



The Influence of Social Media Platforms and Advertisements on Consumer Purchasing Behavior: A Study of Demographic Variations in Nepalese Youth

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Abstract

Background: The growing influence of social media platforms on consumer behavior, particularly in developing countries like Nepal, has been a subject of increasing interest. As social media usage rises, the impact of advertisements on purchasing decisions becomes a critical area of exploration, especially among the youth. This study seeks to understand how demographic factors, including age and gender, affect social media usage patterns and the influence of advertisements on purchasing behaviors. **Objective:** The primary objective of this research is to examine the relationship between social media usage and consumer purchasing decisions, with a focus on the demographic characteristics of age and gender among Nepalese youth. **Methods:** A cross-sectional survey was conducted with 123 respondents from different age groups, ranging from 16 to above 35 years. Descriptive data analysis was employed to assess demographic distributions and social media usage patterns, while a Chi-Square test was used to analyze the influence of gender on purchasing behavior due to social media advertisements. Respondents were asked about their preferred social media platforms, purchasing behaviors, and their views on the influence of social media advertisements. **Findings:** The results revealed that Instagram is the most popular social media platform across all age groups, with a notable gender difference in platform preferences. Social media advertisements were found to influence purchasing behavior, with a majority of respondents either agreeing or being uncertain about their impact. The Chi-Square test showed no significant relationship between gender and the influence of social media advertisements on purchasing decisions. The majority of participants, particularly those aged 16-25, indicated that they were influenced by social media ads in their purchasing choices. **Conclusion:** This study highlights the substantial impact of social media



advertisements on the purchasing decisions of Nepalese youth, particularly among those aged 16-25. Gender did not appear to significantly influence the effectiveness of these advertisements. The findings suggest that social media platforms, especially Instagram and Facebook, play a crucial role in shaping consumer behavior, and advertisers should focus on these platforms to target younger audiences. **Novelty:** This study provides valuable insights into the specific impact of social media advertisements on consumer behavior in Nepal, a developing market, and explores the role of demographic factors in shaping these behaviors.

Keywords: Social media, consumer buying behavior, social media marketing, online shopping

Introduction

Consumer behavior research delves into how groups such as families, friends, cultural influences, and reference groups impact individuals. It explores how individuals, groups, or organizations select, use, and dispose of products, services, and experiences. Understanding consumer behavior is crucial for predicting customer preferences and fostering customer loyalty, which directly enhances customer relationship management (CRM). CRM, in turn, is supported by consumer behavior insights, enabling companies to assess their investments effectively (Anjorin, et al. 2024).

Customer loyalty is a mix of attitudes and behaviors that result in long-term relationships with customers. Behavioral loyalty, particularly in service and industrial marketing, is characterized by repeated customer engagement and brand retention. By analyzing consumer behavior, businesses can strengthen their CRM strategies, leading to higher customer acquisition success, improved profitability, and a competitive edge in the marketplace (Balli, 2024).

The advent of social media has significantly reshaped consumer behavior. Modern consumers engage in a variety of online activities such as blogging, chatting, gaming, and messaging. Through these platforms, they gather information, seek advice, and interact with peers. As social media evolves, it has become a powerful tool for businesses to connect with consumers, particularly in developed countries, where its impact is more pronounced (Gharbauj & Alani 2024).

Social media platforms facilitate communication and encourage the exchange of thoughts, emotions, and beliefs. Unlike traditional communication methods, social media transcends spatial and temporal barriers. It also enables individuals to share multimedia content and interact via user-friendly interfaces, even without technical expertise. With these advancements, consumers now use social media networks and websites to shop online and access information (Prajapati, 2024).

Organizations worldwide have embraced social networks like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Google+ to engage with customers and stay updated. These platforms enable companies to foster relationships and communicate effectively. Among these, Facebook and Twitter have emerged as dominant channels for real-time customer interaction. Social media has also



become a crucial tool for businesses to drive website traffic and promote their products, functioning similarly to traditional word-of-mouth marketing (Kaukoranta, 2024).

Social media networks offer businesses an unparalleled opportunity to influence consumer buying behavior. With hundreds of millions of active users on platforms like Facebook, businesses leverage these networks to expand their marketing strategies, particularly in retail. Corporate messages on social media spread rapidly, often benefiting the company by shaping consumer perceptions favorably (Shrestha, 2023).

