EFFECT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON THE CONSUMER PURCHASE DECISION

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Introduction

Role of Social Media in Marketing is primarily the utilization of social media platforms to engage with the target audience to construct the brand, increment sales, and drive site traffic. This includes publishing extraordinary content on business' social media profiles, tuning in to and connecting with the followers, analysing your outcomes, and running social media promotions.

Research Objective

The motive behind this research was to find out the impact of Social Media on the Consumer Purchase Decision, as to how the consumer purchase decision gets influenced by various factors related to social media for example advertisements present on social media, reviews or information available about discounts.

Many papers suggest that consumers' engagement via social interactive tools becomes important as more marketers incorporate social media. According to Vollmer and Precourt (2008) social media websites are creating a venue for customer to customer conversations about brands and products and these sites represent an ideal tool for electronic word-of-mouth, as consumers freely create and disseminate brand related information in their established social environment.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Motivation behind the topic

Today's consumer audience is better educated and better equipped to research what they don't already know. They're also flooded with advertisements on a daily basis. Hence, it becomes all the more important to capture the consumers attention!

Social media gives marketers a way to interact effectively with the followers, and to find a specific target audience who could become potential consumers .

Thus the urge to understand the role of social media in marketing, how it influences consumer purchasing decision and effective strategies that can be implemented, was the main motive behind the research.

Broader scope and current developments in Role of Social Media in Marketing

Social Media has reached far beyond the stage that was made to just trade messages among friends and family. It has risen as a marketing platform of colossal hugeness.

By utilizing various advancements, and also the behavioural aspect of the consumers; the effect of social networking platforms has become more prominent on marketing going ahead. In the ever expanding scope of the usage of social media in marketing, these six emerging trends could comprise the broader scope of social media in the present and upcoming times-

- Influencer Marketing
- Video will stand amongst the Top of the Users Choice
- Usage of Augmented & Virtual Reality on a greater scale
- Rise of the Chat Bots for Customer Service
- Growth of various new Social Media Platforms and changing popularity in usage
- Incremented application of Automation and Artificial Intelligence

Current developments in the role of social media in marketing has two key aspects to it; first consists of the platforms- major and minor, establishing and emerging- which provide the technologies and business models making up the industry and the environment. Second is the usage; i.e., how various people and organizations are using the technologies and for what purposes. Currently, people use social media in its various forms like, Facebook and Twitter for their news feeds, private messaging on WhatsApp, Reddit and Quora for its discussion forums, Instagram for multimedia sharing, etc.

Role of Social Media is critical in marketing as it is essentially used as one or the other way of doing Word-Of-Mouth (WOM) marketing (Lamberton & Stephen, 2016).

While the characterization as WOM appears worthy, but it limits the usage of social media to only being a platform of communication. However, as time progresses, broader implications of its application are emerging as well.

Purpose for the research

The prime motive of the review is to understand how to write a research paper in accordance to the Role of Social Media in Marketing, as done by the businesses whether MSMEs or big brands. Even though there are a lot of researches done with respect to the role of social media in marketing yet very less efforts have been put to address each of the decision making steps in the process and discover how social media influences consumers on making a purchase decision and thus there exists a research gap here. Thus, the main purpose of this research is to find the role of social media in marketing on different product areas and understand more about the consumer purchase behavior.

Title of the Paper	Name of Authors	Name & Indexing of the Journal/ Book/ Book Chapter	Geography / Region of Study	Framework adopted & Major findings of the study	Gaps addressed/ identified	No. of citations received as per

						Google scholar as on July 2020
Social Media and its Role in Marketing	(Neti S., 2011)	International journal of enterprise computing and business systems, 1(2), 1-15	India	Secondary Data was analysed to arrive at the learning that online presence has become a criterion for any type of Business	Factors related to implementation of SMM (Social Media Marketing) like growth, benefits, relevance, pervasiveness, barriers, strategies, etc.	468
Social media marketing: Strategies & its impact	(Bajpai V., Pandey S., & Shriwas S., 2012)	International Journal of Social Science & Interdisciplinary Research, 1(7), 214-223	United States of America	Comparative Case Study analysis is used to stem strategies for SMM	Implications on traditional advertising	42
A Study On Social Media Marketing & Its Impact On Customers	(Chaturvedi M)	Joseph's Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies	United States of America	Secondary Data is critiqued upon by the author to establish a framework of SMM	Awareness regarding need and implications of the research	
Online Deception in Social Media	(TSIKERDEKIS M., & ZEADALLY., 2014)	Communications of the ACM, 57(9), 72–80		Descriptive study of Secondary Data was wielded to commiserate with Online Deception and it was found that there's an imminent need for designing applications that will inhibit it's growth.	Understanding of Deception in Social Media, it's techniques and prevention	125
Social Media and	(Durgam V. 2018)	International Journal of	India	Amalgamation of formerly gathered	Concepts related to SMM like	2

| its Role in Marketing | | Advanced Research in Management, 9(2) | | learning has been done to reach a common inference on SMM | growth, benefits, role, relevance, pervasiveness, barriers, strategies, etc. | |

