IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOUR AFTER THE PANDEMIC PHASE

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ABSTRACT

Social Media has become one of the hottest new marketing concepts in today's scenario which leads to Consumer Buying Behaviour. As everyone has started to make use of Social Media in their day to day life, it is infeasible to decide a marketing strategy without taking social media networks into account. After the pandemic, Social Media takes a major part in promoting the business and its products/services. This paper carries out empirical research to know the Impact of Social Media on Consumer Buying Behaviour and to understand how far Social Media has been useful in Consumer Purchase decisions after the Pandemic phase. Percentage Analysis and Factor Analysis were used to analyse the data. Service Availability, Reliance, Unique qualities and hindrances of Social Media were the factors that influenced Consumer buying behaviour.

KEYWORDS: *Social Media, Consumer Buying Behaviour and Purchase Decisions, Pandemic phase.*

INTRODUCTION

Social Media is a Computer - based technology which requires internet that enables the communicating of ideas, thoughts and information by way of messages, documents, photos and videos etc. quickly through Social networks and applications. Consumer buying behavior encompasses the amalgamation of a consumer's attitudes, preferences, intentions, and decisions regarding their actions in the marketplace when acquiring a product or service. The approach may include search engines, engaging with social

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media, feedback from friends and a variety of other actions. This paper aims to study how Social Media helps in promoting Consumer Buying Behaviour after the Pandemic phase.

EFFECT OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING IN BUSINESS

- More than 1/3 online users prefer Social Media when looking for information about a product or brand.
- Majority of the population use Social Media to research products.
- Half of the consumers welcome recommendations from Social Media influencers to help with their purchase making decisions.
- Most of the younger generation show interest to purchase via Social Media whereas the old age people are less enthusiastic to buy through this medium.
- Almost 9 out of 10 marketers say that Social Media marketing has created an outcome in their business in the recent times.
- Majority of the small businesses have started using Social Media to promote their business.

LITERATURE REVIEW

- Sony Varghese and Mansi Agrawal (2021) in their study on the topic "Impact of Social Media on Consumer Buying Behavior" among 200 respondents. Convenient sampling technique was adopted in the study. Percentage analysis was used to analyse the data. The research findings revealed that Social Media influencers exerted a favourable impact on consumers' purchasing decisions. Customers are particularly drawn to content showcasing discounts, promotions, and endorsements, as it possesses the ability to shape their mindset and perspective.

- Andy Wijaya, Sisca and Erbin Chandra (2020) in their study on the topic "Effectiveness and Challenges of Social Media Marketing" among 99 students from one of the universities in Pematangsiantar. Purposive sampling method was used in the study. The data was analysed using Percentage analysis. The research uncovered that students frequently utilize Social Media as a platform for marketing their products, leading consumers to frequently seek out information and make purchases after encountering product posts on Social Media. Social media marketing has helped to increase revenue after running the business through social media platforms compared to when it is run traditionally.

- Chahat Chopra and Sachin Gupta (2020) in their study on the topic "Impact of Social Media on Consumer Behaviour" among 136 respondents from New Delhi. The data was analysed using

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Percentage analysis. The study revealed that people were actively using Social Media for purchase making decisions and thus it created a strong impact on the consumer behaviour.

➢ Shamsudeen Ibrahim and Ganeshbabu (2018) in their study on the topic "A Study on the Impact of Social Media Marketing Trends on Digital Marketing". Data is collected through secondary sources. The study found that it is important to connect with users in the case of Digital Marketing and companies are needed to design an effective platform for the better utilisation of Digital Marketing.

➢ Abu Bashar, Irshad Ahmad and Mohammad Wasiq (2012) in their study on the topic "Effectiveness of Social Media as a Marketing Tool: An Empricial Study" among 150 social networkers from Delhi and NCR region. Non- Probability convenience sampling was adopted in the study. The data was analysed using Regression analysis. It showed that independent variable was "To get information about product/service" and "Buying decision" was taken as dependent variable. It indicated the more the companies should stimulate the individuals to talk about their brands/ products the more the chances the consumer will get persuaded towards the products/ brands and will make purchase decision accordingly. It means that consumers do not get what exactly they perceive about Social Media Networks.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To know the Impact of Social Media on Consumer Buying Behaviour after the Pandemic phase.
2. To study how far Social Media is being useful in Consumer Purchase decisions after the Pandemic phase.
3. To identify the factors influencing Consumer Buying Behaviour through Social Media after the Pandemic phase.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

- NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS: 151 Respondents.
- METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION:

  Primary Method - Structured Questionnaire.

  Secondary Method –Articles, Journals and Books.
- TYPE OF SAMPLING: Convenience Sampling.
- AREA OF THE STUDY: Chennai City, Tamilnadu.
- STATISTICAL TOOLS USED: Percentage Analysis and Factor Analysis using SPSS.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study concentrates on Consumer Buying Behaviour influenced from Social Media alone.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This paper aims to know the Impact of Social Media on Consumer Buying Behaviour and how far Social Media is being useful in Consumer Purchase decisions after the Pandemic phase and also to analyze the factors influencing Consumer Buying Behaviour through Social Media after the Pandemic phase. SPSS Package was used for this study. Percentage analysis is used to know the Demographic variable and to know the Impact of Social Media on Consumer Buying Behaviour and how far Social Media is being useful in Consumer Purchase decisions after the Pandemic phase. Factor analysis is used to know the factors influencing Consumer Buying Behaviour through Social Media after the Pandemic phase.

