ISSN (Online): 2455-3662
EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (IJMR) - Peer Reviewed Journal
Volume: 12| Issue: 5| May 2026|| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2013 || SJIF Impact Factor 2026: 8.753 || ISI Value: 1.188

SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING AND STUDENTS BUYING BEHAVIOR: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

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Article DOI: https://doi.org/10.36713/epra27473
DOI No: 10.36713/epra27473

ABSTRACT

The rapid growth in digital technology has greatly impacted marketing activities, where social media has become an influential medium that affects consumer decision-making. The following study entitled "Social Media Marketing and Student Buying Behavior: An Empirical Study with Special Reference to Belthangady Taluk" seeks to determine the effect of social media marketing on consumer buying behavior among students.

This study is concerned with identifying the impact of different aspects of social media marketing such as advertising, promotion, endorsements, and product information on students' knowledge of products, preferences, and buying intentions. Various social media sites are vital sources of information regarding products during consumers' searches for products and evaluation of product features.

Descriptive and analytical research methodologies were applied in this study to gather primary data from the target population using questionnaires. Results show that most students frequently visit social media sites like Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube, which highly influence their purchases. Social media marketing has been effective in increasing product knowledge, establishing trust in brands, and influencing impulse buying.

KEY WORD: *Social Media, Behavior. Influencing And Consumer*

I. INTRODUCTION

In the recent years, social media has emerged as one of the most potent means of communication and information dissemination around the globe. Some of the examples include Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and WhatsApp among others, which have significantly altered the way people engage with one another and obtain information. In many cases, there are different categories of individuals who heavily rely on social media including students. Through the heavy reliance on mobile phones and internet connectivity, students dedicate a lot of their time on these sites. It has not only altered their ways of communicating, but also the manner in which they obtain product-related information prior to buying.

Consumer behavior can be described as the actions and processes that take place when consumers make decisions about the product or service purchase, the timing of purchase, and the places to shop for such products or services. Historically, consumer decisions have been affected largely by personal interests, family members, friends, and advertisements that appear in magazines, TV, and newspapers. In recent times, the emergence of social media platforms has altered the dynamics of such influence significantly. Social media presents an interesting platform on which consumers have the opportunity to encounter product reviews, suggestions, and advertising all at once.

The impact of social media on consumer behavior has gained attention from researchers, marketers, and educators worldwide. For students, who are at a stage of learning and exploring new ideas, social media plays a dual role. On one side, it acts as a source of information and knowledge, while on the other, it introduces various marketing influences that can shape their preferences and consumption habits. Also, students are considered one of the most active user groups on social media. They are more likely to follow trends, engage with brand content and get influenced by peer opinions and influencers. Social media creates a strong psychological impact by showing lifestyle-based advertisements and user-generated content, which often encourages students to try new products or brands. Many students also rely on social media reviews and recommendations before making purchase decisions, making it an important factor in modern consumer behavior.

Understanding how students interact with social media and how it affects their buying behavior is important for several reasons. It helps businesses design better marketing strategies, allows educators to guide students in responsible digital use, and informs policymakers about the effects of digital marketing on young consumers.

This empirical study aims to understand the influence of social media on consumer behavior among students of SDM College, Ujire. The study focuses on how social media affects students' buying decisions, brand awareness, preferences and spending patterns. By analyzing students' responses and experiences, the research attempts to provide practical insights into the role of social media in shaping modern consumer behavior.

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II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Jarrar Yosra, Awobamise & Aderibigbe (2020) in their study "Effectiveness of Influencer Marketing vs Social Media Sponsored Advertising" examined the effectiveness of influencer marketing versus social media sponsored advertising. It found that influencer marketing helps in increasing immediate sales. However, post engagement is limited when compared to sponsored advertisements. Sponsored ads were more successful in sustaining consumer interaction. The study concludes that both methods are useful for different marketing objectives.

Shwetha Y & Sameeksha (2021) in their study "Impact of Social Media Influencers on Consumer Purchase Behavior with Reference to Undergraduate Students (Gen Z) in Mangalore City" suggest that social media influencers significantly influence consumer purchase behavior, particularly among Gen Z. It examines how influencer credibility, trust, and content quality affect buying decisions. The findings reveal that students tend to rely more on influencer recommendations than on traditional forms of advertising. The study concludes that influencer marketing has become an effective digital marketing tool for improving brand awareness and influencing consumer behavior among young consumers.

Adesh Janardan Jadhav (2022) in the article "A study on impact of social media marketing on consumer buying behavior" highlights that social media platforms play an important role in influencing consumers' awareness, attitudes, and purchase decisions. The study finds that factors such as online advertisements, customer reviews, brand posts, and interactive content significantly affect consumers' buying behavior. It also emphasizes that trust, engagement, and information shared through social media positively influence purchase intentions. Overall, the study concludes that social media marketing has become a powerful and effective tool for influencing consumer behavior in the modern digital environment.

