

## A STUDY ON THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

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### Abstract:

This study explores the complex relationship between social media usage and consumer behaviour, particularly in how buying decisions are influenced by online content. The growing integration of user-generated content, reviews, influencer marketing, and social interactions on platforms such as Instagram and Facebook has transformed traditional consumer decision-making models. Using the Engel-Blackwell-Miniard (EBM) model, this research examines six key stages of the consumer decision process within the context of social media influence. Data was collected from 130 respondents through an online survey. The findings indicate that social media significantly influences awareness, attitudes, and purchase decisions, with platforms like Instagram leading this change. Furthermore, promotions, discounts, and peer recommendations were found to be key drivers of consumer behaviour. The paper concludes with implications for marketers and suggestions for future research.

**Keywords:** Social Media, Consumer Behaviour, Purchase Decision, Digital Marketing, EBM Model

## 1. Introduction

In the digital age, social media has revolutionized how individuals connect, share, and consume information. Platforms like Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter now serve as critical channels for shaping consumer perceptions and behaviours. Consumers are increasingly influenced by the visual appeal, user reviews, influencer endorsements, and interactive content available on social media.

The purpose of this study is to explore how social media influences consumer behaviour, focusing on:

- How buying decisions are shaped by content on social media
- How information search and evaluation processes are evolving
- The comparative impact of different platforms (Instagram, Facebook, YouTube)
- The role of trust, peer influence, and engagement

### 1.1 Objectives of the Study

- To determine how social media platforms influence customer purchasing behaviour
- To identify elements that encourage consumers to shop via social media
- To examine which social media platforms consumers prefer

### 1.2 Scope of the Study

This study covers the general public and aims to provide insights into how social media influences consumer decision-making. It focuses on understanding the impact of content, interactions, and social proof on consumer choices.

## 2. Review of Literature

Numerous studies have highlighted the transformative role of social media on consumer behaviour:

- Heinonen (2011) found that motivations behind social media usage impact consumer actions.
- Luo et al. (2012) suggested that social media metrics strongly predict firm value.
- Lee (2013) revealed that consumers actively search for product information on social media.
- Al-Mukhaini et al. (2013) observed Instagram's significant influence on purchasing behaviour in Oman.
- Cheung et al. (2020) identified that interaction, eWOM, and trendiness are key drivers of consumer-brand engagement.
- Gautam & Sharma (2017) confirmed that social media marketing positively impacts purchase intentions, particularly for luxury brands.

The consensus across literature is that social media is a powerful tool in influencing consumer attitudes, awareness, loyalty, and purchase intentions.

## 3. Research Methodology

### 3.1 Research Design

This is a descriptive study, employing quantitative analysis of survey responses.

### 3.2 Data Collection

- Primary Data: Collected through a structured questionnaire.
- Secondary Data: Books, journals, academic articles, and online sources.

### 3.3 Sample Design

- Population: General public
- Sample Size: 130
- Sampling Technique: Convenience sampling

