THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOUR

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Abstract

Social media has revolutionized the way consumers interact with brands and make purchasing decisions. This study explores the impact of social media on consumer buying behavior, with a focus on young adults aged 21-30, who constitute the majority of active users. Using a quantitative research approach, data was collected from 107 respondents through structured questionnaires. Statistical analyses, including Chi-Square and ANOVA tests, were conducted to examine the relationship between social media engagement and purchasing decisions. The findings confirm that social media significantly influences consumer trust, brand perception, and purchase intentions, with influencer marketing, user-generated reviews, and engagement metrics playing a key role. However, age was found to have no significant impact on purchase behavior. The study highlights the importance of social media strategies for businesses in enhancing brand loyalty and customer engagement. Future research should explore psychological factors driving impulse buying and brand switching, as well as qualitative insights into consumer emotions influencing online purchases.

Keywords: Social Media Marketing, Consumer Buying Behavior, Influencer Marketing, Digital Marketing, Online Shopping.

Introduction

Digital marketing encompasses a diverse array of strategies and techniques aimed at promoting products, services, or brands through online channels and platforms. This includes optimizing website content to improve search engine visibility through SEO and utilizing paid advertising campaigns such as SEM to target specific audiences. Social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter are leveraged to engage with potential customers and build brand awareness through SMM efforts. Content marketing involves creating and distributing valuable content to attract and retain audiences, while email marketing allows for targeted communication with prospects and customers. Collaborating with influencers, implementing affiliate programs, and utilizing display advertising further expand reach and visibility. Mobile optimization, analytics, and data-driven decision-making are integral components, enabling businesses to adapt and refine their strategies in real-time based on performance metrics. Overall, digital marketing provides a dynamic and effective means of reaching and engaging with audiences in the digital age. Moreover, social media facilitates engagement and interaction between brands and consumers, allowing for direct communication and feedback exchange. Brands can engage with their audience through content, contests, polls, and customer service interactions, building relationships and trust. This engagement fosters brand loyalty and can influence repeat purchases. The impact of social media on consumer buying behavior is profound and multifaceted. Social media platforms have become integral parts of people's lives, influencing their purchase decisions in various ways. Firstly, social media serves as a source of product discovery and research, with users often discovering new products or brands

through recommendations, sponsored posts, or influencer endorsements. Social media also plays a role in shaping consumer preferences and trends. Trending topics, viral content, and influencer endorsements can create hype around certain products or styles, driving consumer interest and demand. Additionally, social media platforms offer targeted advertising capabilities, allowing brands to reach specific demographics or interests, further influencing consumer behavior.

Primary Objectives

- To study the impact of social media on consumer buying decision process.
- To measure the change in perception of the consumers through the content and engagement on social media.
- To understand how businesses can engage more customers to increase the brand value.

Need for the Study

Understanding the impact of social media on consumer buying behavior is crucial for businesses to refine marketing strategies, enhance brand visibility, and drive sales. Social media insights help companies identify effective platforms, adapt to emerging trends, and gain a competitive edge. Additionally, studying consumer psychology on social media fosters deeper brand engagement, loyalty, and advocacy. This knowledge also informs product development, ensuring alignment with evolving consumer preferences. Ultimately, analyzing social media's role in purchasing decisions enables businesses to optimize marketing, stay competitive, and drive innovation in the digital era.

Scope of the Study

With regard to the objectives, conducting the research from the perspective of consumers would be a considerably suitable approach. The researcher knows that there are many reports and studies available that focuses only to help the business point of view in social media marketing but not to help consumers to identify reasons that social media has changed their decision-making process. Since the purpose of marketing is about the consumers, thereby the collection of data from those consumers point of view, fresh insights can be collected. The research focuses only on the behavior of the consumers.

Review of Literature

Rendeci zc (2022), aimed to identify the role digital media plays in shaping the post- coronavirus consumer culture by reviewing consumer practices, reflecting consumer culture, during the 2020 lockdown in Turkey.

Pop et al. (2020), have indicated the importance of social media on consumers' attitudes, subjective norms, altruistic and egoistic motivations, and the impact of these variables as the antecedents of green cosmetics purchase intention.

Ringim et al. (2019), have revealed that there is a strong significant positive impact on attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioral control on consumer intention/buying behavior to purchase cosmetic products

Alfeel et al. (2019), made quantitative research based primary data collected through structured close ended questionnaire, distributed online. Results were drawn based on 121 responses using factor analysis, ANOVA and regression analysis. The results showed that 92.4% of the customer purchase intention has been explained by Social Media Marketing.

