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Impact of social media engagement on consumer buying behaviour of youth in Patna, Bihar

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Abstract

In today's digital age, social media has become a powerful influence on how young people think, connect, and make purchasing decisions. The study focuses on how social media engagement influences the buying behaviour of young consumers in Patna. It is among the most developing cities of Bihar, especially in the context of today's fast-moving digital world. The study aims to understand the influence of social media platforms on consumer buying behaviour of youth. It also investigates the types of social media content that affect decision making in digital commerce. The study helps us to understand the link between engagement on social media and actual purchase intentions. Now that social media has become such a big part of everyday life, it's necessary to understand how these platforms structure their marketing strategies, attitudes, preferences, and decisions as consumers.

In the VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex, ambiguous) world it is important to understand the changing style of marketing in uncertain and volatile environment as factors affecting the major consumer buying behaviour.

This study is based on primary data, which is collected from young audience in Patna, Bihar. This research will provide maximum benefit to marketers, brands, and businesses aiming to connect with youth more effectively. By understanding what attracts their attention and influence their choices, companies can create better strategies in the evolving prospect of e-commerce.

Keywords; consumer buying behaviour, social media engagement, digital influence, digital marketing strategies

INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade social media has successfully transformed how consumers discover about products, form opinions, and make purchasing decision over them. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube which was merely built for entertainment and connectivity purpose have now evolved as a new channel for marketing by brands and influence the users to purchase from them. Factors like user review, peer pressure, trend, brand influences jointly reshape the user buying behavior. According to data report, there are 5.41 billion social media users around the world at the start of July 2025, which equates to 65.7% of total population. Over 241 million new users have joined in 12 months. This clearly indicates how powerful the new channel has become. In the VUCA world if the organizations don't focus on the shifting consumer behavior they won't be able to survive in this dynamic environment. Social media is not just a source of information but a primary marketplace and a space for building identity. Understanding how social media engagement influences their purchasing choices is therefore essential for marketers, policymakers, and educators.

Patna, Bihar is among fastest developing cities is witnessing a boost in online usage among youth especially due to better internet connectivity and networking. Social media engagement is one of the major reasons and impacts on consumer buying behaviour. By focusing on youth of Patna, this study addresses the gap in understanding consumer buying behaviour on youth in digital consumption in tier 2 cities like Patna.

This research aims understanding the relationship between different forms of social media engagement impacting consumer buying behavior by linking various factors. The study's findings will contribute to digital marketers while also informing broader discussions on digital literacy.

Objectives:

1. To examine the influence of social media platforms on consumer buying behaviour of youth
2. To investigate the different types of social media content which affect decision making of youth in Patna, Bihar
3. To explore the relationship between social media engagement and purchase intention

Research methodology:

The study follows a quantitative research approach. A descriptive research design has been used to understand, observe, and analyse existing behaviours and perceptions of the youth towards social media and online buying behaviour, in Patna, Bihar. The research is based on primary data, collected through a structured questionnaire. The technique used for Data collection was simple random sampling. The sample size collected is of 150 respondents belonging to the age group of 13-35 years.

Various descriptive statistical tools such as frequency distribution, percentage, mean average, crosstabulation and correlation analysis, and graphical representation of data have been applied via Excel Software

VUCA world and consumer behaviour

In the VUCA world, businesses must continuously adapt to shifting consumer preferences, technological disruptions, and global uncertainties. Consumers have taken a big shift in their buying behaviour from traditional methods to modern methods like purchase through social media or ecommerce. In the complexities of different social media content and consumer buying behaviour, organisations have to come up with different strategies to market their products to the target audience where in the information of the

consumers are easily accessible through their social media engagement. Volatile and uncertain environment contributes to new social media marketing strategies and impacts the youth demographics.

Growing dependence on social media

In the modern era of technological advancements, consumer buying behaviour has also taken a shift. It is influenced differently for selection of products overtime. The growing dependence on e-commerce platforms has transformed shopping into a quick, comfortable, and efficient experience, allowing people to get explore about more goods and services. This shift is driven by factors such as convenience, ease of comparison, and the comfort of home delivery.

Over the years, companies have significantly increased their presence and engagement on social media platforms. According to a survey, 79% of the companies have social media presence and 38% of the companies plan to increase their spendings on social media advertisement by 20%. This clearly indicates the growth of social media over the years.

With rise in digitalization, businesses have understood the immense potential of social media as a powerful source for marketing, communication, and customer engagement. Platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), and LinkedIn have become key channels.

The amount of daily content shared on social media increased from 27 million pieces of content in 2011 to 3.2 billion in 2018 (Smith, 2018).

