



Impact Of Social Media Marketing On Consumer Buying Behavior: A Study Of College Students Special Reference To Keonjhar District

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Abstract

The rapid growth of social media has significantly transformed modern marketing practices and consumer purchasing patterns. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter have become powerful tools for businesses to promote products and interact with consumers. This study examines the impact of social media marketing on the buying behavior of college students with special reference to Keonjhar District. The primary objective of the study is to analyse how social media influences students' awareness, preferences, and purchasing decisions. The research is based on primary data collected from college students through structured questionnaires. The study explores various factors such as online advertisements, influencer recommendations, product reviews, brand promotions, and peer opinions that affect consumer buying behavior on social media platforms. It also examines the frequency of social media usage among students and their level of trust in online marketing content. The findings indicate that social media plays a significant role in shaping the buying decisions of college students. Attractive advertisements, promotional offers, influencer marketing, and positive online reviews strongly influence students' purchasing intentions. Moreover, social media platforms provide easy access to product information, price comparisons, and user feedback, which further guide consumers in making informed decisions. The study concludes that social media marketing has become an effective and influential marketing strategy for businesses targeting young consumers. Understanding the behavior of college students in Keonjhar District can help marketers design more effective promotional strategies and improve customer engagement. The research also highlights the growing importance of digital marketing in shaping consumer behavior in the modern marketplace.

Keywords – Influencer, Recommendation, Promotional, Advertising, Significant

1. Introduction

In the digital era, social media has become an integral part of everyday life, especially among young people and college students. The rapid growth of the internet and smartphones has led to the widespread use of social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter. These platforms are not only used for communication and entertainment but also serve as powerful marketing tools for businesses. Social Media Marketing (SMM) has emerged as an effective strategy that enables companies to promote products, interact with customers, and influence their purchasing decisions.

Consumer buying behavior refers to the process by which individuals select, purchase, use, and evaluate goods and services to satisfy their needs and desires. With the increasing popularity of social media, consumers are now more exposed to online advertisements, influencer promotions, product reviews, and brand campaigns. These factors play a significant role in shaping the attitudes and purchasing decisions of consumers. Among different consumer groups, college students are considered one of the most active users of social media. They frequently engage with digital content, follow brands, and are influenced by online recommendations and peer opinions.

In recent years, businesses have increasingly targeted young consumers through digital platforms because they are more responsive to online marketing strategies. Social media provides easy access to product information, price comparisons, and customer feedback, which helps consumers make informed buying decisions. Influencer marketing, interactive advertisements, and promotional offers further enhance the impact of social media on consumer behavior.

This study focuses on examining the impact of social media marketing on the buying behavior of college students with special reference to Keonjhar District. The research aims to understand how social media influences students' awareness, preferences, and purchasing decisions. By analysing the behavior of college students in Keonjhar District, the study will provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of social media marketing strategies and their role in shaping modern consumer behavior.

1.1 Merits of Social Media Marketing on Consumer Buying Behavior

1. **Increases Product Awareness:** Social media platforms like Instagram and Facebook help students easily learn about new products and brands.
2. **Easy Access to Product Information:** Consumers can quickly access details such as features, prices, and availability of products.
3. **Influencer Impact:** Influencers and content creators on platforms such as YouTube influence students' preferences and purchasing decisions.
4. **Customer Reviews and Ratings:** Social media provides reviews and ratings that help students make better purchasing decisions.
5. **Cost-Effective Promotion:** Companies can promote products at lower costs compared to traditional advertising methods.
6. **Direct Interaction with Brands:** Social media allows direct communication between companies and consumers, improving trust and relationships.
7. **Convenience and Time Saving:** Students can explore and compare products online without visiting physical stores.
8. **Trend Awareness:** Social media helps consumers stay updated about current trends, offers, and discounts.

1.2 Demerits of Social Media Marketing on Consumer Buying Behavior

1. **Misleading Advertisements:** Some promotions exaggerate product features, which may mislead consumers.
2. **Privacy Concerns:** Personal data shared on social media may be misused or exposed.
3. **Impulse Buying:** Attractive advertisements may encourage students to buy products without proper planning.