Social Media and Its Role in Marketing	(Madhavi M. G. B., 2018)	Journal of Exclusive Management Science, 7(1)	India	Usage of Secondary Data to list advantages of SMM	Elaboration on Strategies of SMM	
Social media and its role in marketing	(Sajid S. I., 2016)	Business and Economics Journal, 7(1)	Bangladesh	Review research for inclusion of new learnings with respect to the region of correspondence	Overview of SMM in Bangladesh	43
Comprehen sive Study on Social Media and Its Role In Marketing	(Reddy. A., 2018)	Pramana Research Journal, 8(1)		Using Theoretical Analysis to gather the benefits of SMM	Use of statistical tools to gather first-hand proof of benefits of using SMM in Businesses	
A Study on Marketing Strategies using Social Media in Facebook, Youtube, Pinterest	(Rao K. S., Lakshmi J., Sahyaja C., & Dimple G. 2018)	International Journal of Engineering & Technology, 7(2 .20), 114-118.	Vijayawada in AP, India	Sampling Method has been used to showcase the prominence of SMM in the Indian Economy	Importance of maintaining Brand Loyalty in the minds of loyal customers and how losing them could affect sales	
Impact of Social Media Marketing in Rural India.	(Patel P., Patel R., & Agrawal E, 2014)	International Journal of Engineering Sciences & Research Technology, 3(10)	Rural India	Analysing how SMM can be utilized to forecast future outcomes, using Linear Regression Model	Brings a unique point of predicting box office revenues of movies for having a clear metric of comparison with other methods	
Role of Social Media in Business	(Menon M. N. R, 2018)	International Journal of Research and Analytical, 5(Special Issue)		Analysing of Secondary Data to estimate the growth in usage of Social Media in Business	Detailing of the role of Social Media in Marketing with illustrative examples	
Social	(Saravanaku	Life Science		Comparative	Inclusion of	33

Media Marketing	mar M., & SuganthaLakshmi T. 2012)	Journal, 9(4)		study of Facebook and other popular Social Media, and there impact on businesses	topics like Social consumer decision journey, usage of Facebook in engaging	5

Social Media Marketing	(Shaikh N., Siddiqui M. E., Vasatkar K., Jagtap Y. & Sankpal L. J. 2016)	International Research Journal of Engineering and Technology, 3(6), 870-872		Proposes a fully automated system that uses scoring algorithm and helps in enhancing the brand of a company through SMM	Requirement for a platform which not only runs social media campaigns, but also additionally examines the after-effect of the campaigns and gives a pool of potential candidates which could be engaged upon.	3
Advantages of social media marketing over traditional marketing	(Nikolic S., Miladinovski, S., & Pushova L.	International Journal of Recent Research in Arts and Sciences Volume 5, 235.		Analyses the growth of SMM and its benefits using Secondary Data	Brings more to the already existing knowledge of Advantages of SMM	
The impact of social media marketing on brand loyalty	(Erdoğmuş İ. E., & Cicek M. 2012)	Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences, 58, 1353-1360	Istanbul, Turkey	Sampling Method was used to measure influence of SMM on Brand loyalty	Discussion in this paper is based on the authors' experiences in undertaking research on 338 people who were social media users	483
Event management and social media marketing	(Namratha J., Thiruchelvi A., & Natasha J. 2019)	International Journal of Advance Research, Ideas and Innovation in Technology, 5(2)	India	Social Media Monitoring tool was used to analyse the influence of SMM on Event Management	Connecting dots on the usage of SMM in the event management industry and the potential in investing for engaging the audience	
Social Media as a	(Spakovica ., Moskvins	Economic Science for	Europe	Understanding the relationship	Discussion in this paper is	

| Tool for Protection of Consumers' | ., & Topchiy E. 2016) | Rural Development Conference Proceedings, 43, | | between the Consumer and Seller using Survey analysis | based on the authors' experiences in analysing on EU | |

