

Impact of Social Media Marketing on Consumer Buying Behavior Towards Apparel

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ABSTRACT: *Social media marketing is the use of social media platforms to connect with your audience to build brand visibility over the web and increase sales. It is becoming more popular for both marketers and researchers these days and has changed the way people communicate, collaborate, and create. The primary aim of this research was to assess the impact of Social Media Marketing on consumer buying behaviour towards apparel. The results showed a positive relation between the two which was done with the help of a survey conducted among 210 respondents of different age groups. Factors such as product quality, comfort, reasonable prices, offers & discounts motivate consumers to buy apparel through social media platforms. Brand name is observed as the most influential factor which induced purchasing decision among consumers. When a consumer has a good purchase experience through social media platforms it ultimately induced them to recommend their purchases to others as well. The study also reveals that Social Media Marketing is the most popular and preferred form of digital marketing today and contributes to different theorists and marketers who wish to work in a similar field on marketing.*

Keywords: Social Media Marketing, Buying Behavior, Consumer Perception, Digital Marketing, Online Purchase.

1. INTRODUCTION

Social media has become an indispensable tool for consumers online these days. All kinds of businesses have turned to social media to find and connect with their target customers. Consumers are 71% more likely to make a purchase based on social media referrals. Millennials are considered as the generation that spends most of their time online, 47% of their purchases are influenced by social media. They are also 1.6 times more likely to use digital channels to learn about new products. This puts social media platforms in a prime position for executing effective digital marketing campaigns. (FitzGerald, 2019)

Social media such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn, and Twitter has numerous users that keep on growing every day and has attracted marketers and they have recognized that social media marketing as an important part of their marketing communication strategies. When it comes to apparel and fashion, creative and active social media engagement will help reinforce the businesses' brand image as well as expand the reach of their social media posts and, ultimately, boost the sales.

The beauty of social media for retail is that you can engage with people at just about any point of the customer lifecycle. Effective social media marketing means listening and responding to customer concerns actively. In Twitter customer service it was observed that, 60% of people expect a response within an hour. From uncovering new customers to increasing the value of the ones you already have, the amount of creative business opportunities available to brands on social media is endless. (Barnhart, 2020)

2. RESEARCH PROBLEM

The research problem identified here is that different dimensions of customers' attitude that influences shopping through social media platforms have not been thoroughly investigated. Many researchers and marketers fail to understand that which are the factors that motivate the customers to buy apparel through social media platforms and do their purchase experiences create a positive impact on their purchase recommendation to others.

3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- 1) To study the impact of factors influencing consumer buying behavior towards apparel.
- 2) To study the impact of consumer purchase experiences through social media platforms on recommendation of their purchases from social media platforms to others.

4. HYPOTHESES

- 1) H₀ - There is no significant impact of most influencing factor on consumer purchase decision of apparel through social media platforms.
H₁ - There is a significant impact of most influencing factor on consumer purchase decision of apparel through social media platforms.
- 2) H₀ - There is no significant impact of consumers purchase experience through social media platforms on recommendation of social media purchases to others.
H₁ - There is a significant impact of consumers purchase experience through social media platforms on recommendation of social media purchase to others.

5. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

According to **Asma, G., & Misbah, M. (2018)** engagement with social media marketing created a positive impact between the consumer's brand awareness and purchase considerations and that negative influence of companies' social media activities could also affect the overall commitment & involvement of the consumers. They studied various aspects of a five step consumer decision-making process that a consumer goes through before making a purchase, which involved Need Recognition, Search of Information, Evaluation of Alternatives, Final Decision and Post Purchase Behavior and examined the shortcomings that held the prospects from becoming potential customers.

Arshad, S. (2019) did a qualitative research to identify the behavior of social media marketing, the influence of different factors such as Information Satisfaction, Vividness and Entertaining Content which created a stimulus in the behavior of customers created by social media marketers. The research suggested to the marketers that in order to keep the consumer's information satisfaction engaged they should keep their social media posts as much as interesting, colorful, entertaining and providing required information properly rather than only casual and plain content as such posts attracted people more and they tended to share these posts further.