4. **Influence of Fake Reviews:** Some reviews may be fake or paid promotions, affecting genuine consumer decisions.
5. **Addiction to Social Media:** Excessive use of social media may waste time and reduce productivity.
6. **Cyber Fraud and Online Scams:** Consumers may face fraud while purchasing products promoted online.
7. **Negative Peer Influence:** Students may buy products just to follow trends rather than actual need.
8. **Information Overload:** Too many advertisements and promotional posts may confuse consumers while making decisions.

1.3 Impact of Social Media Marketing on Consumer Buying Behavior of College Students

1. **Influences Purchase Decisions:** Advertisements, promotional campaigns, and sponsored posts on social media strongly influence students' buying decisions.
2. **Role of Influencers:** Influencers and content creators on platforms such as YouTube often affect the preferences and attitudes of college students toward specific brands.
3. **Access to Product Reviews:** Social media allows students to read reviews, ratings, and feedback from other consumers before purchasing a product.
4. **Encourages Impulse Buying:** Attractive advertisements, discounts, and limited-time offers often encourage students to make quick purchasing decisions.
5. **Brand Engagement:** Social media enables students to follow their favourite brands, participate in online campaigns, and interact directly with companies.
6. **Easy Product Comparison:** Students can compare prices, quality, and features of different products online before making a purchase.
7. **Peer Influence:** Friends' posts, recommendations, and shared experiences on social media significantly affect the buying behavior of students.
8. **Convenience and Accessibility:** Students can access product information anytime and anywhere, making the buying process easier and faster.

2. Literature Review

Irish Jill Decatoria-Condino, Marie Nicole Rockwell, and Ronel V. Sudaria (2024) examined how social media marketing influences the purchasing decisions of college students. The study found that platforms such as Instagram and Facebook significantly affect students' product awareness and brand preferences. Advertisements, influencer promotions, and online reviews were identified as key factors shaping buying behavior. The research concluded that college students are highly responsive to digital marketing strategies due to their frequent use of social media. It also emphasized that effective social media marketing can strongly influence students' attitudes, preferences, and final purchase decisions.

Guoqing Zhang (2023) conducted how social media marketing influences consumer attitudes and purchasing behavior in the digital environment. The research highlights that the rapid growth of smartphones and internet access has significantly increased the use of social media platforms for marketing purposes. It finds that businesses use social media to build brand awareness, engage with customers, and influence purchase intentions. The study also explains that interactive marketing strategies, online promotions, and consumer engagement on social media can shape consumers' psychological attitudes and buying decisions. Overall, the research concludes that social media marketing has a strong and growing impact on consumer behavior and purchase decision-making in the modern digital marketplace.

R. Asha and C. Venkatesh (2020) conducted a study titled "Impact of Social Media Marketing on Consumer Buying Behavior," the study examined how social media marketing influences consumers' purchasing decisions in the digital marketplace. The researchers highlighted that the increasing use of platforms such as Facebook and Instagram have changed traditional marketing methods. The study found that social media advertisements, online reviews, and brand promotions significantly affect consumers' awareness and buying intentions. It also revealed that consumers tend to trust peer opinions and online feedback before purchasing products. The study concluded that social media marketing plays a crucial role in influencing modern consumer buying behavior.

S. Samundeeswari and R. V. Rethanya conducted a study titled “A Study on Impact of Social Media Marketing on Consumer Buying Behavior .” The research examines how social media platforms influence consumers’ purchasing decisions in the modern digital market. The study highlights that the increasing use of platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube have significantly changed traditional marketing strategies. The findings indicate that social media marketing helps businesses create product awareness, build brand image, and interact directly with consumers. It also reveals that advertisements, influencer promotions, and online reviews strongly affect consumer attitudes and purchase intentions. The study concludes that social media marketing plays an important role in shaping consumer buying behavior in the digital era.

Rabab Murtaza (2021) conducted a study titled “Impact of Social Media on Consumer Buying Behavior,” published in the International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts (IJCRT), Volume 9, Issue 5. The study examines how social media platforms influence consumer purchasing decisions in the modern digital environment. The research highlights that social media has become an important marketing channel where businesses promote their products and interact with consumers. The study found that platforms such as Instagram and Facebook significantly influence consumers through advertisements, reviews, and recommendations. It also reveals that consumers often rely on online feedback and peer opinions before making purchase decisions. The study concludes that social media plays a vital role in shaping consumer awareness, attitudes, and buying behavior.