Prajjwal V, Nikitha M, Nishanth P, & Dr. Mohammed Nabeel K (2025) in their paper **"**A Study on Influence of Social Media Marketing on Consumer Behavior" found that social media marketing significantly influences consumer behavior by shaping awareness, engagement, and purchase decisions through platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube. Their study shows that interaction with social media content increases trust and loyalty toward brands, especially among digitally active users. The authors highlight that digital trends have transformed traditional consumer decision-making processes, making social media an essential marketing tool. Their findings support the view that social media marketing is a key driver in modern consumer behavior research.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To analyze the primary purpose of social media usage among undergraduate students in Belthangady taluk.
2. To study the role of social media in influencing the consumer behavior of students.
3. To examine the impact of social media advertisements on students' purchasing decisions.
4. To understand the social media platforms that most strongly affect students' buying behavior.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH GAP

The present study is descriptive and analytical in nature. The study was conducted in Belthangady tulku with special reference to SDM College, Ujire. Both primary and secondary data were collected for this study. Primary data was collected by administering a questionnaire and a sample of 55 respondents was selected among students at SDM College, Ujire with a convenient sampling method. Secondary data for the study have been collected from various publications in journals, magazines, websites and books.

The current research has emphasized the significance of social media and influencer marketing on consumers' purchasing behavior. However, there is inadequate research work on comparing different types of marketing strategies within distinct regions and consumer demographics. Furthermore, consumer loyalty, regional variation in consumer behavior, and the cumulative impact of trust, engagement, and authenticity on the consumers' purchase behavior remain understudied.

V. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

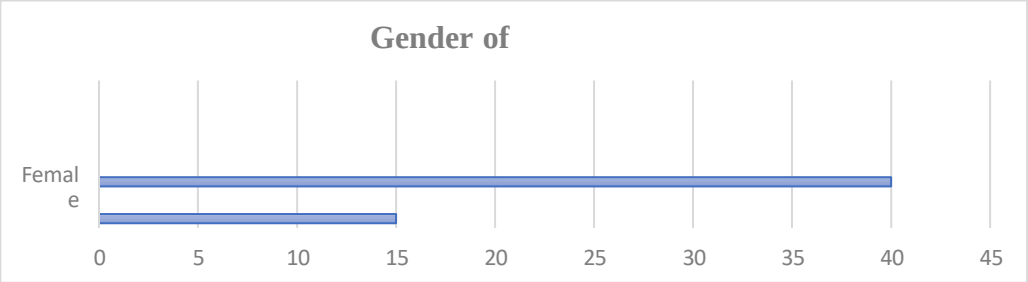
Some limitations have been found in the present study. Since this study is based on samples, all inherent limitations of sample study are involved. Also, the sample size is limited in number. Area of data collection is limited to undergraduate students of Belthangady Taluk. Hence, findings cannot be interpreted to people belonging to a larger geographical area.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1: Gender of respondents

SI. No	Particulars	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Male	15	27
2	Female	40	73
	Total	**55**	**100**

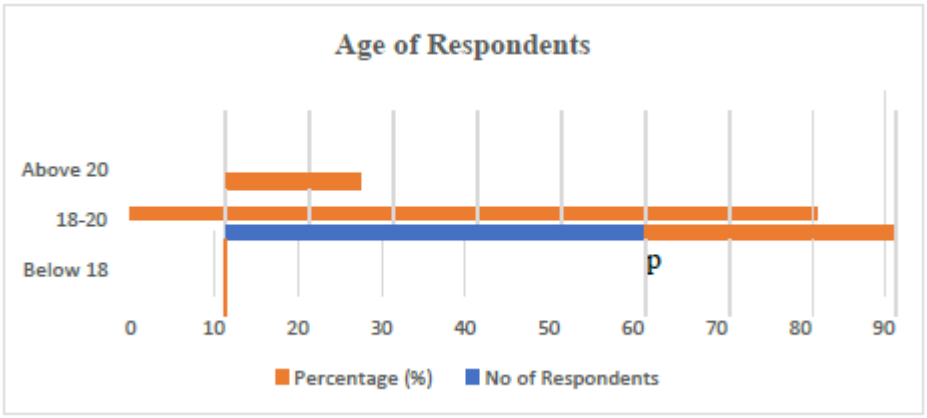
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The above table and graph shows that the gender of respondents. 27% respondents of male and 73% female.

Table 2: Age of Respondents

SI. No	Particulars	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Below 18	1	2
2	18-20	45	82
3	Above 20	9	16
	Total	**55**	**100**