Ioană, E., & Stoica, I. (2014) examined that customers were influenced by psychosocial characteristics like: income, purchase motivation, company presentation, company or brand's presence on social networks, demographic variable (age, sex, disposable income etc.), workplace, method of payment, type of stores (online or physical), etc during their decision making process while making a purchase. These studies were established statistically using univariate and bivariate analysis which was done mainly towards the respondents to study their response.

According to **Kim, A. J., & Ko, E. (2012)** the various attributes of social media marketing and how it affected the relationships among various factors such as perceived activities, value equity, relationship equity, brand equity, customer equity, and purchase intention through a structural equation model with regard to luxury fashion brands. The findings of this study not only draw attention to defining customer equity drivers of luxury fashion brands, but it also indicated the great difficulty in measuring customers' future behavior. The study also suggests more luxury brands to engage in social media marketing activities in order to provide positive contributions to brands by providing new luxury values to customers.

Ibrahim, D. S., & P. Ganeshbabu. (2018) analyzed different platforms of marketing which included social networking websites and mobile phones, wherein they found that social networking sites and blogs allow the followers or connections to repost a post made by others about a product being promoted, which creates more traffic on that particular post, thus reaching more people and creating more traffic to that product/company. It was found that social media integrated email marketing wherein, social media marketers would use tactics of updating their email marketing content in their social media status updates thus promoting their brand to a larger extent.

Nasir, S., Vel, P., & Mateen, H. (2012) focused on the buying behavior of women from the city of Lahore in Pakistan which indicated that women of Pakistan considered traditional word of mouth to be more authentic than social media since people trusted their friends/family's opinion more than other marketing media while making purchase decisions related to their apparels. The research also made a comparative study between Word of Mouth & Social Networking Sites.

The study done by **Bilal, G., Ahmed, M. A., & Shahzad, M. N. (2014)** was aimed at examining the role of Social Media (YouTube, Blogs, and Twitter etc.) and Social Networks (Facebook, Google, Linked In) on Consumer Decision Making in context of the Apparel Industry. It was found that the companies must exhibit an exceptional online presence and engage with customers at a personalized level in order to ensure increased brand awareness and purchase of their brands by the increasingly tech/Internet savvy customers.

6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

6.1. RESEARCH DESIGN:

The research design used here is Descriptive as the research aims to accurately and systematically describe a population, situation and phenomenon.

6.2. RESEARCH METHOD:

Quantitative Research is the process of collecting and analyzing numerical data. It can be used to find patterns and averages, make predictions, test causal relationships, and generalize results to wider populations

6.3. SAMPLING METHOD:

The sampling method used is Convenience sampling since the sample was taken from a group of people who were easy to contact or reach due to the Covid 19 scenario.

6.4. SAMPLE SIZE:

Sample size is the number of respondents included in a research. The sample size of the present study is 210. The primary data is collected from respondents of both males and females of various age groups and occupations who actively use social media platforms and 210 samples are finalized.

6.5. METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION:

A structured Questionnaire was circulated online through Google forms for collection of data from target respondents who are on various social media platforms and have experience in online shopping.

6.6. STATISTICAL TOOL AND SOFTWARE:

The statistical tools used were Stepwise Regression Analysis and Linear Regression analysis and the data was analyzed and tabulated using IBM SPSS Statistics.

6.7. PRIMARY AND SECONDARY DATA:

The Primary data were collected using self-Administered questionnaire and the secondary data were collected from the research Papers and articles published in different Journals.

7. DATA ANALYSIS

7.1. RELIABILITY ANALYSIS:

Reliability is the extent to which a questionnaire, test, observation, or any measurement procedure produces an equivalent result on repeated trials.

