



INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR: A STUDY OF DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT AND PURCHASE DECISION-MAKING

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Abstract

Today, social media is an integral part of our lives, mostly because it has changed the way that people behave as customers. Social media platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook have become primary platforms for communicating and interacting with brands. The main goal of this research paper therefore is to assess the influence of social media on the buying behaviour of consumers and the possibility that digital engagement affects purchasing. The case study of Nykaa is used to evaluate the influence of social media within the beauty and wellness industry based on the impact that it had on its success. It is noteworthy to highlight that the influencer marketing industry in India is projected to grow to INR 3,375 crores (approximately \$436 million) by 2026 with an anticipated CAGR of 18% — thus demonstrating the increasing commercial importance of social media. The analysis of both the metrics associated with digital engagement and the response of consumers to consumer engagement with brands demonstrates how digital engagement ultimately results in a purchasing decision. The study analyzes engagement metrics and consumer responses to show how digital interactions translate into purchase decisions

Key words: *social media, decision making, influencers.*

1. Introduction

As a result of the advancements in digital technology and the increasing availability of the internet, consumers are changing their shopping habits. The rise of social media has also created a new platform through which consumers can make purchasing decisions by finding information about what to buy from others, as well as how to interact with brands. According to Statista (2024), there are approximately 5 billion internet users worldwide, and approximately 4.8 billion people are active users of social media. Within India, the rapid increase in the number of smartphones and the affordability of internet services have caused much digital engagement. Many consumers are now using social media platforms, like Instagram and YouTube, to discover products and evaluate brands.

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Consumer behavior describes the process consumers go through to identify, purchase, and consume products or services. Within the digital environment, various social influences like influencer marketing, and personalisation significantly change how consumers form their behaviours.

2. Literature Review

According to Kotler & Keller (2016) there are four main types of factors that affect consumer behaviour: cultural, social, personal, and psychological. Social media enhances these influences by providing constant exposure to different types of content

Solomon (2018) points out that consumers label certain products as having symbolic meaning. The construction of these labels usually comes through media narratives. Social media platforms through narratives provide additional symbolic value to products through storytelling and visuals.

Kaplan & Haenlein (2010) describe social media as a platform that provides consumers the ability to create and share content with one another. The large amount of user generated content created by users greatly impacts how consumers view themselves and make decisions.

Mangold & Faulds (2009) describe social media as a hybrid communication medium that combines traditional advertising with word-of-mouth communication. The combination of a hybrid advertising medium and a hybrid social medium creates a very powerful influence in relation to consumer behaviour.

According to research by the Nielsen, 92% of consumers trust recommendations from individuals over brands, highlighting the importance of peer influence.

According to Pew Research Centre's research, many consumers depend on social media for product information and reviews before making a purchase. EY Report "State of Influencer Marketing in India" indicates that marketers are equally using large/macro influencers and micro & Nano Influencers. Brand ambassadors (BAs) and influencers play a major role in driving purchase decisions.

Chaffey (2020) has also noted how digital marketing strategies can influence the way consumers interact with brands by using analytics and targeted content to develop effective engagement strategies with the audience. Kapoor and Gupta (2018) have recognised the digital marketing tactics that Nykaa has employed to get attention. Studies demonstrate how Nykaa uses social media interactions and influencer marketing to gain new customers and retain its existing customer base. According to Deepanshi Rawat, Dr Sucharita Sen (2024) Nykaa has formed successful partnerships with numerous brands and influencers. As a result, Nykaa has

launched exclusive products which not only set Nykaa apart from its competitors, but also create user excitement and anticipation.

Overall, the literature suggests that social media has fundamentally changed consumer behaviour by increasing access to information, enhancing engagement, and strengthening peer influence.

3. Objectives of the Study

1. To understand consumer behaviour in the context of digital media.
2. To analyze the role of social media in influencing purchase decisions.
3. To examine the impact of influencers and user-generated content with reference to Naayka.
4. To evaluate theoretical models related to consumer behaviour.
5. To identify challenges associated with social media-driven consumption.

4 Concept of Consumer Behaviour in Digital Media

The study of consumer behaviour is all about how consumers pick, buy, use and throw away products or services. With the rise of digital media, consumer behaviour is influenced by online interactions and the sharing of different types of information across networks.