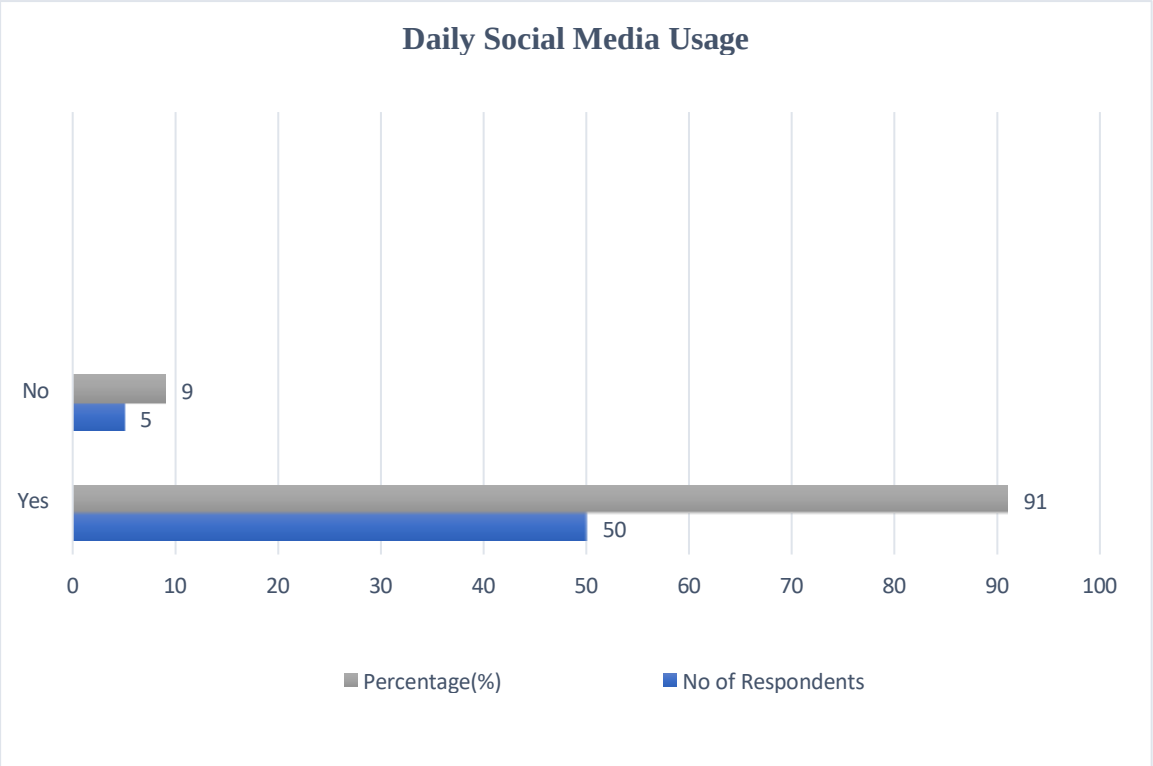


The above table and graph shows that the age of respondents, 2% of the respondents belong to the age group of below 18, followed by 82% who belong to the age group of 18 to 20 years and 16% who belong to the age group of above 20 years.

Table 3: Daily Social Media Usage

SI. No	Particulars	No of respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Yes	50	91
2	No	5	9
	Total	**55**	**100**

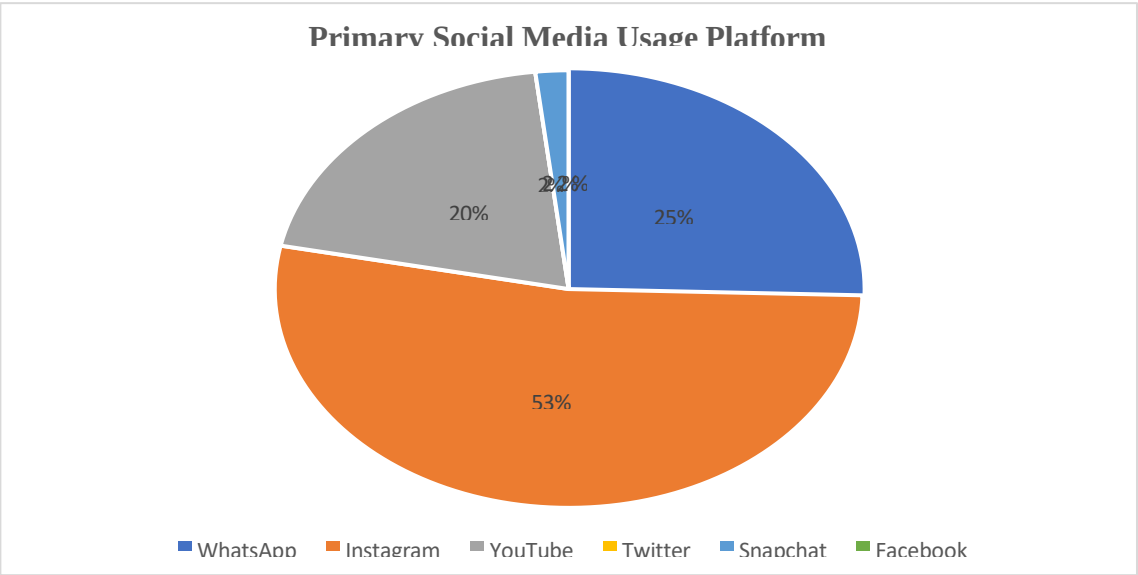
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The above table and chart clearly indicate the daily social media usage pattern of the 55 respondents. Out of the total sample,50 respondents (91%) reported that they use social media platforms on a daily basis. Only 5 respondents (9%) stated that they do not use social media every day. This shows that a large majority of the respondents are active daily users, highlighting the significant role social media plays in their routine live