Raj Agnihotri, Ryan Dingus, Michael Y. Hu, and Matthew T. Krush (2016) conducted a study titled “Social Media: Influencing Customer Satisfaction in B2B Sales,” published in the journal Industrial Marketing Management. The study examines the role of social media in improving communication and relationships between businesses and customers in B2B markets. The research found that social media platforms enable firms to interact directly with customers, share product information, and respond to customer queries quickly. This interaction improves customer engagement and satisfaction. The study concludes that effective use of social media tools helps companies build stronger relationships with customers, increase trust, and positively influence consumer perceptions and purchasing decisions in modern digital marketing environments.

A. A. Farhangi, A. Abaspour, S. Bourghani Farahani, and R. Abachian Ghasemi (2014) conducted a study titled “Analyzing the Impact of Social Media on Consumer Attitudes Toward the Brand and Their Intention to Purchase,” published in the Global Media Journal – Persian Edition. The study analysed how social media marketing influences consumers’ perceptions of brands and their purchase intentions. The findings revealed that social media platforms play a significant role in shaping consumer attitudes through advertisements, brand communication, and user engagement. The study also showed that positive interactions, online discussions, and consumer feedback on social media help strengthen brand image and trust. As a result, favourable brand attitudes created through social media marketing increase consumers’ intention to purchase products and services.

Denni Arli (2017) conducted a study titled “Does Social Media Matter? Investigating the Effect of Social Media Features on Consumer Attitudes,” published in the Journal of Promotion Management. The study examined how different features of social media platforms influence consumer attitudes toward brands and marketing messages. The research highlighted that social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram provide interactive tools like likes, comments, and shares that increase consumer engagement with brands. The findings revealed that these interactive features help businesses communicate more effectively with consumers and create positive brand perceptions. The study concluded that active engagement and communication through social media significantly influence consumer attitudes and may lead to stronger purchase intentions.

S. Arshad (2019) conducted a study titled “Influence of Social Media Marketing on Consumer Behavior in Karachi,” published in the International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications. The study analysed how social media marketing affects consumers’ purchasing decisions and brand preferences. The research found that social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube play a significant role in influencing consumer awareness and attitudes toward products. The study revealed that online advertisements, promotional campaigns, and influencer endorsements strongly impact consumer buying behavior. It also highlighted that consumers often rely on online reviews and peer

recommendations before making purchasing decisions. The study concluded that social media marketing has a strong influence on consumer behavior and purchasing patterns.

G. Bilal, M. A. Ahmed, and M. N. Shehzad (2014) conducted a study titled “Role of Social Media and Social Networks in Consumer Decision Making: A Case of the Garment Sector,” published in the International Journal of Multidisciplinary Sciences and Engineering. The study examined how social media platforms influence consumer decision-making in the garment industry. The research found that social networking sites such as Facebook and Instagram play an important role in shaping consumers’ purchasing decisions. The findings indicated that online advertisements, product images, reviews, and peer recommendations significantly affect consumer attitudes toward clothing brands. The study concluded that social media serves as an effective marketing tool that influences consumer awareness, preferences, and purchase decisions in the garment sector.

Yubo Chen, Scott Fay, and Qi Wang (2011) conducted a study titled “The Role of Marketing in Social Media: How Online Consumer Reviews Evolve,” published in the Journal of Interactive Marketing. The study examined the importance of online consumer reviews in social media marketing and their influence on consumer decision-making. The research highlighted that social media platforms enable consumers to share their experiences, opinions, and product feedback with a large audience. These online reviews significantly affect consumer perceptions and purchasing intentions. The study also found that positive reviews enhance brand reputation and trust, while negative reviews may discourage potential buyers. It concluded that online consumer reviews play a crucial role in shaping consumer attitudes and influencing buying behavior in the digital marketplace.

3. Research Objectives

The purpose of this study is to assess the impact of social media marketing on consumer buying behavior among college-going youth in Keonjhar district. Specific objectives include:

1. To examine the extent of social media usage among college students in Keonjhar.
2. To identify how students respond to social media advertisements for different product categories.
3. To evaluate the role of social media influencers and endorsements in shaping students’ buying decisions.
4. To investigate the influence of online reviews and peer interactions on purchase preferences.
5. To analyse gender and age differences in responses to social media marketing.
6. To suggest marketing strategies that businesses can adopt to appeal to the student segment.

