



The Role of Social Media and Mobile Technologies in Shaping Consumer Behaviour with Special Reference to Students

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ABSTRACT

This study explores how social media and mobile technologies shape consumer behavior, focusing on students' online shopping preferences. Data collected from 207 students in Meerut highlights the significant role of platforms like Instagram and YouTube in influencing purchasing decisions through interactive content, peer reviews, and targeted advertisements. Mobile technologies, particularly smartphones and user-friendly apps, enhance convenience with features like seamless payments and real-time tracking. Major findings state that price sensitivity, accessibility, and personalized recommendations drive purchase intentions, while positive digital interactions encourage brand loyalty. The paper emphasizes the need for businesses to adopt personalized, data-driven strategies and address ethical issues like data privacy to engage effectively with this tech-savvy demographic in the digital marketplace. This research suggests that businesses focus on data-driven, personalized marketing while addressing ethical issues like data privacy to maintain consumer trust. Future studies could explore emerging technologies like artificial intelligence, augmented reality, and virtual influencers in shaping consumer behavior.

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1. Introduction

In the contemporary world, it is argued that social media is by far the most significant global communication network. Thanks to social networks, users can broadcast and share their ideas even in the most distant corners of the world. Anytime people communicate with a business or with each other, they invariably leave a huge social network footprint. In today's marketing environment, social media have a fundamental impact on cross-border trade, particularly on final consumer purchase decision-making, from the stage of learning about the item to that of acquiring it and even after.

Through product discovery to the ultimate purchase, social media sites like Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram have become the spotlight today's consumer behavior. These platforms give customers access to peer recommendations, reviews, and tailored ads, all of which have a big impact on their decision to buy and encourage brand loyalty. Students, a group that often uses social media for brand interactions and purchases, are especially affected.

This change has been sped up by mobile technologies, which enable brand interactions and shopping to happen anywhere, at any time. In addition to improving convenience, mobile apps, social commerce, and mobile payment methods encourage impulsive purchases and closer brand connections. In this study, we investigate how social media shapes students'

purchasing habits, particularly on the aspects that affect their choices and the reasons they use digital platforms to shop.

In today's digitally connected world, consumers often begin their day by engaging with social media on their smartphones. Platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook not only influence consumer preferences but also streamline the purchasing process, making online shopping easier and more accessible. This study focuses on analyzing the impact of social media on the consumer behavior of students, specifically identifying the factors that influence their buying decisions and motivations to make purchases through social media platforms.

2. Objectives of the Study

- To identify the major factors affecting the consumer online buying behaviour.
- To assess the role of social media in consumer buying behaviors.
- To analyze the impact of mobile technologies on consumer buying behaviors.

3. Literature Review

The ethical issues raised by digital transformation are also covered by (Khaleel 2018), who places a strong emphasis on consumer-centric strategies and openness. In order to build trust, he advises businesses to prioritize inclusivity and data protection while utilizing AI and IoT.

Jalaja and Thakur 2020 explain how changing habits in buying have been brought forth by mobile commerce, augmented reality, and artificial intelligence. These three have ensured customer happiness and loyalty through personalized suggestions.

Dwivedi et al. 2021 expand this perspective by discussing the effects of digital and social media marketing on customer behavior and identifying new avenues for research in AI, AR, and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM). The study mentions many ethical issues in digital engagements, which are crucial in sustaining customer trust and loyalty towards the brand.

Schwertner, 2021 the author explores in detail how the digital transformation impacts the behavior of consumers and the operations of companies, the trends in cloud computing, big data, and artificial intelligence are viewed as ways of enhancing the pace and creativity of business operations.

Basu 2023 cited the utility of payment advertisements, social media email and search engine optimization to change the preference choices of consumers as well as eventually building loyalty toward a brand.

Dimova 2023 found that younger generations must mainly use digital tools, like comparison websites with prices and omnichannel methods, to chase their goals because they still value accessibility and convenience more.

