

Social Buying and Social Selling: Holistic Perspective on Indian B2B Buyers and Sellers

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Abstract: This study aims to provide a comprehensive view of social media usage for its usefulness and ease-of-use in Business-to-Business (B2B) context, encompassing buying and selling centers in India. The study involved quantitative research with data collected through an online survey-based questionnaire from the chosen practitioners across buying and selling centers. The data was collected from 448 practitioners in India across buying (203) and selling centers (245). The data was analyzed using a structural equations modeling approach to test the hypotheses. Descriptive analysis of the categorical variables was done. The analysis of data revealed a holistic view of social media usage in the B2B context by identifying the social media usage drivers in buying and selling centers. The ease of use of social media positively influences its usefulness and the usage among B2B practitioners. Further, the usefulness of social media positively influences the usage. Furthermore, the responses were significantly different between the buying and selling centers. However, the difference among categorical variables such as gender, age, role level and industry type did not elicit significant difference. The results offer buying and selling practitioners in India with a view on how to craft their social media strategy. This study extends existing literature in B2B social media in the India context by providing a holistic view of social media usage among buying and selling centers.

Keywords: Business-to-business, Perceived Ease of Use, Perceived Usefulness, Social Buying, Social media usage, Social Selling.

Introduction

B2B business is more prominent as it is estimated to be bigger and more complex than Business-to-consumer (B2C) (MintLeads, 2023). The B2B customer journey went through significant changes in recent years because of the changes in customer behavior and preferences. This change in behaviors and preferences is driven by several factors with the digital revolution being one of them. Social media revolution plays an important part in it (Dwivedi *et al.*, 2023). Social media has redefined how buyers and sellers communicate by enabling openness and cooperation among them (Agnihotri *et al.*, 2016; Cartwright *et al.*, 2021). Furthermore, social media influences the business outcomes of buying and selling organizations (Anchillai *et al.*, 2019; Hsiao *et al.*, 2020). Thus, social media is a powerful tool in building buyer-seller relationships and enhancing organizational business outcomes.

According to Forbes research, it is predicted that “by 2025, 80% of B2B sales interactions between suppliers and buyers will occur in digital channels” (Chaudhri, 2023), and social media is an important channel in it. In addition to that, ~83% of B2B purchase executives use social media in their information research, and it influences their decisions (Schimel, 2018). The disruption caused by social media is both an opportunity and a challenge for sellers and buyers. Hence, social media is consolidating its position as an important tool for both buyers and sellers to conduct their businesses.

The current studies on B2B social media usage were focused mainly on the salesperson context with little emphasis on the entire team that is involved in sales. Hence, there is a need to cover the entire selling center, i.e., all departments of the selling organization involved in selling (Dwivedi *et al.*, 2023). Similarly, there are limited studies that used customer data. Hence, there is a need to view social media usage from the lens of both buying and selling centers, given the bilateral nature of B2B (Kranzbühler *et al.*, 2018). Therefore, this study attempts to fill the gap by providing holistic perspectives on social media

usage by buying and selling centers in the B2B in India context.

This study aims to provide a holistic perspective of social media usage in the B2B context encompassing buying and selling centers. In doing so, this study attempts to answer the following research questions 1) How is social media accepted among buying and selling centers in the B2B context 2) How do buying and selling centers view the usefulness and ease of use of social media?

To this background, this study uses the technology acceptance model (TAM) to determine social media's usefulness and ease of use among B2B buyers and sellers. A survey-based study was conducted with 448 B2B practitioners in India among buying (203) and selling centers (245).

The results show that social media's usefulness and ease of use as the drivers of their social media usage. Further, the ease of use of social media drives the perceptions of its usefulness. Furthermore, there is a significant difference between the social media usage between buying and selling centers. Hence, this study contributes vital to the B2B social media literature on social buying and social selling. In addition, this study provides a perspective for B2B practitioners to carve out their social media strategy and implementation.

The paper is structured as follows: section 2 covers the theoretical background on TAM and social media in B2B to analyze the gaps in social media usage in the B2B context. Section 3 covers the framework of this study, followed by the methodology adopted to carry out the study. The results and findings of this study in section 5 follows then. The final section covers implications, conclusions, and future research areas.

