



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

HOW CAN SOCIAL MEDIA IMPACT THE BUYING CHOICES OF SHOPPERS

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this presentation is to demonstrate the impact of social media on customer decision-making. Advertisers have turned to web-based social networking to engage buyers because they have little control over the content, timing, or frequency of online interactions among customers.

Social media has revolutionised the way businesses use computers over the last few years online, and as a result, social media marketing has earned its own identity in the business world. There are numerous online social networking platforms that influence customer behaviour. Like Google+, LinkedIn, and YouTube, for example. Nowadays, practically all ages of consumers use social media, including college students, working-class individuals, and even the elderly. In today's world, social media has evolved into a powerful tool that consumers can utilise to make purchasing decisions. Consumers' lives have been altered by technological advancements.

Because we live in the twenty-first century, it is quite difficult for consumers to devote time to acquiring a product due to their hectic schedules. Consumers can obtain information not just about firms, but also about the companies, using Social Networking Sites. Even social media is assisting consumers in purchasing products through participation, which means that consumers and other stakeholders such as companies, consumers, society, and businesspeople are players rather than spectators. As a result, consumers have the option to alter their minds before purchasing any product through the internet.

This is my take on how social media might impact buyers' buying decisions.

KEYWORDS: Consumer, Consumer Behavior, Marketing, Consumer Decision Process, Purchase, Online Sites.

INTRODUCTION

A study based on customer decision-making for purchases that is heavily influenced by social media. Internet-based living has entailed a significant situation as a specialized instrument. People use the internet to interact with one another and build associations all around the world. Because people have many connections through web-based networking media, information is consumed by a large number of people. This data becomes a wellspring of influence over customers and their buying habits.

People from all over the world have started to share their stories on social media platforms including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn. As clients, people provide item reviews, information about a service, diet or wellness recommendations, admonitions, suggestions on how to use specific objects, and much more.

The World Wide Web has experienced a proliferation in client-driven web advancements in Web diaries, informal groups, and media sharing stages have all emerged in the recent decade. The creation of client-created content, a global network, and the spread of shopper feelings have all been aided by these advances, which are collectively known as web-based living.

Social media is an online communication platform that allows us to engage with one another, share material, and obtain information. Different sorts of social media include social networking, forums, and social bookmarking. Social media includes Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Wikipedia, Pinterest, Google+, and Twitter, and it has undoubtedly become a vital part of our lives. Businesses frequently utilise social media to enhance product and service awareness, promote brands, retain existing customers, and find new possibilities.

In this approach, social media marketing effectively harnesses the power of social media to raise brand awareness, brand value, and customer reach. The study's purpose is to determine the impact of social media on consumer purchasing behaviour in urban regions. Without a question, consumers and organisations are now more linked than ever before, thanks to more internet connections than ever before, and India has overtaken China as the world's largest internet connection user.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media can be defined as a collection of web-based apps that allow for the creation and exchange of user-generated content and are founded on the Web's ideological and technological roots. Scalable

communication systems make social media accessible and possible. Consumer behaviour is changing as social media becomes more widely used, connecting people and enabling the exchange of information.

Consumers may now simply view a fascinating advertisement on YouTube while writing their own thoughts on Twitter and sharing it with friends on Facebook thanks to social media. In many respects, social media differs from traditional print media (e.g., magazines and newspapers) and traditional electronic media (e.g., radio and television) in terms of quality, frequency, interactivity, usability, and performance.

Types of Social Media

Four various forms of social media outlets are discussed in this examination of different sorts of social media outlets:

- 1) Websites for social networking
- 2) Website for social news
- 3) Websites that allow you to share your media
- 4) Websites with blogs

Each of these social media networks has its own distinct characteristics.

1. Social networking sites

A social networking site is an online platform that allows people to develop Social networks or partnerships are formed by people who share similar personal or professional interests, hobbies, backgrounds, or real-life links.

Some interpersonal contact sites, such as LinkedIn, are used to form professional relationships, while others, such as Facebook, blur the lines between personal and professional.

2. Social news Website

Users of social news websites are encouraged to post news stories, articles, and media, which they then share with other users. These stories are ranked by the number of votes they receive from other website users. These stories are also shared by users, who leave comments and share them.

3. Media sharing sites

A website that allows users to store and share interactive media records (photographs, recordings, and music). The media can be seen or played from any Web software, and it can be restricted to a small group of people or made available to the general public using a secret key.

4. Blogs

A blog is an online discussion that consists of discrete, informal diary-style material. On February 16, 2011, there were more than 156 million public blogs.

Social Media and Marketing

Social Media marketing is the practise of empowering individuals to promote their services or products through different social media platforms to attract a bigger amount of consumers who may not have been available via traditional way of advertising. Advertisements in the mainstream media are no longer as effective as they once were. The social web is a place where people who share common interests come together to share information, ideas, and thoughts. Marketers can use social media to listen to and respond to communities, solicit feedback, and advertise their products and services.

What distinguishes social media marketing from other forms of marketing?

Small and medium-sized businesses with limited resources can take full advantage of when they don't have enough money to use traditional marketing strategies, they turn to social media marketing.

Despite the fact that social media marketing is a developing concept, the core premise of marketing remains the same: to target a certain segment of the population, communicate with prospects, and establish loyalty.

Is social media having an impact on consumer behaviour?

As a communication tool, social media has taken on a significant role. People use social media to connect with other people and organisations all over the world.

People have began to share their experiences around the world using social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn. People contribute product reviews, information about a service, food or health advice, product warnings, suggestions on how to use certain products, and much more as customers.

Because people on social media have so many 'connections,' content is digested by a large number of people. Consumers and their purchasing habits are affected by this knowledge.

According to survey, many consumers rely on social media for information and reviews to help them plan future purchases.

In terms of reach and impact, social media has grown. Here's a statistic to back it up.

54 percent of social browsers utilise social media to conduct product research prior to making a purchase.

How does social media influence consumer behavior?

4 Ways Social Media Influences Consumer Behavior

Buyers are using social media networks in greater numbers than ever before. Consumers are looking for recommendations and reviews. As a result, having a strong online presence on multiple social media platforms is critical.

The introduction of social media is the most recent marketing trend. Social media has the ability to impact potential clients from the beginning to the end of the purchasing process, and even beyond.

To begin, customers must be aware of your brand and its offerings. You'll need a social media influencer to persuade them to make a decision once they've narrowed down their options. To build a solid relationship, the client and the brand must communicate often.

If you generate appealing and informative content, customers will be glued to your brand.

Here are four ways that social media has an impact on consumer behaviour:

1. Increases brand awareness

When it comes to generating customer knowledge about a product, social media plays a big role. When people are faced with a problem, they immediately start hunting for a solution. Customers, on the other hand, are frequently unsure which product or service will best solve their problems.