Table 1: Reliability Statistics (Cronbach Alpha)

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.905	.910	13

A questionnaire was employed to measure different underlying constructs. The scale had a high level of internal consistency as determined by Cronbach's Alpha of **0.905**. Since the score is more than 0.7 i.e. 0.905 the data is reliable for further analysis.

7.2. DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS:

- Gender:

From 210 responses, a proportionate sample of gender can be found with 48.6% being male and 51.4% are female.

Gender

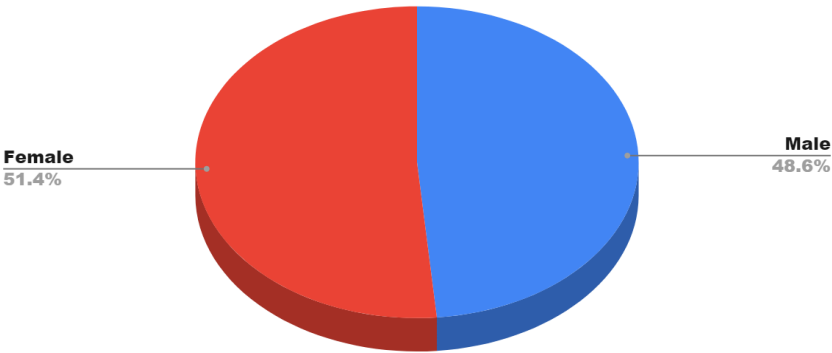


Figure 1: Gender

- Age Group:

Age Group

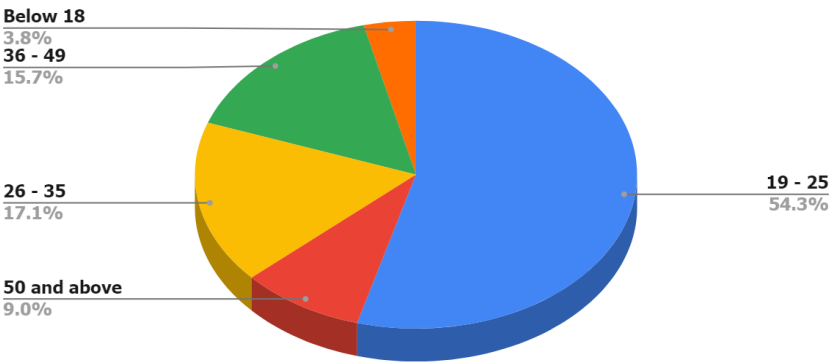


Figure 2: Age Group

Among a population of 210, 54.3% respondents were in the age group of 19-25, 17.1% were between 26-35, 15.7% were between 36-49, 9% were between 50 and above and 3.8% were below 18. The responses cover majority of millennial perspective.

- Occupation:

The Chart shows the occupation of the respondents wherein majority of the respondents are Students with 55.2%, 24.3% have a Private job, 11% have a Government Job, 6.7% fall under Self employed, 1.9% consisted of Housewives and 1% fell in the Other category.

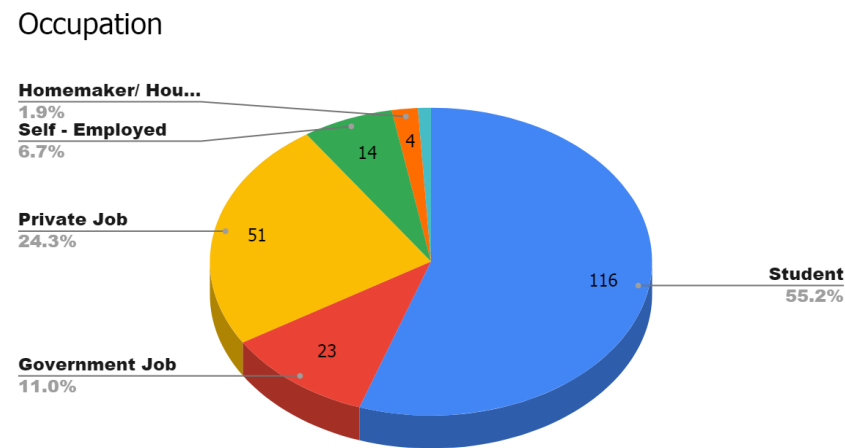


Figure 3: Occupation

- Most widely used type of digital marketing:

