

INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING ON CONSUMER'S BUYING DECISION OF FASHION PRODUCTS IN KATHMANDU

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Abstract

The objective of study to examine the relationships between key factors—Informativeness, E-WOM, Ad Perceived Value, Entertainment, and Consumer Buying Decisions. It focuses on how these factors influence consumer choices when buying fashion products online. The research targeted individuals who have used social media platforms for online shopping in the Kathmandu Valley, with a sample size of 282 participants. Convenience sampling was used to select participants. The study used correlational and causal-comparative research designs, gathering primary data through a survey questionnaire. Hypothesis testing and regression analysis were applied to understand the relationships between the factors influencing consumer buying decisions. The regression model revealed a moderate positive correlation between the predictor variables and consumer buying decisions, showing that these factors together explained a significant portion of the variation in buying decisions. The results indicate that Perceived Value of Ads and Entertainment have a moderate positive effect on consumer buying decisions. Participants who found ads valuable and entertaining were more likely to make a purchase. E-WOM and Informativeness also showed statistically significant, but slightly weaker, correlations with buying decisions. These findings emphasize the importance of creating advertisements that are both valuable and entertaining, providing useful insights for marketing strategies aimed at influencing consumer behavior.

Keywords: Consumer Buying Decision, Informativeness, E-WOM, Perceived Value of Ads, Entertainment

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Introduction

The rise of the internet and web-based platforms has transformed the business sector, significantly affecting traditional marketing methods (Ertemel & Ammoura, 2016). In the past, consumers primarily shopped in physical stores (Hsiao, 2009), but now social media platforms have become key shopping destinations. Social media, including popular sites like Facebook and Instagram, allows users to connect and interact, with Facebook and Instagram being particularly dominant in global usage (Steinfeld et al., 2007).

In Nepal, as of early 2022, Facebook had 12.3 million users and Instagram had 2.3 million users, reaching significant portions of the population (Kemp, 2022). This study focuses on the Kathmandu Valley's online retail fashion market, examining how social media marketing on platforms like Facebook and Instagram influences consumer behavior, especially in purchasing fashion items. Research shows that social media marketing plays a major role in shaping consumer decisions in the fashion sector, with strategies such as user-generated content, product demos, and influencer marketing being particularly effective (Shrestha & Karki, 2020).

While the impact of social media marketing is clear, challenges remain. Overuse of social media marketing can lead to customer fatigue and make it harder for brands to stand out in a crowded market (Wang & Chen, 2018). Additionally, social media may present an idealized image of fashion products that doesn't always align with reality, potentially misleading consumers (Shrestha & Karki, 2020). Despite these drawbacks, social media continues to be a crucial tool for fashion brands, offering broad reach, enhanced brand awareness, and the ability to influence consumer purchasing decisions.

The growing role of social media in consumer interactions has led brand managers to recognize its importance in engaging with customers effectively (Wiertz et al., 2013). With platforms like Facebook and Instagram playing a key role in marketing, businesses must adapt to constantly changing consumer preferences and behaviors (Eroglu, 2014). However, despite the significant investment in social media marketing by businesses aiming to influence purchase intention and foster loyalty (Ceyhan, 2019), research has found that the true impact of social media on customer purchasing decisions remains unclear (Neupane, 2019).

Organizations are struggling with shifting consumer behaviors, competitive pressures, and uncertainty about how to effectively interact with customers, leading to concerns about customer loyalty (Cetina et al., 2013). As a result, businesses are increasingly investing in consumer research to better understand the effects of social media marketing on purchasing decisions (Calder et al., 2010). However, there is still a lack of clarity regarding the specific elements that drive purchase intentions and brand loyalty. The primary issue here is the gap in knowledge about how social media marketing influences consumers' decisions to buy fashion products. This research aims to address

that gap by identifying the key factors that affect consumers' purchasing choices in the context of social media marketing.

Following are the questions which were answered by this research.

1. What is the status of social media marketing variables and consumer buying decision of fashion products?
2. Is there any relationship between social media marketing variables and consumer buying decision making variable of fashion products?