What is the best way for consumers to learn about your product?

Through social media posts, your brand is introduced to a huge portion of the public.

The purpose of every business is to influence client behaviour. If you don't have a social media presence for your brand, you're missing out on a huge potential to influence consumer purchasing behaviour.

2. The importance of social proof in purchasing decisions

Social proof has become more important as a component in purchasing decisions as a result of social media. The tendency for people to imitate the behaviour of those around them, particularly those with power over them, has given rise to social proof.

Customers who are pleased with their purchases are more likely to praise them on social media with likes, shares, reviews, and comments.

Marketers are using social media to boost brand confidence and conversion rates environment more transparent by posting reviews, comments, likes, tweets, and pins from delighted customers.

Sharing customer testimonials, case studies, photos, comments, and videos can increase trust and can be used on your landing page, consulting page, and sign-up page.

When social media has become a vital part of buyers and sellers' lives, the value of social proof cannot be underestimated. As part of their selling strategy, social marketers should provide good social evidence in the form of case studies, photos, videos, podcast interviews, and influencers. The conversion rate will gradually rise as a result of all of this.

3. Promotions, Discounts and Deals on Social Media

Many people on social media have joined organisations and forums that they are interested in. Promotions, discounts, and offers seen on social media affect consumers' purchase decisions.

64 percent of online shoppers wait until items are on sale before purchasing them.

Social media is a low-cost platform that allows marketers to instantaneously connect with billions of active social media users. Brands should make sure that their target audience sees, likes, and shares their items on social media, as this can assist influence consumer behaviour.

4. Influencers on social media

When a customer gets a recommendation from someone they know and trust, they are more inclined to buy.

Celebrities and well-known people have an influence on their viewers' shopping decisions.

It's true that 49% of buyers go to social media influencers for recommendations before making a purchase.

A well-known gamer, for example, might promote gaming and tech items.

Consumers flock to these influencers for product recommendations and advice on social media. A favourable influence will persuade the customer to purchase the product.

Influencer marketing may help your company develop by bringing in new customers. Instead of superstars, many marketers are turning to YouTube, Instagram, and Snapchat influencers. These internet celebrities are adored by customers because they provide unbiased product reviews.

During the pandemic, the popularity of online shopping soared. Because of the contactless buying procedure, many merchants opted to undertake promotional activities through social media platforms to promote brands and improve sales by motivating consumers to transmit information and invite online friends. The epidemic of coronavirus wreaked havoc on the e-commerce sector, especially over the weekend (COVID-19).

When compared to the same period the previous year, online sales increased by 90 percent on March 8." Between March 2019 and March 2020, online sales climbed by 44%. Due to heightened interest in disinfectants and facial masks, e-shops selling medical products saw a 130 percent rise in orders year over year during the first lockdown. According to a survey of Italian e-commerce companies conducted in March 2020, more than half of those polled said the epidemic had a negative impact on their business. In Slovakia, the same pattern was found; a survey of e-commerce businesses revealed that 37 percent of all businesses had decreased sales.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Traditional distribution channels have suffered as a result of consumers' increased usage of online purchasing due to greater access to product/service information, **As Grant (2007)** pointed out. Companies develop a social network and communicate with their whole target population using a customer-centric approach. Marketing is now built on interactions, rather than the traditional way. Several research have identified, analysed, and supported consumers' motivations for joining social networks. Consumers have been observed using social media to obtain information and request assistance, as well as to develop their skills and knowledge about a specific product or service.

As Hajli (2014) points out, the internet's availability has allowed people to engage through social media sites like Twitter and Facebook without having to meet in person. Companies can use social media to raise brand awareness, positive word-of-mouth, sales, and generate more support.

These social media platforms, **According to Nolcheska (2017)**, have permitted a two-way flow of information that allows businesses to influence the purchasing decisions of targeted populations. Your company's permeability increases, allowing for more opportunities for transformation. Each blog post, image, video, or comment has the potential to drive visitors to your organization's website. Through an adaption element, web-based social networking advertising allows your company to make a favourable impression.

In my perspective, social media makes it simple to learn about products and services. Nowadays, most consumers prefer to shop online since they can quickly locate a product. Because the majority of consumers use social media to look for and purchase stuff, brands and services take advantage of this opportunity to promote their products.

NEED OF THE STUDY

The purpose of my research is to learn about and critically evaluate how social media influences buyers' purchasing decisions.

- i. To have a better understanding of shopper purchasing preferences.
- ii. To evaluate the impact of social media on customer purchasing decisions.
- iii. To determine the impact of social media on online social networking sites.
- iv. Customers' journeys were reduced as a result of social media and internet buying.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology refers to the techniques or tactics used to collect, select, process, and analyse information about a topic. The purpose of this study was to see how social media affects buyer behaviour in Greater Noida. A structured questionnaire was constructed to collect primary data. A total of 50 persons were polled through the internet. Primary data was acquired via interviewing respondents and utilising a survey to collect information. This study's sample size is 50 consumers who buy things through social media. The information was analysed and data was collected using Google forms.

Research Design

The method through which the researcher will ask the research questions is defined by the Research Design. It lays out the measuring processes, sampling strategy, analytical frame, and time frame in a logical order. There are three different sorts of study designs to choose from:

Exploratory research: This research method is used when the problem is unclear. Its primary purpose is to explore and clarify the issue. It almost always requires a qualitative investigation.

Descriptive research design: When the problem is ambiguous, this research method is used. Its main goal is to investigate and clarify the situation. A qualitative examination is nearly always required.

- A. Long-term research is important.
- B. A cross-sectional study of the population

Causal research design: This study design is used when a researcher manipulates one or more causal variables to observe how they affect the dependent variable. This cause-and-effect relationship is probabilistic in nature. We used an exploratory research technique for this project because we wanted to learn more about the impact of social media on consumer buying behaviour through surveys and relevant published publications.

Data Collection Method: The data is gathered using both primary and secondary sources. We acquired primary data by using the Google Forms platform, which is a free web-based surveying application. We gathered secondary data by interviewing a few people about their shopping patterns and reviewing prior research articles on the subject. Exploratory research is a sort of study used to investigate

a problem that isn't well defined. It may lead to a better understanding of the current situation, but it will not deliver convincing results. There is such a thing. A problem is usually examined when it is in its early stages.

Sample size: To create the research Lead, we gathered data from 50 people who replied.

Questionnaire Design: Our Questionnaire's questions are arranged as multiple choice questions. This is done in order for the researcher to determine the impact of social media on customer purchasing habits.