Table 4: Primary Social Media Usage Platform

SI. No	Particulars	No of respondents	Percentage (%)
1	WhatsApp	14	25
2	Instagram	29	53
3	YouTube	11	20
4	Twitter	0	0
5	Snapchat	1	2
6	Facebook	0	0
	Total	**55**	**100**

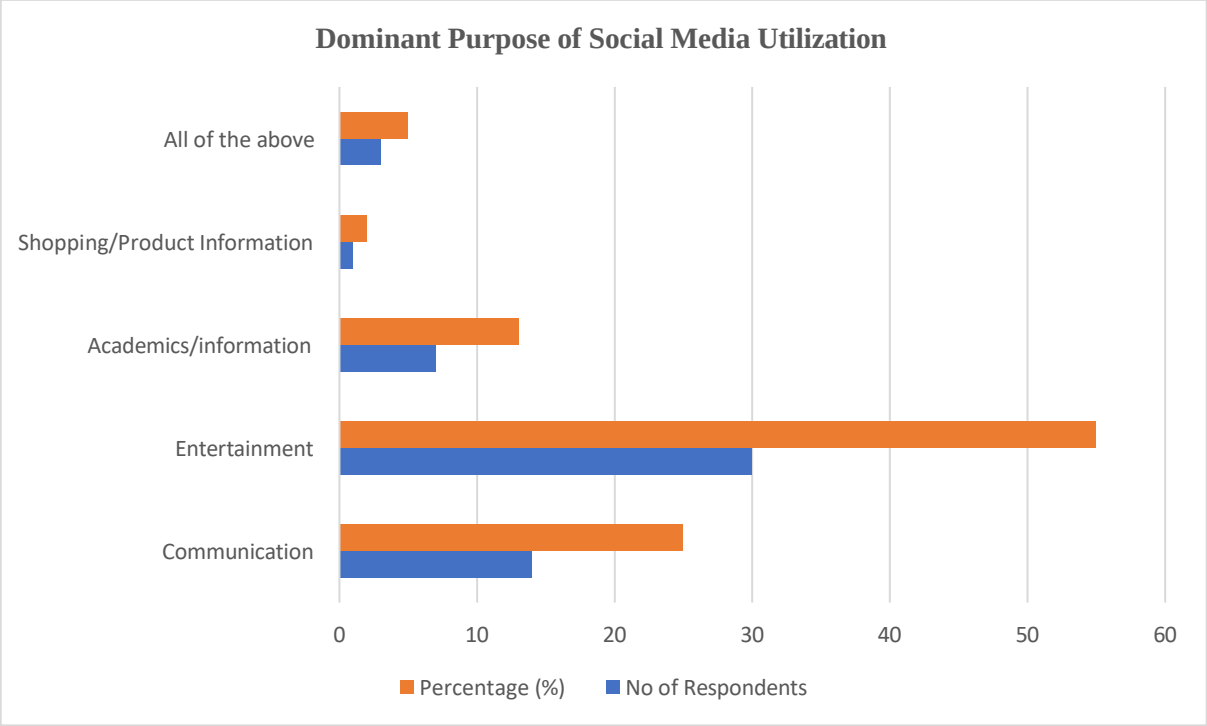


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The table and chart reveal that half of the respondents primarily use Instagram that is 53%, making it the most dominant platform in the group. WhatsApp is the next preferred choice with 25%, followed by YouTube at 20% and Snapchat at 2%. Meanwhile, Twitter, Snapchat, and Facebook show no usage at all.

Table 5: Dominant Purpose of Social Media Utilization

SI. No	Particulars	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Communication	14	25
2	Entertainment	30	55
3	Academics/information	7	13
4	Shopping/Product Information	1	2
5	All of the above	3	5
	Total	**55**	**100**