Alalwan et al. (2018), have analysed the key results of structural equation modelling (SEM) largely supported the current model's validity and the significant impact of performance expectancy, hedonic motivation, interactivity, informativeness, and perceived relevance on purchase intentions.

Prasath et al. (2018), In this research the Pearson's Correlation analysis explores a positive significant linear relationship between Social Media Marketing and Consumer Buying Decision Making.

Schivinski et al. (2016), The results of the empirical studies showed that user-generated social media communication had a positive influence on both brand equity and brand attitude, whereas firm-created social media communication affected only brand attitude.

Biswas (2016), enumerates the role of consumers' in discharging environmental responsibility by emphasizing green consumption when being exposed to social media impact factors.

Ashman et al. (2015), concluded that the old EKB model, with some minor tweaks, still provides valuable insights into and explanations of consumer decision making.

Goh et al. (2013), findings show that engagement in social media brand communities leads to a positive increase in purchase expenditures.

Hayes (2012), Offer a primer on some of the important concepts and methods in mediation analysis, moderation analysis, and conditional process modelling prior to describing PROCESS, a versatile modelling tool freely - available for SPSS and SAS.

Punj (2012), examined an important aspect of online consumer decision making, namely, the impact of the electronic environment on the capabilities of consumers.

Yayli et al. (2012), show that consumer reviews have a causal impact on consumer purchasing behavior and they have an effect on choosing the products by consumer.

Chu et al. (2011), confirmed that tie strength, trust, normative and informational influence are positively associated with users' overall eWOM behavior, whereas a negative relationship was found with regard to homophily.

Bronner et al. (2010), monitored the eWOM about brands and, by using this information companies should flexibly adapt their advertising to the discussion points raised at the consumer-generated sites.

Research Methodology

This study adopts a quantitative research approach to examine the impact of social media on consumer buying behavior. A probability sampling method is used to select a representative sample of 100 social media users across various demographics. Primary data is collected through a structured questionnaire designed to capture insights on social media usage, purchase influence, product preferences, and engagement frequency. The survey consists of closed- ended and Likert scale questions, ensuring structured responses. Data collection is conducted online via Google Forms and through face-to-face interviews to maintain diversity and accuracy. The sample population includes individuals aged 18 and above who actively engage with social media platforms. Statistical techniques such as regression analysis, correlation analysis, and factor analysis are applied to identify key trends and relationships. Findings are presented using charts, tables, and graphs, providing actionable insights for businesses. This research

offers valuable perspectives on the role of social media in shaping consumer purchasing decisions and guiding marketing strategies.

Data Analysis
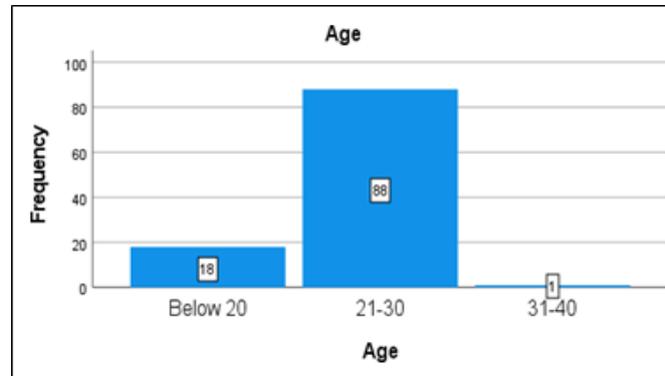
Interpretation

We can observe that the majority of respondents fall within the age range of 21-30, which comprises 82.2% of the total respondents. This indicates that the sample predominantly consists of young adults, which is relevant for studying the impact of social media on consumer buying behaviour because younger demographics are often more active users of social media platforms.
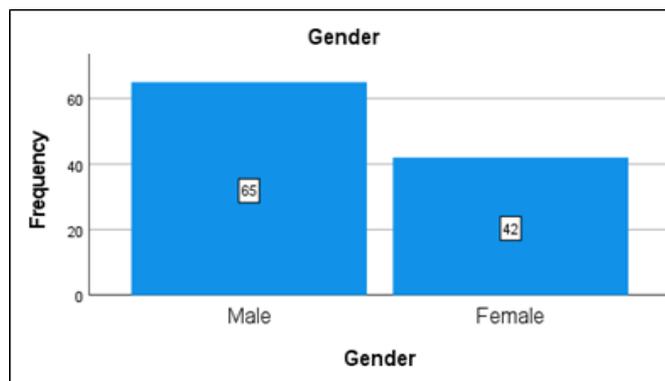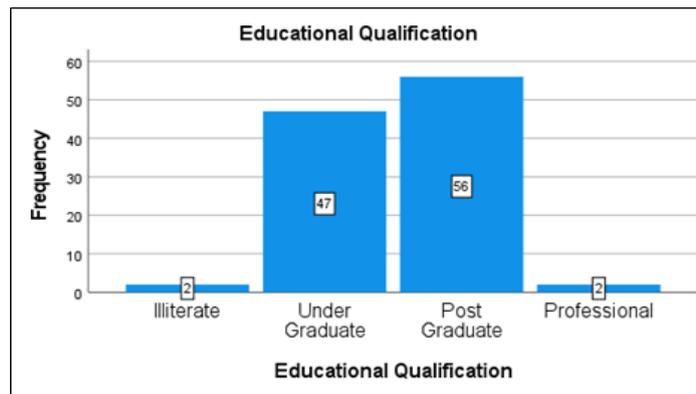