Scope of the research

In light of the study's objectives, conducting the research from the perspective of the consumer would be the most effective technique. The researcher is conducting this research in order to assist consumers in determining the factors that influenced their shopping decisions as a result of social media. Because one of the main goals of marketing is to analyse consumer wants, the data collected through the questionnaire is from the consumer's point of view, enabling for new insights to be uncovered. The study also aims to inform readers on the importance of social media websites and applications in consumer decision-making. The focus of the research is on end-user behaviour.

DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis is the act of getting raw data and then translating it into information that users can use to make decisions. To answer questions, test hypotheses, or disprove ideas, data is collected and examined.

To put it another way, data analysis is the process of cleansing, modifying, and processing raw data in order to obtain actionable, relevant information that assists businesses in making educated decisions.

The term "big data" is frequently mentioned in conversations concerning data analysis. When it comes to turning huge data into meaningful information, data analysis is critical.

Why is Data Analysis Important?

Here are some of the reasons why data analysis is so important in today's corporate world.

- Improved Customer Targeting
- A Better Understanding of Your Target Customers
- Lower Operational Costs
- Better Problem-Solving Methods
- You Get More Accurate Data



Data Analysis Methods

Some experts interchange the words "data analysis methods" and "data analysis techniques." To make matters even more complicated, some people put in the previously mentioned "data analysis kinds" as well! Our goal is to draw a distinction between the various types of data analysis and how they are employed.

Although there are several data analysis techniques accessible, they always fall into one of two categories: qualitative or quantitative.

Data is gathered using words, symbols, drawings, and observations in the **qualitative data analysis** approach. Statistics are not used in this procedure. The following are the most prevalent qualitative methods:



- Content analysis, which is used to examine behavioural and verbal data.
- Narrative Analysis, which is used to deal with information gathered from interviews, diaries, and surveys.
- Grounded Theory, which entails conducting research and extrapolating from one or more previous situations to arrive at causal explanations for a specific event.

Raw data is acquired and converted into numerical data using statistical data analysis procedures. Methods of quantitative analysis include:

- Hypothesis Testing, which determines whether a hypothesis or theory is true for a certain data collection or demography.
- A subject's general trend is determined by dividing the total of a list of numbers by the number of items on the list.
- Sample Size Determination looks at a small group of people from a larger group. The outcomes are thought to be indicative of the entire body.

What Is the Process of Data Analysis?

Gathering all the data, analysing it, studying it, and applying it to identify patterns and other insights is what the data analysis process, or data analysis processes, entails. The process consists of:

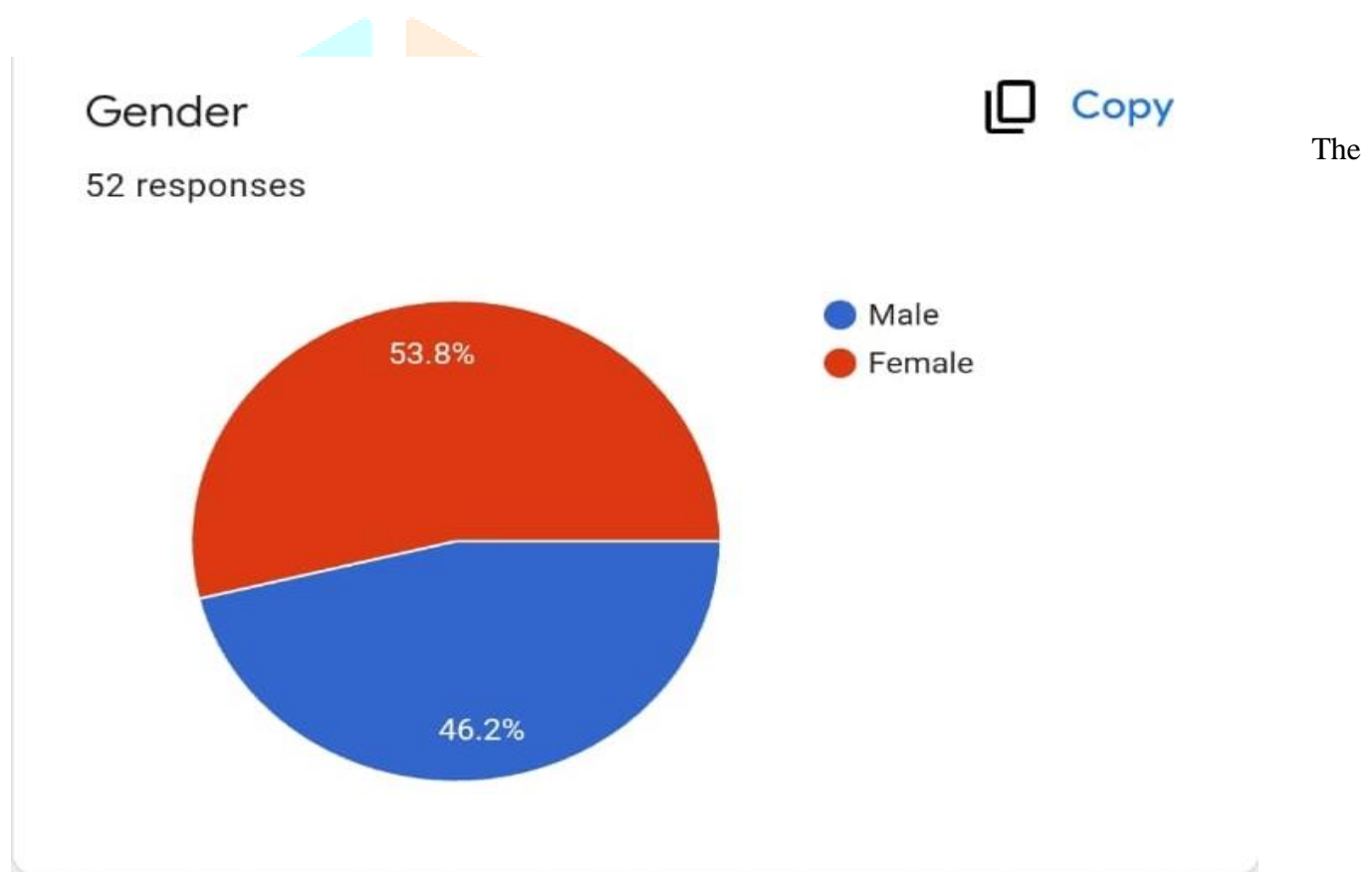
- Data Requirement Gathering
- Data Collection
- Data Cleaning
- Data Analysis
- Data Interpretation
- Data Visualization

1. BACKGROUND

The analysis of the data collected from the questionnaire is presented in the next section. Individuals were emailed the set of questions via Google Forms. Because the survey was distributed to 50 people and there were 50 people who responded, the overall percentage of replies was 100. (Percent). The questionnaire consists of ten items in total.