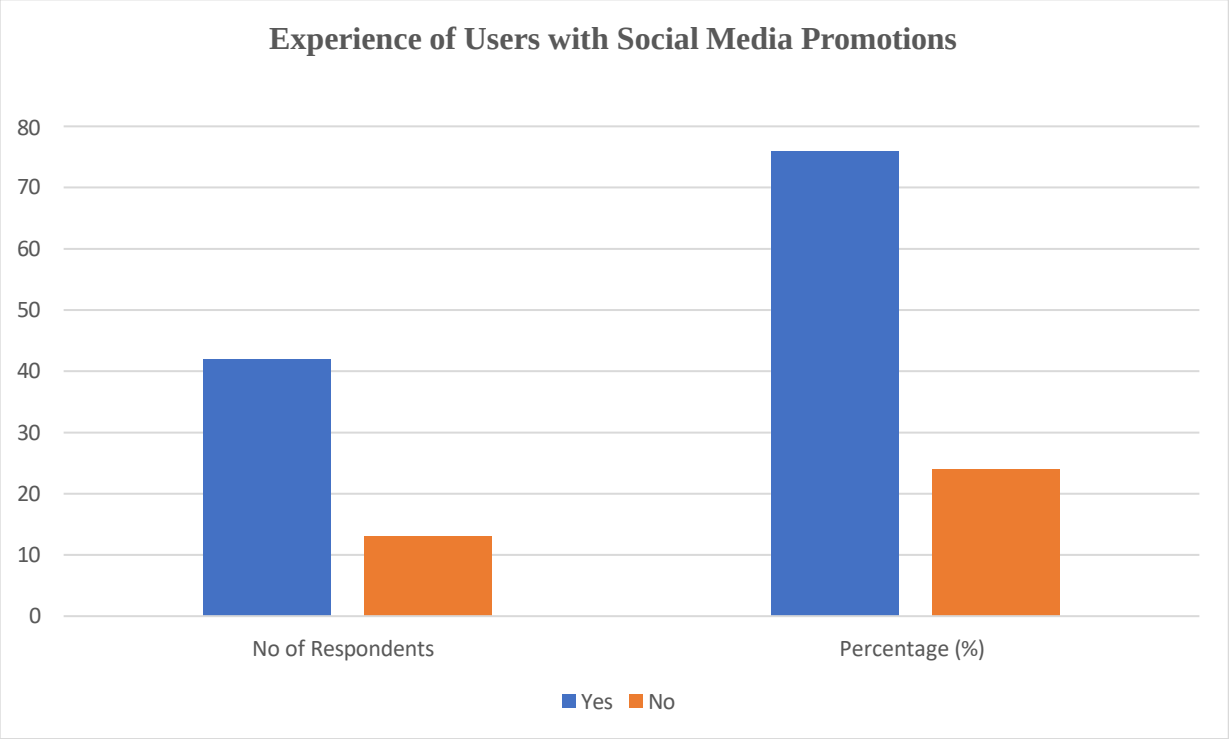


The table and chart show that the highest number of respondents, 30 (55%), use social media mainly for entertainment, making it the most dominant purpose. This is followed by communication, chosen by 14 respondents (25%). A smaller group of 7 respondents (13%) use social media for academic or informational needs, while only 1 respondent (2%) uses it for shopping or product information. Additionally, 3 respondents (5%) use social media for all the listed purposes.

Table 6: Experience of Users with Social Media Promotions

Sl. No	Particulars	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Yes	42	76
2	No	13	24
	Total	**55**	**100**

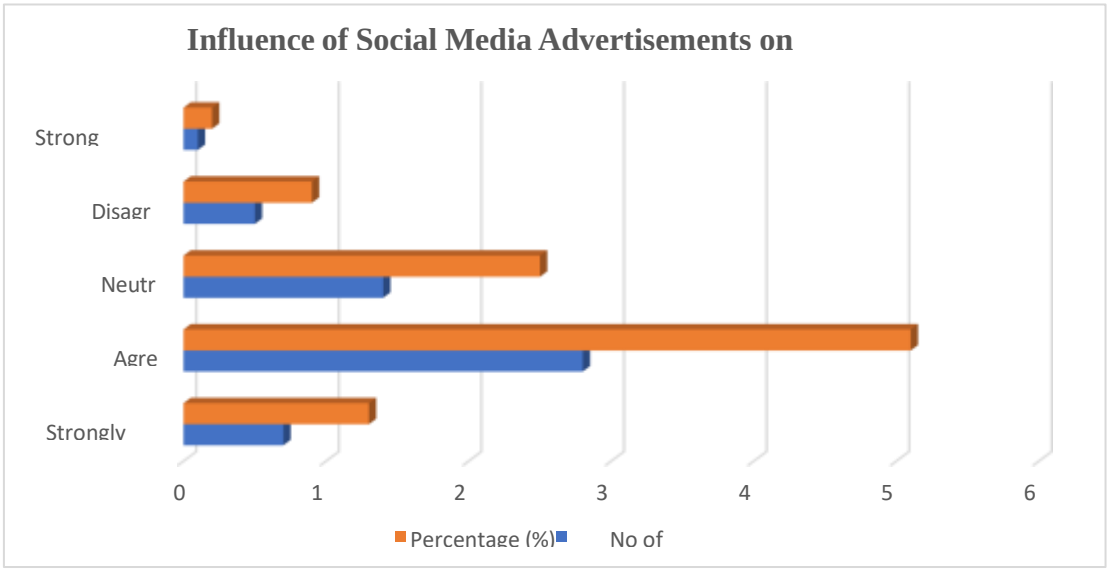
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The above table and chart show the experience of users with social media promotions. Out of the total 55 respondents, 42 users (76%) have experience with social media promotions, while the remaining 13 users (24%) do not have such experience. This indicates that a majority of the respondents are familiar with social media promotional activities.

Table 7: Influence of Social Media Advertisements on Purchasing Decisions

Sl. No	Particulars	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Strongly agree	7	13
2	Agree	28	51
3	Neutral	14	25
4	Disagree	5	9
5	Strong Disagree	1	2
	Total	**55**	**100**