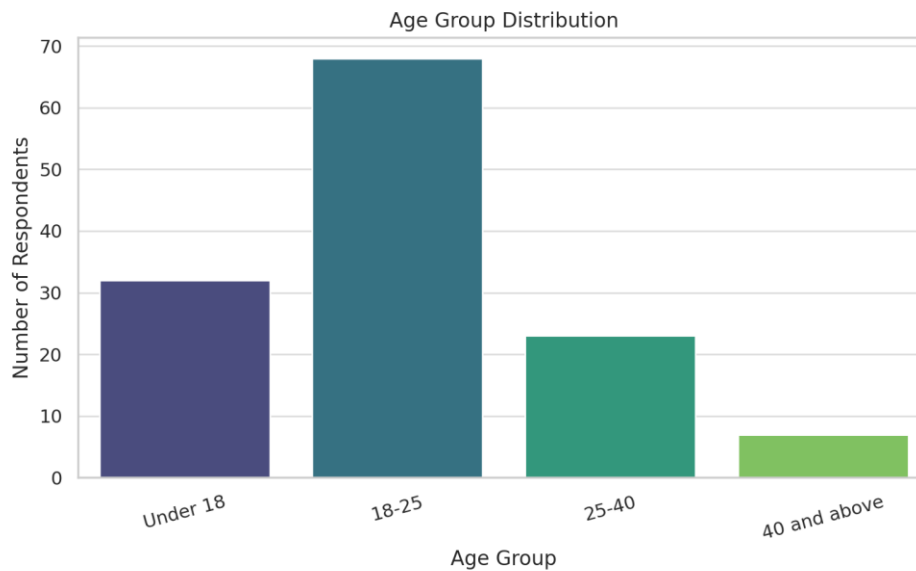
### 3.4 Tools for Analysis

Statistical analysis through charts and graphs; Descriptive statistics using frequency distribution, mean, and skewness.

## 4. Data Analysis and Interpretation

### Demographic Profile

#### 4.1 Age Group Distribution



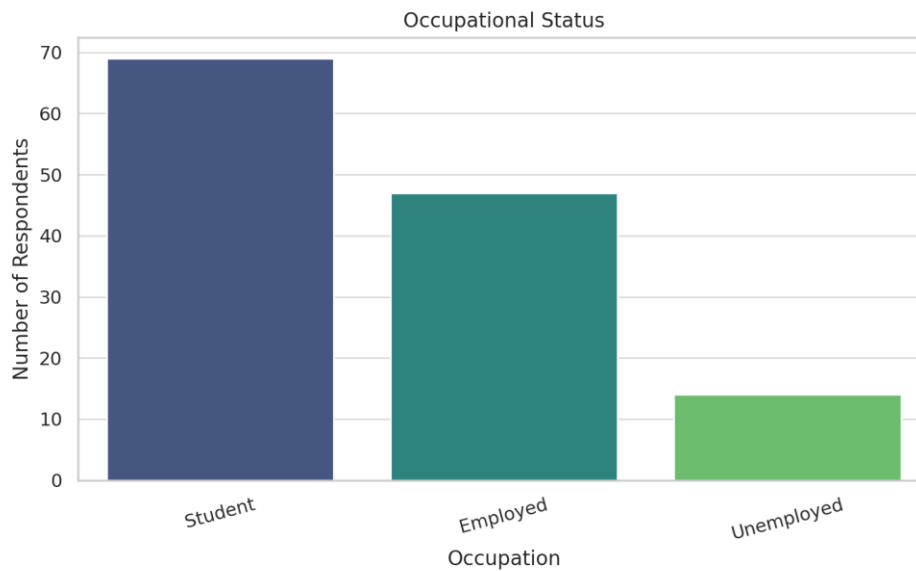
Majority (52.3%) were aged 18-25; 24.6% were under 18.

#### 4.2 Gender Distribution



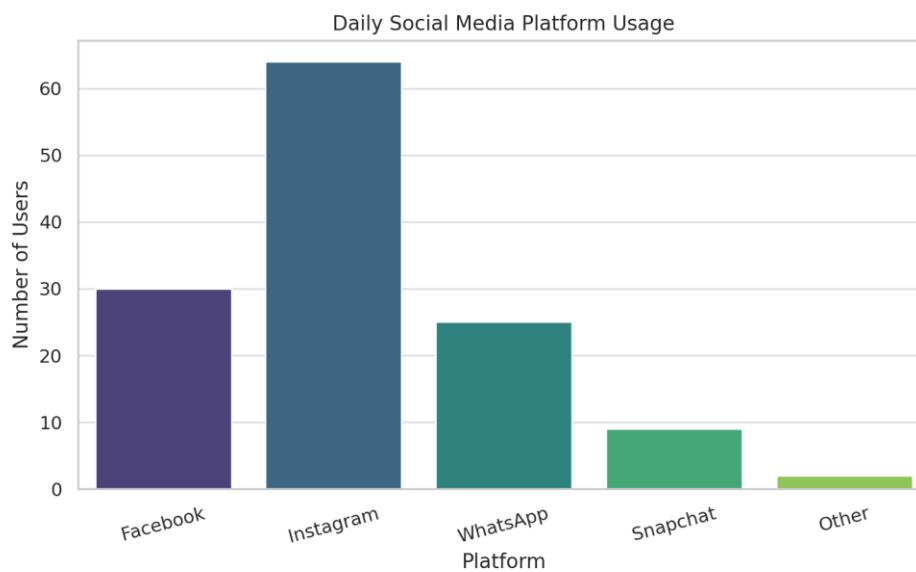
53.1% Female; 46.9% Male.