The general objective of this study is to understand social media marketing influence on consumer buying decision of fashion products in Kathmandu valley. In line with this, the specific objective are as follows:

1. To evaluate the status of social media marketing variables and consumer buying decision of fashion products.
2. To analyze the relationship between social media marketing variables and consumer buying decision making variable of fashion products.

Methods

The research is based on quantitative approach following the descriptive and causal research design. The information was obtained by creating a survey and distributing it to every fashion product buyer in the Kathmandu Valley who had ever made an online purchase. The results were solely dependent on the information and facts supplied by the sample population because the questionnaires were self-administered.

The research focused on individuals in the Kathmandu Valley who use social media for online fashion shopping. Since it's impossible to count all social media users, the population was considered unlimited. From this population, 385 questionnaires were distributed, and 282 complete responses were collected using judgmental sampling to ensure accuracy. Convenience sampling was used for selecting the sample.

The primary data for this study was collected through a survey, using a structured questionnaire with two sections. The first section gathered demographic information (age, gender, income, and education level), while the second focused on respondents' agreement with items representing the study's dependent and independent variables, using a five-point Likert scale. In addition to primary data, secondary sources were also reviewed, including previously published articles from online marketing journals.

The primary data for this study was collected using a survey questionnaire, which was developed based on relevant prior research (Gaudel, 2019). The questionnaire had two sections: the first collected demographic information, while the second asked respondents about their views on key independent and dependent variables. The questionnaires were distributed in multiple formats, including hardcopy, mail, messenger, and Instagram. Respondents who received a printed questionnaire filled it out manually, while those who received the digital version completed it via Google Forms.

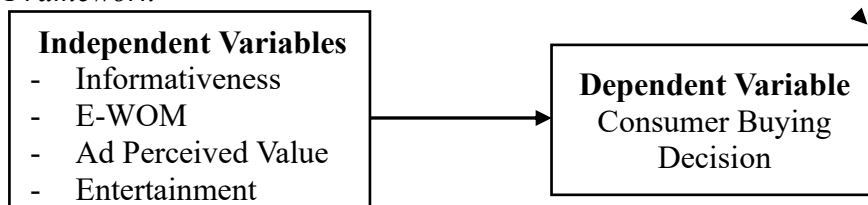
A total of 282 valid responses were collected for analysis. The questionnaire included both categorical and numerical variables. In the demographic section, questions on gender, age group, income, and education level used ordinal scales, with gender being a nominal variable. The second section consisted of ordinal-scale items based on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree) to assess agreement with various statements

In this study, the instruments used to measure variables were statistical tools, as the research followed a quantitative approach. A survey questionnaire was the primary data collection method, and statistical techniques were applied to analyze the data. Descriptive statistics, including tables, were used to summarize the data (e.g., frequency percentages, mean, median, and standard deviation). For inferential statistics, regression analysis and hypothesis testing were employed to examine correlations between the justice dimension variables and customer satisfaction. These methods allowed for predictions and deeper insights from the data.

The reliability of the survey items was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha test, which is widely used to assess reliability (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The test was conducted using IBM SPSS version 26. The Cronbach alpha values for the variables were as follows: Consumer Buying Decision (0.933), Informativeness (0.941), E-WOM (0.895), Perceived Value of Ads (0.807), and Entertainment (0.886). As all values exceed 0.70, the data is considered reliable, with ratings above 0.80 indicating good reliability, as per Churchill Jr. (1979).

This study intended to explore various factors influencing consumer purchasing decisions in the context of Nepal's online retail fashion industry, with a focus on social media marketing. The objective is to offer valuable insights to organizations and strategists by identifying the most significant factors that Nepalese customers consider when making purchasing decisions. These key factors, derived from the literature review on the online retail fashion sector in Nepal, guided the research framework for the study.

