

IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOUR

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ABSTRACT

This document investigates empirically the role of social media in the consumer decision-making process. A quantitative survey investigates how deep an effect consumer experience bears with reference to social media. Consumers' views on products and services are more influenced by the third parties in the digital sphere and then transferred to the perceptions in the real world. Consumers are empowered by social media in such a way as it makes it impossible for marketers to manage the content, timing, or frequency of conversations among users. The results show that social media use impacts satisfaction in consumers at the information search and alternative evaluation stages. This satisfaction increased as the consumer progressed through the decision-making process until their final purchase decision and subsequent evaluation.

Keywords: Social Network, Consumer, Consumer Behaviour, Marketing, Deliberations and Decisions, Purchase, Online sites.

INTRODUCTION

Social media refers to a collection of digital sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, and YouTube, where users can make content and share or exchange it with others. Social media has advanced from the communication tool that it is to a major influencer of consumer behaviour. The advent of social media brings information, reviews where one can see advertisements, and now influencer opinions where all affect the way the purchase decision is likely to be made. Furthermore, the brands have customers in real time and use social proof, peer influence, and targeted ads that can adversely impact preferences. This study will investigate the way(s) through which social media influences buying behaviour and will analyze the psychological triggers and trust-building, brand engagement, and thus given the analytical and practical approach, demonstrates product awareness and creates trust through peer recommendation rather than direct means like reviews and likes.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of this project is to understand different ways in which social media contributes to consumer buying behaviour. This will involve having insight into what prompts a customer to want to know more about a product from social platforms, the importance of an influencer and ambassador in driving purchases, and how much impact targeted advertising and promotions have.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. **Varghese, S., & Agrawal, M. (2021).** The research has shown a powerful impact of Social media on consumer buying behaviour in digital age. No doubt that Social media had brought major changes to both, consumer as well as businesses. The research has shown that consumers are highly selective while making a purchase.
2. **Voramontri, D., & Klieb, L. (2019).** Results show that social media usage influences consumer satisfaction in the stages of information search and alternative evaluation, with satisfaction getting amplified as the consumer moves along the process towards the final purchase decision and post-purchase evaluation.
3. **Ozer, S. (2012).** This research explored that social interactive tools are effectively used to collect information about products at different prices and other's product-related opinions are perceived as a trustworthy source in the buying decision process. It also suggested that social factors, especially family opinions have a strong influence on the buying decisions while buying an expensive product.
4. **Chopra, C., Gupta, S., & Manek, R. (2020).** It is concluded from the research that India are actively utilizing social media platforms as a tool in validating their purchase decisions. Social media platforms affect the decision process of potential customers.
5. **Pütter, M. (2017).** s. As a result, the effective use of social media has become an essential part of creating and maintaining a competitive advantage. Subsequently, companies now place considerable value on the way in which social media can be used to shape consumer brand perception and influence their buying intention.
6. **Arekar, K., Jain, R., Kumar, S., & Ayarekar, S. K. (2018).** This study helps producers and retailers in understanding consumers buying behavior towards electronics appliances and also helps in improving the customer satisfaction.
7. **Oumayma, B. (2019, October).** The results show that consumers' purchasing decision is highly influenced by social media networks. According to the results, the influence of social

media on information and evaluation of alternatives stages is higher than the rest of the stages of the purchase decision making process.

8. **AlShawabkeh, A., Nuseir, M. T., & Aljumah, A. (2021).** This study helps to understand the role of social media in developing e-commerce with the help of the SEM-PLS model.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following are three research objectives on the effect of social media on the buying behaviour of consumers, among others:

- To assess the extent to which social media, via user interaction with advertisements, influencer endorsements, or even user-generated content, builds the emotional relationship with consumers before buying a specific brand or product.
- Identify the strongest social media platforms that influence consumers' purchasing behaviour and identify the drivers that lead to their success in the consumption of different demographic groups.
- To study the effect of social media reviews, ratings, and recommendations on consumer trust and perception of the brand, and how these variables affect the purchasing decisions.

NEED OF THE STUDY

- Use of social media as a different consumer satisfaction stage in identifying information alternatives, which even increases as consumers get through the whole process up to purchasing, even to post purchase evaluation.
- Marketers can meet the consumers in the social media sites they are visiting LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, and even some of the younger ones like TikTok. And then strategizing on how to post, marketers can finally transform audiences into consumers.