Considering the situation presented by (Gabhane et al. 2023), it is no longer enough only to satisfy the present wants of the consumers. Marketers and organizations are expected to be concerned with more modern issues as well which ranges from sustainability to responsible advertisement.

The evolution of customer engagement through social media, such as Facebook and Instagram, has been revolutionary for brand-consumer interaction. Examining the effect that social media had on consumer behavior during the COVID-19 pandemic, (Miah et al., 2022) reported online reviews and celebrity endorsements to be significant influences for buy decision.

The research conceptualization on 'digital signals' by (Schweidel et al. 2022) focused on how companies can effectively leverage data to achieve relationship marketing without running afoul of consumer privacy. Their attention is drawn to the tension between privacy and personalization and assert that a customer's willingness to bear marketing.

A very important aspect of mobile technology is the capability to access consumers at any time, from any place, which is among the chief factors influencing how consumers

purchase. Wilson et al. (2024) throw light on the contribution of mobile to brand engagement, impulsive purchasing, mobile payments as well as social commerce apps. Moreover, according to Dhaliwal (2023), mobile devices have been better than ever at reaching and convincing consumers for a very remote India.

Antczak, 2024 looks at online marketing practices that drive customer engagement and sales, including using influencer marketing, email campaigns, and social media ads. This is reflective of (Al Hamli and Sobaih's 2023) study of the online shopping behavior of Saudi nationals, which revealed psychological factors, types of payment, and product options highly influence their choices.

Ngo et al., 2024, examined via social networking sites, how the purchasing goals of Generation Z are correlated with the qualitative benefits of electronic word-of-mouth. The study had to consider how customers' attitudes and information needs are related to their overall behavior and how the overload, primarily the quality, quantity, and credibility of information, influenced their buying behavior.

Haudi 2024 believes that the growing number of digital connections forces businesses to incorporate cross-platform advertising, focusing on tailored customer interaction. Similarly, multichannel methods in home furnishings that match online and offline buying needs while creating consumer loyalty are highlighted by (Rangaswamy et al. 2022).

Sagar, 2024 describes the way companies like Amazon & Walmart have changed the customer experience out of the omnichannel approach and how very little inconsistency in customer experiences is allowed as both channels are interlinked. This strategy provides the flexibility and accessibility to the users as desired while integrating all the acquiring experiences in a single ecosystem.

4. Research Methodology

4.1 Research Design

The research design here in the study is Descriptive in nature. It identified the role of social media and mobile technologies in shaping consumer behavior with special reference to students.

4.2 Data Collection

The primary data was collected from the students using social media and mobile technologies for buying goods online. Data collected from consumers, specifically students using structured questionnaires. The questionnaire was pre-tested to ensure that it is clear and easy to understand. The secondary data was collected through research publications, books, standard journals, web, advertisement, etc.

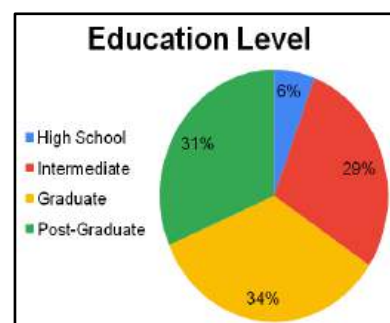
4.3 Data Analysis

The data collected from 207 students using structured questionnaires and was analyzed using simple percentage calculations. This finds out the trends in social media and mobile technology usage for online shopping, such as the frequency of use, factors influencing purchase decisions, and satisfaction levels etc. The findings were summarized and presented through charts and graphs for easy interpretation, providing clear perspectives into how these digital platforms shape consumer behavior among students.

5. Data Analysis & Findings

The study found that 34% of respondents were graduates and 31% postgraduates, highlighting an educated audience that gives value to content information over purely commercial messages. With 64% based in urban areas, these

Figure 1



respondents are more exposed to mobile technology and high-speed internet, making them more flexible to ecommerce and digital trends.