PERCENTAGE ANALYSIS

Table – 1

Demographic profile and Social Media's impact on Consumer Buying Behaviour after the pandemic phase

Variables	Dominant Group	Percentage
Age (in years)	16 - 25	83.4
Gender	Female	55
Marital Status	Unmarried	88.1
Educational Qualification	Post Graduate	32.5
Occupation	Student	57.6
Family Monthly Income	Rs.10,000 – Rs.30,000	49
Time spent on Social Media on a particular day	2 – 4 hours	39.7
Social Media platform that influences the most towards Consumer Purchase decision	Instagram	45.7
Product that Consumers prefer to buy the most from Social Media	Clothes	34.4
Frequency of buying through Social Media applications by Consumers	Rarely	51
Mode of payment that Consumers prefer the most while buying through Social Media	Cash on delivery	54.3
Amount of money that Consumers are ready to spend when buying through Social Media	Below Rs.1,000	47.7

Source: Questionnaire

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Percentage analysis yielded the following findings:

- A significant majority, 83.4% of respondents, belonged to the age group between 16 and 25 years.

- Approximately 55% of respondents were female.

- The majority, 88.1% of respondents, were unmarried.

- 32.5% of respondents held post-graduate qualifications.

- 57.6% of respondents identified themselves as students.

- 49% of respondents belonged to the family monthly income group of Rs.10,000 – Rs.30,000.

- 39.7% of the respondents were spending 2-4 hours on Social Media on a particular day.

- 45.7% of the respondents were getting influenced through Instagram the most towards Consumer Purchase Decision.

- 34.4% of the respondents preferred buying Clothes the most from Social Media.

- 51% of the respondents were buying rarely through Social Media apps.

- Cash on delivery was the preferred mode of payment for purchasing through social media applications for 54.3% of the respondents.

- 47.7% of the respondents were ready to spend below Rs.1,000 when buying through Social Media applications.

FACTOR ANALYSIS

Table-2

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.842
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1068.691
	Df	153
	Sig.	.000

- Table-2 indicates a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy of 0.842, signifying a high value that exceeds 0.5, suggesting the suitability of factor analysis for the dataset.

- Additionally, Bartlett's test of Sphericity yielded a significant value of 0.000, indicating significant relationships among the variables as it is less than 0.05.

- Therefore, it can be inferred that the variables concerning the Impact of Social Media on Consumer Buying Behavior are normally distributed and possess the potential to form factors.

Table-3

Communalities

Components	Initial	Extraction
Purchase decision is influenced by Social Media	1.000	.621
Unplanned purchase is made after viewing a product in Social Media at times	1.000	.778
Level of satisfaction is high on purchase after being referred from Social Media	1.000	.551
Social Media has been useful in purchase making decisions	1.000	.505
Following a brand page helps to know about the product, its quality, variants, prices and others	1.000	.599
Social Media plays an important role in promoting a brand	1.000	.627
Social Media can be taken as electronic word of mouth	1.000	.602
Social Media is more informative and easy to make purchase decisions	1.000	.544
Products and services information are reliable in Social Media	1.000	.583
Social Media helps in getting updated information about the products	1.000	.601
Purchasing through Social Media apps saves time	1.000	.545
Customer reviews posted in Social Media helps to make better purchase decision	1.000	.544
Easy to have queries when buying through Social Media	1.000	.502
Trustable enough in buying through Social Media Apps	1.000	.599
Difficult to buy through Social Media as there is no physical interaction with the products	1.000	.704
Technical problems make you stop buying through Social Media apps	1.000	.780
I will recommend others to buy products through Social Media	1.000	.626
Life without using Social Media is difficult	1.000	.407

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

- From the above table, it is found that the 18 variables range from 0.407 to 0.780. It implies the 18 variables exhibit the variance ranging from 40.7% to 78%.

- These variance limits are more appropriate for variable groupings and formation of factors.

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Table-4

Total Variance

COMPONENT	INITIAL EIGENVALUES			ROTATION SUMS OF SQUARED LOADINGS		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
Purchase decision is influenced by Social Media	6.476	35.980	35.980	3.653	20.296	20.296
Unplanned purchase is made after viewing a product in Social Media at times	1.657	9.204	45.184	3.440	19.113	39.409
Level of satisfaction is high on purchase after being referred from Social Media	1.483	8.238	53.422	2.029	11.271	50.681
Social Media has been useful in purchase making decisions	1.104	6.135	59.557	1.598	8.876	59.557
Following a brand page helps to know about the product, its quality, variants, prices and others	.840	4.667	64.223			
Social Media plays an important role in promoting a brand	.776	4.314	68.537			
Social Media can be taken as electronic word of mouth	.757	4.206	72.743			
Products and services information are reliable in Social Media	.691	3.841	80.497			
Social Media helps in getting updated information about the products	.543	3.019	83.516			