Figure 1
Research Framework



Source: Gaudel (2019)

Results and Discussion

Data was gathered through a self-administered questionnaire targeting fashion product buyers who had previously engaged in online shopping. The collected data was analyzed

using SPSS, and the respondents' profiles were categorized based on gender, age, income, and education level. The survey showed the following demographic characteristics: 51.8% of respondents were female, and 48.2% were male, indicating a fairly balanced gender distribution (Table 1). Age-wise, the majority of respondents (46.8%) were between 20 to 30 years old, followed by those aged 30 to 40 years (31.2%). Younger age groups had fewer participants, with only 11.7% below 20 years and 1.8% over 50 years. Income distribution showed that 30.2% of respondents earned below Rs. 20,000, while 21.6% earned above Rs. 50,000, with various income ranges represented throughout the sample. In terms of education, most respondents had completed a Bachelor's degree (42.6%), with 24.1% holding a Master's degree or higher.

Analysis of Social Media Marketing Variables

This study section describes the descriptive analysis of the information gathered from respondents via questionnaires during the investigation. Descriptive analysis uses statistical metrics and methods to provide an explanation for the data. The three statistical metrics are the standard deviation, mean, and frequency. The tabular version of this mean and standard deviation is displayed. Questions are posed for this investigation.

Informativeness section consist of four questions which explain how Facebook and Instagram are helping respondents to make informed decision.

Table 1
Summary statistics of informativeness

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Facebook and Instagram ads help keep me up to date with new and trending fashion products	1	5	3.34	1.227
Facebook and Instagram advertisements allow me to make better purchasing decision	1	5	3.22	1.149
Facebook and Instagram ads are convenient source of products information	1	5	3.27	1.230
Facebook and Instagram ads are valuable source of a product information	1	5	3.38	1.182

The Table 1 presents descriptive statistics for four statements related to Facebook and Instagram ads, reflecting the responses from 282 participants. Each statement was rated on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 represents Strongly Disagree and 5 corresponds to Strongly Agree.

The statement that received the highest mean score (3.38) is Facebook and Instagram ads are a valuable source of product information. This relatively high mean score suggests that respondents, on average, hold a favorable view of these social media advertisements as valuable resources for accessing information about various products. Conversely, the statement with the lowest mean score (3.22), Facebook and Instagram

advertisements allow me to make better purchasing decisions, garnered a slightly lower level of agreement.

Table 2
Summary statistics of E-WOM

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
I often read online recommendations to buy product online	1	5	3.38	1.353
To choose the right products or brands, I often read online reviews of products and brands provided in Facebook and Instagram pages	1	5	3.38	1.274
I am willing to share my experiences with products and brands on Facebook and Instagram	1	5	3.11	1.260
To make sure that I buy the right products, I often go through consumer reviews on respective Facebook and Instagram pages	1	5	3.66	1.213

Table 2 displays descriptive statistics for four statements related to online shopping behavior and engagement with Facebook and Instagram. The data is derived from responses collected from 282 participants, who rated each statement on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 indicating Strongly Disagree and 5 representing Strongly Agree.

The statement with the highest mean score (3.66) is "To make sure that I buy the right products, I often go through consumer reviews on respective Facebook and Instagram pages." This higher mean score suggests that, on average, respondents exhibit a notable inclination to rely on consumer reviews on Facebook and Instagram pages to guide their product purchasing decisions. Conversely, the statement with the lowest mean score (3.11) is "I am willing to share my experiences with products and brands on Facebook and Instagram." This lower mean score suggests that respondents, on average, hold a more moderate willingness to share their product and brand experiences on these social media platforms.

Table 3
Summary statistics of perceived value of advertisements

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
I do believe that I can depend on Facebook and Instagram advertising to make purchasing decisions	1	5	2.80	1.240
I do believe that the information provided in Facebook and Instagram Ads are sincere	1	5	2.79	1.168
I do believe that Facebook and Instagram advertisements deliver valuable offers and information related to new and existing products	1	5	3.11	1.131
I believe marketing done via Facebook and Instagram add value to consumers by saving consumers time, resources, enabling convenience and by easing the shopping	1	5	3.50	1.142

The Table 3 presents descriptive statistics for four statements that explore beliefs and perceptions of Facebook and Instagram advertising. The data is based on responses from 282 participants who rated each statement on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 represents "Strongly Disagree" and 5 indicates "Strongly Agree."

