

Influence of social media on consumer buying behavior

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ABSTRACT

In an era defined by rapid technological advancements, social media has emerged as an influential force shaping consumer behavior across industries. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and others have evolved beyond simple networking sites to become powerful tools that inform, persuade, and even transform how consumers make purchasing decisions. This research paper investigates the multifaceted influence of social media on consumer buying behavior, focusing specifically on the fashion retail sector. It seeks to unravel the dynamics behind how consumers interact with brands online, the psychological triggers involved, and how demographic factors such as age, gender, and economic status impact these interactions. The study further explores how consumer trust, engagement with brand content, peer influence, and targeted advertising play roles in the decision-making process. Social media has created a new form of digital word-of-mouth where customer reviews, influencer recommendations, and user-generated content heavily influence buying choices. Unlike traditional advertising, consumers now trust peer opinions and authentic user experiences more than direct brand messages. This shift has given consumers more control over how products are perceived in the market. The study focuses on expensive or luxury fashion purchases, where buyers typically spend more time researching before making decisions. Social media makes this research process easier by providing instant access to reviews, comparisons, and visual content. Personalized advertisements that appear in users' feeds based on their browsing habits also play a significant role in influencing impulse purchases. Age differences are particularly important - younger consumers (18-25) respond more to trending content and influencer endorsements, while older buyers prefer detailed product information and genuine reviews. The research uses statistical analysis to measure how these various factors impact buying behavior. The findings show that successful social media marketing now requires brands to build genuine communities rather than just advertise products. Interactive content like challenges, polls, and user-generated campaigns create stronger emotional connections with customers, leading to increased loyalty and repeat purchases. However, this digital shift also presents challenges. Issues like misinformation, privacy concerns, and the ethical use of personal data for targeted advertising need careful consideration. Brands must balance personalization with transparency to maintain consumer trust. The research provides practical insights for fashion retailers looking to leverage social media effectively. By understanding demographic differences, building authentic relationships, and maintaining ethical practices, companies can successfully navigate this new consumer landscape where social influence drives purchasing decisions.

KEYWORDS: Social Media Marketing, Consumer Buying Behavior, Decision-Making Process

INTRODUCTION

The evolution of social media from simple communication tools to sophisticated commercial platforms represents one of the most significant paradigm shifts in modern marketing history. This transformation has fundamentally altered traditional relationships between businesses and consumers, creating new dynamics that challenge established marketing theories and practices. The exponential growth of social media adoption, with over 4.8 billion active users worldwide, has created an unprecedented opportunity for brands to engage with consumers in real-time, personalized interactions that were previously impossible through traditional marketing channels.

Social media represents a revolutionary communication ecosystem that has fundamentally transformed how individuals connect, share information, and make purchasing decisions in the digital age. This comprehensive network of online platforms encompasses various formats, including social networking sites, interactive forums, content-sharing platforms, and collaborative communities. Major platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter, Pinterest, and TikTok have evolved from simple communication tools into powerful commercial engines that influence billions of consumer decisions daily (Kim, 2021). The integration of social media into business strategies has become essential rather than optional, serving multiple critical functions, including brand awareness development, customer retention initiatives, and prospect identification. Companies leverage these platforms to create meaningful connections with their target audiences, transforming traditional one-way marketing communications into dynamic, interactive conversations.

Social media marketing harnesses the collective power of social networking to amplify brand visibility, enhance brand equity, and significantly expand customer reach across diverse demographic segments (Chen, 2019). The emergence of Web 2.0 technology marked a pivotal transformation in commercial history, creating the foundation upon which social media platforms flourished. The shift from static web pages to dynamic, user-centric platforms fundamentally altered the relationship dynamics between marketers and their stakeholders, ushering in an era where consumer voices carry equal or greater weight than traditional brand messaging (Appel, 2020).

