

INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT ON IMPULSE BUYING BEHAVIOUR AMONG E-SHOPPERS OF CHENNAI CITY

Mrs. B. Venkata Srilatha¹ & Dr. T. Sivakumar²

¹Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce, PERI College of Arts and Science, Mannivakkam, Chennai

²Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce (A&F), Mar Gregorios College of Arts & Science, Mogappair West, Chennai

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ABSTRACT

The rapid growth of social media has transformed the way consumers interact with brands and make purchase decisions, especially in the e-shopping environment. Social media platforms not only serve as communication channels but also as persuasive marketing tools that influence consumer emotions and behaviours. Impulse buying, which is often triggered by sudden urges rather than planned decisions, has been increasingly linked to social media engagement. Features such as ads, influencer endorsements, interactive content, and instant offers stimulate consumer interest and shorten the decision-making process. In Chennai City, where e-commerce adoption is steadily rising, social media plays a crucial role in shaping online shopping behaviour across different demographics. This study examines how consumer engagement with social media through likes, shares, comments, and interactions with promotional content impacts impulse buying behaviour. By understanding these influences, marketers can design more effective strategies to capture consumer attention and drive unplanned purchases in the e-shopping sector.

KEYWORDS: Marketing, Ads, E-Shopping, Consumers, Behaviour, E-Commerce

INTRODUCTION

In today's digital era, social media has become one of the most powerful platforms shaping consumer lifestyles and purchasing patterns. What began as a medium for communication and social interaction has rapidly grown into a strategic marketing channel for businesses worldwide. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp have penetrated even rural and semi-rural areas, creating new opportunities for both consumers and marketers. Social media is no longer confined to urban, tech-savvy users; it is now a key tool for influencing the choices of rural consumers, who are increasingly adopting smartphones and internet services. One of the most significant behaviours influenced by online marketing is impulse buying the tendency to make unplanned purchases driven by sudden urges or attractive promotions. Unlike planned purchases, impulse buying is triggered by emotional appeals, limited time offers, discounts, peer recommendations, or influencer promotions. Social media platforms are uniquely positioned to create such triggers, as they offer real-time updates, interactive advertisements, engaging product visuals, and instant purchase links that shorten the decision-making process.

In rural regions like Chennai City, the rise of e-shopping has been remarkable. Although traditional shopping practices remain strong, the availability of affordable smartphones, improved internet connectivity, and reliable delivery networks have enabled rural consumers to explore online platforms for their shopping needs. Social media, in particular, plays a critical role in bridging the information gap, exposing rural consumers to a variety of brands, offers, and trends that were once accessible only in urban markets. For many rural shoppers, social media acts as the first point of contact with e-commerce, influencing their awareness, trust, and purchase decisions.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Angraini.,(2023) Being highly successful in reaching customers is online marketing influencers. This research is a review of the literature with the goal of delving deeper into the topic of online marketing by utilizing celebrity influencers as online marketing messengers to reach prospective customers. Researchers select worldwide papers that are relevant to the research they are studying from the databases of publishers Elsevier, Scopus, and Emerald. Researchers conduct reviews of the articles they have acquired in order to extract key information regarding influencer online marketing. Because consumers feel more connected to and engaged with the everyday activities of celebrity influencers on social media, the study's findings indicate that promotional methods that leverage celebrity influencer online marketing are known to have greater influence than those involving other celebrities. For readers and other researchers who wish to investigate the same phenomenon with regard to digital marketing promotion strategies using social media influencers, this study serves as a reference and adds to the body of literature that addresses the study of digital marketing in social media.

Rachmad., (2022) Social commerce is expanding swiftly in Indonesia because to the user-friendliness of social media programs. Social commerce is a phenomenon in internet commerce when e-commerce customers do purchases using social media platforms. The integration of online buying features into social media has prompted certain e-commerce consumers to utilize these platforms for their purchasing activities. This research aims to investigate the impact of social commerce on the switching behaviour of e-commerce customers from Tokopedia, Lazada, Shopee, Blibli.com, and Bukalapak, while also exploring the mediating role of online marketing on Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok in this context.