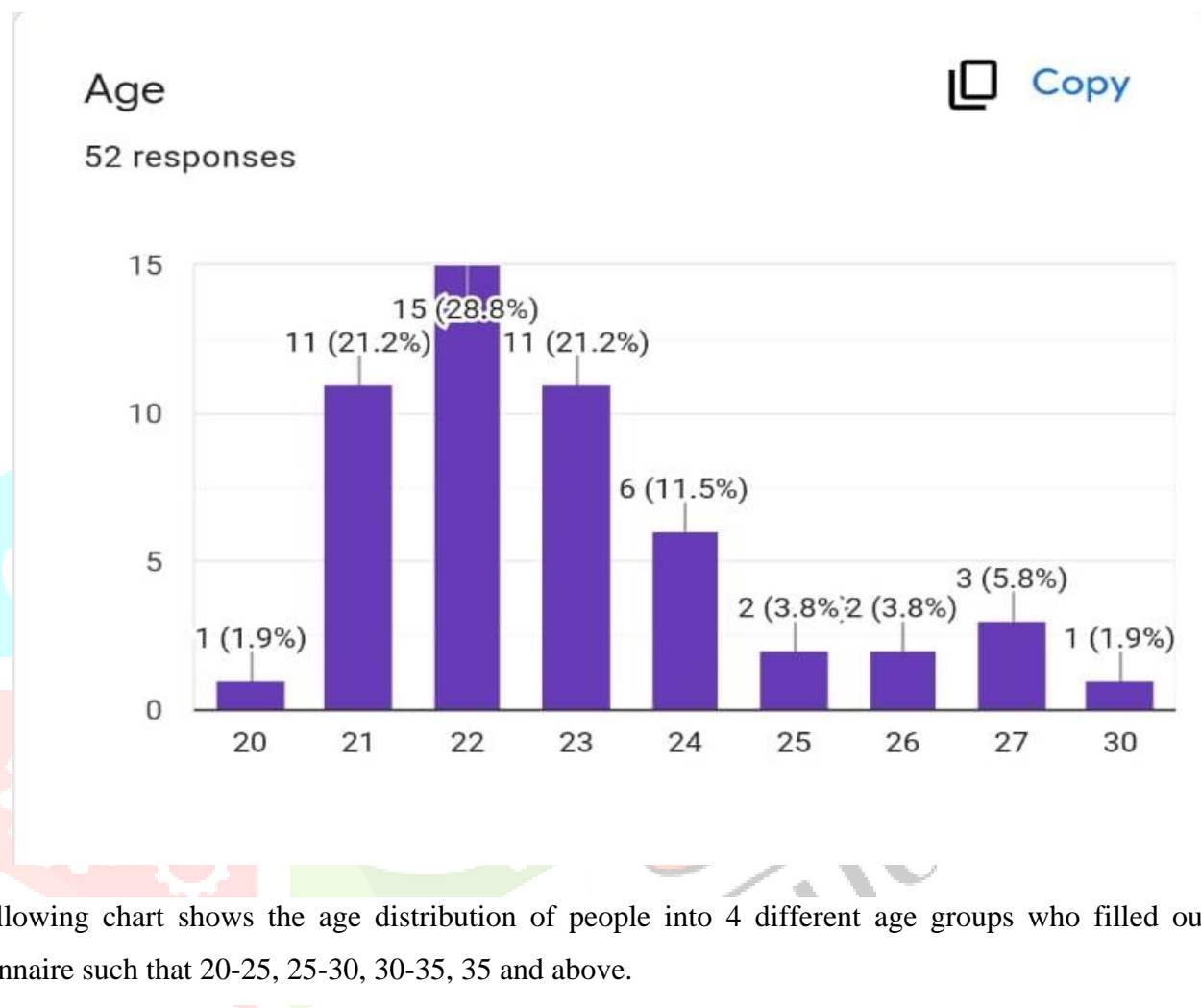
The analysis and findings will be provided in the following parts.

1.1 Gender

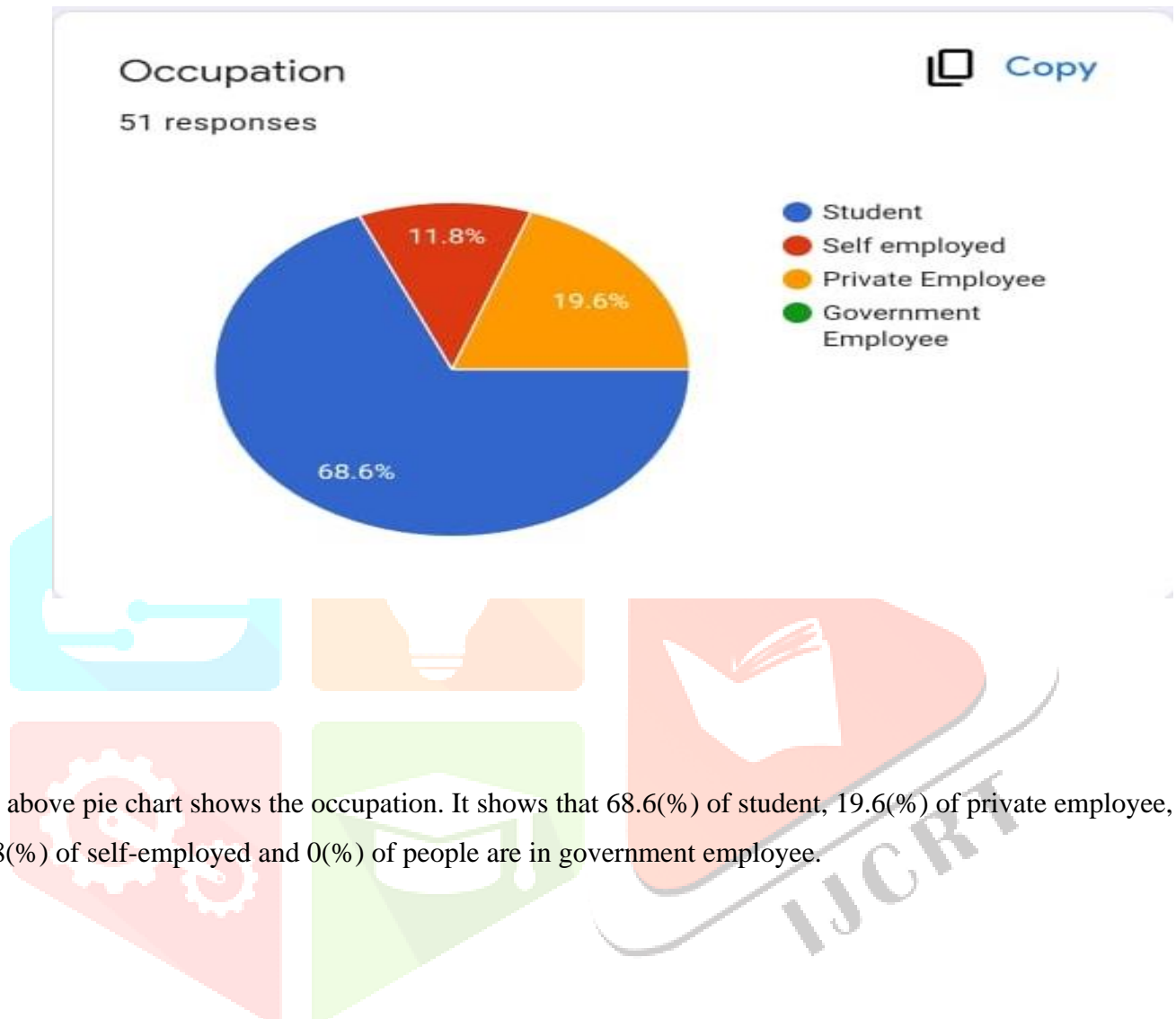


following pie chart shows the gender distribution of the respondents.