Interests and Rights		214–222			Consumer surveys	
Social media and business growth: Why small/medium scale enterprises in the developing world should take an advantage of it (A Case of the country Ghana)	(Apenteng S. A., & Doe N. P. 2014)	IOSR Journal of Business and Management, 16 , 76-80	Ghana	Survey design method was used to gather public views Places emphasis on developing a Social Media Marketing Strategy	Relating the already present information on SMM to the MSME's for better adoption of the strategies for growth	9
Social Media Strategy Adoption by Small and Medium Entrepreneurs	Kaur, S., Bhardwaj, B. R., & Sehgal, M.	Make in India Through Sustainable Development: Achieving Inclusive Growth, 313	India	Using Case Study method with SAP-LAP method of analysis, author critically studies the relationship between Social Media and Organizational Growth	Brings a unique combination of organizational growth and SMM for easy adoption by MSME's	
Efficacy of Social Media in Luxury Goods Industry.	Goyal, D., & Subramanian, M, 2017	Journal of Commerce and Educational Thoughts, 1, 41-47	India	Variable Evaluation Criteria was used to draw link between Brand Awareness and SMM Majorly found that SMM does not lead to the final purchase decision	Influence of SMM on the sales of luxury goods	
A Review	Andzulis, J.,	The Journal of		Using Grounded	Addressing the	458

of Social Media and Implications for the Sales Process	Panagopoulos, N., & Rapp, A. (2012)	Personal Selling and Sales Management, 32 (3), 305-316		Theory, the author has drawn comparisons from the beginning of the Internet Revolution	potential role played by social media in the sales process, metrics of its success and

					understanding the customer	
Social media and social media marketing: A Literature Review	(Khan M. F., & Jan A. 2015)	IOSR Journal of Business and Management, 17 (11), 12-15.		Honey Comb model was used for analysis which leads to the conclusion that the seven functionalities of social media supports all the five dimensions of the SMM	Elaboration on the dimensions of SMM and correlating the concept with social media's functionalities	29
Social media and its implications for viral marketing	(Miller R., & Lammas N. 2010)	Asia Pacific Public Relations Journal, 11(1), 1-9.	Australia	Secondary Data has been critiqued upon to interpret that for success of SMM campaigns, Brands need to shift from "Hard-sell" to "Co-creation"	Detailing on the potential of social media for usage in viral marketing and its measurement	236
Relevance of social media in marketing and advertising	(Husain S., Ghufran A., & Chaubey D. S. 2016)	Splint International Journal of Professionals, 3(7), 21-28.	India	Analysis of Secondary Data leads to the conclusion that Retailers should focus more on delivering an experience to engage the customers and not just sell the products	Convoluting on the pertinence of SMM and and other related areas like information evaluation, reinforcement and product purchase.	28
Instagram marketing: a content analysis of top Malaysian restaurant brands.	(Salleh S., Hashima N. H., & Murphy J. 2015)	E-Review of Tourism Research, 6, 1-5.	Malaysia	Web Content Analysis was used and it lead to the inference that customers are able to grasp information easily with the help of pictures rather than reading plain text; furthermore, restaurants should	Unique mixing of Restaurant marketing and usage of SMM in it along with elaborating on Diffusion of Innovation (DOI)	21

				maintain an active online presence.		

RESEARCH GAP

The main research gap identified is regarding the typologies of the Role of Social Media in Marketing, as in the difference between the social media marketing strategies and their
application, in business-to-business (B2B) versus business-to-consumer (B2C) ecosystems. The second gap identified is the influence of social media on the bringing together of the purchase decision- making process of consumers. Lastly, the third gap identified is related to the positive or negative effects a company faces due to social media marketing.

Summary of the Reviews

Various research papers reviewed above, postulate in common that Role of Social Media in Marketing is ever expanding with increasing innovation and development of various technologies. It also states that social media includes various methods of online
communication such as social networking, collaborative websites, etc.
Currently, its nothing untold that social media is changing the behaviour of the consumers and also the workplace expectations. Psychological literature states that research done on various buyers led them to conclude that social media/ internet research and WOM influenced their purchase decision before finalizing a product. It has been also established that social media pays off for the businesses' efforts, although not vast research has been conducted on the said topic.
Over the years, social media has also swayed consumer behaviour from information
collection to post-purchase traits like dissatisfaction complaints or behaviours about a product or company. Thus, the Role of Social Media in Marketing is becoming of increasing importance now, and that businesses should have an online presence to tap the right audience from the required target market who could later on convert to being loyal consumers.