Theoretical background

The penetration of social media research in B2C is largely explored compared to its sparse presence in the B2B space (Iankova *et al.*, 2019). In B2C, it explores the consumer's interactions; B2B is complex given the nuances of B2B

purchases. Within B2B, social media was largely explored in sales, communication, and employee engagement (Cartwright *et al.*, 2021). This research is positioned to explore the social media usage of B2B buying and selling center members in a single study.

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

Social media usage is difficult for organizations to track even though it has been established that its usage leads to positive returns for the organizations. Several models and frameworks are available to determine the usage of social media. However, the most used one to predict the usage is the technology adoption model (TAM), given its empirical operationalization nature (Cartwright *et al.*, 2021; Siamagka *et al.*, 2015; Buratti *et al.*, 2018). Hence, this study draws on TAM to understand social media usage in the B2B context.

TAM is a widely used model in technology adoption studies. It helps explain the changing behavioral tendencies of buyers and sellers based on two key dimensions, “perceived usefulness” and “perceived ease of use” (Venkatesh and Davis, 2000). Perceived usefulness explains how users perceive the benefits realized by using social media as there are efforts involved in using it. The benefits realized are expected to outweigh the efforts put in. Similarly, perceived ease of use is the user’s perception of how easy or difficult the navigability of social media is while using it (Venkatesh & Davis, 2000; Venkatesh *et al.*, 2003).

Extant literature has established that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use drive social media usage (Peng *et al.*, 2018; Sangwan *et al.*, 2022)). In addition, innovation, pressure to match competition, and pressure from senior management drive social media usage (Dwivedi *et al.*, 2023). However, the social media usage among buying and selling organizations is different. For example, while sellers prefer a breadth of social media channels, buyers prefer a narrow channel (Van dan Steen *et al.*, 2020). While several studies used TAM to study social media usage, they are mainly from sellers’ perspectives. The studies around customer perspectives are

limited. This study fills the gap of including buying and selling organizations and involving buying and selling center teams.

Social media in B2B

Social media is defined as “the technological component of the communication, transaction, and relationship-building functions of a business which leverages the network of customers and prospects to promote value co-creation” (Andzulis *et al.*, 2012, p.308). Social media is generally confused with social networks like LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, etc. However, social media encompasses social networks and other channels like blogs, online communities, forums, content aggregation, etc. (Constantinides, 2008). Social media has emerged as a marketing tool over the years and has been used in several areas, influencing customer expression, generating market intelligence, and enabling decision-making (Lamberton & Stephen, 2016).

The traditional B2B selling and buying approach has evolved because of the revolution brought by social media. It evolved from a simpler and face-to-face approach to a more faceless online one. Digital technologies are powering this shift in approach. The use of digital technologies in B2B is classified into market-based and integrated ones (Van den Steen *et al.*, 2020). Market-based technologies, including social media, among others, are used by buying and selling organizations. Social media helps transform buyer-seller interactions and engagement, creating a unique edge for organizations (McGrath *et al.*, 2023). It has emerged as a powerful, robust, inbound marketing tool for selling organizations to pull buyers and buying center members and influence their buying decisions (Licong & Ghosh, 2023). For buying organizations, it has emerged as an excellent tool to acquire information about selling organizations, their capabilities, and offerings. Hence, social media as a tool cannot be ignored by both B2B buying and selling organizations in today’s environment.

Buyers are accessing digital tools like social media more and more to gather information about the sellers (Pine, 2015). The emergence of digital and

social media led buyers to be in groups of traditional and social or digitalist buyers. The emergence was based on their usage of digital and social media (Grewal *et al.*, 2015; Kock & Rantala, 2017). This usage of social media during the buying process by the buyers led to the emergence of “Social Buying” as a concept wherein buyers extensively use social media tools in their buying activities (Grewal *et al.*, 2015; Schimel, 2018). Social buying can empower buyers as the information provided is grounded on multiple users and different levels of richness. The accuracy, relevance, and timeliness of information obtained enhance the confidence of buyers to use social media more and reduce their dependence and influence on the sellers. This usage of social media tools led to a shift in power from sellers to buyers now, as buyers are no longer dependent on sellers for information (Andzulis *et al.*, 2012). Hence, sellers are stressed about staying relevant by resorting to the adoption and usage of social media to provide information to buyers. This resulted in a change from direct, sequential, and dyadic selling to indirect, parallel, and multi-actor selling (Andzulis *et al.*, 2012; Jensen & Helles, 2017). Therefore, social media is all-pervasive in buying organizations and enables them to enhance the prowess of their buying process.