The chart shows 5 types of Digital Marketing tools which are most widely used among the businesses lately. It was observed that 61.9% of the respondents considered Social Media Marketing as the most used, followed by Search Engine Optimization with 18.1%, Mobile Marketing with 10%, Email Marketing with 7.6% and finally Content Marketing with 2.4% .

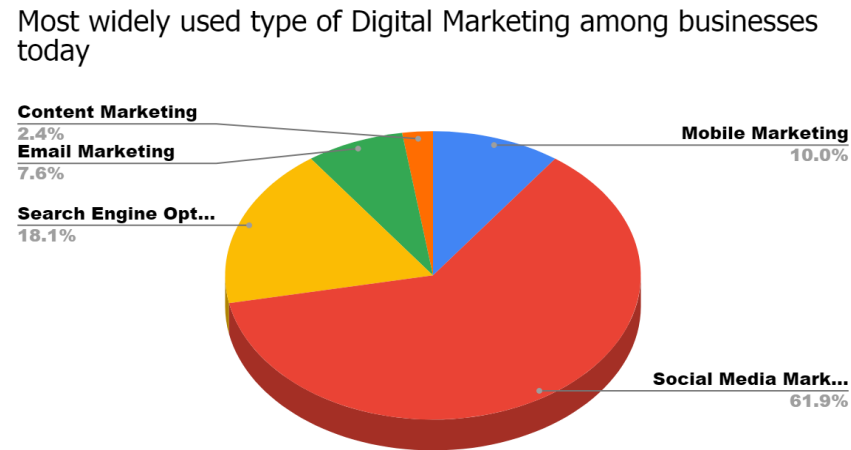


Figure 4: Most widely used type of digital marketing

7.3. STATISTICAL ANALYSIS:

FRIEDMAN TEST:

Table 2: Friedman Test (Mean Ranks)

Ranks	
	Mean Rank
Attractive Offers and Discount	4.34
Reasonable Prices	4.68
Quick Delivery	4.36
Variety	4.57
Product Quality	5.09
Comfort	4.94
Brand Name	3.48
Easy Return Policy	4.54

The Friedman test is the non-parametric alternative to the one-way ANOVA with repeated measures. It compares the mean ranks between the related groups and indicates how the groups differed. Here, the test is conducted to get the ranking of variables because all variables are in one factor. The results showed that Product Quality secured 1st rank with 5.09, followed by Comfort on 2nd rank with 4.94 and Reasonable prices on 3rd with 4.68.

HYPOTHESES TESTING:

1. **H0** - There is no significant impact of most influencing factor on consumer purchase decision of apparel through social media platforms.
H1 - There is a significant impact of most influencing factor on consumer purchase decision of apparel through social media platforms.

STEPWISE REGRESSION ANALYSIS:

Stepwise regression is a method of regressing multiple variables while simultaneously removing those that aren't important. It essentially does multiple regressions a number of times, each time removing the weakest correlated variable. At the end we are left with the variable that explains the distribution the best. We can infer from the below table that Brand Name is strongest independent variable among other variables put to test.

Table 3: Stepwise regression (Model Summary)

Model Summary ^b				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.393 ^a	.154	.150	1.118

a. Predictors: (Constant), Brand Name

b. Dependent Variable: On a scale of 1 to 5, How often do you purchase apparel over these platforms?

In the above table R shows the covariance between independent and dependent variables which is 0.393 and $R^2 = 0.154$, which indicates that Brand Name accounted a variance of 15.4% on the dependent variable.