In conclusion, demographic information therefore shows the importance of social media and mobile technology for the purpose of influencing purchasing habits among urban, educated students.

The data reveals that students primarily shop on a monthly basis (43%) or rarely (34%), with only a small percentage shopping weekly (18%) or daily (4%). This indicates that students prefer planned, infrequent purchases, influenced by budget constraints and academic schedules.

In Figure 4, Instagram is the most popular platform among respondents, with 51% usage, highlighting its influence on student consumer behavior. YouTube follows at 34%, reflecting its appeal for visual content, while Facebook and Twitter/X are less popular, at 6% and 5%.

In Figure 5, shows that most students spend a significant amount of time on social media, with 31% using it for 3–4 hours daily, followed by 25% for 2–3 hours and 19% for 1–2 hours. This emphasizes the growing influence of social media in daily life and highlights the importance of integrating digital skills into management education to prepare students for modern corporate demands.

Figure 2

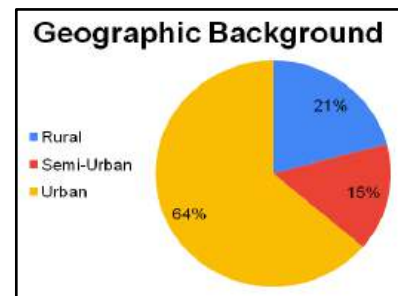


Figure 3



Figure 4

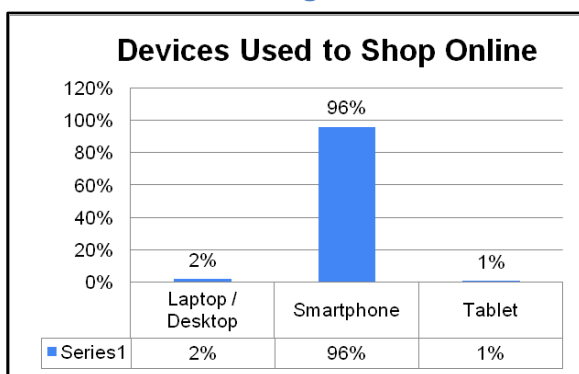


Figure 5

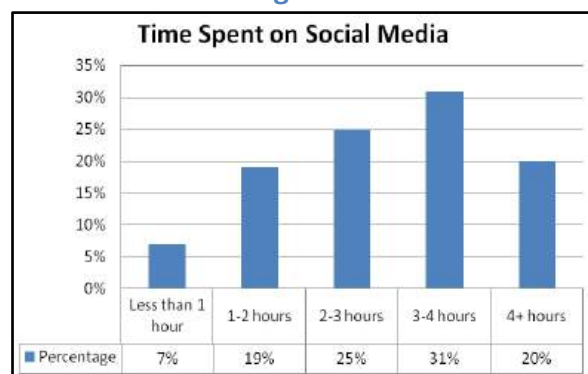
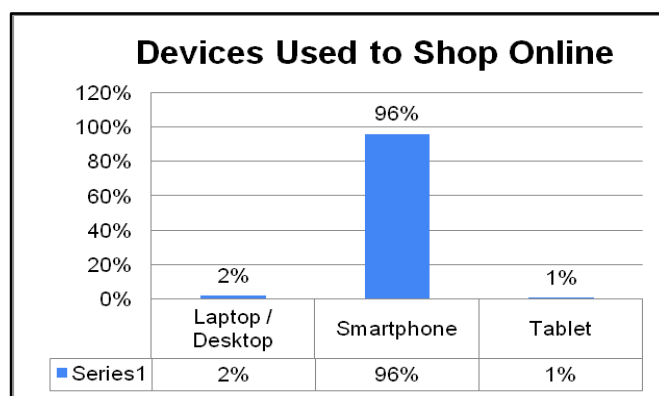


Figure 6



In Figure 6, data shows that 96% of online shopping is done via smartphones, while laptops and desktops (2%) and tablets (1%) are barely used. This highlights the dominant role of smartphones and their integration with social media in shaping students' online shopping behavior. Mobile-friendly strategies and social media marketing are essential for influencing this demographic effectively.