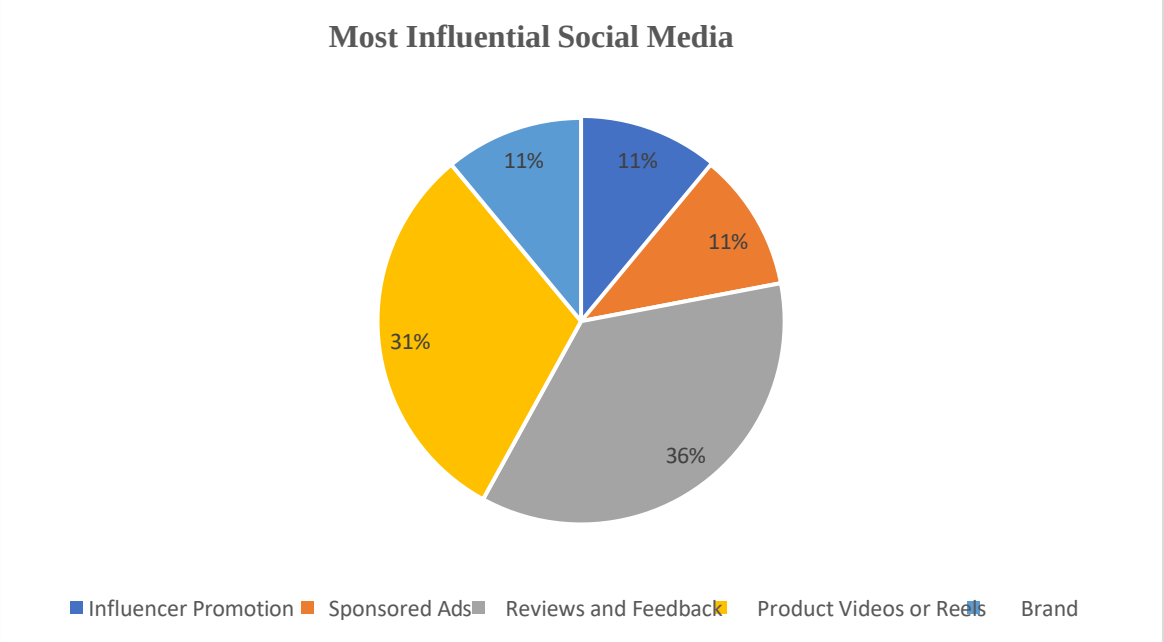


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The above table and chart show the influence of social media advertisements on purchasing decisions. Out of 55 respondents, 28 individuals (51%) agreed that social media advertisements affect their purchase decisions, while 7 respondents (13%) strongly agreed. A total of 14 respondents (25%) remained neutral, indicating uncertainty or mixed opinions. Only 5 respondents (9%) disagreed, and 1 respondent (2%) strongly disagreed with the statement.

Table 8: Most Influential Social Media Content

Sl. No	Particulars	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Influencer Promotion	6	11
2	Sponsored Ads	6	11
3	Reviews and Feedback	20	36
4	Product Videos or Reels	17	31
5	Brand Pages	6	11
	Total	**55**	**100**

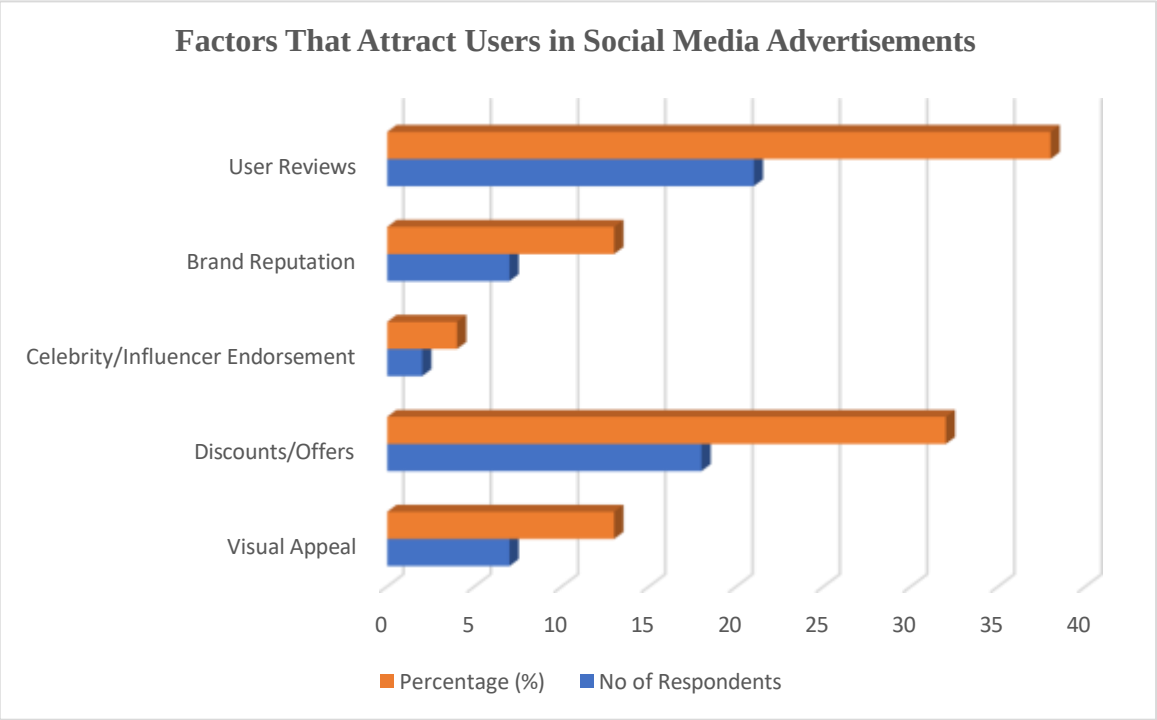


The table reveals that reviews and feedback are the most influential form of social media content (36%), followed by product videos or reels (17%), while influencer promotion and sponsored ads equally influence 11% of respondents each, and brand pages have the least impact at 11%.