Influence of social media platform on consumer buying behaviour

The marketers try to understand the utilization of social media by the consumers and their deciding pattern on the basis of the content showed there that can change their decision process. Consumers are most active on social media, which becomes the best channel to market the products. There by the consumers buy what they see. The youth nowadays depend mostly depend on the content they see and look upon the trends which majorly influences their choices. These contents are available on social media like Instagram, Facebook.

Social media marketing

Since the consumers use considerable amount of their time on social media for it is important for organisations to focus on this opportunity and make it a channel for marketing their

products. Many organizations have started department of social media marketing where in the major focus of work is on marketing their products via social media. This department mainly works on creating content on social media that attract customer’s attention, handling official social handles of brands and building consumer relationships and bonds through these platforms.

ANALYSIS

Social media Usage

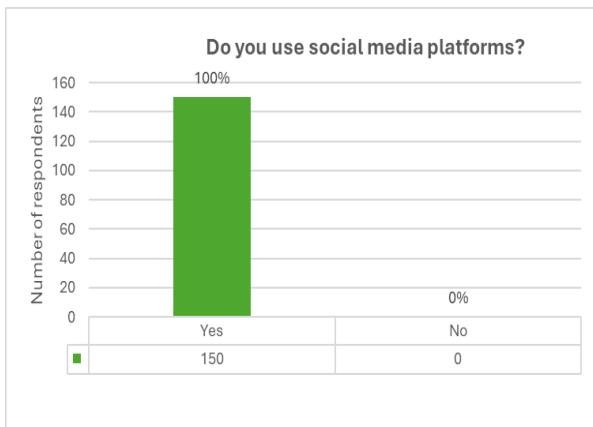


Figure 1: social media usage

Interpretation: All 150 respondents use social media as it as source for information and awareness along with a channel to communicate formally or informally. Social media helps in networking as well. Besides this, it is also a medium for shopping and brand discovery. Using social media for such a prolonged period has made it to daily lives and among one of the daily habits of all.

Average time spent on social media

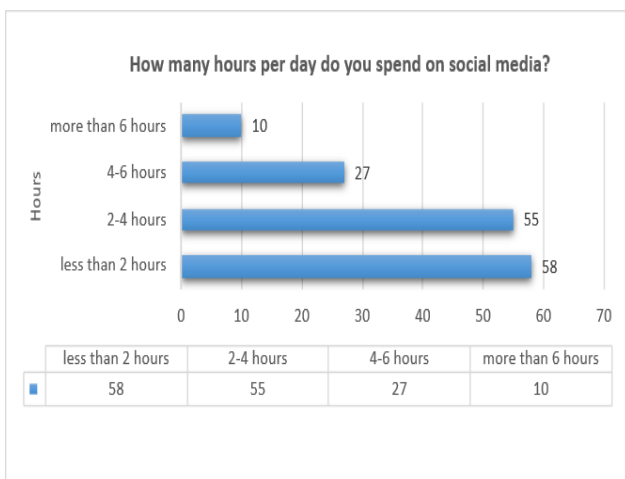


Figure 2: Average time spent on social media

Interpretation: As per the data collected, to find the average number of hours respondents spend on social media each day, class midpoints and frequencies were calculated to find mean average time spent. A large portion of the respondents i.e 38.66% use social media for less than 2 hours daily, which suggest short but frequent engagement is quite common. 36.66% respondents spend 2-4 hours depicting moderate daily social media usage. 6.66% of the respondents over 6 hours per day and on an average the total respondents spend approximately 2.85 hours per day on social media indicating it is widely used among the selected age groups.

Various social media used by different age groups

Social Media Platforms	13-18 years	19-25 years	26-30 years	31-35 years	Grand Total
facebook	1	12	1	18	32
instagram	5	32	6	26	69
snapchat		1		1	2
youtube	2	22		23	47
Grand Total	8	67	7	68	150

Figure 3: Various social media used by different age groups

Interpretation: The most popular social media across all the age groups selected for the purpose of the study is Instagram, used by 46% of the respondents. YouTube ranks at second position in most used social media with 31.3% respondents first choice.