In Figure 7, The analysis tells that price is the most influential factor, receiving 131 ratings, showing its critical role in student purchasing decisions. Convenience follows with 111 ratings, highlighting the importance of accessibility. Product reviews also significantly impact

behavior, with 101 ratings, emphasizing the trust students place in peer feedback. Mobile apps and payment options received 105 and 101 ratings, respectively, showcasing the role of technology and seamless transactions in shaping preferences.

In Figure 8, The data indicates that social media plays a significant role in shaping consumer behavior among students, influencing everything from product exploration to final purchase decisions. A large no. of respondents rely on social media for searching products (65% sometimes, 30% always) and are influenced by social media ads (69% sometimes, 22% always), demonstrating the platform's reach in consumer decision-making. Peer recommendations and reviews also hold sway, with 64% sometimes influenced, while 51% always make purchases after viewing detailed content like reviews, unboxings, or tutorials.

In Figure 9, The findings indicate that social media and mobile technologies significantly shape students' online shopping behavior by facilitating price comparison, providing targeted advertisements, and offering personalized recommendations. A substantial 61% of students always compare prices across platforms, demonstrating a cost-conscious approach, while 65% report that targeted ads sometimes increase their likelihood of purchasing, showing the effectiveness of ad targeting. Additionally, 51% of students are always influenced by customer reviews, underscoring the importance of peer feedback in decision-making.

In Figure 10, The data reveals that mobile technologies are crucial in shaping students' online shopping behaviors, with 75% of students always using smartphones for shopping and 62% preferring mobile apps over websites due to convenience. Mobile payment options significantly impact purchasing decisions, with 46% always and 44% sometimes more likely to buy online when these methods are available. Furthermore, 66% of students always value order tracking via mobile, and 57% are consistently satisfied with the functionality and ease of shopping apps, while 41% are sometimes satisfied. In Figure 11, shows that social media and digital interactions play a crucial role in shaping consumer behavior among students. A positive online shopping experience results in 57% of respondents being loyal to a brand, while 40% are sometimes loyal. Negative reviews or poor service discourage 51% from purchasing, with 41%