Contemporary social media environments have orchestrated significant redistribution of influence, shifting power from marketers to consumers. This democratization of information has empowered users to become active participants in brand conversations, sharing authentic experiences, reviews, and recommendations that directly impact purchasing decisions. The transparency and accessibility inherent in social media platforms enable consumers to research, compare, and evaluate products through multiple perspectives before making informed choices (Tafesse, 2018).

The multifaceted nature of social media influence operates through various channels, encompassing both organic word-of-mouth communications and sophisticated targeted advertising campaigns. Organic influence emerges through genuine user interactions, reviews, testimonials, and shared experiences that create authentic social proof. Simultaneously, advanced algorithmic advertising systems deliver personalized promotional content based on user behavior patterns, preferences, and social connections. This dual approach ensures that consumers encounter brand messages through trusted peer networks while also receiving tailored advertisements that align with their specific interests and needs (Kumar, 2020).

Consumer decision-making processes have become increasingly complex and informed due to social media accessibility. Modern consumers actively seek comprehensive product information, comparative analyses, and authentic user experiences before committing to purchases. Social media platforms provide unprecedented access to diverse perspectives, enabling consumers to make educated choices rather than relying solely on traditional advertising claims. This information-rich environment supports more confident purchasing decisions by reducing uncertainty and providing social validation for consumer choices (Alalwan, 2017).

Contemporary social media environments facilitate complex behavioral patterns that extend far beyond simple product promotion. These platforms serve as comprehensive ecosystems where consumers engage in social learning, peer comparison, and community-building activities that collectively shape their purchasing preferences. The integration of entertainment, information sharing, and commercial activities within single platforms creates unique opportunities for brands to connect with consumers during various stages of their decision-making processes.

The emergence of influencer marketing as a dominant force within social media has created new forms of celebrity endorsement that often carry greater credibility than traditional advertising approaches. Micro-influencers, in

particular, have demonstrated remarkable effectiveness in driving consumer behavior due to their perceived authenticity and niche expertise. This phenomenon has transformed ordinary consumers into potential brand ambassadors, creating a distributed marketing network that extends brand reach through trusted personal connections.

The global reach of social media platforms has created opportunities for brands to engage with diverse international audiences while also presenting challenges related to cultural sensitivity and localization. Different cultural contexts influence how consumers respond to social media marketing, with varying levels of trust in online reviews, influencer endorsements, and brand communications. Understanding these cultural nuances becomes crucial for brands seeking to expand their reach across different geographic markets.

The integration of social commerce features directly within social media platforms has streamlined the customer journey from awareness to purchase, reducing traditional barriers and friction points that previously hindered online shopping. Features such as shoppable posts, in-app checkout, and seamless payment processing capitalize on impulse buying behaviors while maintaining user engagement within the social media environment. This integration represents a fundamental shift toward comprehensive digital ecosystems where social interaction and commercial activity coexist seamlessly.