The statement with the highest mean score (3.50) is "I believe marketing done via Facebook and Instagram adds value to consumers by saving consumers time, resources, enabling convenience, and by easing the shopping." This higher mean score suggests that, on average, respondents strongly believe that marketing efforts carried out through Facebook and Instagram contribute positively to consumers' experiences. Conversely, the statement with the lowest mean score (2.79) is "I do believe that the information provided in Facebook and Instagram Ads is sincere." This lower mean score indicates that respondents, on average, have a more reserved belief in the authenticity of information presented in these advertisements.

Entertainment experiences with Facebook and Instagram advertisements. The statement regarding with responsiveness are as follows:

Table 4
Entertainment experiences

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
I enjoy watching Facebook and Instagram advertisements	1	5	2.79	1.284
Facebook and Instagram advertisements are clever and quite entertaining	1	5	3.04	1.216
Facebook and Instagram advertisements are fun to watch or read	1	5	3.10	1.236
Facebook and Instagram ads do not just sell, they also entertain me	1	5	3.10	1.267

The Table 4 displays descriptive statistics for four statements that explore participants' entertainment experiences with Facebook and Instagram advertisements. The data is based on responses from 282 participants who rated each statement on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 represents "Strongly Disagree" and 5 indicates "Strongly Agree."

The statement with the highest mean score (3.10) is "Facebook and Instagram advertisements are fun to watch or read." This higher mean score suggests that, on average, respondents find these advertisements on social media platforms to be engaging and entertaining. The elevated mean score indicates that a notable segment of respondents perceive these ads as sources of enjoyment, either due to their visual appeal, creative content, or engaging presentation. Conversely, the statement with the lowest mean score (2.79) is "I enjoy watching Facebook and Instagram advertisements." This lower mean score signifies that respondent, on average, expressed a more moderate level of enjoyment when watching these advertisements.

The mean and standard deviation of independent and dependent variables are shown in Table 5.

*Table 5**Mean and standard deviation of all variables*

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Informativeness	3.3023	.90970
EWOM	3.3839	.95915
Perceived Value of Ads	3.0904	.86411
Entertainment	3.0071	1.00773

Looking at the data, "Informativeness" has a mean of approximately 3.30, suggesting that participants, on average, find the content informative, with responses varying moderately (standard deviation of 0.91). Similarly, "EWOM" shows a mean of about 3.38, indicating participants generally engage in electronic word of mouth, with some diversity in opinions (standard deviation of 0.96).

The Table 6 presents descriptive statistics for four statements that explore participants' behaviors and responses concerning Facebook and Instagram advertisements. The data is based on responses from 282 participants, who rated each statement on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 represents "Strongly Disagree" and 5 indicates "Strongly Agree."

*Table 6**Consumer Buying Decision*

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
I look for information about products advertised on Facebook and Instagram	1	5	3.18	1.219
I buy products advertised on Facebook and Instagram	1	5	3.11	1.138
My buying decisions are highly influenced by Facebook and Instagram advertisements	1	5	3.06	1.231
I purchase products that are on video and pictorial ads on my Facebook and Instagram	1	5	3.25	1.272

The Table 6 shows statement with the highest mean score (3.25) is "I purchase products that are on video and pictorial ads on my Facebook and Instagram." This elevated mean score signifies that, on average, respondents tend to consider video and pictorial advertisements on their Facebook and Instagram feeds as influential factors in their purchasing decisions. Conversely, the statement with the lowest mean score (3.06) is "My buying decisions are highly influenced by Facebook and Instagram advertisements." This slightly lower mean score suggests that, on average, respondents have a more moderate level of agreement regarding the strong influence of Facebook and Instagram advertisements on their purchasing decisions.

Consumer Buying Decision has a mean of approximately 3.15, indicating that participants' buying decisions are somewhat influenced by the variables considered in the study, and responses have moderate variability (standard deviation of 0.95). Overall, these

statistics help to understand both the general consensus and the range of perspectives among participants regarding the assessed variables. This result shows that the most of the response are agreed to the question asked towards the consumer buying decision.