Social media has firmly established itself at the core of the business-consumer relationship, offering new ways for companies to connect and engage with customers. This growing influence has made it essential for businesses to understand the impact of social media on consumer purchasing decisions. Consequently, more organizations are utilizing these platforms for marketing purposes, underscoring the need to examine how social media drives consumer behavior in the modern marketplace (Singh, 2024; Yadav et al., 2024).

The general objective of this study is to examine the influence of social media on consumer buying behavior, focusing on how social media platforms impact purchasing decisions, consumer perceptions, and engagement with brands. The study aims to assess the role of social media in shaping consumer attitudes and behavior, particularly in relation to online and offline shopping, social media advertisements, and the factors that influence purchase intentions.

Methods and Materials

This study employed a quantitative research approach with a cross-sectional survey design to gather data on social media usage, gender differences, and the influence of social media advertisements on purchasing behavior. A total of 123 respondents participated in the survey, which was designed to capture demographic information, social media platform usage patterns, and perceptions of social media advertisements. The respondents were selected using a non-probability sampling method, ensuring that the sample represented a variety of ages, genders, and income levels, although the majority of respondents were aged 16-25 years. The survey instrument included both closed-ended and multiple-choice questions to collect data efficiently and ensure consistency across all responses.

The survey covered several key areas, including demographic details (such as age, gender, and income), as well as usage patterns of popular social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok. It also included a question to assess how social media advertisements influence purchasing decisions. Respondents were asked to choose from a range of options, including "Strongly agree," "Maybe," "Disagree," and "None of the above," to capture their perceptions of the effectiveness of social media ads. Data were then analyzed using descriptive statistical methods, focusing on frequencies, percentages, and cross-tabulations. This approach enabled the researcher to identify trends and patterns in social media usage and the influence of advertisements across different demographic segments.



For the analysis, the study used SPSS software to perform descriptive data analysis and to conduct a Chi-Square test to explore potential relationships between gender and the influence of social media advertisements on purchasing behavior. The Chi-Square test was used to examine whether gender had any statistically significant impact on respondents' purchasing decisions related to social media advertisements. The results were interpreted with caution due to the presence of some cells with expected counts less than five, which could affect the reliability of the test. The survey's findings were then presented in tables to provide a clear and concise overview of the demographic distribution, platform usage, and purchasing behavior, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of the study's key objectives.

Results and Analysis

Demographic information

Table 1: Age

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	16-25	92	74.8	74.8	74.8
	25-30	21	17.1	17.1	91.9
	30-35	5	4.1	4.1	95.9
	35 above	5	4.1	4.1	100.0
	Total	123	100.0	100.0	

Source: Survey 2024

Table 1 presents the age distribution of respondents. The majority of respondents (74.8%) are aged between 16-25 years, indicating that the sample primarily consists of younger individuals. A smaller proportion, 17.1%, falls within the 25-30 age group, while 4.1% each are in the 30-35 and 35-above categories. This distribution shows that the dataset is heavily skewed towards younger age groups, with cumulative percentages reaching 91.9% by the 25-30 age range and 100% by the 35-above category.

Table 2: Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Female	63	51.2	51.2	51.2
	Male	60	48.8	48.8	100.0
	Total	123	100.0	100.0	

Source: Survey 2024

Table 2 illustrates the gender distribution of respondents. Out of 123 participants, 51.2% are female, and 48.8% are male. The data indicates a nearly balanced representation of genders, with females slightly outnumbering males. The cumulative percentage shows that by including the male respondents, the total reaches 100%, confirming the dataset's completeness.

Table 3: Income

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	10000-20000	23	18.7	18.7	18.7
	20000-30000	20	16.3	16.3	35.0
	30000 above	37	30.1	30.1	65.0
	Below 10000	43	35.0	35.0	100.0
	Total	123	100.0	100.0	

Source: Survey 2024

The table provides the income distribution of respondents. The largest group (35.0%) earns below NPR 10,000, followed by 30.1% who earn above NPR 30,000. Smaller proportions of respondents fall into the NPR 10,000-20,000 (18.7%) and NPR 20,000-30,000 (16.3%) income ranges. The cumulative percentage shows that 65.0% of respondents earn above NPR 10,000, with the remaining 35.0% earning below NPR 10,000. This indicates a diverse income distribution with a significant portion of respondents at the lower end of the income spectrum.