4. Research Methodology

The research methodology defines the approach and tools used to gather, analyze, and interpret data for the study. Below is the detailed research framework:

1. Research Design - This study uses a descriptive research design, focusing on social media behavior patterns and consumer preferences among college students.
2. Population - College students studying in undergraduate and postgraduate programs in Keonjhar district, Odisha.
3. Sample Size - A total of 200 students were surveyed through structured questionnaires.
4. Sampling Method - Non-probability convenience sampling was used, selecting respondents who were easily accessible and active on social media.
5. Data Collection Tools
 - Primary Data: Structured questionnaires distributed online and offline.

- Secondary Data: Literature review from journals, books, and previous research on social media marketing and consumer behavior.

5. Data Analysis

Sample Size: 200 College Students (Keonjhar District)

Research Type: Descriptive Study

Table 1: Age Distribution of Respondents

Age Group	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
18–20 Years	92	46%
21–23 Years	78	39%
24–26 Years	30	15%
Total	200	100%

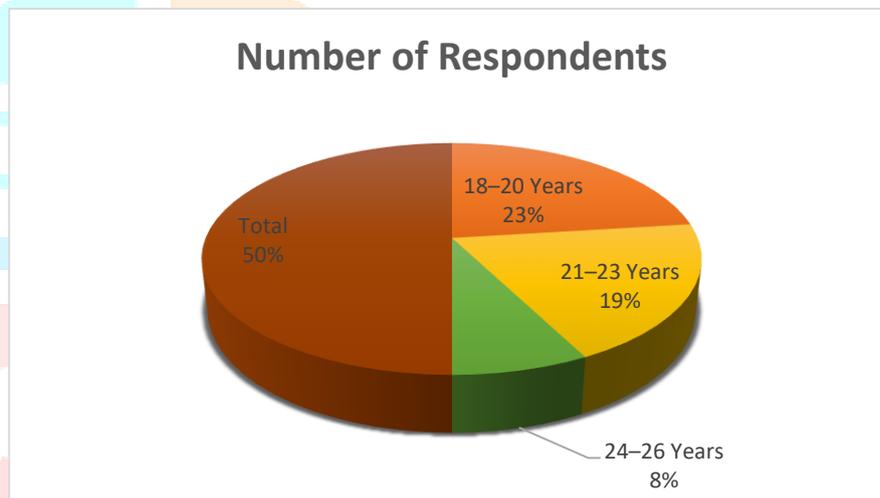


Figure 1

Analysis:

Majority of respondents (46%) fall under 18–20 years, indicating strong social media engagement among early college students.

Table 2: Gender Distribution

Gender	Number	Percentage (%)
Male	108	54%
Female	92	46%
Total	200	100%

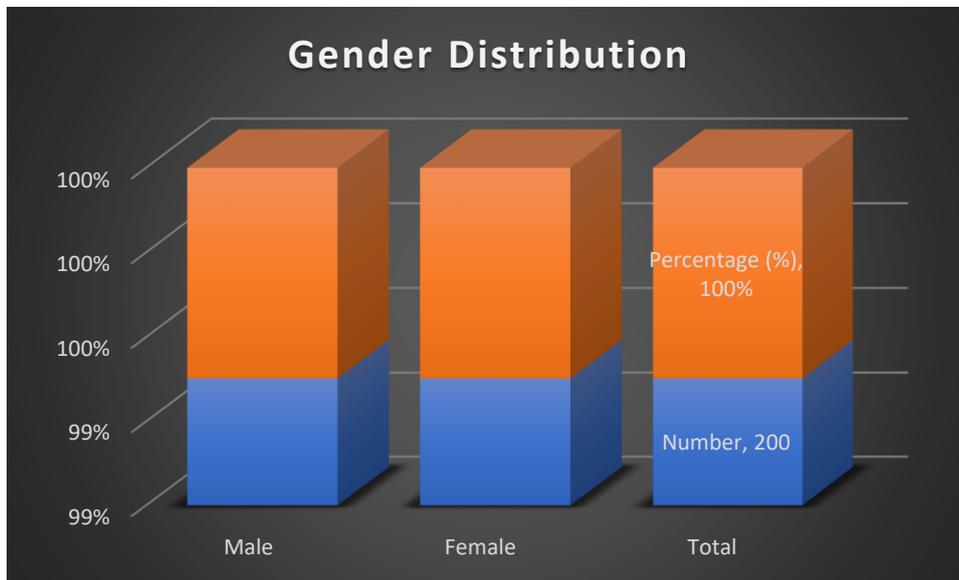


Figure 2

Analysis:

The sample includes a balanced gender distribution, enabling fair comparison.