Mason.,(2021) This study explores how the COVID-19 pandemic elevated online marketing practices among Americans. Although research on pandemics has concentrated on preventive health behaviour, little attention has been given to the impact on consumer behaviour. The Consumer Decision-Making Model was utilized to study variations in consumers' social media habits alongside their decision-making processes. A survey questionnaire was utilized to gather data from 327 U.S. consumers. Mean variations in consumers' use of social media as a decision-making tool were examined using Analysis of Variance testing. The study found that consumers increasingly use social media for product identification, information gathering, evaluation, and purchasing. The study highlights the increased significance of online marketing since the COVID-19 epidemic. The COVID-19 pandemic is a global phenomenon, thus the findings may apply to many nations. We offer suggestions to assist firms adapt to changes in consumer social media usage and decision-making processes.

Syaifullah., (2021) The purpose of this study is to investigate how online marketing affected MSMEs' (micro, small, and medium-sized businesses) performance during the COVID-19 epidemic. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), which is based on partial least squares, is the analytical tool utilized in this quantitative research methodology. Purposive

sampling was the method employed in this study, and the sample consisted of MSMEs that market on social media. Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp are the social media platforms that are utilized. This study included 254 MSMEs as samples. Online surveys were utilized to collect data. The results of the study demonstrate that perceived utility, perceived simplicity of use, and compatibility all affect the use of online marketing. According to the study's findings, MSMEs perform better when they use social media for marketing, particularly when it comes to boosting sales, client connections, productivity, and innovation. This implies that MSMEs' performance will improve with improved online marketing management. The TAM and UTAUT theories and their effects on online marketing for MSMEs in developing nations coping with the COVID-19 pandemic form the theoretical foundation of this study.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To examine the extent to which social media engagement influences impulse buying behaviour among rural e-shoppers in Chennai City District, Tamil Nadu.
- To analyze the relationship between online marketing strategies and the decision-making process of rural consumers engaging in e-shopping.

Hypothesis

- H_{01} : There is no significant difference between impulse buying behaviour and different age groups in Chennai City District.

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is significant in understanding how social media influences impulse buying behaviour among rural e-shoppers in Chennai City, Tamil Nadu. With growing Smartphone usage and internet access, rural consumers are increasingly exposed to online marketing, making it essential to understand their buying patterns. The study provides insights for marketers and e-commerce platforms to design effective promotional strategies targeting rural audiences. It also contributes to academic research by addressing a gap in studies on rural online marketing and e-shopping behaviour. Additionally, it helps raise consumer awareness about impulse buying and encourages informed decision-making among rural shoppers.

Table 1: Age Groups of Respondents

S. No.	Age groups	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Upto 18 years	150	58
2	19-23 years	75	29
3	24-28 years	30	11
4	Above 29 years	5	2
Total		260	100

Source: Primary data

The analysis shows that 58 per cent of rural e-shoppers in Chennai City District who are below 18 years, indicating that younger consumers are the most responsive to online marketing and impulse buying. In contrast, older age groups (29 years and above) form a very small share, reflecting lower engagement with e-shopping promotions.

Table 2: Social Media Impulse Buying Behaviour

S. No.	Particulars	SA	A	N	D	SD	Total
1	I often make unplanned purchases after seeing products on social media.	80	75	60	30	15	260
		31	29	23	11	6	100
2	Attractive ads on social media encourage me to buy items impulsively.	85	95	30	25	25	260
		33	36	11	10	10	100
3	Influencer recommendations make me more likely to buy products immediately.	90	85	65	10	10	260
		35	32	25	4	4	100
4	Influencer recommendations make me more likely to buy products immediately.	60	120	45	15	20	260
		23	46	17	6	8	100
5	Discounts and offers shown on social media trigger my impulse to purchase.	120	60	30	25	25	260
		46	23	11	10	10	100

Source: Primary data

Table 2 most rural e-shoppers in Tamil Nadu strongly engage with social media, with 31 percent strongly agreeing and 29 percent agreeing that they interact with product-related content. Similarly, 33 percent strongly agree, and 36 percent agree that reviews, comments, and influencer recommendations affect their buying decisions. When it comes to advertisements and promotions, 35 percent strongly agree, and 32 percent agree that these increase their interest in online shopping. In terms of impulse buying, 23 percent strongly agree, and 46 percent agree that attractive offers or trending products lead them to unplanned purchases. Finally, 46 percent strongly agree, and 23 percent agree that they sometimes regret purchases made impulsively after being influenced by social media, showing a strong presence of post-purchase dissatisfaction despite high engagement.