1.2 Age Distribution



1.3 Occupation

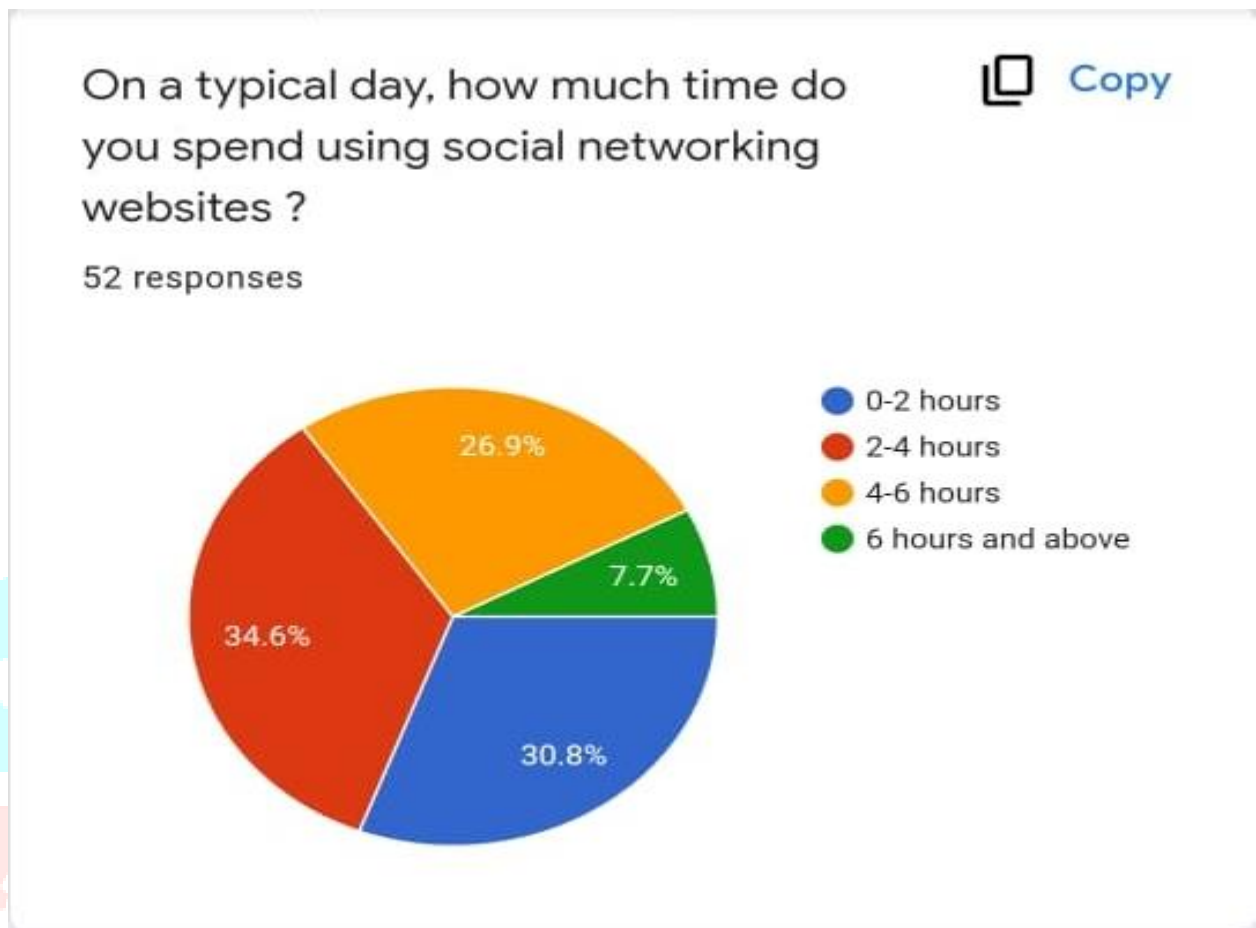


1.4 Frequency of online shopping done by people



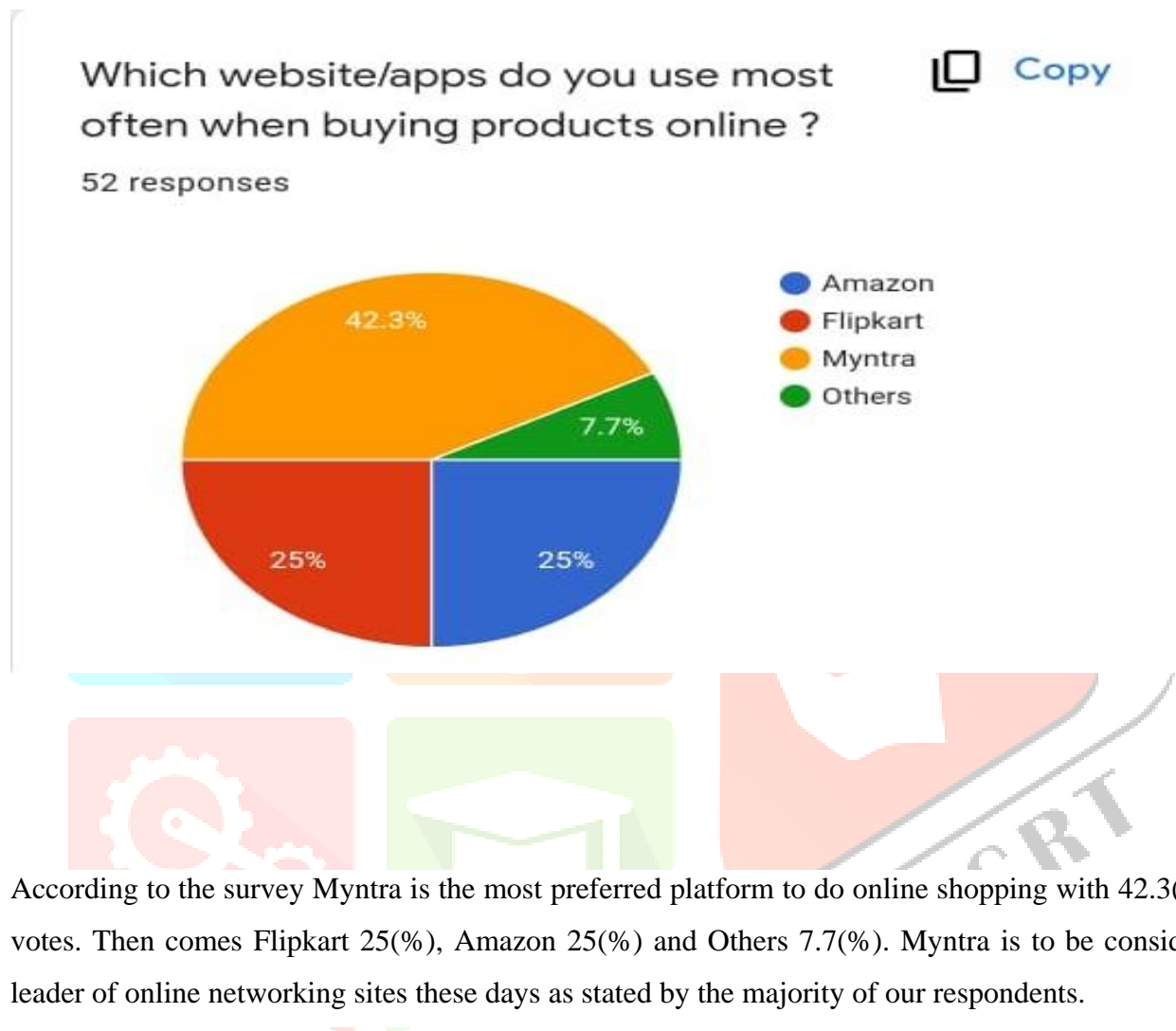
The above pie chart shows the frequency of online shopping done by people. It shows that 63.5(%) of the people did online shopping on a monthly basis, 17.3(%) of the people did online shopping on a weekly basis, 5.8(%) of the people did online shopping every day and 13.5(%) people did online shopping 1 or 2 times a year.