SURVEY DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

A mixed-method research design-a form of technique that combines both quantitative and qualitative is used. It increases the area of consumer buying behaviour and will cover the data from social media.

- a) **Target Audience:** A more expanded view of the subject is the reason the survey targets 106 different stakeholders from social media marketing.

- Consumers who are influenced by online content and reviews while making purchases and use the social media sites actively.
 - Social Media Marketers and Digital Marketing Professionals to know their strategies and insights on how social media content is influencing consumer purchases.
 - Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) Owners using social media as a marketing tool to engage and reach possible buyers.
 - Data shows that gender distribution is balanced, as 53% female and 47% male.
 - 84 students, 12 professionals, 6 owners of businesses, and 4 others are included in the sampling of the survey, out of 106 respondents.
- b) Survey Tools: The survey design consists of both open-ended-the closed-ended questionnaire, which will accurately meet the demands of collecting qualitative and quantitative data so as to really have a good understanding between the impacts of social media in buying decisions, thus measuring the trends, as well as getting proper insights from the participants' points of view.

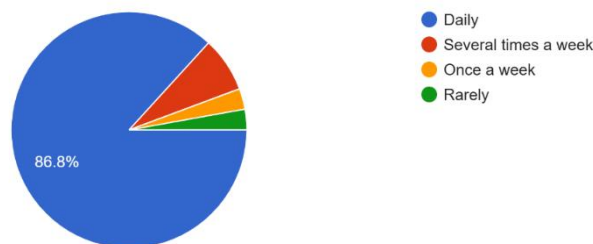
FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Table 1: Representing social media usage frequency of the total 106 respondents

Social media usage frequency	No. of respondents (out of 106)
Daily	92
Several times a week	8
Once a week	3
Rarely	3

Graph 1: Representing social media usage frequency

How often do you use social media?
106 responses



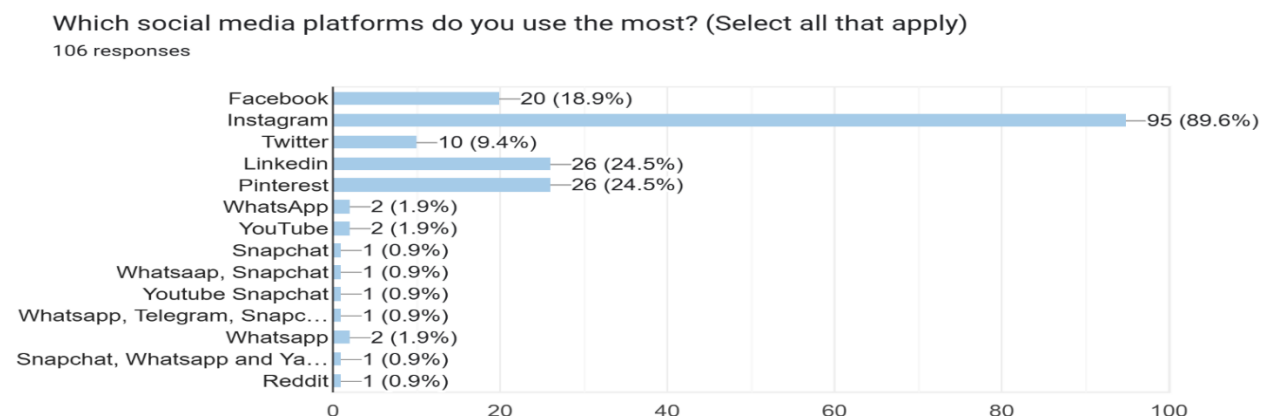
INTERPRETATION

The data indicates that the vast majority of respondents, 86.8%, use social media daily, reflecting a high level of engagement with online platforms. A smaller portion, 7.5%, uses social media several times a week, while only 2.8% check it once a week or rarely. This high daily usage suggests that social media plays a significant role in the daily routines of most respondents, potentially influencing their consumer behaviour and decision-making processes. The infrequent users form a minor segment, implying that most consumers are consistently exposed to social media content, including advertisements and recommendations, which could heavily impact their buying behaviour.