Future Research

In due course of time, more emphasis can be put on new innovations in SMM, ways of measuring the success of SMM Strategies and also on how to obtain more Return on
Investment (ROI). Since so many new developments are taking place each day and
expanding the ever increasing role of social media in marketing, it would be beneficial to tap information as to how can marketers use these innovations to market their products/ services to consumers can be researched. Other industries like recruitment, education, fitness, etc can also be reviewed in accordance with social media marketing.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1) Type of Research:

The research paper focuses on finding the relationship between the influence of social media on the ultimate consumer purchase decision. The study is a type of *conclusive research* where the main aim is to describe the effect caused by the social media on the buying patterns of the respondents. The type of research used for the paper is *Descriptive research* that seeks to depict what already exists in a group or population. It does not seek to measure the effect of a variable, it seeks only to describe.
It is a statistical research, provides data about the population or universe being studied and can only describe the "who, what, when, where and how" of a situation, not what caused it. It is used to provide a systematic description that is as factual and accurate possible and it also provides the number of times something occurs, or frequency.
It lends itself to statistical calculations such as determining the average number of occurrences or central tendencies.

One major limitation of descriptive research is that it cannot help determine what causes a specific behavior, motivation or occurrence, cannot establish a casual research relationship between variables.

2) Type of Research Design:

Cross sectional Research Design was chosen as the research design to be opted for the paper. It has two criteria's, in the first it is carried out at a single moment in time, therefore the applicability is most relevant for a specific period. In the second, it is conducted on a sub-section of the respondent population. The variation of the research design opted for is the *Cohort analysis*, that is a cross sectional survey which is conducted on different sample groups at different time intervals.

3) Population for the research:

With respect to **research** design and statistical analysis, a **population** is the entire collection of individuals one seeks to understand or, more formally, about which one seeks to draw an conclusion.

Sample size taken for the population considered is 109 individuals. The population consists of all those who are prospective buyers and hold social media accounts.

Samples were collected from major cities of India namely pune, delhi, lucknow and Mumbai. A structured questionnaire was prepared, taking into account the Research Gap and Research questions and these questions were pre-tested. Samples were collected on basis of random sampling techniques. Respondents of the current study includes anyone who was either 15 years old or above. The respondents mainly consisted of school and college going students, working professional, people in the service/ business sector, housewives and retired people. Questionnaire was distributed randomly to people through whatsapp and instagram which ensured availability of internet and exposure to social media channels to get an accurate response.

4) Sampling Considerations:

Out of the 109 respondents which was also the sampling frame, 32.1% were males and 67% were females, comprising of individuals ranging between 15 to 55+ years, divided into sampling units of:
- 15-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55+

In this, the 15 to 24 years age group was dominating amongst the respondents. Majority of the respondents were students recording a percentage of 67% and others consisted of professionals (10.1%), business (6.4%), service (8.3%), retired (2.8%) and homemakers (5.4%).

For finding out the sample size, a sample size calculator was used. Confidence level was estimated to be 95%, margin of error was taken to be 5% and population proportion was kept at 10% and the final result for the sample size came out to be 139.

Then for calculating the sample error, the sample size was taken to be 109 which was the actual size of the entire sample drawn from the population being studied. Sample proportion was taken to be 10% and the confidence interval was taken to be 95% which is a typical percentage. This gave our sampling error to be 5.6%.

Sampling techniques used for the research was a combination of *convenience* and *snowball* samplings.

5) Variables:

The variables of the study are the various factors that cause Social Media influence and the Consumer Purchase Decision. The independent variables are the factors that cause Social Media influence like:
- Discounts and Promotions
- Reviews

- Advertisements on Social Media
- Trust on information provided by Brands on social media pages
- Convenience
- Emergence of the recent pandemic Covid-19

Whereas, Consumer Purchase Decision is the dependent variable. This is because Consumer Purchase decision is either partially or fully dependent on Social Media Influence for trend awareness and convenience.

6) Scales used:

The scale used for measuring the variables is ordinal, where rank 1 is given to the factors present on social media that influence the purchase decision of the consumer and rank 5 is given to a factor whose influence is the least. The scale was used to rank the factors that influence the consumer purchase decision from most to the least.

The various factors present on social media that could influence the ultimate buying decision of the consumer are-

- Knowledge about the latest trends
- Building a good impression on others by buying from popular brands
- Suggestions on additional purchases that can be made with the already selected product
- Shopping through Social media is more convenient and enjoyable

7) Instruments used:

The instrument used for the study was a formalized and unconcealed questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of multiple choice questions with specific answers and a few questions which required written input from the respondents. It clearly specified the aim of our study and had questions related to age, gender and profession to know more about the demography of the sample audience taken. The questionnaire then explored questions regarding the buying habits of people in particular to the purchases made through social media, the eventual influence of advertisements and reviews present on social media, on the consumer purchase decision.