Social media has allowed for a change from traditional linear purchasing behaviour to an interactive, non-linear approach. Consumers now have a much more active role throughout the entire purchasing process. They are now able to connect with brands directly, looking for opinions of their peers, comparing alternative products and checking digital sources prior to making a purchase. Their purchasing decisions are heavily influenced by visible indicators of social proof (likes, reviews, comments and shares) which can quickly establish trust and credibility. Recommendations from influencers establish relatable and persuasive communication. Additionally, consumers also rely on partially personalized marketing that has been developed through algorithms. Real time feedback through comments and other forms of interaction allows consumers to evaluate products quickly. Consequently, digital interaction has become a key contributor to shaping today's consumers' behaviours and decision making.

5. Theoretical Framework:

The AIDA model explains how social media captures attention, generates interest, creates desire, and drives action through engaging content. The Theory of Planned Behavior highlights how consumer attitudes perceived social norms, through online interactions, shapes decisions. Social Proof Theory highlights the tendency to rely on peer reviews and ratings.

6. Role of Social Media in Consumer Behaviour:

Social media plays a critical role through:

Awareness: Brands use digital platforms for promotion

Information Search: Access to reviews and videos

Evaluation: Comparison through content

Purchase Decision: Influenced by advertisements and influencers

Post-Purchase Behaviour: Reviews and feedback

7. Case Study: Influence of Social Media on Consumer Behaviour with reference to Nykaa

Nykaa was established as the vision of Falguni Nayar in 2012 and since then has become one of India's largest beauty platforms. It began as an eCommerce portal with a wide range of beauty products.. In 2020, Nykaa was priced at Rs.85 billion, which made it the first-ever unicorn startup led by an Indian woman. Their presence on social media makes them a strong force to be reckoned with, especially with many influencer partnerships and user-generated reviews, highlighting "Source digitally and shop physically" strategy, combining online discovery with offline experience. In the financial year 2024–2025, Nykaa's digital marketing focused on hyper-personalization, seamless omnichannel experiences, and tech-enabled customer journeys.

7.1 Strategy Used

- Instagram: Regular posts featuring tutorials, product launches, and influencer collaborations keep followers engaged.
- Facebook: Utilized to share offers and deals, engage content, and drive traffic to the website.
- YouTube: Nykaa TV serves as an educational hub, reinforcing brand authority.
- Influencer collaborations for product promotion- The brand has strategically partnered with influencers at all levels—from macro-celebrities to nano creators—ensuring reach across all tiers of the Indian audience.
- User-generated reviews and testimonials
- Personalized recommendations
- Content-Driven Engagement-One of Nykaa's most powerful marketing engines is content. Nykaa has over 100,000 creators creating over 2 million pieces of content.
- Beauty Book Blog: Nykaa's in-house blog offers articles on trending beauty topics, seasonal skincare routines, product recommendations, and ingredient spotlights. This

content is SEO-rich, helping Nykaa rank for thousands of beauty-related keywords organically.

Notable campaigns include:

- #WhatMakesYouBeautiful – A self-love movement celebrating all skin tones and types
- #PowerOfMakeup – Encouraging transformation, creativity, and personal expression through makeup

7.2 Insights

A study by BrightLocal found that 74 % of Indian consumers read online reviews before making a purchase decision, indicating the strong role of social proof and peer evaluations in pre-purchase behaviour. Research on online consumer behaviour shows that 51 % of Indian shoppers use social media to check visuals or live reviews before purchasing, further demonstrating the importance of social media content (likes, comments, peer feedback) in consumers' evaluation stages

Nykaa has created one of the largest influencer/affiliate networks in India with over 100,000 creators generating over 2 million pieces of user-generated social-media content (posts, videos, reels). During campaigns leveraging influencer advocacy (such as during sales events), Nykaa has reported a 32% increase in user-generated content compared to prior periods, indicating that influencer advocacy has a significant impact on driving greater numbers of organic consumers to engage and show interest online. Furthermore, a study conducted on purchasing behaviour showed that 50% of respondents were influenced by Nykaa's social-media marketing when making purchasing decisions.

8.Challenges

- Misleading ratings and false claims distort consumer trust and decision accuracy.
- Data tracking and personalized ads may lead to misuse of personal information.
- Continuous exposure to persuasive content encourages unplanned buying.
- Excess dependence on online opinions reduces independent evaluation.

9. Conclusion

Social media has changed consumer behaviour by providing information access, creating opportunities for interaction. Platforms such as YouTube and Instagram have considerable influence over consumer preferences.

Nykaa's case study demonstrates the real-world use of social media's influence on consumer behaviour. Social media will continue to influence consumers and marketers even with challenges today — this area of study is essential to marketers and businesses.

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