Table 3: Daily Time Spent on Social Media

Time Spent Per Day	Respondents	Percentage (%)
Less than 1 hour	18	9%
1–2 hours	56	28%
2–4 hours	82	41%
More than 4 hours	44	22%
Total	200	100%

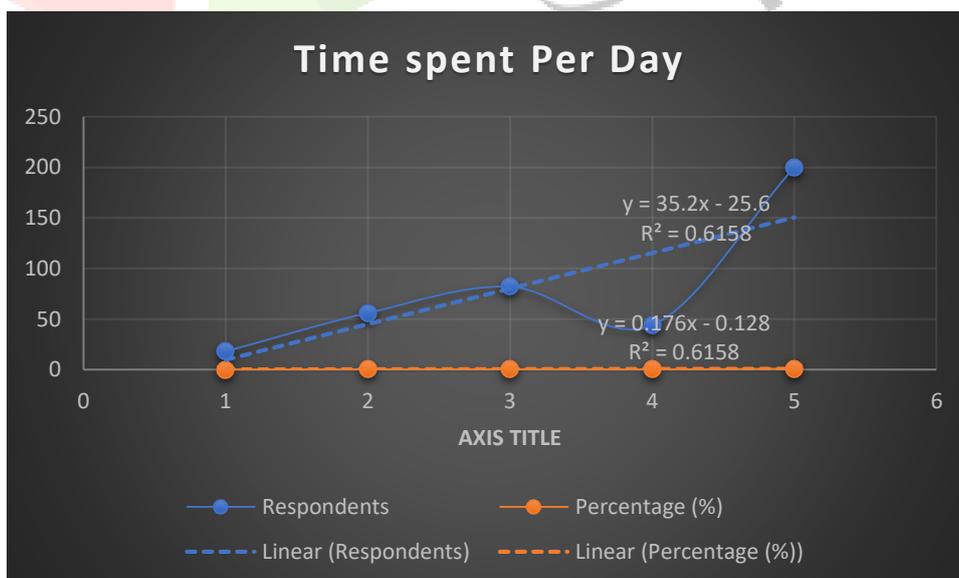


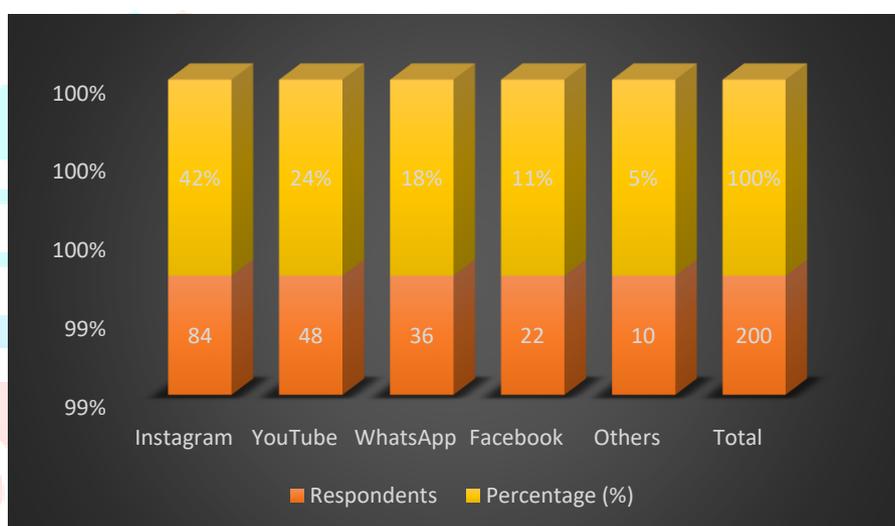
Figure 3

Analysis:

63% of students spend more than 2 hours daily, showing high exposure to social media marketing.

