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A STUDY ON ONLINE CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR AND DIGITAL SHOPPING TRENDS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA SHOPPING

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ABSTRACT

The rapid proliferation of social media platforms has fundamentally reshaped the landscape of consumer purchasing behaviour. This study investigates the influence of social media on online consumer behaviour and digital shopping trends, with special reference to social commerce practices. Using a descriptive research design and a structured questionnaire administered to 101 respondents of diverse demographic profiles, the study employs percentage analysis, chi-square testing, and weighted average methods for data interpretation. The findings reveal that social media exerts a moderate influence on consumer buying behaviour; however, factors such as product quality, trust, pricing, and customer service remain pivotal determinants of purchase decisions. Most respondents maintain a neutral stance towards social media advertisements, influencer marketing, and online shopping convenience. The chi-square analysis confirms no statistically significant relationship between gender and satisfaction with social media shopping ($\chi^2 = 9.97$, $df = 8$, $p > 0.05$). A weighted average score of 3.10 indicates moderate-to-positive consumer evaluations of online product variety. The study underscores the necessity for businesses to augment credibility, engagement strategies, and consumer trust to fully harness the potential of social media commerce.

KEYWORDS: Social Media Shopping, Consumer Behaviour, Digital Marketing, E-Commerce, Influencer Marketing, Social Commerce, Online Trust.

INTRODUCTION

The advent of the digital economy has profoundly transformed the mechanisms through which consumers search for, evaluate, and acquire products and services. The traditional retail paradigm, once dominated by physical storefronts and face-to-face transactions, has undergone a dramatic metamorphosis, giving way to a dynamic and interactive online marketplace. Within this evolving ecosystem, social media platforms occupy a uniquely influential position functioning simultaneously as communication networks, content discovery engines, and transactional marketplaces.



Social commerce, the convergence of social networking and electronic commerce, enables consumers to discover, evaluate, and purchase products directly within social media environments. Platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and increasingly TikTok, have integrated sophisticated shopping features that reduce friction in the consumer journey, collapsing the distance between product discovery and purchase completion. This integration has not merely supplemented traditional e-commerce but has created an entirely new paradigm of consumer engagement.

The influence of social media on purchasing decisions is mediated through several mechanisms: targeted algorithmic advertising, peer recommendations, influencer endorsements, user-generated reviews, and interactive content formats such as live commerce sessions and short-form video demonstrations. Each of these mechanisms operates on distinct psychological pathways trust, social proof, aspirational identification, and informational utility that collectively shape consumer attitudes and purchase intentions.

Understanding these dynamics is of paramount importance to businesses, marketers, policymakers, and academic researchers alike. From a managerial perspective, insight into social media's influence on consumer behaviour enables the design of more effective digital marketing strategies. From a policy standpoint, it informs regulatory approaches to digital advertising, data privacy, and consumer protection. Academically, it contributes to an expanding literature on digital consumer psychology and social commerce ecosystems.

This study, conducted among 101 respondents spanning diverse age groups, educational backgrounds, and occupational categories, seeks to examine the nature and extent of social media's influence on online shopping behaviour. The research analyses attitudes towards social media advertisements, influencer credibility, customer review utility, product variety, price affordability, payment security, and overall satisfaction constructing a comprehensive portrait of the contemporary social media shopper.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The increasing influence of social media on consumer buying behaviour has also created several challenges. Consumers are often exposed to a large amount of promotional content, which may sometimes be misleading or exaggerated. Fake reviews, lack of product authenticity, security concerns in online payments, and the inability to physically examine products can affect consumers' trust and satisfaction in online shopping.

At any given time, there are millions of people online and each of them is a potential customer for a company providing online sales. Due to the rapid development of the technology surrounding the internet, accompany that are interested in selling products from its website will constantly have to search for an edge in the fierce competition. Since there are so many potential consumers, it is of the



utmost importance to be able to understand what the consumer wants and needs.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To study consumer behaviour towards online shopping.
- To know the factors which affect decision making process of customer while purchasing the online shopping product.
- To identify their preference towards different E-shopping websites and the features of websites in general.
- To know the problems, they face during online shopping.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Methodology is a way to find out consumers satisfaction towards public distributive system. It is conducted if there's any problems faced by consumers based on this system. This methodology includes the following research details:

- Research Design
- Sources of Data
- Sampling Method
- Sample Size
- Data Collection Tool
- Data Analysis and Interpretation