### 4.3 Occupational Status



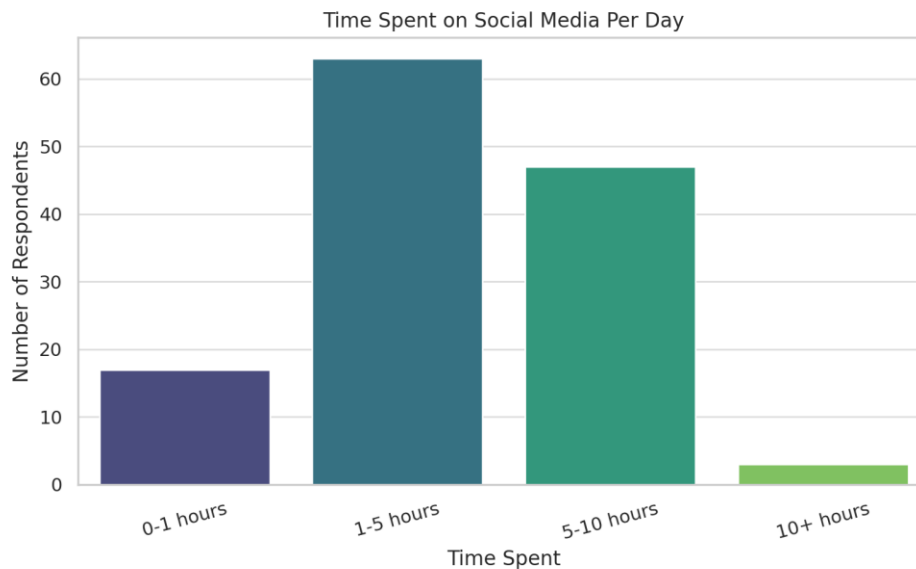
53.1% Students; 36.2% Employed; 10.8% Unemployed.

### 4.4 Daily Social Media Platform Usage



Instagram most used (49.2%); Facebook and WhatsApp follow.

#### 4.5 Time Spent on Social Media Per Day



Majority spend 1-5 hours/day (48.5%); 36.2% spend 5-10 hours/day.

#### 4.6 Influence of Social Media on Consumer Behaviour

- 76.2% pay attention to ads on social media.
- 90% trust information on social media.
- 79.2% said social media influences their buying decisions (Instagram is the top influencing platform).
- 66.1% actively search for product info before purchase.
- 81.5% agree that ads/blog posts/reviews influence them to try new products.
- 90% find information searching easier via social media than mass media.
- 79.2% likely to change their attitude based on positive online feedback.
- 82.3% agree that social media enables effective communication between consumers and brands.
- 75.4% triggered to purchase due to social media content.
- 70% feel social media makes their decision-making more complex.
- 36.9% strongly agree that social media has enhanced their product knowledge.

## 5. Discussion

The findings confirm the critical role of social media in shaping modern consumer behaviour:

- Consumers now rely heavily on peer-generated content, reviews, and visuals before making purchases.
- Platforms like Instagram and Facebook drive impulse buying and brand discovery.
- Social proof and influencer marketing amplify brand trust.
- The ease of access to product information through social media surpasses that of traditional mass media.

## 6. Conclusion

Social media has a profound impact on consumer behaviour. It influences awareness, attitudes, purchase decisions, and post-purchase feedback.

The majority of consumers trust and engage with content on platforms such as Instagram and Facebook. Reviews, promotions, and user interactions are key drivers. As social media evolves, it will continue to reshape how consumers perceive brands and make buying decisions.

## 7. Recommendations

- Brands should focus on visual storytelling and authentic content.
- Advertisements must be trustworthy and engaging.
- Interactive campaigns and peer-generated content should be encouraged.
- Influencer partnerships should be strategically designed.
- Brands must monitor and respond to consumer feedback on social media.

## 8. Limitations

- Potential response bias in self-reported survey.
- Limited to a sample size of 130 respondents.
- No longitudinal tracking — results are time-specific.
- Focused primarily on urban consumers.

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