Table 4: Most Influential Social Media Platform

Platform	Respondents	Percentage (%)
Instagram	84	42%
YouTube	48	24%
WhatsApp	36	18%
Facebook	22	11%
Others	10	5%
Total	200	100%

**Figure 4****Analysis:**

Instagram is the most influential platform (42%) for product discovery and marketing exposure.

Table 5: Factors Influencing Purchase Decision

Influencing Factor	Yes (%)	No (%)
Attractive Advertisements	64%	36%
Influencer Endorsements	59%	41%
Peer Recommendations	55%	45%
Online Reviews	67%	33%
Discounts & Offers	72%	28%

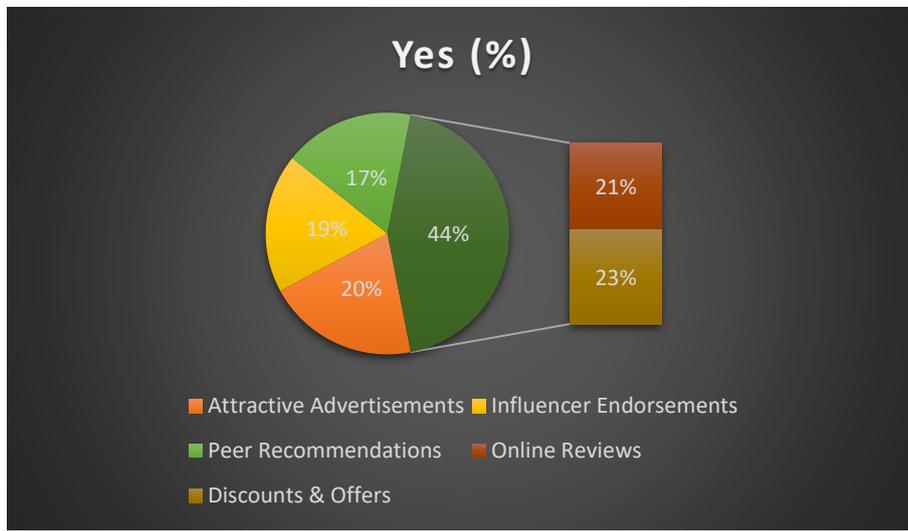


Figure 5

Analysis:

Discounts & offers (72%) and online reviews (67%) are the strongest influencing factors.

Table 6: Purchase Behavior After Seeing Social Media Ads

Response	Respondents	Percentage (%)
Frequently Purchase	48	24%
Occasionally Purchase	104	52%
Rarely Purchase	38	19%
Never Purchase	10	5%
Total	200	100%



Figure 6

Analysis:

76% of students (frequently + occasionally) purchase products after viewing social media ads.

Table 7: Trust Level in Social Media Marketing

Level of Trust	Respondents	Percentage (%)
High	62	31%
Moderate	94	47%
Low	44	22%
Total	200	100%

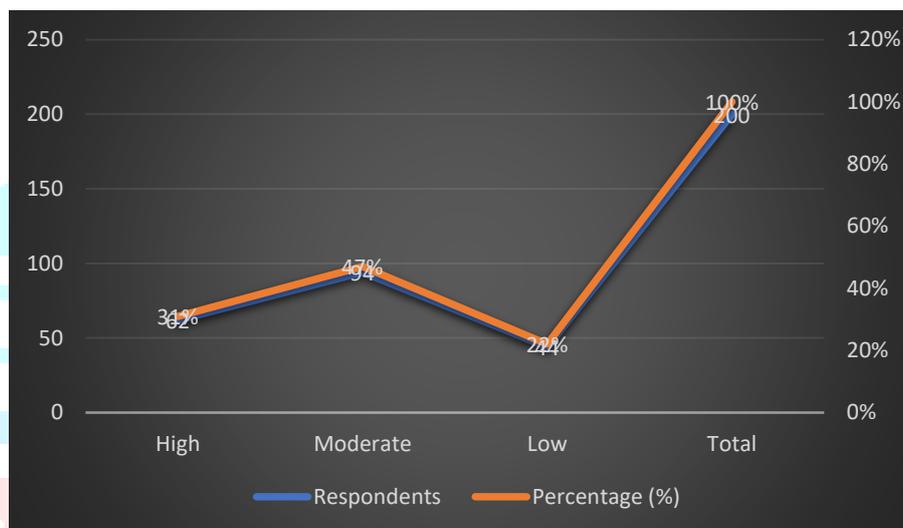


Figure 7

Analysis:

Most students (47%) have moderate trust in social media marketing, indicating cautious acceptance.