The rise of user-generated content as a primary source of product information and social proof has transformed how consumers research and evaluate potential purchases. Authentic customer reviews, unboxing videos, and real-world product demonstrations provide valuable insights that help consumers make more confident purchasing decisions. This shift toward peer-generated content has elevated the importance of customer satisfaction and authentic brand experiences, as negative reviews can significantly impact brand reputation and sales performance. By examining these interconnected elements, this research contributes to the growing body of knowledge surrounding digital marketing effectiveness and consumer psychology in the social media era. The findings will provide actionable insights for marketers, researchers, and business strategists seeking to optimize their social media marketing approaches for maximum consumer engagement and conversion effectiveness.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In recent years the online environment is viewed by users from a new perspective, in a commercial way. Its development and the emergence of online stores have turned users into consumers. Also, the most important role of social media has changed the way consumers and marketers communicate (Hennig-Thurau, 2004). Internet and virtual communities have transformed consumers, societies, and corporations with widespread access to information, better social networking, and enhanced communication abilities (Kucuk, 2007). Therefore, social networks are defined to be websites that link millions of users from all over the world with the same interests, views, and hobbies. Blogs, YouTube, Myspace, and Facebook are examples of social media that are popular among all levels of consumers (Sin, 2012). Users are using several online formats to communicate, (e.g., blogs, podcasts, social networks, bulletin boards, and wikis) to share ideas about a given product, service, or brand and contact other consumers, who are seen as more objective information sources (Kozinets, 2004). Palalic, R. investigate the impact of social media on Pakistani consumers' buying decision behavior, whether positive or negative. The awareness of social media sites in Pakistan is growing quite rapidly. People tend to surf for every little information they acquire which became a reason to investigate how social media influence Pakistani consumers' buying decision behavior. The empirical findings show that consumers of different general backgrounds, like age, gender, marital status, etc., trust and rely on WOM communication before making their final buying decision. Pakistanis are a "complex buying behavior" type of people. This implies that they do not really see the currently offered brand as captive, differentiated, and unique, where they can make buying decisions easily. Thus, the study gives a signal that entrepreneurs should work on differentiation which is later reflected in positioning their products. Pakistani consumers also tend to trust this WOM communication mainly because of its credibility. If the content is not found credible or from a credible source, they are not likely to consider it in their

decision-making process. In addition, the empirical findings suggested that consumers, influenced by WOM communication and the credible content, possess complex buying behavior. Their level of purchase involvement is evidently high, given their reliance on and the influence of the WOM and CC (Palalic, 2020). Al-Dhuhli found Omani consumers are mostly affected by informational and design factors which lead them to make the best decision in choosing the most suitable Social Media site (Instagram) to buy their preferred product (Fashion) online. Although the

above fact presents a positive sign toward relying on social media to buy certain products, there is still a gap in mistrust among consumers toward the use of Social Media sites in terms of security associated with such sites (Al-Dhuhli, 2013). Varghese, S. noticed in his study that the quality of content on social media makes a big impact so it should be consumer relevant. When marketing is done through social media, it is not all about consumer awareness or selling the product itself. It is more than that which includes retaining a built-up relationship and building it between the potential buyers and corporations. Now the consumer is the king who can get all the information regarding a product or service by simply speaking with each other. So, companies and marketers should be highly careful about the bad mouths on social media because it can lead to destroying the company's reputation. The company that is adopting an integrated strategic approach with the aim of social network platforms is becoming the most successful in getting, engaging, influencing, and retaining the customers. Factors that can change the customer's brand perception and a will to buy include the strategies that led to consumers' perspective and the opinion of the people who create content on social media. So, these strategies need a high degree of maintenance and those companies that are using the method should be ready to fix all the marketing services to retain the existing customers and to increase the customer lifetime value (Varghese, 2021). Sharma, B says that people found social media very useful in the sense that it really helps people to reconnect with them, get products and services information very easily, and get the information about E-commerce companies, which really influences their purchase intention. It is also found that social media adds value to their personal life by providing good quality products and services as well as helping them in saving a lot of time and money while shopping. Another important thing is that people find social media less risky such as financial risk related to their transactions; getting poor quality products and coming under social pressure is very less hence it increases the chance to purchase from social media (Sharma, 2018). Pütter, M. studied the increasing use of social media worldwide has led to the belief that this is a valuable tool in supporting consumer engagement. Companies are continually looking for new methods for reaching consumers and for shaping consumer behaviors, including brand loyalty and intention to buy. The changing technological era has led to increased activity in social network platforms like Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter, all of which have created mechanisms through which consumers can develop rapport and create interactions with brand-specific content (Pütter, 2017). Firm-created social media communication does not directly affect brand equity but indirectly influences consumer perceptions of value based on brand attitude. According to these findings, marketing managers should focus on building positive brand associations and on exploring brand characteristics that influence the consumer's attitude toward the brand. For example, brands such as Harley-Davidson and Converse All-Stars 'Chuck Taylor' should strengthen brand associations such as freedom, passion, assertiveness, and originality, whereas brands such as Apple and Starbucks should focus on associations such as innovation, originality, outgoingness, and interactivity. Such practices are strongly recommended because, as the behavioral outcomes in our research suggest, the effect of brand attitude is almost twice as strong as the effect of brand equity on consumer purchasing decisions. However, to achieve better results, communication managers should support user-generated communication by marketing action programs while maintaining an active profile of social media advertising (Schivinski, 2016). In the study of Lim, X. J. Respondents acknowledged social media influencers' lack of credit for the product that they endorsed. The main reason was identified as social media influencers' inadequate expertise and knowledge about the endorsed product (Lim, 2017). Curran, J acknowledges these businesses need help. They could clearly benefit from improved use of the Internet and social media individually and collaboratively. It is important to note that despite facing multiple constraints (knowledge, time, finances), what they do with their limited resources is remarkable. But our research suggests that there is a role for training and consulting to help these businesses overcome their lack of knowledge and resources. The positive aspect is that it wouldn't take a huge investment to help them (Curran, 2000). Overall, Song, S., & Yoo, M.'s study suggests that social media plays an important role in the pre-purchase stage of the service process that supports customers' purchase decisions. The results indicate that the benefits of social media do have a positive relationship with customers' purchase decisions, but not all items are crucial to a similar extent. Functional (convenience, efficiency,