As social media gained traction among buyers, the onus lies on selling organizations to make the customer’s journey easier through their presence on social media. Social media influences marketing outcomes such as customer satisfaction, when selling organizations include it as part of their marketing channels (Agnihotri *et al.*, 2016; Sangwan *et al.*, 2022)). Selling organizations need a robust social media strategy for their targeted audience to influence these marketing outcomes and engage with buying organizations. This use of social media for selling activities by sellers led to the emergence of “Social selling” as a concept that enables sellers to engage with existing and new customers to drive their buying decisions (Zhang & Li, 2019). Thus, selling organizations use social media across their marketing activities like sales, lead generation,

branding, marketing, and service processes to engage with buyers (Lam *et al.*, 2019). Hence, social media is an important tool for salespeople to stay relevant and engage with buyers’ changing engagement behavior.

Current research studies investigate social media mainly from sales facilitation, communication, and employee engagement points of view and are primarily published in B2B marketing journals (Cartwright *et al.*, 2021). Social media’s influence on B2B sales opportunities, relationship management (Rodriguez *et al.*, 2012), brand performance (Andzulis *et al.*, 2012), different influences of SM blocks in the buying process (Diba *et al.*, 2019), communication strategies (Heng Wei *et al.*, 2021; Lashgari *et al.*, 2018), decision making (Siti-Nabiha *et al.*, 2021) etc. Given the bilateral nature of B2B, the alignment between buyers and sellers is important for the seamless running of business activities (Van den Steen *et al.*, 2020). However, there is a misalignment in the adoption and usage of digital channels, which hinders both parties from realizing the full benefits of digitization. With social media in B2B, research in social selling is nascent even though practitioners in sales have realized how valuable social media tools are to influence customers (Ancillai *et al.*, 2019, Cartwright *et al.*, 2021).

There is a misalignment between buyers and sellers and this is pronounced in social media usage (Van den Steen *et al.*, 2020). Hence, there is a gap in understanding the social media usage encompassing buyers and sellers thereby providing a holistic view of social media usage in B2B. Further, it is recommended that social media usage be understood in social buying and social selling (Diba *et al.*, 2019; Steward *et al.*, 2019). Hence, there is a need to obtain holistic B2B actors’ views on social media usage to generalize it (Kranzbühler *et al.*, 2018). Similarly, the current studies focus primarily on the salespeople and purchase people instead of the buying and selling centers. To date, no study has provided an integrative and comprehensive view of how social media usage empowers buyers and sellers and contributes to the social buying and selling

process (Gustafson *et al.*, 2021; Kumar & Sharma, 2022). To date, no study provides an integrative view of how social media usage empowers buyers and sellers and contributes to social buying and selling across the customer journey (Gustafson *et al.*, 2021). Responding to the calls on the lack of holistic study on social media usage in the B2B context, this study attempts to cover both buying and selling centers.

To summarize, social media is a vital tool for the selling center and buying center to carry out their activities. Social media usage drives social selling and buying, which leads to organizational outcomes. Hence, an understanding of social media usage holistically involving buying and selling center members is imperative in B2B.