The link for the questionnaire is here: https://forms.gle/qNhZuNiFW2Z5gKw19

8) Tools to be used:

For the research analysis, the tools that are going to be used are the pie chart for showing the proportional data and the percentages that each category would represent. Horizontal Bar graph would also be used in questions necessary to show comparison of various data.
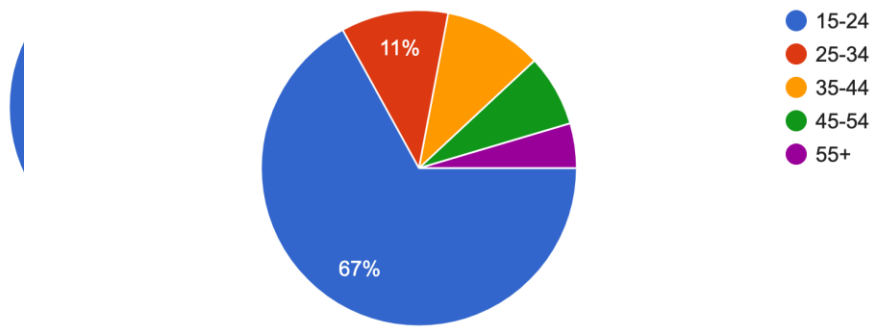
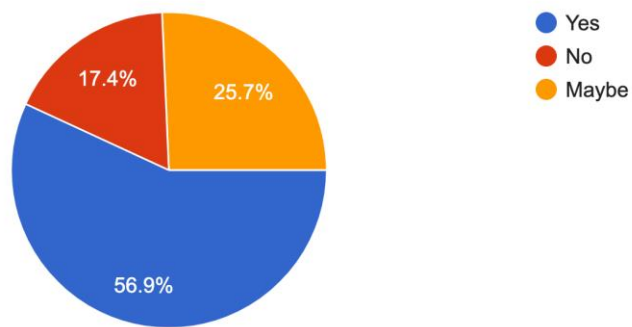# DATA ANALYSIS

Gender
109 responses

Age
109 responses

- 15-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55+

11%

67%

Do you rely on Social Media reviews for a Product or Service?
109 responses
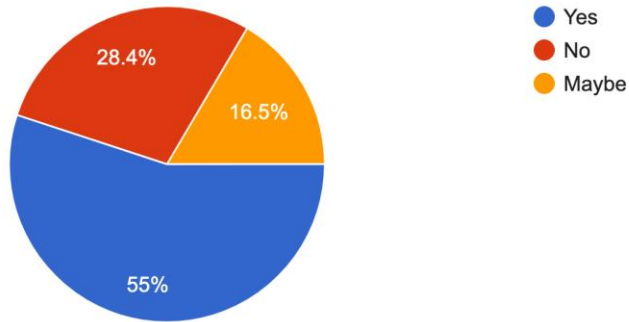

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

17.4%   25.7%

56.9%

How frequently do you purchase something endorsed on Social Media?
109 responses

● Very frequently

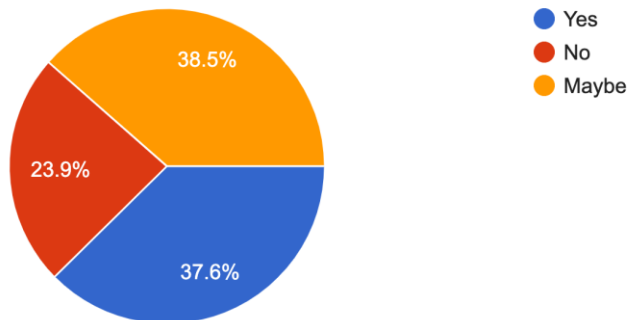Do you use Social Media to find unique Discounts and Promotions?
109 responses

● Yes
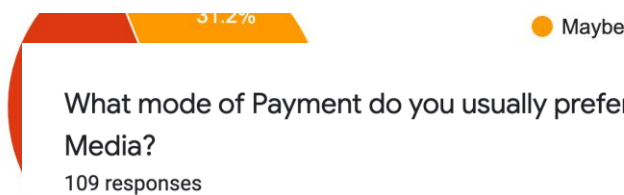● No
● Maybe

28.4%
16.5%
55%

Occupation
109 responses

● Student
● Proffesional

10.1%

Do you trust the Brands to provide positive and credible information on its Social Media pages?
109 responses