Table 4: Stepwise regression (ANOVA)

ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	47.390	1	47.390	37.928	.000 ^b
Residual	259.891	208	1.249		
Total	307.281	209			

a. Dependent Variable: On a scale of 1 to 5, How often do you purchase apparel over these platforms?

b. Predictors: (Constant), Brand Name

In the above table $F=37.928$ and p value associated with it is 0.00, which means that there is a significant Impact of the Independent variable Brand Name on the dependent variable i.e. consumers purchase decision.

Table 5: Stepwise regression (Coefficient)

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	
(Constant)	1.697	.315		5.394	.000
Brand Name	.487	.079	.393	6.159	.000

a. Dependent Variable: On a scale of 1 to 5, How often do you purchase apparel over these platforms?

Since p-value: $0.00 < 0.05$, we shall reject the Null Hypothesis (H_0) and accept the Alternate Hypothesis (H_1)

As per the Stepwise Multiple Regression analysis it is found that only Brand Name have significant effect as compared to other factors on the Dependent Variable thus being the most influencing factor.

Therefore, we can conclude that, “*There is a significant Impact of Most Influencing Factor on Consumer Purchase Decision of Apparel through Social media Platforms*”.

2. H_0 - There is no significant impact of consumers purchase experience through social media platforms on recommendation of social media purchases to others.

H_1 -There is a significant impact of consumers purchase experience through social media platforms on recommendation of social media purchase to others.

LINEAR REGRESSION:

Linear regression analysis is used to determine the extent to which there is a linear relationship between the dependent and independent variable. Here, it was performed to assess the impact of consumers shopping experience through social media platforms on recommendation of social media purchase to others.

Table 6: Linear regression (Model Summary)**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.841 ^a	.708	.706	.532

a. Predictors: (Constant), On a scale of 1 to 5, Rate your experience from shopping through these social media platforms.

In the above table R with 0.841 shows a strong correlation between Experience and Recommendation as it is closer to 1. The $R^2 = 0.708$ i.e. there is a variance of 70% on Dependent variable.

Table 7: Linear regression (ANOVA)**ANOVA^a**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	142.444	1	142.444	503.282	.000 ^b
Residual	58.870	208	.283		
Total	201.314	209			

a. Dependent Variable: What is the likelihood of you recommending your purchase from social media platforms to others?

b. Predictors: (Constant), On a scale of 1 to 5, Rate your experience from shopping through these social media platforms.

In the above table $F = 503.282$ and p value associated with it is 0.00, it can be implied that consumer purchase experience has a positive impact on consumer recommendation.

Table 8: Linear regression (Coefficient)**Coefficients^a**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	.432	.161		2.685	.008
On a scale of 1 to 5, Rate your experience from shopping through these social media platforms.	.880	.039	.841	22.434	.000

a. Dependent Variable: What is the likelihood of you recommending your purchase from social media platforms to others?

Since p-value: $0.00 < 0.05$, we shall reject the Null hypothesis (H_0) and accept the Alternate hypothesis (H_1).

Therefore we can conclude that, “There is a significant Impact of Consumers purchase experience through social media platforms on Recommendation of social media purchase to others”.

8. FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS

8.1. FINDINGS:

The aim of the study was to study the effect of factors influencing consumer buying behavior towards apparel and the effect of purchase experiences on purchase recommendation through social media platforms. The data was collected among 210 respondents which comprised of 48.6% male and 51.4% female respondents wherein, the majority of the respondents comprised of Students with 55.2%, followed by Private and Government Job employees with 24.3% and 11% respectively. The average time spent by the majority of respondents on social media was around 1 Hour - 3 Hours a day.

To study the Impact of Factors which Influenced Consumer Buying Behavior towards apparel a stepwise multiple regression analysis was performed while taking into consideration various factors and their effect on consumer purchase decision. With an R square of 0.154 it was found that Brand name was capable of significantly explaining 15% of the variance in consumer purchase decision and was the most influential among other factors. Furthermore, the ANOVA table showed $F=37.928$ and p value associated with it as 0.00 which showed that the research model was amply significant.