1.5 Time spent on Social Media Websites on a typical day:

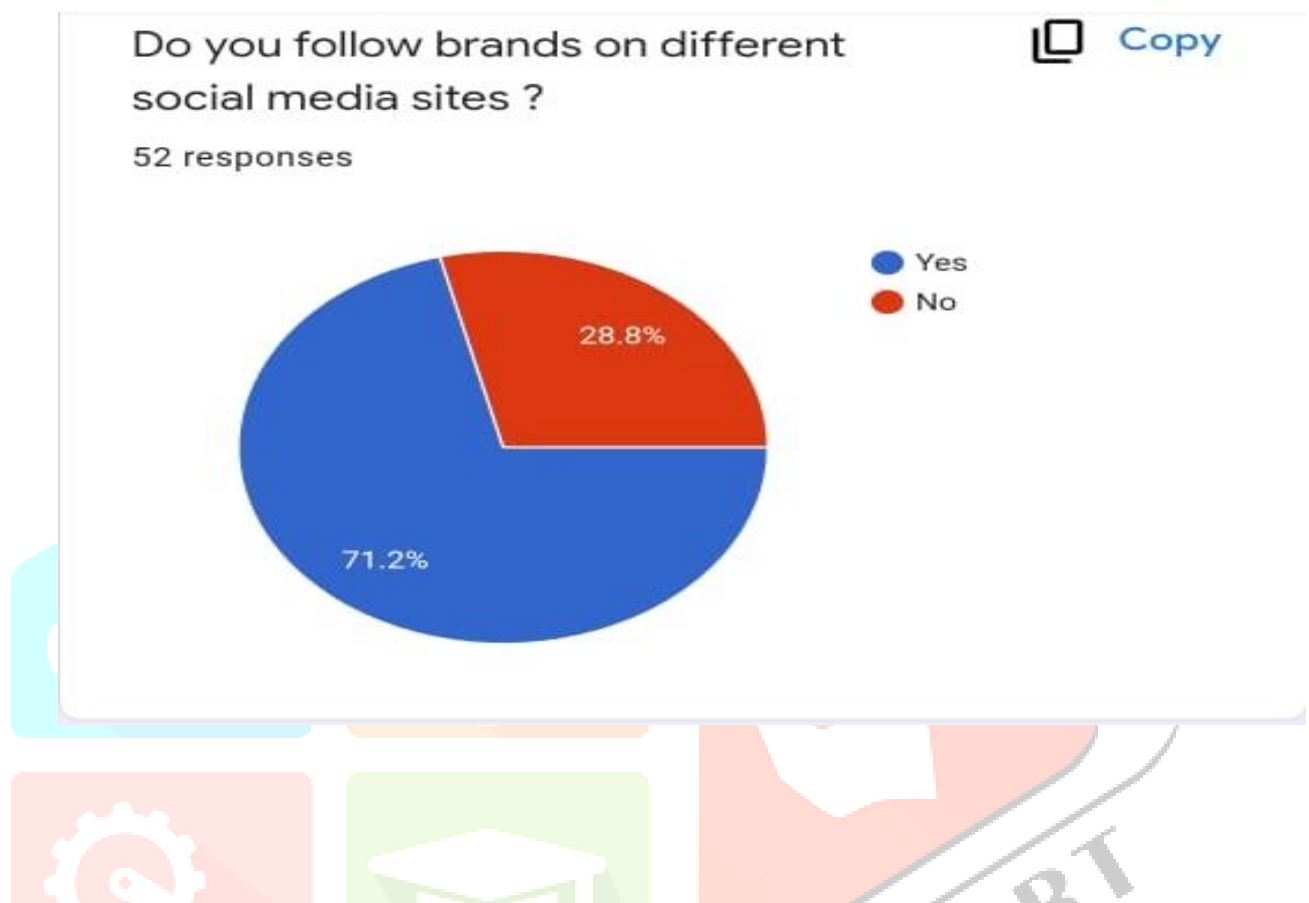


The fourth question in our survey was to determine how many hours per day people spend on social media. Through this we got to know that major chunk of population spent 0 - 2 hours of their time on social media i.e., 30.8(%) of people. Furthermore, 34.6(%) of population spent 2 - 4 hours on social media, 26.9(%) of people spent 4 - 6 hours on social media, with the least number i.e., 7.7(%) spending 6 hours or more on social media.