Relationship between Social Media Marketing Variables and Consumer Buying Decisions

The dependent variable, Consumer Buying Decision, is the focal point of the study, indicating the variable researchers want to understand or predict. The correlation coefficient between Consumer Buying Decision and Informativeness is approximately 0.396, indicating a positive but moderately weak correlation. This suggests that as participants perceive content as informative, their buying decisions tend to have a slightly positive association with that perception.

Consumer Buying Decision and E-WOM have a correlation coefficient of around 0.422, suggesting a positive but again moderately weak correlation. This implies that when participants engage in electronic word of mouth, their buying decisions also exhibit a slightly positive correlation with this behavior.

The correlation coefficient between Consumer Buying Decision and Perceived Value of Ads is about 0.503, indicating a moderately positive correlation. This suggests that participants who perceive value in ads tend to have a more positive relationship with their buying decisions.

Consumer Buying Decision and Entertainment have a correlation coefficient of approximately 0.438, indicating a positive but moderately weak correlation. This implies that participants who find ads entertaining tend to have a slightly positive correlation with their buying decisions.

Impact of Social Media Marketing Variables on Consumer Buying Decisions

The impact of several independent factors on a single dependent variable is examined using multiple regression analysis. Consequently, the influence of social media marketing variables on customer purchasing decisions is examined using multiple regression analysis.

The coefficient of determination (R Square) is around 0.335. This statistic reveals that about 33.5% of the variability in the dependent variable can be explained by the predictor variables included in the model. This suggests a moderate level of predictability, meaning that the selected predictors collectively have a notable impact on the outcome. The adjusted R Square, which stands at approximately 0.326, provides a more conservative estimation of the proportion of variance explained by the model. This adjustment accounts for the complexity of the model and helps ensure a more accurate assessment of the explanatory power of the predictors.

The results of the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for the regression model. ANOVA assesses the overall significance of the regression model by comparing the variability explained by the model (Regression) with the unexplained variability (Residual) in the dependent variable. The p-value associated with the F-statistic is .000. This p-value is

used to determine the statistical significance of the model. In this case, the p-value is very close to zero which means the model is highly statistically significant.

The results of the multiple linear regression analysis shows the coefficients for each predictor variable along with their standard errors, standardized coefficients (Beta), t-values, and significance levels. The coefficient for the predictor variable IN is .125. This indicates that for a one-unit increase in IN, the dependent variable CB is estimated to increase by .125 units, holding other variables constant. The standard error for IN is .063, and the associated t-value is 1.966. The p-value of .050 suggests that the relationship between IN and CB is marginally statistically significant. The coefficient for the predictor variable EW is .154. This suggests that a one-unit increase in EW is associated with a .154-unit increase in CB, while other variables remain constant. The standard error for EW is .062, and the associated t-value is 2.472. The p-value of .014 indicates that the relationship between EW and CB is statistically significant.

The coefficient for the predictor variable AP is .273. This implies that a one-unit increase in AP leads to a .273-unit increase in CB, keeping other variables constant. The standard error for AP is .072, and the associated t-value is 3.793. The p-value of .000 indicates that the relationship between AP and CB is highly statistically significant. The coefficient for the predictor variable ET is .207. This suggests that a one-unit increase in ET is associated with a .207-unit increase in CB, while other variables remain constant. The standard error for ET is .054, and the associated t-value is 3.812. The p-value of .000 suggests that the relationship between ET and CB is highly statistically significant.

Hypothesis Testing

H1: There is significant impact of Informativeness on consumer buying decision of fashion products. The p value of informativeness regarding influence of social media marketing of fashion products in Kathmandu valley is 0.050 ($P \leq 0.05$). Alternative hypothesis is accepted at 5% level of significance. Thus, informativeness has significant impact on consumer buying decision of fashion products in Kathmandu valley.