Interpretation

The data suggests that there are more male respondents (60.7%) compared to female respondents (39.3%). When studying the impact of social media on consumer buying behavior, it's important to consider gender differences, as research has shown that there can be variations in social media usage patterns and buying behavior between males and females.
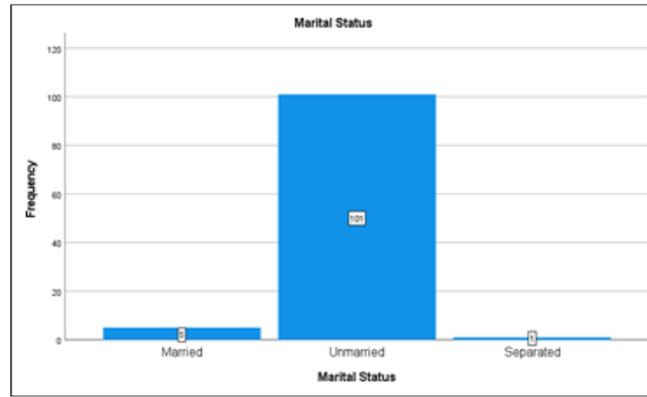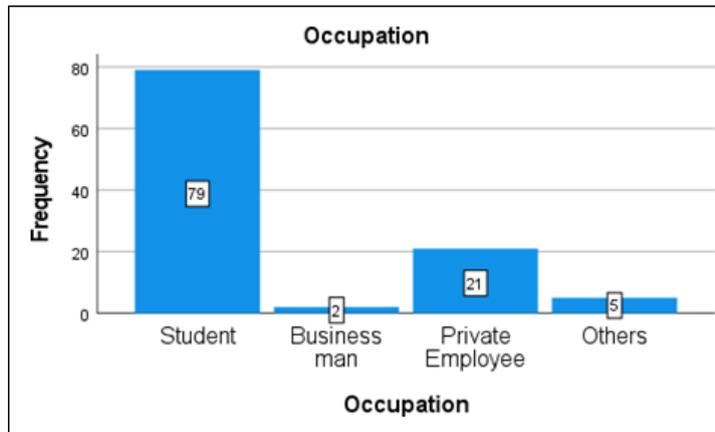
Interpretation

Understanding the marital status of respondents is crucial when studying the impact of social media on consumer buying behavior. Married individuals may have different purchasing behaviours compared to unmarried individuals due to various factors such as family responsibilities, financial considerations, and lifestyle choices. Unmarried individuals, on the other hand, might have more disposable income or different spending priorities.
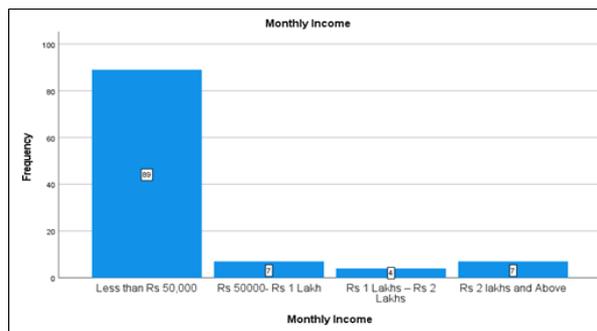

Interpretation

Educational qualification can significantly impact consumer behavior, including how individuals engage with social media and make purchasing decisions. Typically, higher levels of education are associated with greater access to information, critical thinking skills, and potentially higher disposable income, all of which can influence consumer behavior.

Interpretation

Occupation can significantly influence consumer behavior, including how individuals interact with social media and make purchasing decisions. For example, students may have different spending patterns compared to private employees or businessmen due to differences in income levels, financial responsibilities, and lifestyle preferences.