Table 9: Factors That Attract Users in Social Media Advertisements

Sl. No	Particulars	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Visual Appeal	7	13
2	Discounts/Offers	18	32
3	Celebrity/Influencer Endorsement	2	4
4	Brand Reputation	7	13
5	User Reviews	21	38
	Total	**55**	**100**

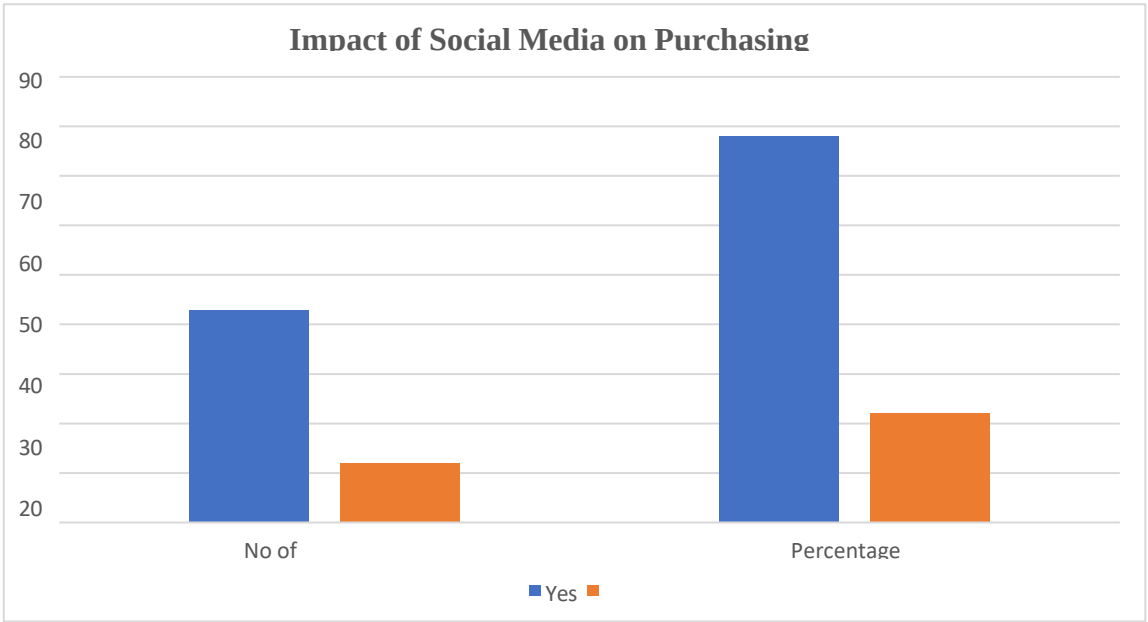
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The table and chart show the key factors that attract users in social media advertisements. User reviews influence the highest number of respondents (38%), followed by discounts and offers (32%). Visual appeal attracts 13% of users, while brand reputation accounts for 13%. Celebrity or influencer endorsement is the least influential factor at 4%. Overall, users are most influenced by reviews and promotional offers.

Table 10: Impact of Social Media on Purchasing Decisions

Sl. No	Particulars	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Yes	43	78.18
2	No	12	21.82
	Total	**55**	**100**

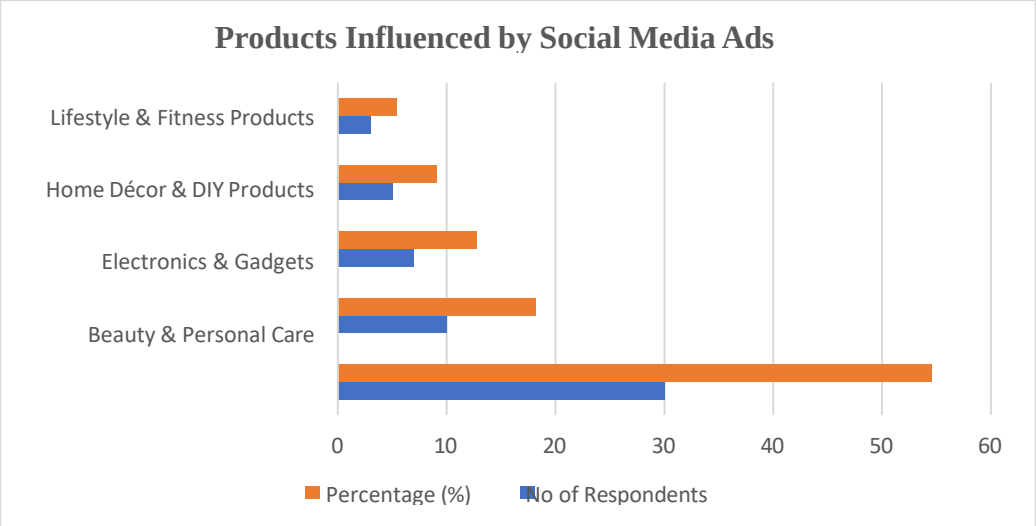


The table and chart show that a large majority of respondents (78.18%) agree that social media influences their purchasing decisions, indicating that social media plays a significant role in shaping consumer buying behaviour, while only a small proportion (21.82%) report no influence.