H2: There is significant impact of E-WOM on consumer buying decision of fashion products. The p value of E-WOM regarding influence of social media marketing of fashion products in Kathmandu valley is 0.014 ($P \leq 0.05$). Alternative hypothesis is accepted at 5% level of significance. Thus, E-WOM has significant impact on consumer buying decision of fashion products in Kathmandu valley.

H3: There is significant impact of Ad Perceived Value on consumer buying decision of fashion products. The p value of Ad Perceived Value regarding influence of social media marketing of fashion products in Kathmandu valley is 0.000 ($P \leq 0.05$). Alternative hypothesis is accepted at 5% level of significance. Thus, Ad Perceived Value has significant impact on consumer buying decision of fashion products in Kathmandu valley.

H4: There is significant impact of Entertainment on consumer buying decision of fashion products. The p value of Entertainment regarding influence of social media marketing of fashion products in Kathmandu valley is 0.000 ($P \leq 0.05$). Alternative

hypothesis is accepted at 5% level of significance. Thus, Entertainment has significant impact on consumer buying decision of fashion products in Kathmandu valley.

Discussion

The study found that social network marketing as informativeness had positively and significantly influenced consumer buying decision in fashion products. Similarly, Mathews and Ohajionu (2019) results showed that social network marketing as informativeness had positively and significantly influenced consumer purchase behavior. But in the contrary, Nuseir (2020) found that social network marketing as informativeness had negatively and insignificantly influenced consumer buying decision.

Similarly, this study shows that social network marketing as E-WOM had positively and significantly influenced consumer buying decision in fashion products. Similarly, Dulek and Aydin (2020) results showed that social network marketing as E-WOM had positively and significantly influenced consumer purchase behavior. But in the contrary, Ashmond et al. (2021) found that social network marketing as E-WOM had negatively and insignificantly influenced consumer buying decision.

Likewise, this study also found that social network marketing as ad perceived value had positively and significantly influenced consumer buying decision in fashion products. Similarly, Wrangmo et al. (2013) results showed that social network marketing as ad perceived value had positively and significantly influenced consumer purchase behavior. But in the contrary, Neupane (2019) found that social network marketing as ad perceived value had negatively and insignificantly influenced consumer buying decision.

Lastly, this study found that social network marketing as entertainment had positively and significantly influenced consumer buying decision in fashion products. Similarly, Gholampour et al. (2022) results showed that social network marketing as entertainment had positively and significantly influenced consumer purchase behavior in Facebook Marketplace. But in the contrary, Ashmond et al. (2021) found that social network marketing as entertainment had negatively and insignificantly influenced consumer buying decision in fashion products.

Conclusion

The correlation analysis initially shows the numerous interconnections between predictor variables and consumer buying decisions. Notably, variables such as Perceived Value of Ads and Entertainment surfaced as moderate positive correlates, suggesting their pivotal roles in shaping purchasing choices. Electronic Word of Mouth and Informativeness also emerged as statistically significant contributors, albeit with slightly more modest associations. Building upon these correlations, the subsequent regression analysis provided a deeper dive into the predictive power of the predictor variables. The regression model demonstrated that both Perceived Value of Ads and Entertainment wielded significant influence on consumer buying decisions, substantiated by robust

unstandardized coefficients. Electronic Word of Mouth and Informativeness, while presenting relatively smaller coefficients, retained their importance in shaping consumer behavior.

Mutually, these findings underscore the intricate tapestry of factors guiding consumer buying decisions. The analyses underscored the prominent roles of perceived value and entertainment value in advertisements, shedding light on their potential to sway choices. Also, the acknowledgment of Electronic Word of Mouth and Informativeness as significant contributors showcases the diverse spectrum of influences that can prompt consumers to take action.

This study provides invaluable insights for crafting effective marketing strategies. The knowledge that the perceived and entertainment values of advertisements significantly impact consumer behavior serves as a compass for businesses seeking to engage and resonate with their target audience. By aligning advertising efforts with these influential factors, companies can enhance their ability to influence consumer buying decisions and create impactful connections in an ever-evolving marketplace.

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