Influence of social media on purchase behavior

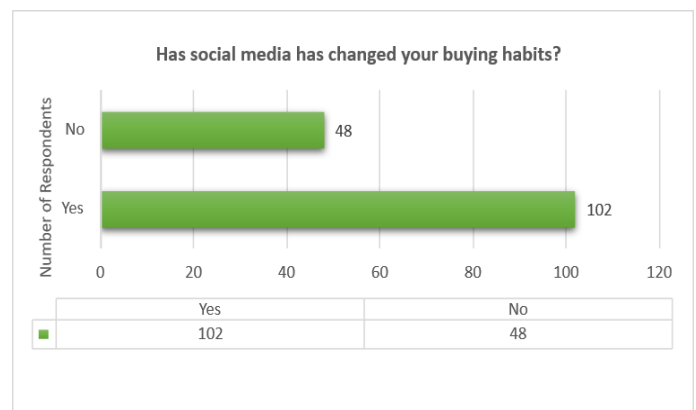


Figure 4: Influence of social media on purchase behavior

Interpretation: 68% respondents agree to the fact that social media has changed their buying habits. The data collected reveals that out of 150 respondents 68% agree that social media influences their purchase decision while 32% suggested that their purchase decision remain unaffected by social media exposure. as they may rely on traditional information sources or their own personal preferences rather than digital recommendations. Therefore, majority of the youth acknowledge social media's influence on their decision making while purchasing products.

Purchase of products through social media

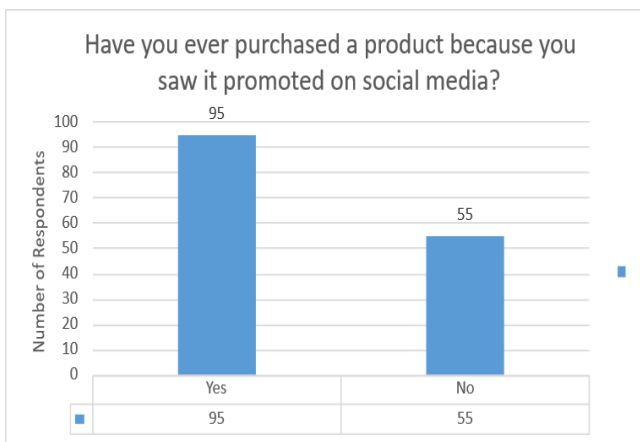


Figure 5: Purchase of products through social media

Interpretation: 63.3% respondents agree that they purchase products after viewing social media content as these platforms shape their perception, emotions and trust through several powerful psychological and marketing factors such as social proof, peer influence, influencer endorsement, aesthetic visuals, convenient access to buying, personalized advertising, customer review and user generated content they find the product trending where as 36.7% do not purchase products based on only social media content but also take into consideration other factors that influence decision making

Purchases through social media by each age group

Age Groups	Count of Purchased via Social Media
13-18 years	5.33%
19-25 years	44.67%
26-30 years	4.67%
31-35 years	45.33%
Grand Total	100.00%

Figure 6: Purchases through social media by each age group

Interpretation: Out of the 63.3% respondents who make purchase decisions through social media content, the highest engagement-based purchasing belong to the 31-35 years (45.33%) and 19-25 years (44.67%) together accounting for almost 90% of social media driven purchases. This indicates young adults and working professionals have higher digital exposure, online shopping preference and higher spending power. Whereas the age group 13-18 years are likely to have limited financial independence. The age group of 26-30 years often make practical need based spendings rather than trend driven purchases.

Social media content and decision making among youth.

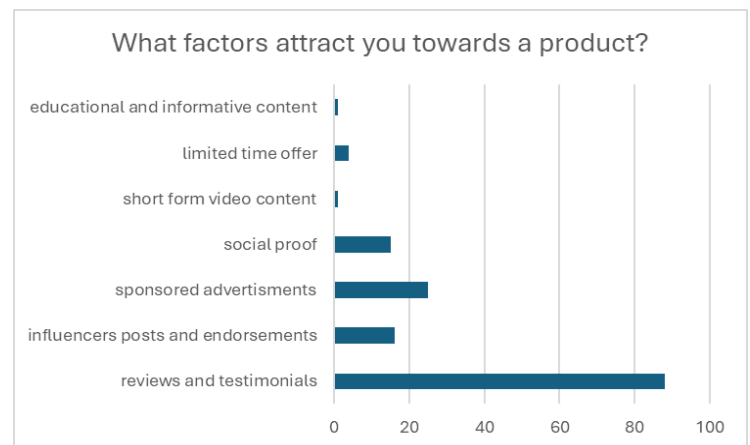


Figure 7: Social media content and decision making among youth

Interpretation: 58.6% respondents mainly depend on the reviews while purchasing a product as it directly given by experience and can be highly trusted.16.6% respondents are driven by sponsored advertisement made by brands on social media as they are easily visible and attractive for the customers to focus on. 10.6% respondents trust the posts made by influencers and their reviews as they are very famous and set trends for the audience. Trends influence 10% of the respondents only as it usually attractive for young audience. Limited time offer like discounts encourage 2.6% respondents as respondents don't find these deals of much help. Education content and short form videos are concern of only 0.6% respondents as these are not made for marketing purpose by more for education and entertainment purpose.