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Table 11: Products Influenced by Social Media Ad

Sl. No	Particulars	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Fashion & Apparel	30	54.55
2	Beauty & Personal Care	10	18.18
3	Electronics & Gadgets	7	12.73
4	Home Décor & DIY Products	5	9.09
5	Lifestyle & Fitness Products	3	5.45
	Total	**55**	**100**

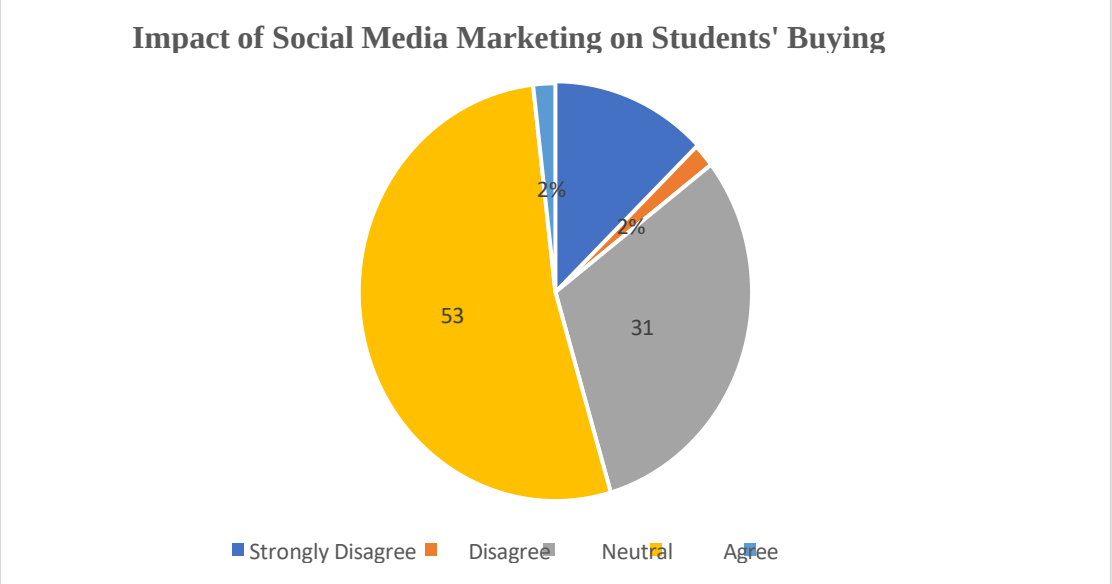


The table and chart indicate that social media advertisements most strongly influence the purchase of fashion and apparel products (54.55%), followed by beauty and personal care (18.18%), electronics and gadgets at 12.73%, home décor at 9.09%, and lifestyle products have comparatively lower influence (5.45%).

Table 12: Impact of Social Media Marketing on Students' Buying Behavior

Sl. No	Particulars	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Strongly Disagree	7	12.73
2	Disagree	1	1.82
3	Neutral	17	30.90
4	Agree	29	52.73
5	Strongly Agree	1	1.82
	Total	**55**	**100**

Table 13: Impact of Social Media Marketing on Student Product Awareness



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VII. FINDINGS

1. The research found that 91% of the questionnaire respondents use social media platforms on a daily basis.
2. Instagram is the most used social media platform by the respondents.
3. 51% of respondents agree that social media advertisements affect their purchase decisions.
4. It is found that user reviews influence 36% of respondents in their purchasing decision.
5. Social media advertisements strongly influence the purchase of fashion and apparel products of student respondents.
6. Overall, 79.91% of students agree that social media marketing influences their product awareness.

VIII. SUGGESTIONS

1. More awareness programmes must be introduced to educate students on how social media marketing impacts their buying behavior.
2. Students should differentiate between genuine product promotions and misleading advertisements so they can make informed purchase decisions.
3. Colleges, universities, and students can collaborate with marketing professionals to organize workshops, seminars, and poster campaigns on responsible consumer behavior.
4. Clear and concise information about product promotions, brand authenticity, and consumer rights should be shared through engaging posts, reels, and videos on popular platforms like Instagram, YouTube, etc.
5. Street plays, debates, and interactive sessions can be conducted to highlight the influence of social media marketing on product awareness and buying behavior.

IX. CONCLUSION

Social media have become an integral part of students' daily lives and play a significant role in shaping their awareness, preferences, and purchasing decisions. Advertisements, influencer content, and user reviews on social media platforms contribute to product awareness and influence buying behavior, especially among young consumers. The growing importance of social media marketing in the current digital environment while also indicating the need for students to make informed and responsible purchase decisions. Overall, social media marketing has a strong influence on student consumer behavior.

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