information, sharing experiences) and monetary (free coupons, price discounts, special deals) benefits from social media were found to have a positive impact on customers' purchase decisions (*H1* and *H2*), while socio-psychological benefits were found to have no relationship with customers' decisions (*H4*). Still, hedonic benefits (amusement, enjoyment, entertainment, fun) were found to have a relationship with purchase decisions (*H3*) (Song, 2016). Wibowo, A., found in this digital age, marketers are increasingly aware that marketing content should not only give priority to commercial-oriented aspects but also give more priority to social- oriented aspects or highlight interactions between sellers and buyers. Utilizing social media as a marketing tool is a good choice if the marketing content fulfills the parameters shown in the SMMA and CX. Therefore, marketers must think critically and creatively to establish great marketing content that meets the personal preference of the target customer. All these activities impact the quality of the relationship between customer and enterprise and managing a good customer–enterprise relationship is a necessary strategy to achieve the marketing objective (Wibowo, 2020).

Research Gap

Although numerous studies have examined the role of social media in influencing consumer buying behavior, certain gaps remain unaddressed. Most prior research has been conducted in international contexts such as Pakistan, Oman, and Malaysia, with limited focus on the Indian market, particularly the Delhi-NCR region where diverse cultural and demographic characteristics may influence consumer decisions differently. While earlier studies emphasize the importance of electronic word-of-mouth and online reviews, little attention has been given to how consumer trust in reviews and influencer endorsements has evolved in the post-COVID era, where digital dependence has increased substantially. Furthermore, the comparison between online and offline shopping preferences remains underexplored, despite its significance in shaping purchase behavior. Another notable gap lies in understanding the impact of emerging social commerce features, such as shoppable posts, in-app checkout, and integrated payment systems, on consumer decision-making. Although influencer marketing has been widely studied, the relative effectiveness of micro-influencers versus celebrity endorsements in the Indian context remains insufficiently researched. Finally, while several studies recognize that consumer buying decisions are shaped by factors such as discounts, reviews, price comparisons, and brand endorsements, limited research explores how these factors interact collectively to influence consumer perceptions and behaviors.

OBJECTIVITY OF THE STUDY

- Check the preferences of the consumer between online and offline shopping.
- To study the impact of social media on consumer buying behavior
- To study the impact of social media on the consumer buying decision process.
- To understand the various factors like discounts on products, price Comparison, social media reviews, and brand endorsement, and how that affects the consumer nature.
- To measure the change in perception of the consumer's buying behavior through the online product review and celebrity influence.

LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

The present study is based on data collected from the people living in Delhi NCR. So, the findings of this study might vary from the research carried out in other parts of the country as India is a country with diversity. This study is also limited in terms of geographical areas.

The main limitation of the study is that we are only able to collect the data by online mood, due to covid- 19 we are all being locked in our homes at such time collecting the data from the respondent in offline mood was not possible.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To ensure a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter, both primary and secondary sources of data were utilized in this research. Primary data was gathered using a structured questionnaire designed specifically for this study. The questionnaire comprised 21 multiple-choice questions, each carefully framed to capture key aspects of consumer buying behavior. These questions were shared digitally via email and WhatsApp, allowing for wider reach and ease of participation, especially in today's tech-driven world.

In parallel, secondary data was collected from a range of credible sources such as academic journals, published articles, industry magazines, and trusted websites. This was done to gain deeper theoretical insights and to support the primary data findings with well-established knowledge and current trends in consumer behavior.

Initially, a sample size of 500 participants was targeted to ensure statistical relevance and diversity of opinion. However, despite persistent follow-ups and reminders, the study received a total of 425 valid responses.

ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION

Based on relevant information, which was captured through the primary data collection process, data has been analyzed by using different statistical methods.

Gender

Frequency		Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	217	51.2	51.2	100.0
Total	424	100.0	100.0	

Chart 1 shows that the analysis of gender-wise participation reveals a fairly balanced representation. Out of the total 424 respondents, 51.2% (217 individuals) were male, while 48.8% were female. This near-equal gender distribution provides a more inclusive perspective on consumer behavior, allowing for meaningful insights into how social media influences buying decisions across both genders. The gender balance also adds to the credibility of the research findings by ensuring that responses are not skewed heavily towards one group.

Age

Frequency		Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
26 - 35	40	9.4	9.4	9.4
36 - 45	63	14.9	14.9	99.1
46 - 55	4	.9	.9	100.0
Total	424	100.0	100.0	

Chart 2 shows, that Respondents were categorized into three age groups to better understand the influence of age on social media-driven consumer behavior. The largest proportion of participants belonged to the **18–25 years** age group, accounting for a significant **74.8%** of the total sample. This indicates that young adults are not only the most active on social media platforms but are also more responsive to online marketing and brand communication.

The **26–35 years** age group comprised **9.4%** of the participants, followed by **14.9%** from the **36–45 years** bracket. Lastly, a smaller percentage—**0.9%**—represented the **46–55 years** age group. These findings suggest that while younger consumers dominate the online shopping and engagement space, a noticeable portion of middle-aged individuals are also interacting with digital content, albeit at a lower frequency.

Demographic Profile of Respondents: Place of Residence

Frequency		Perc ent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Metro Politian city	310	73.1	73.1	74.1

Village	110	25.9	25.9	100.0
Total	424	100.0	100.0	

Chart 3 depicts that a major portion of people, 73.1% from the metro Politian city and 25.9% were from villages.

Educational Qualification

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Graduate	257	60.6	60.6	67.2
Postgraduate	139	32.8	32.8	100.0
Total	424	100.0	100.0	

Chart 4 depicts that a major portion of people in our studies, 60.6% are graduates and 32.8% are post graduated and 6.6% are diploma or 12th students.

Occupation

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Serviceman	241	56.8	56.8	73.3
Student	113	26.7	26.7	100.0
Total	424	100.0	100.0	

Chart 5 depicts that a major portion of people in our studies 56.8% are servicemen and 26.7% are students and 16.5% are a businessman.

Check product reviews on social media before buying any product

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	344	81.1	81.1	100.0
Total	424	100.0	100.0	

Chart 5 depicts 81.1% of people check the product reviews on social media before buying any product and 18.9% decline that they didn't check the product reviews on social media before buying any product.