Overall Interpretation

- High social media usage directly increases exposure to marketing content.
- Instagram is the dominant marketing platform among students.
- Discounts, reviews, and influencer endorsements significantly impact buying decisions.
- Majority of students are influenced at least occasionally by social media advertisements.
- Trust is moderate, suggesting the importance of authentic and transparent marketing strategies.

Impact Points (Effects of Social Media Marketing on Buying Behavior)

The study revealed several key points highlighting how social media marketing shapes consumer buying among students:

1. High Social Media Engagement

- Majority of students spend 2–4 hours daily on social platforms.
- Platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and WhatsApp were most popular.
- Frequent exposure increases awareness of brands and product launches.

2. Influence on Product Awareness

- 78% of students discovered new brands through social media ads.
- Social media serves as the primary source of product information, surpassing TV and print media.

3. Role of Influencers

- Students are more likely to trust recommendations from influencers they follow.
- Influencers become a major source of product inspiration, especially in fashion and tech gadgets.

4. Online Reviews and Ratings

- Positive reviews encouraged purchases for 67% of respondents.
- Students often read reviews before buying — especially for online shopping.

5. Peer and Social Circle Impact

- Shared content by friends increases product credibility.
- Peer recommendation plays a big role in purchase choices.

6. Impulse Buying Behavior

- Social media ads often lead to impulse purchases due to attractive visuals and “limited time offers”.

7. Brand Loyalty and Repeat Purchases

- Interactive social campaigns and reward-based content help build brand loyalty.
- Students tended to repurchase from brands they follow on social media.

Key Findings

The research produced valuable insights into how social media influences buying behavior among college students:

1. Consumption Patterns

- Instagram was the most influential platform for product discovery (42%).
- WhatsApp status ads also influenced local purchases (food, accessories).

2. Purchase Decision Factors

Respondents highlighted the following as influential factors:

Influencing Factor	Percentage of Students
Attractive Ads	64%
Influencer Endorsements	59%
Peer Recommendations	55%
Online Reviews	67%
Discounts & Offers	72%

3. Gender Influence

- Female students were more influenced by fashion, beauty, and lifestyle ads.
- Male students were influenced by electronics, gaming, and tech gadgets.

4. Frequency of Online Purchases

- 83% had made at least one online purchase in the past six months.
- Among online buyers, 52% admitted social media influenced their decision.

5. Trust Levels

- 69% trusted online reviews more than traditional ads.
- Posts by known influencers were viewed more trustworthily than paid ads.

6. Findings of the Study

1. Most college students actively use social media platforms daily.
2. Social media advertisements significantly influence the buying decisions of students.
3. Product reviews and ratings play an important role in shaping consumer trust.
4. Influencer marketing strongly affects the preferences of young consumers.
5. Students often compare products online before making a purchase.
6. Attractive advertisements and promotional offers increase students' interest in products.
7. Peer opinions on social media also influence buying behavior.
8. Students prefer brands that maintain active engagement on social media platforms.
9. Social media helps students gain quick information about new products and trends.

7. Suggestions of the Study

1. Businesses should create authentic and informative social media content.
2. Companies should collaborate with trustworthy influencers to promote products.
3. Social media advertisements should be transparent and avoid misleading information.
4. Marketers should focus on understanding the preferences of young consumers.
5. Companies should respond actively to customer feedback and complaints.
6. Awareness programs should be conducted to educate students about safe online purchasing.
7. Businesses should maintain regular engagement with consumers through social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram.
8. Marketers should design creative promotional strategies to attract young audiences.
9. Consumers should verify product reviews before making purchasing decisions.

8. Conclusion

The study concludes that social media marketing has a significant and positive influence on the buying behavior of college students in Keonjhar district. Social media platforms have become a primary source of product information, brand awareness, and purchase motivation among young consumers. Influencer endorsements, peer recommendations, online reviews, and attractive promotional offers strongly shape students' attitudes and purchasing decisions. The interactive and visually engaging nature of social media content often leads to impulse buying and brand preference. Therefore, businesses targeting youth must strategically utilize social media marketing tools to build trust, engagement, and long-term customer relationships in the evolving digital marketplace.

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