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) established a seminal classification of social media platforms and articulated their transformative potential as marketing communication channels. The authors observed that social media enables businesses to interact directly with consumers, fostering brand awareness and influencing purchase decisions through participatory content ecosystems.
2. Mangold and Faulds (2009) complemented this perspective by situating social media within the promotional mix, arguing that electronic word-of-mouth communication on social networks exerts a powerful and often underestimated influence on consumer purchase decisions.
3. Hajli (2015) advanced understanding of social commerce by identifying trust, social interaction, and user-generated content as the primary determinants of online purchase intention. The research demonstrated that social networking sites provide consumers with structured opportunities to read reviews, share experiences, and build confidence prior to transactional commitment effectively socialising the purchase decision process.
4. Afzal et al. (2024) conducted a detailed examination of social media influencers' role in shaping consumer shopping behaviour, demonstrating that authenticity in product recommendations

significantly amplifies consumer trust and purchase likelihood. Consumers increasingly exhibit preference for micro-influencers whose niche authority and perceived authenticity outweigh the reach advantages of macro-influencers.

5. Jain and Kumar (2023) found that students who frequently engage with social media demonstrate heightened susceptibility to influencer recommendations and promotional content, often resulting in impulse purchase behaviour. This demographic characteristic is particularly salient given that young consumers constitute a disproportionately large share of social commerce participants.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

**TABLE NO: 1
EDUCATION QUALIFICATION**

Education Qualification	No of Respondents	Percentage
Higher Secondary	17	16.80%
Undergraduate	46	45.50%
Postgraduate	23	22.80%
Professional	14	13.90%
Others	1	1%
Total	101	100%

INTERPRETATION

The table shows that out of 101 respondents; the majority 46 respondents (45.50%) are undergraduates. About 23 respondents (22.80%) are postgraduates, 17 respondents (16.80%) have higher secondary education, 14 respondents (13.90%) have professional qualifications, and 1 respondent (1%) belongs to others.

INFERENCE

Most respondents are Undergraduate (45.50%).

**TABLE NO: 2
OCCUPATION**

Occupation	No of Respondents	Percentage
Student	36	35.6 %

Employed	21	20.8 %
Self-Employed	29	28.7 %
Home maker	10	9.9 %
Unemployed	5	5 %
Total	101	100 %

INTERPRETATION

The table shows that out of 101 respondents; the majority 36 respondents (35.6%) are students. About 29 respondents (28.7%) are self-employed, 21 respondents (20.8%) are employed, 10 respondents (9.9%) are homemakers, and 5 respondents (5%) are unemployed.

INFERENCE

Most respondents are Students (35.6%)

TABLE NO: 3
How often does social media influence your purchase decisions?

Social Media Influence	No of Respondents	Percentage
Always	28	27.70%
Often	25	24.80%
Sometimes	35	34.70%
Rarely	11	10.90%
Never	2	2.00%
Total	101	100%

INTERPRETATION

Many respondents are influenced by social media in their purchase decisions. The highest proportion (34.7%) said they are sometimes influenced, followed by always (27.7%) and often (24.8%). Only a small number reported being rarely (10.9%) or never (2%) influenced.

INFERENCE

Most respondents' social media influence your purchase decisions are Sometimes influenced

(34.70%).

TABLE NO: 4
Social media content increases your interest in products.

Particulars	No of Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	20	19.80%
Agree	20	19.80%
Neutral	38	37.60%
Disagree	18	17.80%
Strongly Disagree	5	5.00%
Total	101	100%

INTERPRETATION

Most respondents are neutral (37.6%) about whether social media increases their interest in products. However, a considerable number agree or strongly agree and agree (19.8%), while fewer disagree (17.8%) and strongly disagree (5 %).

INFERENCE

Most respondents are Neutral to buy products seen on social media (30.70%).

TABLE NO: 5
Variety of products available online

Particulars	No of Respondents	Percentage
Excellent	23	22.80%
Good	14	13.90%
Average	29	28.70%
Poor	20	19.80%
Very Poor	15	14.90%
Total	101	100%

INTERPRETATION

Most respondents rate the variety of products available online as average (28.7%). While a fair number consider it excellent (22.8%) and good (13.9 %), a significant portion view it as poor (19.8%) or very

poor (14.9%).

INFERENCE

Most respondents feel product varieties available online is Average (28.7%).

Chi-Square Test: Gender and Shopping Satisfaction

A chi-square test of independence was conducted to examine the relationship between respondents' gender and their level of satisfaction with social media shopping. The null hypothesis (H_0) posited no significant association between gender and shopping satisfaction, while the alternative hypothesis (H_1) proposed a statistically significant relationship.