Check the product price & compare it before buying it

Frequency		Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	338	79.7	79.7	100.0
Total	424	100.0	100.0	

Chart 6 depicts that 79.7% of people check the product price & compare it before buying it and 20.3% decline that they didn't check the product price & compare it before buying it.

Waiting for an online discount sale before buying any product

Frequency		Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	330	77.8	77.8	100.0
Total	424	100.0	100.0	

Chart 7 depicts that 77.8% of people wait for an online discount sale before buying any product and 22.2% decline that they didn't wait for an online discount sale before buying any product.

Feel influenced at Shopping Time

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
My friend's social media post	No, I never influenced	78	18.4	18.4	18.4
	Yes, I feel influenced	346	81.6	81.6	100.0
	Total	424	100.0	100.0	
I inspire to purchase a new brand after seeing social media images from other consumers	No, I never influenced	272	64.2	64.2	64.2
	Yes, I feel influenced	152	35.8	35.8	100.0
	Total	424	100.0	100.0	
Social Media Offer	No, I never influenced	78	18.4	18.4	18.4

	Yes, I feel influenced	346	81.6	81.6	100.0
	Total	424	100.0	100.0	

Chart 8 depicts that 81.6% of people feel influenced by their friend's social media posts when they went shopping. Whereas 18.4% of people did not feel influenced by their friend's social media posts when they went shopping. 35.8% accepted that they inspire to purchase a new brand after seeing social media image from other consumers and 64.2% declined to accept this fact and 81.6% of people said that social media offer influenced them when they went shopping 18.4% declined to accept that social media offer didn't influence them.

Social media change Personal buying behavior

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Easy to use	Agree	280	66.0	66.0	66.0
	Disagree	144	34.0	34.0	100.0
	Total	424	100.0	100.0	
It gives a large heavy discount	Agree	225	53.1	53.1	53.1
	Disagree	199	46.9	46.9	100.0
	Total	424	100.0	100.0	
home delivery is available	Agree	291	68.6	68.6	68.6
	Disagree	133	31.4	31.4	100.0
Total		424	100.0	100.0	
All items Available in one palace	Agree	282	66.5	66.5	66.5
	Disagree	142	33.5	33.5	100.0
	Total	424	100.0	100.0	
It gives quality Assure product	Agree	282	66.5	66.5	66.5
	Disagree	142	33.5	33.5	100.0
	Total	424	100.0	100.0	
it saves time	Agree	333	78.5	78.5	78.5
	Disagree	91	21.5	21.5	100.0

	gree				
	Total	424	100.0	100.0	
It helps to be aware of the product	Agree	242	57.1	57.1	57.1
	Disagree	182	42.9	42.9	100.0
	Total	424	100.0	100.0	

Chart 9 depicts that social media changed the behavior of people because it is easy to use and admitted by 66% of people, 53.1% of people said that it gives a large number of heavy discounts, 68.6% of people said that easy to home delivery available, 66.5% of people said that all items available in one place and 66.5% people said that online shopping gives quality assurance, 21.6% people said that it helps to save time and 42.9% people said that it helps to aware me about the product where rest people decline to accept all facts like 34% said it is not easy to use, 46.9% said it does not give a large number of heavy discount 33.55 people said all items are not available at one place.

Most Social media platforms influenced

Frequency		Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Instagram	188	44.3	44.3	59.4
Tik-Tok	4	.9	.9	60.4
YouTube	168	39.6	39.6	100.0
Total	424	100.0	100.0	

Chart 10 depicts that 44.3% of people admitted that Instagram posts, reels, and videos influenced them, whereas 39.6%, 15.1%, and 9% of people accepted that YouTube, Facebook, and Tik-Tok respectively influenced their thoughts before buying a product.