● Yes
● No
● Maybe

38.5%
23.9%
37.6%

Do you pay a lot
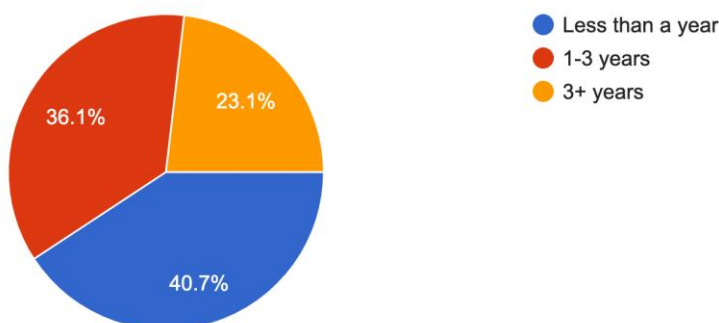109 responses

31.2%

● Maybe

What mode of Payment do you usually prefer when making a purchase through Social Media?
109 responses

71 (65.1%)

How long have you been purchasing products through Social Media?
108 responses

● Less than a year
● 1-3 years
● 3+ years

36.1%
23.1%
40.7%

80

Do you worry about privacy problems when shopping through Social Media?

109 responses

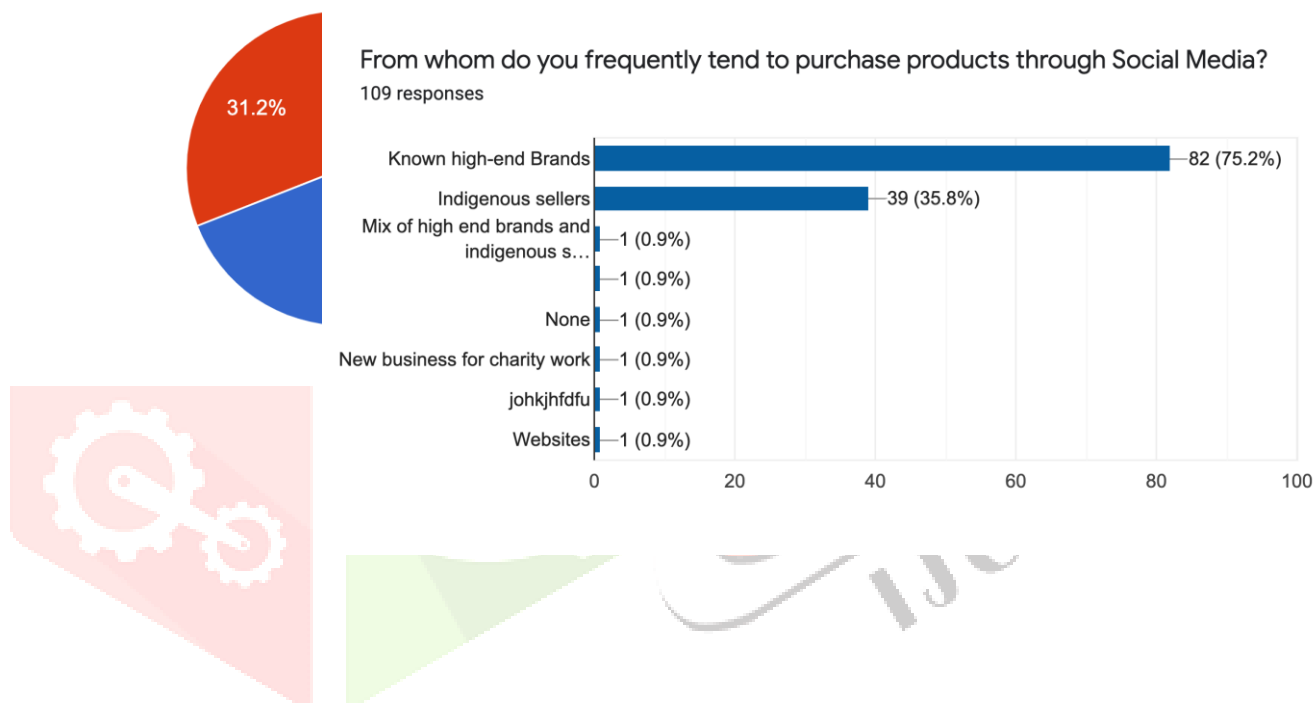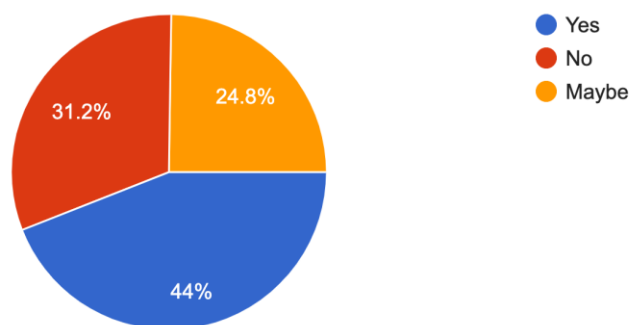From whom do you frequently tend to purchase products through Social Media?
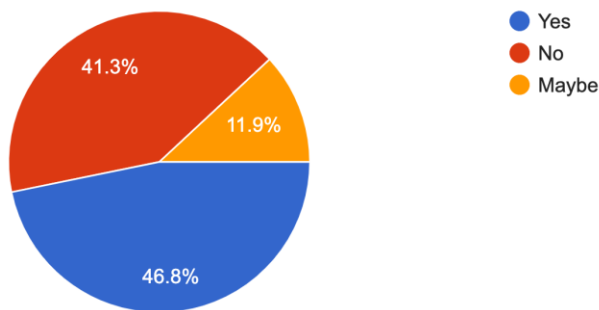
109 responses