Objectives of the study

1. To provide a comprehensive view of social media usage among B2B buying and selling centers in the Indian context
2. To investigate how the social media usefulness and ease of use are viewed by the B2B buying and selling centers

Hypotheses development

According to TAM, the adoption and use of technology is driven by the utilitarian motive of the users. The constructs that drive this utilitarian motive are the Perceived Ease of use and Usefulness. Perceived ease of use of social media is defined as an individual's perspective on easy and quick navigating and using social media to achieve an objective (Davis, 1989; Nielsen, 1994). This is a user's assessment of how much effort is needed to use social media to achieve the goals and can be termed 'usability.' According to TAM, this usability drives the perception of the usefulness of social media. From the B2B marketer's perspective, this was confirmed in extant literature the perceived ease of use drives the perceived usefulness of social media (Siamagka *et al.*, 2015). However, it is proposed that this postulate be verified using the buying and selling center to get a holistic view. Hence, it is hypothesized as below:

H₁: Perceived Ease of Use of social media positively affects the Perceived Usefulness of social media

Further, according to TAM, this usability influences the user's drive towards technology. Hence, this study specifically attempts to verify the usability of social media's influence on social media usage. A prior study found that perceived ease of use was not a statistically significant driver of the adoption of social media (Lacka and Chong, 2016), even though it is confirmed in other studies (Siamagka *et al.*, 2015). Further, several statutory and legal compliances must be considered before assessing the usability of social media (Jussila *et al.*, 2014). Therefore, perceived ease of use and its relationship with social media usage are hypothesized as below:

H₂: Perceived Ease of Use of social media positively influences Social media Usage

Perceived usefulness of social media is defined as an individual's perspective on social media about its ability to achieve their job-related goals or enhance their job performance (Davis, 1989; Nielsen, 1994). Thus, usefulness is an individual's perception of the practical acceptability of social media. While perceived ease of use focuses on the process side, perceived usefulness focuses on the result. Further, marketers, i.e., one side of B2B, perceive social media's usefulness as driving their adoption of social media sites (Sangwan *et al.*, 2022; Siamagka *et al.*, 2015). A similar study covering the buyer's side is needed to provide a holistic view. This study seeks to verify the relationship between perceived usefulness and social media usage, covering both buying and selling centers, to present a unique holistic view in the B2B context. Based on the above arguments, it is hypothesized that:

H₃: Perceived Usefulness of social media positively influences Social media Usage

The identified traits of an individual affect one's behavior (Kreitner, 2001). The composition of the buying and selling center involves people from diverse backgrounds in terms of age, gender, category (buying vs selling center), job level,

industry, etc. Hence, the effect of this background on social media usage is worth studying. Hence it is hypothesized as below:

H_4 : There is a significant difference in the user characteristics in Social media Usage

H_{4a} : There is a significant difference in the Social media Usage in Gender

H_{4b} : There is a significant difference in the Social media Usage in Age categories

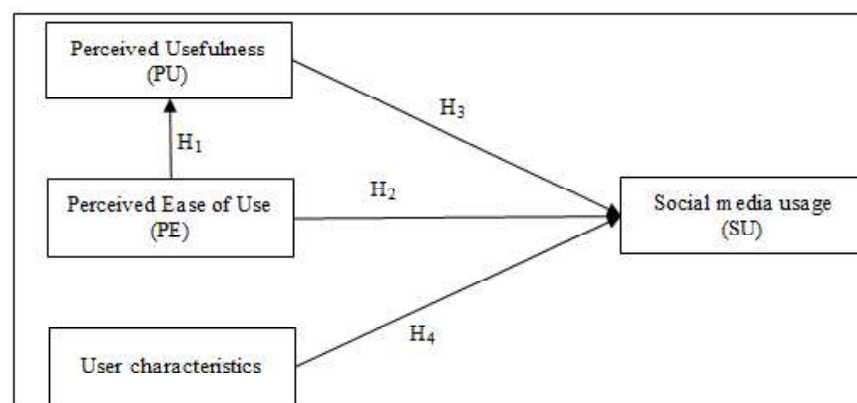
H_{4c} : There is a significant difference in the Social media Usage in Role level

H_{4d} : There is a significant difference in Social media Usage at the Industry type

H_{4e} : There is a significant difference in the Social media Usage in Category

The overall study model that emerged from the above hypotheses is shown in Figure 1:

Figure 1: Proposed Conceptual Study Model



Methodology

Measures

The study used scales from extant literature to measure the study constructs, i.e., perceived usability, perceived ease of use, and social media usage. Perceived usability was a 5-item measure adapted from existing literature (Keinänen & Kuivalainen, 2015). Perceived ease of use was a 6-item scale adapted from existing literature (Eid et al., 2020). The scale for social media usage was derived from existing literature (Agnihotri et al., 2016) and was a 3-item scale.