1.6 Apps and Websites used most for buying products online:

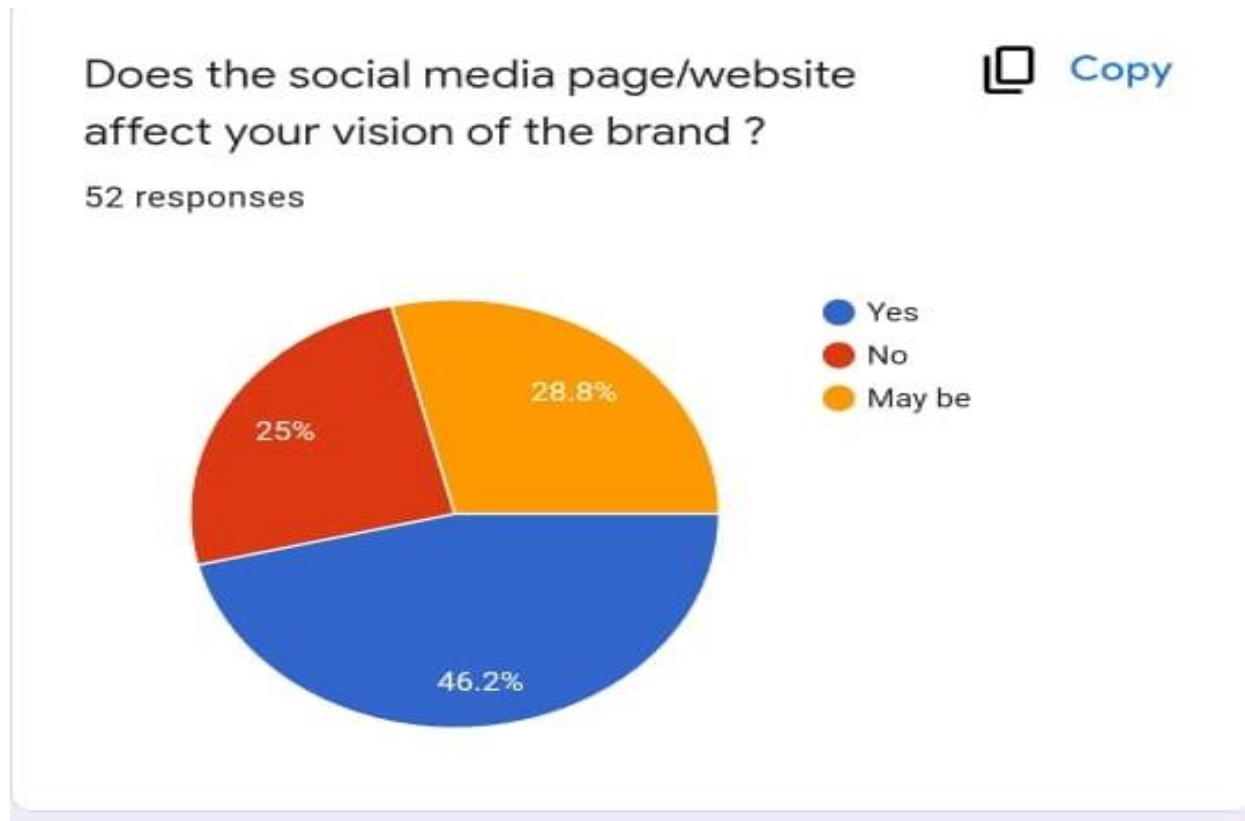


1.7 Do people follow brands on social media?



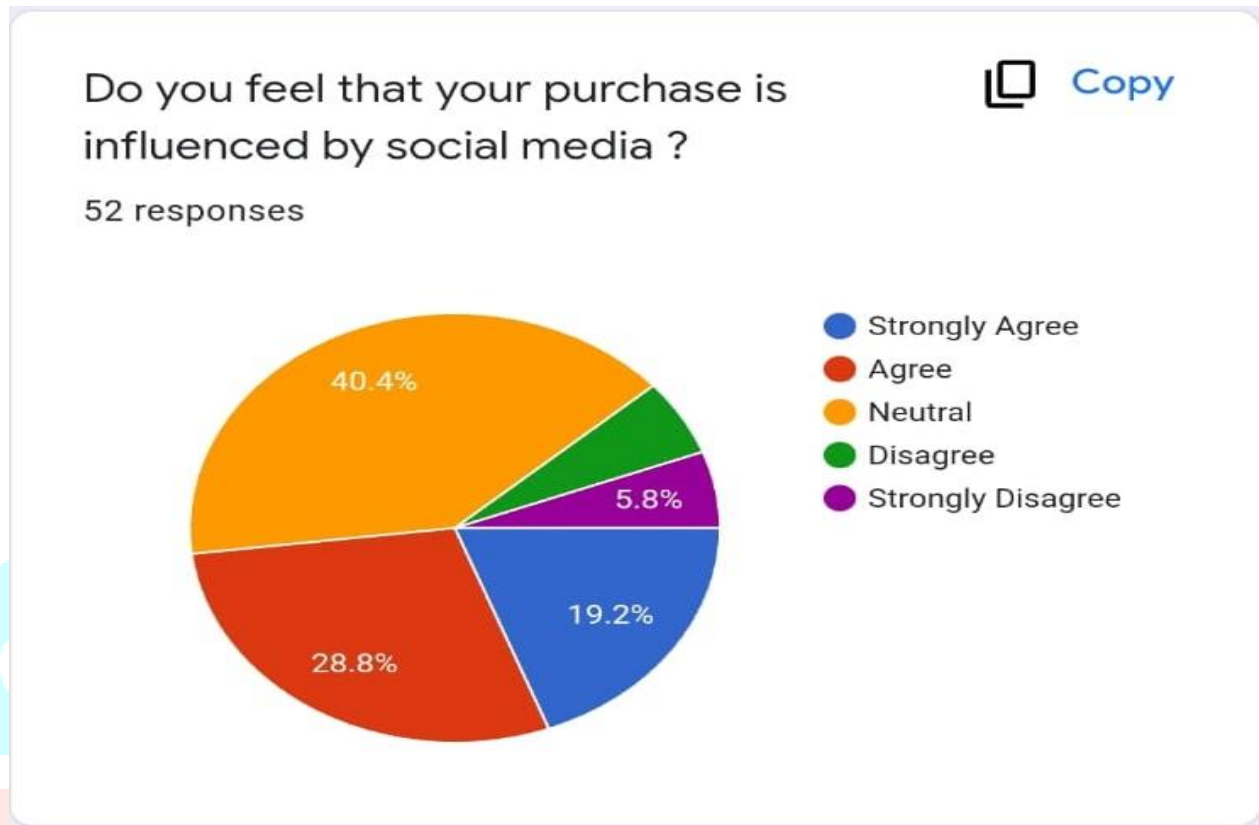
Knowledge about various companies, promotions, discounts, and deals is posted on social media sites. Social media and websites are a terrific method to get information about anything without putting in a lot of work, thus the majority of people use them i.e. 71.2% of people tend to follow various brands on social media.