Do you worry about privacy problems when shopping through Social Media?

109 responses

Has there been a surge in your Social Media influenced purchases after the Covid-19 pandemic?
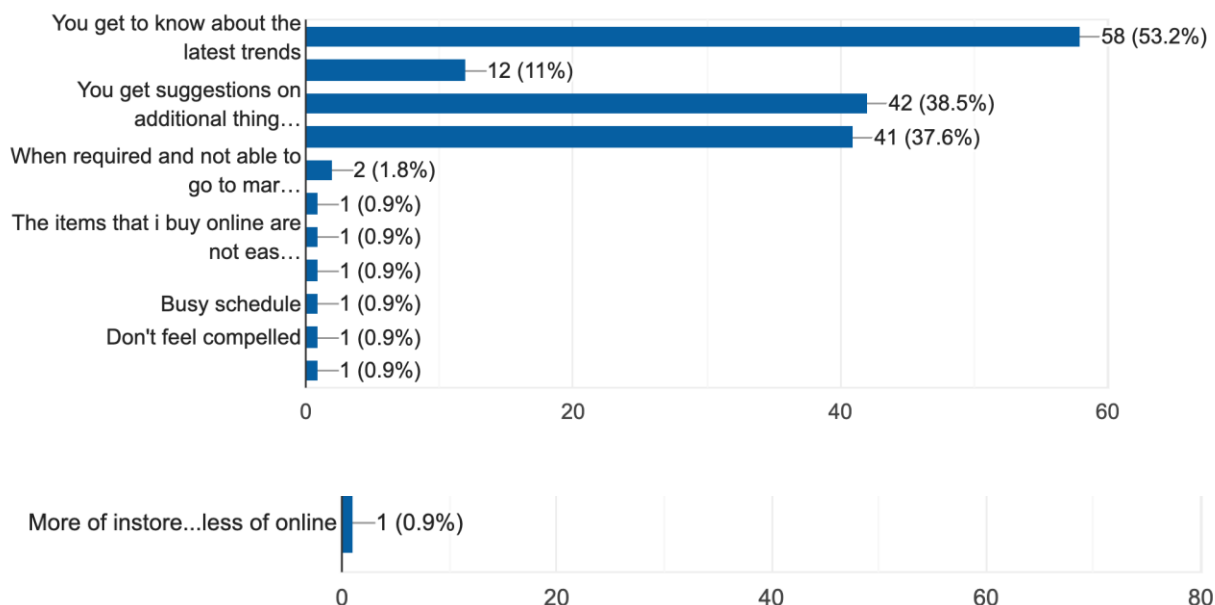
109 responses

DATA INTERPRETATION

- The age group that responded were 15-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54 and 55+ above. Out of which the age group 15-24 was

Select possible reasons that you think compels you to shop through Social Media.

109 responses

dominating with 67% and rest with 11%, 10.1%, 7.3% and 4.6% respectively. Which means most of the respondents are students, part time employee, full time employee, business man, etc.