To Study the Impact of Consumer Purchase Experiences through social media platforms on Recommendation of their Purchases from social media platforms to others, linear regression analysis was performed taking both the variables into consideration. The value of R square was 0.708 and it was found that consumer purchase experience through social media platforms had a variance of 70% on Recommendation of purchase from such platforms to others. Furthermore the ANOVA table showed $F = 503.282$ and p value associated with it as 0.00, which implied that Consumer experience has a positive impact on consumer recommendation.

Apart from the buying behavior, the study also revealed that the respondents 'preferred Social Media platforms the most to receive updates about the latest offers and discounts on products. Similarly, among different types of digital marketing tools, the respondents considered Social Media Marketing as the most used with 61.9%, followed by Search Engine Optimization and Mobile Marketing. Hence, it could be implied that social media marketing is the most preferred form of digital marketing from the consumers' perspective.

8.2. SUGGESTIONS:

It was found from the study that customers were not comfortable to share their personal information online while purchasing a product through such platforms. Thus, the social media store should ensure that the customers' information is secured during every transaction as customers are more sensitive to payment security, the online companies should make efforts to have a technology which have safe, effective and rapid transaction. It was observed that majority of the respondents preferred Social Media as compared to email marketing or advertisements to receive updates about the latest offers and discounts on products, thus the marketers should focus more on creating an attractive digital presence so as to attract and engage a larger audience.

8.3. DISCUSSION:

The study was performed for the basis of understanding various factors influencing customer buying behavior towards apparel from various social media platforms. The research was conducted to know the most influencing factor that induced purchase decision among customers and to know whether their purchase experiences from such platforms created a positive impact on recommendation of purchase from

such platforms to others. It was found that Social media is often the go-to place for discovering new products among shoppers these days and its use have been remarkably increased post Coved 19. Apparel is one of the industries where consumer buying behavior had matured towards digital channels over the years more popularly towards social media platforms which are popular among both the marketers and researchers.

9. LIMITATIONS & CONCLUSION

9.1. LIMITATIONS

The outcomes were accompanied with some limitations. Firstly, the opinion of respondents may differ based on parameters such as age, this sample size comprised of majority of students and the perceptions, satisfaction and their purchase intention through social media platforms may vary from time to time. Secondly, the respondents may have filled the form in haste and were not wholehearted to take part..Finally, Lack of face to face interaction due to the Coved 19 pandemic was also seen as a limitation, which otherwise would have helped to study the matter more precisely.

9.2. CONCLUSION

Through this study we can conclude that there is a positive impact of social media marketing on consumers buying behavior towards apparel, among the factors that influenced the customers to buy apparel from such platforms with Brand name turned out to be the most influential factor among other factors. A good shopping experience of respondents from such platforms also created a positive impact on their recommendation of purchases from social media platform to others. The results of the study are believed to put significant contribution to practice and literature since social media marketing today can be defined as a new, but rapidly growing platform for creating a brand identity and positive brand association, building relationships with customers and even driving leads and sales.

Social media is a platform which not only connects people worldwide but also serves best for Marketing The study has also revealed that since social media marketing is the most preferred type of digital marketing as compared to the other types both for consumers as well as marketers, unlike most of the online digital marketing tools, social media is free to use and promote stuff. You can create a page of your business without spending a single penny on it, target your audience, connect with customers, learn their interests, solve their queries, reply on their feedback and make improvements Social media marketing being a part of digital marketing has a great scope in the near future.

10. FURTHER RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

The study involved majority of the respondents being students with 55.2% it would be interesting to see that how the social media marketing can influence people of other age groups and occupation. Thus the future researchers have loads of opportunities to explore this subject further.

From this research it was observed that social media marketing was preferred more by the respondents when it came to digital marketing to promote businesses compared to other forms of digital marketing such as search engine optimization, email marketing etc. Thus, social media marketing being a part of digital marketing has a great scope in the near future.

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