Sampling and data collection

This study collected data from buying and selling centers of B2B firms in India. A non-probabilistic purposive sampling technique was adopted to draw samples from the consulting, pharma, and information technology industries of the B2B domain. A pre-determined criterion of at least five

years of buying or selling experience was adopted to select the sample for data collection. The selected respondents were provided with an online survey to collect their responses. Upon this snowball sampling technique was used to expand the coverage but adhering to the selection criteria. The survey questionnaire had two sections with the first covering the demographic variables like gender, age, role, industry, the second section covered the study constructs. The initial survey was floated to a few chosen practitioners for pilot testing to check for the flow, language, layout etc. The suggested changes were incorporated and the final survey was prepared. The weblink of survey were sent to over a thousand potential respondents. A final sample size of 448 was achieved after dropping incomplete responses. The entire data collection was done in a single phase and it took ten weeks to collect data. The demographic profile is in Table 1

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the respondents

Parameter	Items	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	367	82%
	Female	81	18%
Age	<30 years	36	8%
	31-40 years	136	30%
	41-50 years	169	38%
	51-60 years	91	20%
	>60 years	16	4%
Role level	Entry level	34	8%
	Manager	115	26%
	Middle management	130	29%
	Senior management	120	27%
	CXO	49	11%
Industry	Consulting	122	27%
	IT	107	24%
	Pharma	219	49%
Category	Buying center	203	45%
	Selling center	245	55%

Source: Authors' field survey

Data analysis approach

This study used the Structural Equations Modeling (SEM) approach to examine the study model and hypotheses. SEM can analyze multi-constructs and multi-relationship models and assess the cause-effect relationships (Byrne, 2013). Further, the study used Partial Least Squares (PLS) based SEM to analyze data using SmartPLS version 4.0. PLS-SEM is a technique that explains how observed variables generate latent variables and verifies that relationship (Hair *et al.*, 2019). PLS-SEM has emerged as a well-established technique and is an accepted tool under conditions of data non-normality and for small sample sizes (Hair *et al.*, 2019). SPSS version 25 was also used as a secondary tool to run data analysis.

Results and Findings

Data Analysis

The common method bias was eliminated by randomly spreading the items across the questionnaire. Further, it was assessed using exploratory factor analysis and found no single factor explained more than 50% variance,

indicating a lack of any common method bias (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003).

Measurement model results

The measurement model helps to understand the relationship between the constructs and their measures. The parameters assessed are factor loadings, construct reliability, and construct validity. Regarding factor loadings, the results in Table 2 indicate that all the items exceeded the recommended cut-off value of 0.70 (Chin, 1998), barring a couple of items closer to 0.67 indicating higher correlation with the factor. Hence, no items were dropped. The construct reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite reliability (ρ_a and ρ_c) scores with an acceptable threshold of 0.7 (Hair *et al.*, 2012). The results are within the acceptable threshold, which indicates that the data is reliable. The average variance extracted (AVE) scores were assessed with an acceptable limit of 0.5. The results are within the acceptable threshold and indicate that the indicators satisfactorily explained the latent constructs. Further, cross-loadings were assessed, and it was found that the indicators loaded more on

their constructs than the other constructs. The results of item loadings, construct reliability, and AVE scores establish the construct reliability of the measurement model.

Table 2: Summarized factor loadings, Construct reliability, and Composite reliability

Construct	Factor loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite reliability (ρ_a)	Composite reliability (ρ_c)	AVE
Perceived Usefulness of Social Media (PU)		0.796	0.814	0.859	0.551
PU1	0.793				
PU2	0.835				
PU3	0.731				
PU4	0.674				
PU5	0.662				
Perceived Ease of Use of Social Media (PE)		0.875	0.878	0.906	0.617
PE1	0.802				
PE2	0.797				
PE3	0.814				
PE4	0.808				
PE5	0.717				
PE6	0.770				
Social media usage (SU)		0.842	0.842	0.905	0.760
SU1	0.875				
SU2	0.872				
SU3	0.868				

Source: Authors' processing from Smart PLS version 4.0

To assess discriminant validity, heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) values were used with a recommended threshold of 0.9 which is superior to the Fornell and Larcker criterion (Henseler *et al.*, 2015). The HTMT values in Table 3 were within the recommended threshold, which provided sufficient evidence of discriminant validity.