1.8 Does social media affect your vision of the brand?



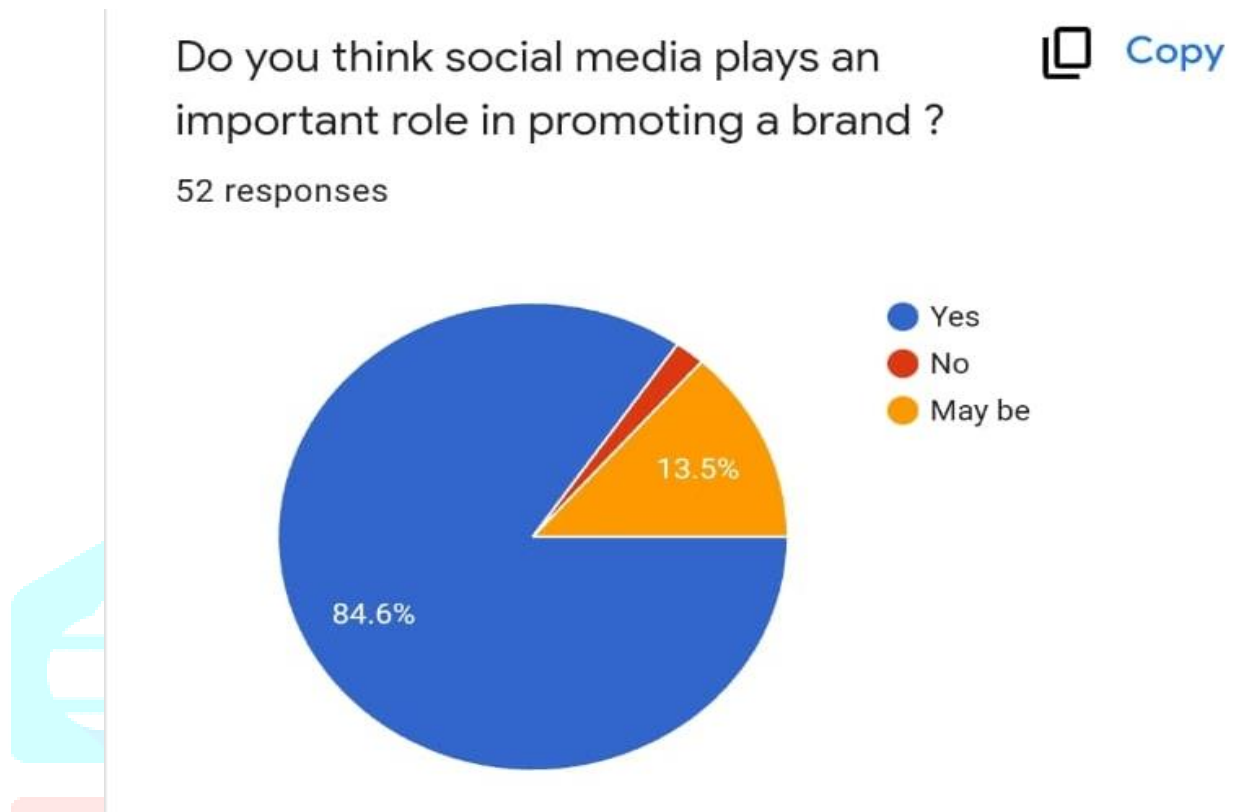
Social media acts as a megaphone, broadcasting information about brands to customers. Brands may shine and get an advantage by spreading positive information about their products and services through this medium. Customers' perceptions of a brand are influenced by social media, according to 46.2 percent of all respondents. This can have a negative influence on the business if there are a few negative reviews about the brand on social media. The target audience may interpret this as a lack of trust and decide not to buy the product or service from that brand. While a minority of people, 28.8 percent, believe that social media has no impact on brand impression and that the best way to learn about a product is to test it.

1.9 Do you feel that your purchase is influenced by social media?



To locate and engage with their target market, a variety of businesses have turned to social media. Social media advertising have an impact on consumer purchasing decisions. Only a few people disagree with the fact that social media influences purchases, with 28.8 percent agreeing, 40.4 percent neutral, and only a handful disagreeing.

1.10 Do you think social media plays an important role in promoting a brand?



The dissemination of information about a company's products and mission is aided by social media marketing. Brand awareness is boosted through promotions, influencers, or celebrity marketing. The majority of our respondents, 84.6%, agreed that social media plays a very essential role in brand promotion, while a minority of 13.5% were neutral on the subject.

FINDINGS

1. The maximum number of the respondents were from the age group of 20-25 as this is the age group which spends maximum number of hours on Social Media.
2. Data from survey shows that nearly more than half of the people tend to do online shopping once or twice in a month. This could indicate that they are from the working class, who do not have a lot of spare time and like to buy in large amounts but less frequently from online marketplaces.

3. The data from the survey shows that almost half of the people spend 2-4 hours every day on Social Media Platforms. Social media plays a critical role in connecting individuals and building relationships, allowing us to advance in our jobs and expand our horizons.

4. According to the survey results, nearly 60% of respondents follow brands on social media. People follow brands on Social Media as they want to know about sales, new products etc.

5. The data from the survey suggests that almost 46.2% of the respondents believe that Social Media page/website affected their vision of the brand. Most internet shoppers read reviews on the brands of the things they are purchasing, which may influence their perception of that brand.

6. The data from the survey shows that 50% of the respondents believe that their decision was influenced by social media. It's because many individuals read internet reviews and comments about a product before deciding on the best brand and pricing.

7. The data from the survey shows that almost 84.6% of the respondents believes Social Media plays an important role in promoting a brand as it helps increase the amount of exposure which enables the brand to generate leads and increase sales.

CONCLUSION

Consumers are actively using social media sites to validate their buying decisions, according to the findings of this study. The majority of people think of social media as electronic word of mouth. The decision-making process of potential customers is influenced by the reviews and preferences of previous customers on social media platforms.

When compared to those who relied on other sources of information, social media users found decision-making to be simpler and more enjoyable. Those who thought social media content was of higher quality and quantity than expected were generally pleased. Overall, the results indicate that social media has a considerable influence on consumer decision-making.

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Social media has revolutionised the way businesses use computers over the last few years online, and as a result, social media marketing has earned its own identity in the business world. There are numerous online social networking platforms that influence customer behaviour. Like Google+, LinkedIn, and YouTube, for example. Nowadays, practically all ages of consumers use social media, including college students, working-class individuals, and even the elderly. In today's world, social media has evolved into a powerful tool that consumers can utilise to make purchasing decisions.

Consumers' lives have been altered by technological advancements.

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