Interpretation

Income level can significantly influence consumer behavior and purchasing decisions. Individuals with higher incomes may have more disposable income to spend on non- essential items, luxury goods, or experiences, and they may engage with social media differently in terms of following brands, making purchases online, or seeking product recommendations.

Chi – Square Test

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2- sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	468.355a	496	.809
Likelihood Ratio	263.036	496	1.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	.244	1	.621
N of Valid Cases	107		
a. 544 cells (100.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .01.			

Null Hypothesis (H0): There is no association between [demographic factor] and consumer buying behavior.

Alternative Hypothesis (H1): There is an association between [demographic factor] and consumer buying behavior.

Interpretation: The Pearson chi-square test assesses the independence between variables. In this case, it suggests that there is no significant association between social media usage and consumer buying behavior, as the p-value (0.809) is greater than the typical significance level of 0.05. Therefore, based on this test, we fail to reject the null hypothesis of independence.

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	**df**	**Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)**
Pearson Chi-Square	696.586a	589	.001
Likelihood Ratio	329.011	589	1.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	8.069	1	.005
N of Valid Cases	107		
a. 640 cells (100.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .01.			

Null Hypothesis (H0)

There is no significant association between social media usage and consumer purchase decisions.

Alternative Hypothesis (H1)

There is a significant association between social media usage and consumer purchase decisions.

Interpretation: The Pearson chi-square test assesses the independence between variables. In this case, it suggests that there is a significant association between social media usage and consumer buying behavior, as the p-value (0.001) is less than the typical significance level of 0.05. Therefore, based on this test, we reject the null hypothesis of independence.

ANOVA

ANOVA					
Age					
	Sum of Squares	**df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**
Between Groups	.306	3	.102	.657	.580
Within Groups	15.993	103	.155		
Total	16.299	106			

Interpretation

The "Between Groups" row represents the variation in the "Age" variable between different groups (e.g., different age categories). The sum of squares (SS) quantifies the total variability between groups, the degrees of freedom (df) indicate the number of groups minus 1, and the mean square is the ratio of SS to df. The F-value is the ratio of the mean square for between groups to the mean square for within groups, testing whether there are significant differences in means between groups. The p-value associated with

the F-value determines the statistical significance of the differences. In this case, the p-value is 0.580, which is greater than the typical significance level of 0.05, indicating that there are no significant differences in "Age" between the groups.

Findings

The study reveals that young adults (21-30 years) form the majority (82.2%) of social media users influencing consumer buying behavior, with a higher male participation (60.7%). Most respondents (94.4%) are unmarried, and a significant portion (52.3%) are postgraduates, indicating that educated individuals actively use social media for purchase decisions. Students (73.8%) dominate the sample, highlighting the importance of targeting young consumers. Income levels show that 83.2% earn less than ₹ 50,000 per month, suggesting affordability plays a key role in purchasing decisions. The Chi-Square Test confirmed a significant relationship (p-value = 0.001) between social media usage and consumer buying behavior, reinforcing the platform's impact on purchase decisions. However, another chi-square test (p-value = 0.809) indicated no significant association between certain demographic factors and buying behavior. The ANOVA test (p-value = 0.580) further showed that age does not significantly impact purchase behavior. The study highlights that social media content, influencer marketing, and user-generated reviews strongly influence consumer trust, engagement, and brand loyalty, making digital marketing a crucial factor in modern purchasing decisions.

Limitations

- **Age Limitation** – The study focuses on a specific age group, which may not fully represent the buying behavior of all consumers across different age demographics.
- **Geographical Limitation** – The research is confined to a particular region, limiting the generalizability of the findings to a broader or global audience.
- **Sample Size** – A limited number of respondents may restrict the accuracy and reliability of conclusions, affecting the study's overall representativeness.
- **Platform-Specific Influence** – The study considers selected social media platforms, potentially overlooking the impact of emerging or less popular platforms on consumer behavior
- **Self-Reported Data Bias** – Responses are based on participants' perceptions and experiences, which may introduce biases or inaccuracies in the findings.

Conclusion

The study highlights the significant role of social media in shaping consumer buying behavior, particularly among young adults (21-30 years), with a male majority (60.7%). Education and income levels influence online purchase decisions, with postgraduates and those earning below ₹ 50,000 being the most active consumers. Chi-Square analysis confirms a strong correlation between social media engagement and buying behavior, though age showed no significant impact. Influencer marketing, user-generated reviews, and brand engagement enhance consumer trust and loyalty. Businesses must leverage social media insights for targeted marketing strategies. Future research could explore psychological factors influencing impulse buying and brand switching. Understanding emotional triggers in purchasing decisions remains a key area for further study. Social media continues to transform digital marketing, reshaping how consumers interact with brands.

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