Table 2: Representing social media platforms

Social Media Platforms	No. of respndents
Facebook	20
Instagram	95
Twitter	10
Linkedin	26
Pinterest	26
Whatsapp	2
Youtube	2
Snapchat	1

Graph 2: Social media platforms



Interpretation:

Based on the data collected from the survey, Instagram is the most popular social media platform among the respondents, with a significant 89.6% of users indicating regular usage. This high engagement suggests Instagram's strong influence and appeal, likely due to its visual content and diverse features, which may play a substantial role in consumer behaviours and purchasing decisions. Overall, the data reflects a strong preference for visually driven platforms, highlighting the potential for Instagram in influencing consumer buying behaviour, especially when brands focus on visual storytelling and influencer partnerships

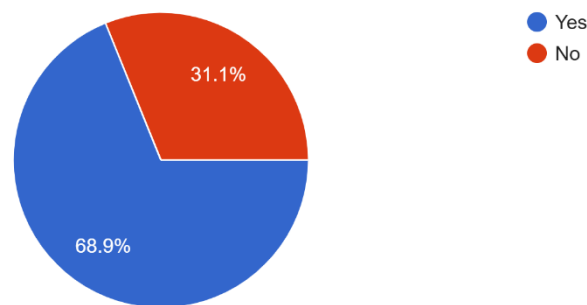
Table 3: Showing no. of respondents who purchased products based on social media recommendations/ advertisements.

Response	No. of Respondents (out of 106)
Yes	73
No	33

Graph 3: Showing no. of respondents who purchased products based on social media recommendations/ advertisements.

Have you ever purchased a product based on a recommendation or advertisement you saw on social media?

106 responses



Interpretation:

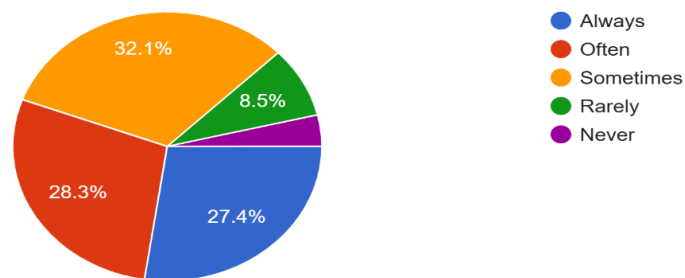
According to the survey, 68.9% of participants have bought a product as a result of suggestions or ads they saw on social media, demonstrating the significant impact of social media on consumer purchasing decisions. The fact that just 31.1% of people have refrained from making purchases as a result of social media influence indicates that these platforms have a big influence on what people decide to buy.

Table 4: Showing no. of respondents who research products on social media before purchasing

Frequency	No. of respondents (out of 106)
Always	29
Often	30
Sometimes	34
Rarely	9
Never	4

Graph 4: Showing no. of respondents who research products on social media before purchasing

How often do you research products on social media before purchasing?
106 responses

**Interpretation:**

According to the survey, 32.1% of participants occasionally use social media to investigate products before making a purchase, while 28.3% frequently do so. This demonstrates how social media influences consumers' decisions to buy by showing that a sizable percentage of them look there for product information.

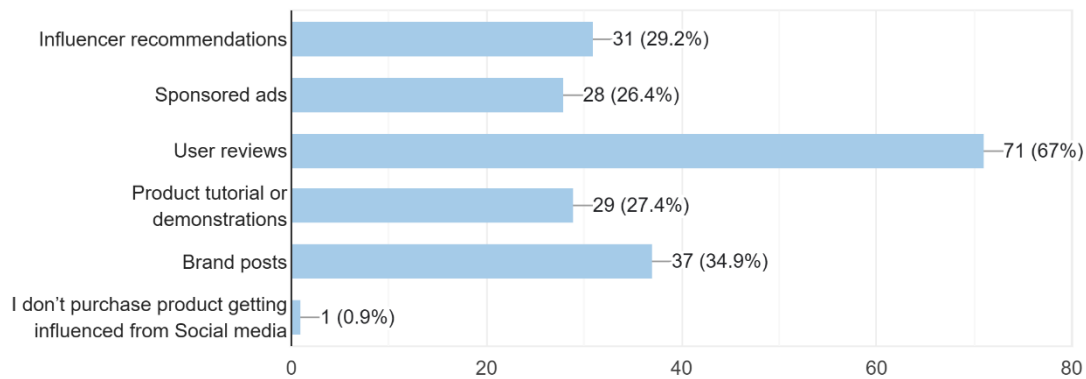
Table 5: Type of social media content influences respondents buying decisions he most.