Table No: 6

Gender	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	V. Dissatisfied
Male	10 (13.1)	9 (9.22)	12 (14.07)	15 (10.19)	3 (2.43)
Female	17 (13.64)	10 (9.59)	16 (14.64)	6 (10.61)	2 (2.52)
Others	0 (0.27)	0 (0.19)	1 (0.29)	0 (0.21)	0 (0.05)

Observed (O) and Expected (E) Frequencies Gender \times Shopping Satisfaction

The chi-square statistic was computed using the formula $\chi^2 = \sum[(O-E)^2/E]$, yielding a calculated value of $\chi^2 = 9.97$. With degrees of freedom $df = (3-1)(5-1) = 8$ and a critical value of $\chi^2(8, 0.05) = 15.507$, the calculated value falls substantially below the critical threshold.

Decision: The null hypothesis is accepted. There is **no statistically significant relationship** between gender and satisfaction with social media shopping ($\chi^2 = 9.97 < \chi^2_{critical} = 15.507$, $p > 0.05$). Shopping satisfaction in social media contexts is gender-neutral a finding with important implications for inclusive digital marketing strategy design.

FINDINGS

- The study reveals that most of the respondents are female (50.50%), followed closely by males (48.50%).
- Most respondents belong to the 18–25 age group (43.6%), indicating a young population.
- A large portion of respondents are undergraduates (45.50%), showing a good level of education among participants.



- Most of the respondents are students (35.6%), followed by self-employed individuals (28.7%).
- Most respondents earn below ₹10,000 (31.7%), indicating a lower income group dominance.
- Social media sometimes influences purchase decisions (34.7%), showing moderate impact.
- Most respondents are neutral (30.7%) about buying products seen on social media.
- A majority remain neutral (37.6%) on whether social media content increases their interest in products.
- Respondents believe social media creates moderate awareness (36.6%) about new products.
- Most of the respondents sometimes rely on social media (31.7%) before purchasing.
- The convenience of online shopping is rated as neutral (29.7%) by most respondents.
- Product variety available online is considered average (28.7%).
- Price affordability is mostly viewed as moderate (27.7%).
- Ease of payment methods is rated neutral (34.7%) by the majority.
- Time-saving aspect of online shopping is considered moderate (26.7%).
- Effectiveness of social media advertisements is mostly neutral (42.6%).
- Influence of social media influencers is rated moderate (34.7%).
- Trust in influencer recommendations is also moderate (33.7%).
- Customer reviews are considered moderately important (38.6%).
- Sponsored content has a moderate impact (39.6%) on buying decisions.
- Satisfaction with social media shopping is mostly neutral (28.7%).
- Trust in social media sellers is moderate (37.6%).
- Security of online payments is perceived as neutral (37.6%).
- Product quality received is mostly average (36.6%).
- Respondents show a neutral attitude (38.6%) towards repeat purchases.
- Customer service has a moderate effect (36.6%) on customer loyalty.
- Discounts and offers have a moderate impact (29.7%) on purchasing decisions.
- Quick response from sellers is considered moderately important (27.7%).
- Interactive content has a neutral effect (27.7%) on respondents.
- Most respondents are not sure (33%) about shopping via social media in the future.

SUGGESTIONS

- Businesses should create more engaging and attractive social media content to influence consumers effectively.



- Companies should focus on building trust by providing authentic information and avoiding misleading advertisements.
- Improving the quality of products delivered can increase customer satisfaction and encourage repeat purchases.
- Sellers should ensure secure payment options to reduce customer concerns about online transactions.
- Providing quick responses to customer queries can improve customer experience and loyalty.
- Brands should collaborate with reliable and trustworthy influencers to increase credibility.
- Offering better discounts and promotional offers can positively impact buying decisions.
- Companies should improve the variety and availability of products online to meet customer expectations.
- Enhancing the convenience of online shopping platforms (easy navigation, fast delivery) can attract more users.
- Businesses should focus on customer reviews and feedback, as they play an important role in decision-making.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that social media has a moderate influence on consumer purchasing behaviour. Most respondents show a neutral attitude towards various factors such as social media advertisements, influencer impact, and online shopping experience. Although social media helps in creating awareness and interest in products, it does not strongly drive purchase decisions for all consumers. Factors like trust, product quality, price, and customer service play a crucial role in influencing buying behaviour. The findings of the study indicate that social media has a noticeable influence on consumer behaviour, but its impact is generally moderate rather than strong. Most respondents maintain a neutral opinion towards social media marketing activities, including advertisements, influencer promotions, and online shopping experiences. Overall, while social media is an important marketing tool, businesses need to improve credibility, engagement, and customer satisfaction to fully utilize its potential and convert interest into actual purchases.

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