Table 4: Crosstab of Gender and Used Social Media Platforms

Gender * 2. Which social media platforms do you use the most? (You can choose as many as you want)											
Crosstabulation											
		Coupang , Ali express	Facebook	Instagram	LinkedIn	Pinterest	Snapchat	Tiktok	Websites	YouTube	
Gender	Female	0	13	31	1	0	1	6	1	10	63
	Male	1	23	28	0	1	0	1	0	6	60
Total		1	36	59	1	1	1	7	1	16	123

Source: Survey 2024

Table 4 provides a crosstabulation of gender and the most-used social media platforms by respondents. It highlights the following patterns:

- **Instagram** is the most frequently used platform with 59 users overall, comprising 31 females and 28 males, indicating high popularity among both genders.
- **Facebook** is the second most-used platform with 36 users, including 13 females and 23 males, suggesting a stronger preference among males.
- **YouTube** is used by 16 respondents, with more female users (10) than males (6).
- Other platforms, such as **TikTok**, have limited usage (7 users in total), predominantly by females (6 users).
- Platforms like **LinkedIn**, **Pinterest**, and **Snapchat** have minimal usage, with just 1 user each. **Coupang and AliExpress** are used only by 1 male respondent.

Overall, Instagram emerges as the most popular platform across genders, with a notable gender disparity favoring males for Facebook and females for TikTok and YouTube. Other platforms have significantly lower engagement among the respondents.

Table 5: Crosstab of Age and Used Social Media Platforms

		Coupang , Ali express	Facebook	Instagram	LinkedIn	Pinterest	Snapchat	Tiktok	Websites	YouTube	
Age:	16-25	1	25	50	0	1	1	4	1	9	92
	25-30	0	9	8	1	0	0	0	0	3	21
	30-35	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	2	5
	35 above	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	5
Total		1	36	59	1	1	1	7	1	16	123

Source: Survey 2024

Table 5 shows the distribution of social media platform usage across different age groups.

Key observations include:

- **Instagram** is the most widely used platform, with 59 users overall. It is especially popular among the **16-25 age group** (50 users), while usage decreases significantly in older groups, with only 8 users in the 25-30 age group and just 1 user in the 30-35 age group.
- **Facebook** is the second most used platform, with 36 users. It is also most popular among the **16-25 age group** (25 users), with moderate usage among those aged 25-30 (9 users) and minimal engagement in the 30-35 and 35-above age groups.
- **YouTube** has 16 users, predominantly from the **16-25 age group** (9 users). Its popularity declines in older age groups, with only 3 users aged 25-30 and 2 each in the 30-35 and 35-above age groups.
- Platforms like **TikTok** (7 users) and **Coupang, AliExpress, LinkedIn, Pinterest,** and **Snapchat** are used by very few respondents, mostly from the youngest age group.
- Older age groups (30-35 and 35-above) have limited engagement with most platforms, with a slight preference for YouTube and TikTok.

Overall, the data suggests that younger individuals (16-25 years) are the most active on social media, with Instagram and Facebook being their preferred platforms. Usage of all platforms declines sharply in older age groups.

Table 6: Influence of Social Media Advertisement on Purchasing

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Disagree	2	1.6	1.6	1.6
	Maybe	65	52.8	52.8	54.5
	None of the above	14	11.4	11.4	65.9
	Strongly agree	42	34.1	34.1	100.0
Total		123	100.0	100.0	

Source: Survey 2024

The table highlights the influence of social media advertisements on respondents' purchasing decisions. Key observations include:



- The majority of respondents, **52.8%**, selected "Maybe," indicating uncertainty about whether social media advertisements directly influence their purchasing behavior.
- A significant portion, **34.1%**, "Strongly agree" that social media advertisements impact their purchasing decisions, demonstrating the effectiveness of such ads for many respondents.
- A smaller group, **11.4%**, chose "None of the above," suggesting they may not feel directly influenced or may have alternative perspectives not covered by the other options.
- Only **1.6%** of respondents "Disagree" with the influence of social media advertisements, indicating that few people actively reject their impact.

Overall, the results suggest that social media advertisements have a notable influence on purchasing behavior, with most respondents either positively acknowledging the influence or being uncertain about its impact. Only a small minority does not see a connection.