Content Type	No. of respondents
User reviews	71
Brand Posts	37
Influencer Recommendations	31
Product tutorial demonstration	29
Sponsored ads	28
No influence	1

Graph 5 : Type of social media content influences respondents buying decisions he most.

What type of social media content influences your buying decisions the most? (Select all that apply)

106 responses



Interpretation:

User evaluations had the most influence on purchasing decisions, affecting 67% of participants, according to survey data from 106 respondents. Influencer recommendations have a 29.2% influence, while brand posts come in second at 34.9%. Sponsored advertisements and product tutorials have comparable effects, at 26.4% and 27.4%, respectively. Just 0.9% of those surveyed said social media has no influence.

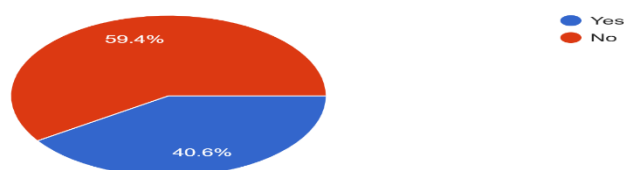
Table 6: Showing no. of respondents who purchased product promoted by an influencer.

Response	No. of respondents
Yes	43
No	63

Graph 6: Showing no. of respondents who purchased product promoted by an influencer.

Interpretation:

Have you purchased a product promoted by an influencer?
106 responses



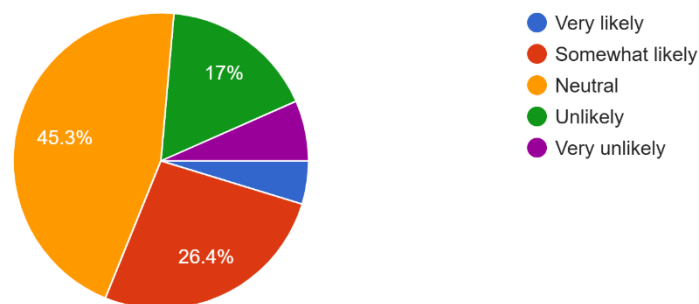
According to survey results for the research study on how social media affects consumer purchase decisions, 40.6% of participants said they had bought a product that an influencer had recommended, compared to 59.4% who did not. According to this research, influencer promotions affect a sizable percentage of customers but have not yet affected the majority.

Table 7: Showing how likely are you to purchase a product after seeing a multiple ads for it on social media

Likelihood	No. of respondents
Very likely	7
Somewhat likely	48
Neutral	28
Unlikely	18
Very unlikely	5

Graph 7: Showing how likely are you to purchase a product after seeing a multiple ads for it on social media.

How likely are you to purchase a product after seeing multiple ads for it on social media?
106 responses



Interpretation:

After seeing several advertisements, 45.3% of respondents are relatively likely to purchase a product, while 26.4% are neutral, per a survey on the impact of social media on consumer purchasing behaviour. Just 6.6% of respondents are extremely likely to make a purchase, indicating that social media advertisements have a moderate impact.

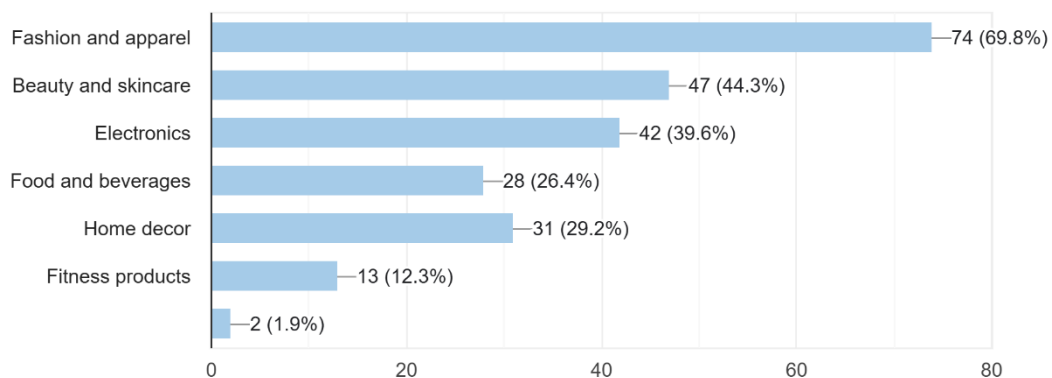
Table 8 : Showing which type of products are most likely to buy based on social media influence.