- Around 67% of the population were female and 32.1% were male and rest were prefer not to say.
- Around 56.9% of the people who took the survey admit that they do rely on social media reviews for a product or service
- 55% of the people use social media to find unique discounts and promotions, 28.4% do not use it and 16.5% of the people were unsure.
- 2.8% of the people very frequently purchase products endorsed on social media, 17.4% of the people frequently purchase them, 41.3% people sometimes purchase the products endorsed online, 31.2% purchase rarely and the rest of them do not purchase only from social media.
- Most of the people don't pay attention to advertisements endorsed on social media in our research it came to be about 49.5% and 31.2% of the people admitted to paying attention to online advertisements. Rest were unsure.
- Largely people were unsure that whether they trust the brands to provide positive and credible information on their social media pages
- When making online purchases, majority of the population surveyed about 65.1% trusts cash on delivery as a trusted mode of payment.
- Majority of the population has started to buy products from Social Media in the past year, mainly owing to the covid-19 pandemic due to worldwide lockdowns which prevented people from shopping through shops, etc. and hence leaving only one option for them to get commodities, i.e., online mediums.
- When shopping online people prefer to buy from known high end brands as they trust the product quality to be better than those of the indigenous sellers.
- 44% of the people were concerned about privacy problems when shopping through social media.
- People listed down various factors that play a definitive role in influencing them to purchase through social media like getting to know about the latest trends, suggestions on additional purchases, etc.
- In the upcoming future, people said that they would prefer to directly shop online through e-commerce websites instead of shopping through social media most probably due to the privacy concerns.

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSIONS

In the research, an individual's buying decision was studied through a survey to analyze crucial factors that influence the buying decision. The result of the questionnaire was that using social media proved to be effective to acquire information about the product and the current discounts etc. that could be availed on it. Social media is considered comparatively more credible source rather than company websites for collecting product and brand information. Social media is also used for passing and sharing information amongst its users leading to a viral word of mouth. Online comments made on the posts of products contains information of sorts which could be a valuable source when making a purchase decision.

The findings of the survey further project that online comments and reviews shared on social media have a strong influence on the buyer's intention before making the final purchase. Additionally, social media can also be used as platform to gather more information about a said product by doing online polls, etc. The findings explore that the buying intentions are highly influenceable by others product related opinions.

Largely people were unsure that whether they trust the brands to provide positive and credible information on their social media pages. When making online purchases, majority of the population surveyed about 65.1% trusts cash on delivery as a trusted mode of payment. Majority of the population has started to buy products from Social Media in the past year, mainly owing to the covid-19 pandemic due to worldwide lockdowns which prevented people from shopping through shops, etc. and hence leaving only one option for them to get commodities, i.e., online mediums. When shopping online people prefer to buy from known high end brands as they trust the product quality to be better than those of the

indigenous sellers. 44% of the people were concerned about privacy problems when shopping through social media. People listed down various factors that play a definitive role in influencing them to purchase through social media like getting to know about the latest trends, suggestions on additional purchases, etc. In the upcoming future, people said that they would prefer to directly shop online through e-commerce websites instead of shopping through social media most probably due to the privacy concerns.

To conclude, the results gathered from the survey convey that social media is also effective in post-purchase behavior. A buyer after making the purchase communicates his product related views on social media influencing other potential buyers and hence a recommendation cycle is formed.

LIMITATIONS

In order to obtain more available data for the validity of the research, the data was also collected from other related people who had a role in the buyer's decisions. The questionnaire was randomly distributed to people through the medium of whatsapp and Instagram to ensure that people answering the questionnaire were regular social media users. People may or may not have answered truthfully given that they were aware of the fact that they were being studied.

Insufficient sample size could also be counted as a limitation as a wide majority of the Indian population uses one or more social media platform and hence a research on a greater scale would yield more practical results.

Time constraint was also a major limitation involved in writing this research paper. If provided with more time a proper detailed study could have been done on the topic mentioned.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The result of the research is very helpful for the brands as they can use it to understand the customers mind and their problems and solve it to attract more customers to purchase their products. The main points that can be used to attract most of the customers are-

1. Aim for the age group between 18 to 35 as they are the most of the customers that shop from social media and actually buy something. As any lower then 18 are too small to actually make a purchase and any above 35 mostly prefer going to shops and buying online only from big brands.

2. As most of the people prefer buying from shops and E commerce websites then social media because they are more liable and safe at this point, the brand as well as the social media platform need to work together to make it more safe for the customers to give their payment details and remove any type of fraud and the brands should make themselves more liable to put out their names.

3. As most of the people like to buy product from any brand that looks good, the brands should make their product more attractive and valuable to make the customers interested.

4. As the customers are highly affected by the customers review, brands should give good quality of product as well as services to ensure a happy customer which eventually means good and positive reviews.

5. As the research shows that most of the people prefer the social media due to the incentives like discounts and additional purchase suggestions that come with it, brands should try to gain on this and work towards a more user friendly experience and provide them with more lucrative incentives.

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