Table 3: HTMT values

	PU	PE	SU
PU			
PE	0.762		
SU	0.712	0.894	

Source: Authors' processing from Smart PLS version 4.0

Structural model results

The structural analysis and hypotheses testing indicate that all hypothesized relationships are statistically significant. The results are presented

in Table 4. Thus, it can be inferred that ease of use of social media positively influences its usefulness. Further, both the ease of use and usefulness positively influence social media usage.

Table 4: Structural estimates and Hypotheses testing

Hypotheses and Relationship	B	T	P	Decision
H1: PE → PU	0.646	18.300	0.000	Accept
H2: PU → SU	0.174	3.967	0.000	Accept
H3: PE → SU	0.655	14.649	0.000	Accept

Note: B – Beta coefficient, T – T statistic, P – p-value.

Source: Authors' processing from SmartPLS version 4.0

Standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) and Normed fit index (NFI) are assessed to check the model fit (Hu *et al.*, 1999, Hair *et al.*, 2012). Our model result shows an SRMR value of 0.037, which is within the recommended threshold. Our model result shows an NFI value of 0.898. Hence, considering both the SRMR and NFI values, there is a good fit for the research model.

R-square values were used to measure the explanatory power. The variance of 41.7% and 60.7% were explained in PU and SU by its antecedents, implying a satisfactory level of prediction, and the results are tabulated in Table 5. Further, an F square was assessed to check the impact of the predictor variable, which was found to be within the satisfactory level. Hence, the model is a good fit.

Table 5: R Square, F Square, and Model Fit

Predictor	Outcome	R-Square	F-square	SRMR	NFI
PE	PU	0.417	0.715	0.037	0.898
PU	SU	0.607	0.045		
PE			0.537		

Source: Authors' processing from SmartPLS version 4.0

The categorical variables (age, gender, role level, industry, and category) were assessed for the differences in the SU against the pre-defined reference item, and the results are tabulated below in Table 6. While the results are not significant for categorical variables like gender, age, role level, and industry, the difference between buying and selling centers is significant. In the case of gender, female respondents perceive social media usage higher than male respondents because of the positive B coefficient. Similarly, in age categories, all respondents who were above 30 years old

perceived social media usage as higher than the respondents who were less than 30 years old. In the case of role level, while all levels perceive social media usage higher than the entry-level employees, it was otherwise for CXOs. However, in the case of industry type, respondents from IT and Pharma perceive lower social media usage compared to respondents from the consulting domain. In the case of the buying and selling center, selling center respondents perceive lower social media usage than the buying center respondents, and the difference was significant.

Table 6: Categorical variable assessment

Categorical predictor variable	Categories	B	T	P	Decision
H _{4a} : Gender	Male (reference)	-	-	-	-
	Female	0.122	1.566	0.117	Reject
H _{4b} : Age	<30 years (reference)	-	-	-	-
	31-40 years	0.102	0.839	0.401	Reject
	41-50 years	0.158	1.339	0.181	Reject
	51-60 years	0.107	0.876	0.381	Reject
	>60 years	0.038	0.222	0.824	Reject
H _{4c} : Role level	Entry level (reference)	-	-	-	-
	Manager	0.039	0.301	0.763	Reject
	Middle management	0.057	0.444	0.657	Reject
	Senior management	0.063	0.479	0.632	Reject
	CXO	-0.103	0.693	0.488	Reject
H _{4d} : Industry	Consulting (reference)	-	-	-	-
	IT	-0.014	0.177	0.859	Reject
	Pharma	-0.074	1.178	0.239	Reject
H _{4e} : Category	Buying center (reference)	-	-	-	-
	Selling center	-0.134	2.191	0.029	Accept