Table 7: Gender and Social media advertisements on respondents' purchasing decisions

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.610 ^a	3	.456
Likelihood Ratio	2.634	3	.452
N of Valid Cases	123		

a. 2 cells (25.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .98.

Source: Survey 2024

The Chi-Square test examines the relationship between gender and the influence of social media advertisements on purchasing decisions.

Key findings from the test:

- **Pearson Chi-Square Value:** The test statistic is **2.610** with **3 degrees of freedom (df)**.
- **Asymptotic Significance (p-value):** The p-value is **0.456**, which is greater than the standard significance level (typically 0.05). This indicates that there is no statistically significant relationship between gender and the influence of social media advertisements on purchasing behavior.
- **Expected Counts:** Two cells (25% of the total) have expected counts less than 5, with the minimum expected count being 0.98. This suggests that the data may not fully meet the assumptions of the Chi-Square test, such as adequate expected frequencies.

The analysis suggests that gender does not significantly influence whether social media advertisements affect purchasing decisions. Additionally, the test results should be interpreted with caution due to the presence of low expected counts in some cells.

Analysis

The findings from this study offer insights into the demographic characteristics of respondents, their social media usage patterns, and the influence of social media advertisements on their purchasing behavior. The age distribution reveals that the sample is predominantly composed of younger individuals, with 74.8% of respondents falling in the 16-



25 age group. This aligns with existing research that younger demographics are more active on social media platforms. Gender representation is nearly balanced, with females slightly outnumbering males, providing a relatively equitable basis for analyzing gender-specific behaviors. Income data indicate a diverse distribution, with a significant proportion (35%) earning below NPR 10,000, reflecting a mix of socioeconomic statuses among the respondents.

Social media usage patterns indicate that Instagram is the most frequently used platform, particularly among the youngest age group (16-25 years), followed by Facebook and YouTube. Gender differences are evident in platform preferences; males show a stronger inclination toward Facebook, while females dominate usage on TikTok and YouTube. Notably, platforms like LinkedIn, Pinterest, and Snapchat have minimal engagement, suggesting they hold limited relevance for the target audience. Age-based patterns further emphasize that social media activity declines significantly in older age groups, with younger respondents (16-25) driving most of the usage across platforms.

Regarding the influence of social media advertisements, the majority of respondents (52.8%) expressed uncertainty ("Maybe") about their impact, while 34.1% strongly agreed that advertisements influence their purchasing decisions. This indicates that a sizable portion of the population acknowledges the persuasive power of social media advertisements, though many remain undecided. The Chi-Square analysis examining the relationship between gender and the perceived influence of social media advertisements on purchasing behavior reveals no statistically significant association (p -value = 0.456). This suggests that gender does not play a decisive role in shaping how respondents perceive the impact of social media advertisements. However, some limitations in the Chi-Square test, such as low expected counts in certain cells, call for cautious interpretation of these results. Overall, the findings underscore the strong role of social media in shaping consumer behavior while highlighting areas for further exploration, such as platform-specific engagement and the nuanced effects of advertisements.

Conclusion

The findings of this study highlight the significant role of social media in the lives of individuals, particularly younger demographics, and its potential to influence consumer behavior. With the majority of respondents aged 16-25 years, the study underscores the prominence of younger age groups as active users of social media platforms, notably Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube. Gender analysis reveals a nearly balanced representation, with subtle differences in platform preferences, such as males gravitating toward Facebook and females favoring TikTok and YouTube. The diverse income distribution further reflects the inclusive nature of the study, with a notable segment earning below NPR 10,000. Social media advertisements emerge as a key factor influencing consumer behavior, as 34.1% of respondents strongly agreed with their impact, while 52.8% remained uncertain, indicating potential for advertisers to tap into undecided consumers.



Despite this, the Chi-Square analysis suggests no statistically significant relationship between gender and the perceived influence of social media advertisements, highlighting that the impact of such advertisements transcends gender boundaries. However, the limited engagement with platforms like LinkedIn, Pinterest, and Snapchat and the marked decline in social media usage among older age groups suggest that social media strategies should be tailored to the preferences of active users. Overall, the study underscores the importance of social media as a dynamic tool for communication and marketing, while pointing to the need for more targeted approaches to maximize engagement and influence across diverse demographic segments.

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