Favorite celebrity influence to buy a product

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Disagree	40	9.4	9.4	69.3
Neutral	102	24.1	24.1	93.4
Strongly agree	24	5.7	5.7	99.1
Strongly disagree	4	.9	.9	100.0
Total	424	100.0	100.0	

Chart 11 depicts that 5.7% of people strongly admitted that their favorite celebrity influence them to buy a product, and 59.9% of people agreed that their favorite celebrity influence them to buy a product whereas 24.1% are neutral and rest 18.4% people disagree to accept that they're favorite influenced to buy a product.

Which type of shopping do you like?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Online Shopping	330	77.8	77.8	100.0
Total	424	100.0	100.0	

Chart 12 depicts that 77.8% of people liked online shopping and 22.2% liked offline shopping.

Feeling safe in online shopping

Frequency		Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	312	73.6	73.6	100.0
Total	424	100.0	100.0	

Chart 13 depicts 73.6% of people who felt safe in online shopping and 26.4% said that they didn't feel safe in online shopping, they loved offline shopping.

Feeling satisfied on social media

Frequency		Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
2	75	17.7	17.7	29.5
3	37	8.7	8.7	38.2
4	148	34.9	34.9	73.1
5	114	26.9	26.9	100.0
Total	424	100.0	100.0	

Chart 14 depicts that most people are satisfied with online shopping, and they were lying between a 3- 5 rating scale and 17.7% gave 2 satisfied factors

FINDINGS

- Customers prefer online shopping over offline shopping and also felt influenced by social media platforms.
- Customers prefer to check product reviews & prices on social media platforms before buying and they also prefer to compare them.
- Social media offers and creative & attractive posts influenced customer behavior before buying a product.
- Customers accepted that Online Shopping services like ease to use, heavy discounts, free home delivery, and product assurance services are the main causes of changed their behavior.
- Instagram is known as the most influential platform which is followed by YouTube.

CONCLUSION

Social media has revolutionized consumer buying behavior, shifting power from brands to consumers by providing instant access to information, peer reviews, and influencer endorsements. This study reveals that a significant portion of consumers, especially younger demographics actively engage with social media platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook before making purchasing decisions. The findings indicate that 81.1% of consumers check product reviews online before buying, while 79.7% compare prices, and 77.8% wait for online discounts. This highlights the growing dependence on digital validation before committing to a purchase. Moreover, social media influences not only the decision-making process but also shapes consumer trust and brand

loyalty. The study found that 80% of respondents feel influenced by social media when shopping, and 88% admitted that they have purchased a product after reviewing it on social media. Instagram emerged as the most influential platform (44.3%), followed by YouTube (39.6%), suggesting that visually appealing and engaging content plays a crucial role in consumer persuasion. The research also uncovered key factors driving the shift towards online shopping. Consumers cited ease of use (66%), home delivery (68.6%), heavy discounts (53.1%), product availability (66.5%), and timesaving (78.5%) as the primary reasons for preferring online shopping. Interestingly, while 73.6% of respondents feel safe shopping online, a notable 26.4% still harbor concerns about online security, indicating the need for brands to prioritize data privacy and customer trust. A major finding of this study is the increasing role of influencers and celebrities in shaping consumer choices. 59.9% of respondents agreed that their favorite celebrities influenced their purchases, while 81.6% admitted that social media offers and friends' posts impacted their buying decisions. This reinforces the importance of peer influence and user-generated content in modern marketing strategies. Despite the numerous advantages, challenges such as misinformation, misleading advertisements, and privacy concerns remain key issues in social media-driven commerce. Brands must navigate these challenges responsibly, ensuring transparency and ethical marketing practices to maintain consumer trust.

In conclusion, social media is not just a marketing tool but a powerful force that dictates consumer behavior, brand perception, and purchasing decisions. Businesses that successfully integrate personalized engagement, trust-building strategies, and interactive content into their social media marketing will thrive in this dynamic digital landscape. As social media continues to evolve, staying ahead of trends and consumer expectations will be the key to long-term success.

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