Source: Authors' processing from Smart PLS version 4.0

Discussion, Implications, and Conclusion

Discussion

This study aimed to examine the role of social media usefulness and ease of use of social media in the B2B context in India across buying and selling centers. The results obtained verify the proposed model. Ease of Use of social media in buying and selling centers positively influences its usefulness. Hence, both buying and selling centers regard the ease of process navigation of social media results in its usefulness, i.e., the result of social media. B2B sales practitioners can induct user friendly platforms during their social media design to enable this ease of use. In addition, both B2B buyers and sellers can enable training modules for its personnel to enhance the social media adoption and usage. Further, perceived ease of use positively impacts social media usage, like perceived usefulness. To create awareness among their employees, B2B companies can run awareness drive to communicate the usefulness of social media to enable their usage at work. While driving this communication, B2B practitioners need to be cognizant of the improper and inappropriate usage of social media and hence need to regulate the usage for official purposed. Further, this study confirms the TAM constructs in social media usage in a holistic B2B context in India. This means that the usefulness and usability of social media govern social buying and social selling. Hence, B2B practitioners can integrate their social media strategy to the selling and buying strategy there by the nuances of selling and buying can leverage the social media's benefits. Furthermore, the usability of social media drives the individual's perception of its usefulness. This confirms the extant research (Lacka and Chong, 2016). However, the current study is in the context of B2B buying and selling centers, providing a holistic view of social media usage in B2B.

Further, there is a significant difference in the social media response of buying and selling centers, wherein the perceived social media

consumption of selling center is less than the buying center which is an interesting finding in this study and is counterintuitive in nature where in sellers use social media more than the buyers. This could be attributed to the current misalignment between the buying and selling centers, which must be carefully addressed (Van den Steen *et al.*, 2020). However, the categorical variables such as age, gender, role level, and industry type did not elicit significant differences in social media usage.

Implications

The study findings offer a few theoretical contributions. First, the TAM model is verified in the B2B context of buying and selling centers, thereby offering a dyadic and holistic approach. The dyadic approach is a novel addition to the existing literatures which focused either on buyer or seller side. Further, the India context is specifically focused in this study. Hence, this is a contribution to social media and B2B literature and more specifically in India context. Second, the difference in social media usage between the buying and selling centers is a contribution to the social buying and social selling literature. Finally, the mediating role of the social media usefulness complements social media usage, which is a contribution to the social media literature.

The study focused on data from both buying and selling organizations, and hence, it is expected to add value to the practitioners in buying and selling organizations in India. First, selling side managers in India need to focus on the difference in social media usage of the buying center Their social media usage is significantly less than the one of buying center and hence need to be carefully studied countering the popular belief that sellers use social media more than their buyers. Hence, they need to drive their efforts to narrow the gap and align themselves with the buying center. Second, both buying and selling side managers need to create a narrative on the uses of social media and how it is easy to handle to enhance and improve social media usage among their teams. Finally, contrary to the popular belief that social media is only for the

younger generation, the results indicate that the difference in social media usage between the younger and older generations is not significant. The same was witnessed in other parameters like role level and gender. Hence, practitioners must recognize those to drive their social media strategy.

Conclusion

This study revealed dyadic perceptions of B2B practitioners in India on their social media perceptions of its usefulness and usability. Further, it is holistic in B2B as it involves both sides, i.e., buy and sell side members. The study examined the role of TAM constructs in defining social media usage. Finally, this study showed a variance in the responses between the buying and selling centers.

Scope for Future Research

There are a few limitations to this study which opens up areas for future research

1. This study involved self-reporting from the participants, which may not be accurate enough to represent the whole population.
2. Second, this study involved only Indian context and hence any extrapolation to other geographies are limited. Further, this study covered only three industries in B2B.
3. Third, this study involved only usefulness and usability constructs in TAM. Hence, the future research to cover other constructs that drive social media can be explored. Also, diverse participation of all B2B businesses and other countries would be a logical extension of this study.
4. Finally, future research can extend this study across various stages of the customer journey involving customer channel preferences and purposes.

In summary, this study provided a holistic view of social media usage among B2B buyers and sellers in India. The usefulness and usability of social media drives its usage even though the usage among selling center is less than the

buying center. Sellers need to be cognizant of their less social media usage compared to the buyers. This implies that the B2B companies need to focus their efforts to sharpen their social media strategies in design and execution to achieve its marketing objectives.

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