Factors affecting digital purchase decision.

factors Affecting purchase Decision	Sum of Yes	Sum of No
EngagementEffect	22.66%	15.81%
FollowBrands	15.25%	27.49%
InfluencerTrust	14.16%	29.21%
ProductPopularity	18.74%	21.99%
ReadReviews	29.19%	5.50%
Grand Total	100.00%	100.00%

Figure 8 : Factors affecting digital purchase decision.

Interpretation: The major factor that affects purchase decision is reviews by 29.19% as it is based on experience and most reliable of all. 22.66% respondents trust the engagement effects through their social media. 29.21% Respondents don't trust influencer reviews as it mostly paid and doesn't provide accurate information. Social media of brands and product popularity too are not trusted by 27.49% and 21.99% respectively as it is not interactive to the audience.

Purchase via social media and satisfaction on the purchase

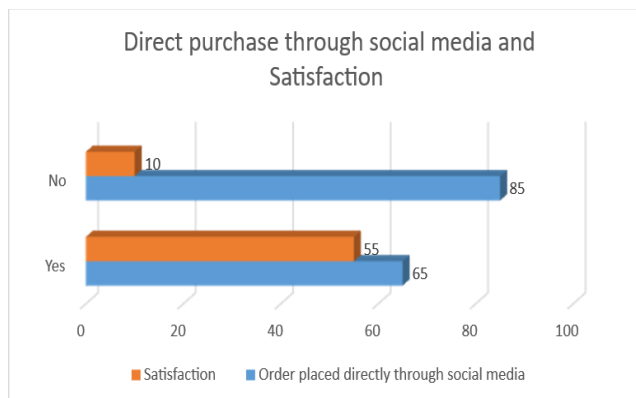


Figure 9: Purchase via social media and satisfaction on the purchase

Interpretation: out of 150 respondents 43.33% have order directly from social media as it is convenient and one stop for finding trendy products and purchasing them as well. Though 56.7% have not purchased directly from social media due to lack of trust, unavailable product descriptions, no authenticity, unclear details about refunds, limited payment and delivery options and fear of fake brands and products. Among the 43.33% purchasers 36.67% were satisfied with product received and 6.66% were not satisfied from the products received.

Social media engagement and purchase intention

The correlation analysis between social media engagement and purchase intention calculated through several relevant questions for both variables combined into a single social media engagement score and single purchase intention score, revealed a coefficient value of $r = 0.834$, indicating a strong positive relationship between both the variables selected for the purpose of study.

The finding suggests that higher levels of social media content engagement are strongly associated with greater likelihood of purchase intention of products promoted on social media platforms. Therefore, respondents who are highly active and involved in social media exhibit strong purchase intention. This underscores that this social media engagement plays a significant role in shaping the purchase motivation and influences consumer buying behavior particularly among the youth of Patna, Bihar

The way forward:

The research serves as a foundation for understanding how crucial social media has become as a factor affecting consumers. With technological advancements increasing rapidly, social media has become one of the major channels for consumers to visit brands and a massive opportunity for companies to market their products.

The study will benefit the companies by understanding factors that majorly influence the choice of the consumers. This study reveals how social media actively used by the youth now and factors that majorly impact the choice of the consumer along with many other facts that could help them take decisions wisely regarding the new channel.

Along with already established companies, new startups can use this research to take the correct steps and move forward in the right direction focusing on the factors that will benefit them the most by taking accurate decision.

All coins have two sides. The study clearly shows how important social media has become, but with this comes a huge risk of theft and scams. To save the consumers from this, government should bring out effective laws regarding the safety of consumers and their data. Government shall also organize public awareness programs to educate people regarding their rights and scams.

Conclusion:

In a world full of changing dynamics, the only constant is change. In the VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex, ambiguous) world the consumer buying behavior is uncertain and has changed swiftly as well. Where in the environment is highly volatile and ambiguous for understanding the situation. The complex dynamics among the factors combined, to conclude, this research is aimed at understanding how social media impacted the consumer buying behavior in the youth of Patna, Bihar. The research evidentially states how important social media has become with context to source of purchase by youth and marketing opportunities by the companies. Over the period of years, consumers have taken a massive shift from traditional method of purchasing to modern method. The biggest reason behind this shift is the convenient communication channel. The youth is most active on Instagram and YouTube now which gives the companies a fair chance to market their product to the target customers via social media. The study subtly emphasizes that the major focus of the companies should now be on digital engagement strategies. Factors affecting the buying behavior has transformed as well to reviews and testimonials. Many companies nowadays have a separate team for social media marketing or to handle social media handles, which is a clear indication of companies too are realizing and taking note of the importance of this channel for advertising. Overall, this study witnesses the idea that social media is not merely a communication platform but a key ingredient in today's digital era as there is a positive relation between use of social media and purchase intention of the youth.

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