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Purchasing through Social Media apps saves time	.523	2.903	86.419			
Customer reviews posted in Social Media helps to make better purchase decision	.488	2.712	89.131			
Easy to have queries when buying through Social Media	.437	2.430	91.561			
Trustable enough in buying through Social Media Apps	.419	2.325	93.886			
Difficult to buy through Social Media as there is no physical interaction with the products	.354	1.968	95.854			
Technical problems make you stop buying through Social Media apps	.283	1.574	97.427			
I will recommend others to buy products through Social Media	.250	1.387	98.815			
Life without using Social Media is difficult	.213	1.185	100.00			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

- From the provided table, it is observed that 18 variables have been condensed into 4 main factors, collectively explaining 59.557% of the variance.

- These factors individually exhibit variances of 20.296%, 19.113%, 11.271%, and 8.876%.

- The specific variable loadings are detailed in the Rotated Component Matrix.

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Table-5

Rotated Component Matrix

COMPONENT	1	2	3	4
Social Media plays an important role in promoting a brand	.770			
Following a brand page helps to know about the product, its quality, variants, prices and others	.751			
Social Media can be taken as electronic word of mouth	.713			
Customer reviews posted in Social Media helps to make better purchase decision	.707			
Social Media is more informative and easy to make purchase decisions	.555			
Easy to have queries when buying through Social Media	.539			
Social Media helps in getting updated information about the products		.591		
Trustable enough in buying through Social Media Apps		.730		
Products and services information are reliable in Social Media		.712		
I will recommend others to buy products through Social Media		.683		
Life without using Social Media is difficult		.584		
Purchasing through Social Media apps saves time		.537		
Social Media has been useful in purchase making decisions		.506		
Unplanned purchase is made after viewing a product in Social Media at times			.867	
Purchase decision is influenced by Social Media			.731	
Level of satisfaction is high on purchase after being referred from Social Media			.582	
Technical problems make you stop buying through Social Media apps				.854
Difficult to buy through Social Media as there is no physical interaction with the products				.793

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

The First factor consists of six variables as follows:

1.	Social Media plays an important role in promoting a brand	.770
2.	Following a brand page helps to know about the product, its quality, variants, prices and others	.751
3.	Social Media can be taken as electronic word of mouth	.713
4.	Customer reviews posted in Social Media helps to make better purchase decision	.707
5.	Social Media is more informative and easy to make purchase decisions	.555
6.	Easy to have queries when buying through Social Media	.539

Therefore this factor can be named as "SERVICE AVAILABILITY"

Social Media serves customers and marketers in many ways and that helps in Consumer Buying Behaviour.

The Second factor consists of seven variables as follows:

1.	Social Media helps in getting updated information about the products	.591
2.	Trustable enough in buying through Social Media Apps	.730
3.	Products and services information are reliable in Social Media	.712
4.	I will recommend others to buy products through Social Media	.683
5.	Life without using Social Media is difficult	.584
6.	Purchasing through Social Media apps saves time	.537
7.	Social Media has been useful in purchase making decisions	.506

Therefore this factor can be named as "RELIANCE"

People started to rely on Social Media for almost everything and that promoted Purchase decisions as well.

The Third factor consists of three variables as follows:

1.	Unplanned purchase is made after viewing a product in Social Media at times	.867
2.	Purchase decision is influenced by Social Media	.731
3.	Level of satisfaction is high on purchase after being referred from Social Media	.582

Therefore this factor can be named as "UNIQUENESS"

The unique qualities of Social Media promote more of Consumer Buying Behaviour.

The Fourth factor consists of two variables as follows:

1.	Technical problems make you stop buying through Social Media apps	.854
2.	Difficult to buy through Social Media as there is no physical interaction with the products	.793

Therefore this factor can be named as "HINDRANCE"

Even though there is much usefulness in Social Media, there are some hindrances that stop Consumer Buying Behaviour at times.

CONCLUSION

Social Media Marketing has become the solid strategy in recent days. Over fifty percent of the global population is using Social Media on a daily basis and so it has become the strongest medium for marketing. After the outbreak of Pandemic, people started to use Social Media more than the usual as they are at home and that impacted more of Consumer Buying Behaviour. People now are used to check everything in Social Media before making a purchase decision. Youngsters rely on Social Media to research a product every time and show interest in buying through Social Media whereas older ones are less enthusiastic and do not show maximum interest in buying through Social Media or making purchase decisions because they spend less time on Social Media and some are not even using it. Marketers are making the maximum use of Social Media and their efforts created a positive impact in their businesses. They are just being active in Social Media posting about their products then and there and replying to customer's queries instantly and showing the customers that they really care for them and make their buying as smooth as possible. Service Availability, Reliance, Unique qualities and hindrances of Social Media were the factors that influenced Consumer buying behaviour. Thus it can be finalized that Social Media is being useful for both the Consumers and Marketers as well and its Impact on Consumer Buying Behaviour is comparatively more after the Pandemic Phase.

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