Product Category	No. of respondents
Fashion and apparel	74
Beauty and skincare	47
Electronics	42
Home décor	31
Food and beverages	28
Fitness products	13
Others	2

Graph 8: Showing which type of products are most likely to buy based on social media influence.

Which types of products are you most likely to buy based on social media influence? (Select all that apply)

106 responses



Interpretation :

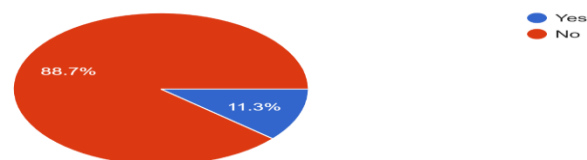
With fashion and clothing being the most popular category (69.8%), followed by beauty and skincare (41.5%), electronics (39.6%), and home décor (29.2%), social media has a significant impact on consumer purchasing behaviour. Products related to fitness (12.3%) have less of an impact.

Table 9 : Showing does respondents typically share their experience on social media after purchasing product influenced by social media.

Response	No. of respondents
Yes	12
No	94

Graph 9: Showing does respondents typically share their experience on social media after purchasing product influenced by social media.

After purchasing a product influenced by social media, do you typically share your experience on social media?
106 responses



Interpretation :

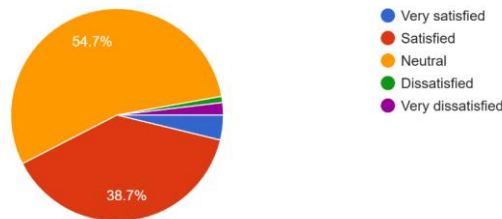
Only a small percentage of consumers (11.3%) post about their experiences on social media after making purchases that were inspired by social media, but the majority (88.7%) do not. This suggests that despite social media's impact on purchasing decisions, there is little feedback sharing.

Table 10: Showing how much respondents are satisfied with the products purchased due to social media influence.

Satisfaction Level	No. of respondents
Very Satisfied	41
Satisfied	58
Neutral	4
Dissatisfied	2
Very Dissatisfied	1

Graph 10: Showing how much respondents are satisfied with the products purchased due to social media influence.

How satisfied are you with the products you've purchased due to social media influence?
106 responses



Interpretation :

Customers' satisfaction levels with goods they've bought as a result of social media influence vary. Most respondents (54.7%) are satisfied, with 38.7% expressing high satisfaction. While dissatisfaction (1.9%) and very unhappiness (0.9%) are low, a tiny fraction (3.8%) is neutral.

FINDINGS:

- The study reveals a high frequency of daily social media usage among consumers.
- The survey data show Instagram emerged as the preferred social media platform by the respondents signifying the impact of this platform on consumer buying behavior.
- The research indicates that most consumers ascertain their buying decisions based on the recommendations from advertisements on social media.
- This research illustrates the influence of social media on consumer purchasing decisions only through a high percentage of the respondents who search for product information there.
- In this study, it was found that evaluations made by users had the maximum impact on purchase decisions.
- Generally, consumers have a reasonable degree of trust in product recommendations by influencers.
- According to the research, influencer stories influence a considerable number of customers but still are not inclined towards all of them.
- The most influenced category where a purchase is made based on social media is in fashion and clothing followed by beauty and skin care.
- Studying it found that a small percentage of respondents posts their experiences on social media, while the rest do not.

- The result of the study indicates that most of the respondents are satisfied with the products they have bought through social media influence.

CONCLUSION:

Social media, without a doubt, influences the buying decisions of consumers. Hence, modern shopping has become an article of extensive importance for understanding the nature of the consumer-customer relationships that shape a life process where it engages an end user with different brands and how they affect the buying decision. These brands may then use social media as a tool to enter the market, as well as increase their brand awareness, and get consumers to engage with their brands. Social media can create community and trust among its users, which affects their buying behaviour., but brands should innovate at the use of social media in a responsible and planned manner. This might ensure a reliable outreach to consumers by providing fast responses, relevant information, and authentic communication. The understanding of these subtleties of social media microcosms and the agility to their changing trends, then, empower brands to wield this potent instrument to increase the sales and loyalty of their consumers. The aforementioned influence will perpetuate and grow, being harbored under the social media networks, on consumer behaviour. It thus becomes imperative for businesses to keep abreast of these emerging trends in order to remain competitive in the new digital landscape.

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