Figure 7

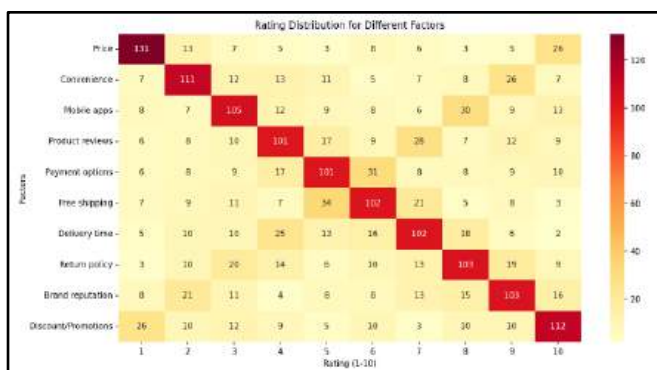


Figure 8

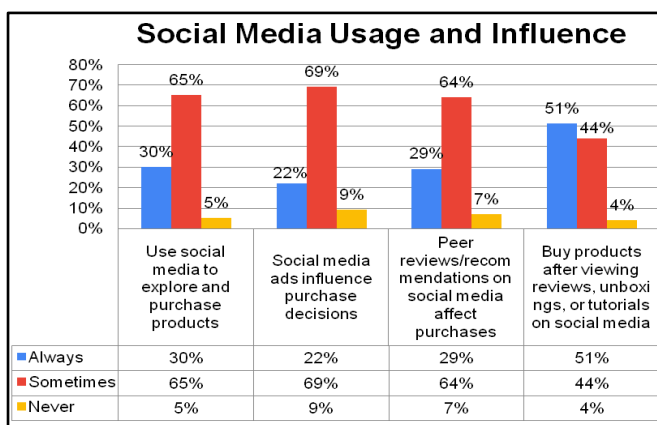
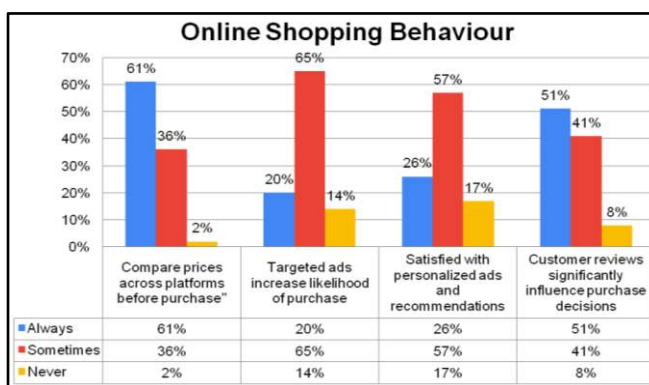


Figure 9



sometimes affected. Social media engagement influences 44% of respondents to trust a brand more, with 51% sometimes feeling this way. Furthermore, 53% always consider user feedback before purchasing, highlighting the importance of peer recommendations.

6. Conclusions

Figure 10

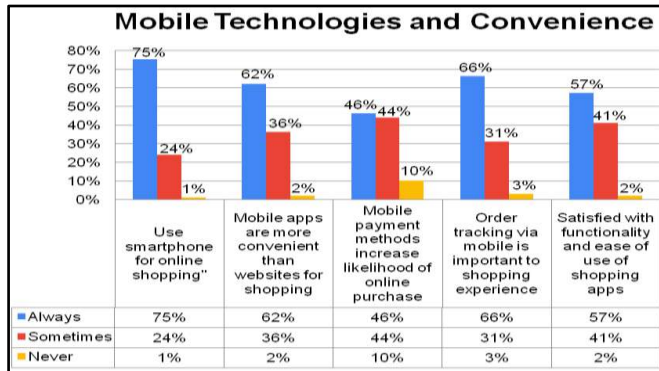
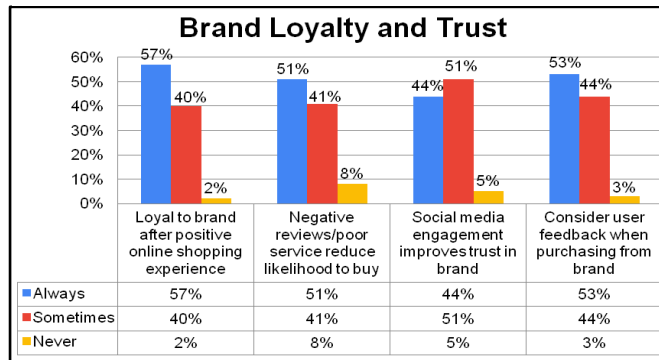


Figure 11



This study shows the great impact of social media and mobile technology in the buying behaviors of Meerut students. Through the responses from 207 students, it was established how vital YouTube and Instagram, among others, were in making them decide to buy through suggestions that suit their needs, reviews from their peers, and advertisements specifically targeted towards them. Mobile technologies, particularly safe payment options and real-time tracking, improve the convenience of purchases.

Key findings reveal that although negative reviews and data privacy issues act as deterrents for further purchases, price sensitivity, access, and positive digital experiences influence the consumer's choice and drive brand loyalty. Students preferred convenience, cost, and peer-generated information, which indicates the need for customized approaches in

interacting with this technologically proficient audience.

This research suggests that businesses focus on data-driven, personalized marketing while addressing ethical issues like data privacy to maintain consumer trust. Future studies could explore emerging technologies like artificial intelligence, augmented reality, and virtual influencers in shaping consumer behavior. Additionally, comparative research across demographics, such as urban and rural consumers, could offer a broader understanding of digital marketing's impact. This study contributes valuable insights for businesses adapting to the rapidly evolving digital marketplace. ■

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