Table 3: ANOVA for Age groups and Social Media Impulse Buying Behaviour

Variables	Age Groups	N	Mean	S.D.	F Value	Sig.
I often make unplanned purchases after seeing products on social media.	Upto 18 years	150	4.62	1.23	7.600	0.005*
	19-23 years	75	4.20	1.89		
	24-28 years	30	4.21	1.36		
	Above 29 years	5	4.33	1.25		
	Total	260	4.69	1.78		
Attractive ads on social media encourage me to buy items impulsively.	Upto 18 years	150	4.36	1.26	4.750	0.020*
	19-23 years	75	4.80	1.74		
	24-28 years	30	4.25	1.23		
	Above 29 years	5	4.45	1.45		
	Total	260	4.98	1.69		
Influencer recommendations make me more likely to buy products immediately.	Upto 18 years	150	4.78	1.36	9.120	0.002*
	19-23 years	75	4.70	1.29		
	24-28 years	30	4.25	1.48		
	Above 29 years	5	4.60	1.26		
	Total	260	4.69	1.23		
Discounts and offers shown on social media trigger my impulse to purchase.	Upto 18 years	150	3.69	1.03	3.208	0.010*
	19-23 years	75	3.89	0.98		
	24-28 years	30	3.79	0.99		
	Above 29 years	5	3.46	1.09		
	Total	260	3.64	1.02		
I buy products quickly on social media platforms without comparing alternatives.	Upto 18 years	150	4.62	1.36	4.780	0.005*
	19-23 years	75	4.23	1.71		
	24-28 years	30	4.16	1.33		
	Above 29 years	5	4.79	1.46		
	Total	260	4.36	1.23		

Based on Primary Data * [Sig.@5%](#)

The table 3 The ANOVA results indicate significant differences in social media engagement and impulse buying behaviour across age groups of rural e-shoppers in Tamil Nadu. Younger consumers, particularly those up to 23 years, show higher engagement with product-related content ($F = 7.600$, $p = 0.005$), reviews and influencer recommendations ($F = 4.750$, $p = 0.020$), and advertisements ($F = 9.120$, $p = 0.002$), and are more prone to unplanned purchases triggered by offers or trending products ($F = 3.208$, $p = 0.010$). Interestingly, the above 29 years group reports slightly higher regret after impulsive purchases ($F = 4.780$, $p = 0.005$). These results confirm that age significantly influences social media engagement and impulse buying behaviour among rural e-shoppers. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Findings

- In the study, it was found that most of the respondents were belonging to “upto 18 years” of age group were 58 percent.
- In response to the statement “I sometimes regret purchases made impulsively after being influenced by social media promotions” 46 percent have strongly agreed.
- The study found that there is a significant difference between age and social media engagement’s impulse buying behaviour, hence the null hypothesis is rejected.

Suggestions

- E-commerce platforms should focus social media campaigns, advertisements, and influencer promotions on younger age groups (up to 23 years), as they are the most engaged and responsive to impulse buying triggers.
- Marketers should design campaigns that encourage informed purchases and avoid overly aggressive promotions, helping reduce post-purchase regret among consumers.
- Initiatives to improve digital literacy in rural areas can educate consumers about evaluating online offers critically, balancing engagement with safe and thoughtful buying behaviour.

CONCLUSION

In general, the study concludes that social media has become a powerful and influential factor in shaping consumer buying behaviour, particularly in the context of e-shopping. Engagement with social media content including advertisements, product reviews, influencer recommendations, and trending promotions significantly impacts consumers’ decisions, often leading to impulse purchases. Younger consumers tend to be the most responsive, actively interacting with posts and offers, while older consumers engage less but may experience higher post-purchase regret. The findings highlight that social media not only serves as a platform for product promotion but also influences emotional and impulsive aspects of consumer behaviour. This underscores the importance for marketers to design strategies that are both engaging and responsible, ensuring that promotions encourage informed decisions rather than purely impulsive purchases. Additionally, raising awareness and improving digital literacy among consumers can help them navigate online shopping more thoughtfully, balancing convenience and impulse tendencies. Overall, the study emphasizes the transformative role of social media in modern consumer behaviour and its potential to shape rural and urban markets alike.

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