

A STUDY ON INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISEMENTS ON THE BUYING BEHAVIOR OF DEGREE COLLEGE STUDENTS IN DOMBIVLI CITY

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Abstract:

Social media has become an integral part of daily life. With the widespread use of platforms like Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter, businesses increasingly rely on social media advertisements to attract and engage potential customers. Due to high engagement of young demographics on social networking platforms, it is important to understand how social media advertisements influence their buying behavior. This study investigates the influence of social media advertisements on the buying decisions of degree college students, both undergraduates and postgraduates from selected colleges in Dombivli City.

Keywords: *Social Media Advertisements, Buying Behavior, Degree College Students*

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Introduction:

Advertising has always been a vital tool for businesses to introduce products, create awareness and build connections with their target audience. It acts as a bridge between consumers and brands by providing information, educating potential buyers, and influencing their choices. It makes an effort to influence prospective customers to purchase or use a good or service of the marketer. Traditionally, companies relied on broadcast, print, and outdoor media such as television commercials, newspaper ads, magazines, and billboards, to capture consumer attention. In the dynamic landscape of marketing, both traditional and digital strategies have evolved significantly in recent years to better engage consumers and influence their buying behavior. However, over time, emerging digital applied technological modes and tendencies have started to infringe on traditional business norms. Social media is rapidly evolving and assuming an increasingly significant role in the lives of consumers specially among the younger generation aged between 1-24 years. With the easy availability of

smartphones and affordable internet social media platforms like Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, Snapchat, and X (formerly Twitter) have become an integral part of everyday life, especially for young adults specially college students. These platforms provide instant connectivity, real-time updates, and an engaging space for interaction. They spend a significant portion of their day browsing through these platforms, exploring trends, sharing updates, and engaging with peers. Since, students are regularly exposed to marketing messages, it provides significant opportunities for marketers to engage effectively with this demographic.

Business attempt to expose the younger generation to a variety of advertisements, some directly targeted based on their preferences and browsing behavior, and others appearing organically in their feeds. These advertisements often include interactive visuals, influencer endorsements, promotional offers, and personalized suggestions designed to grab attention and influence decision-making of students, who are often influenced by trends and are open to exploring new

products and services. The interactive and visually engaging format of social media advertising, combined with its ability to deliver personalized experiences, plays a crucial role in shaping students' buying preferences and behaviors. Given the increasing reliance of businesses on social media platforms and the rising engagement of students, there is a growing need to understand how such advertisements impact the buying behavior of this demographic group.

The study focuses on degree college students residing in Dombivli who are pursuing traditional and self-financed courses. It also studies the general profile of Gen Z students and the influence of social media advertisements on their buying behavior in Dombivli City. It aims to analyze how frequently students are exposed to social media advertisements, the extent to which these advertisements influence their purchasing decisions, and the types of products they prefer to buy as a result. The findings of this research will provide valuable insights helping better understand the evolving consumption patterns of young consumers in the digital age.

Review of Literature:

Nugzar Todua et al. (2015) The study examines social media marketing in Georgia's tourism industry, finding that while consumers actively use social media, tourism content sees low engagement and limited effectiveness. Consumer trust, interest, and satisfaction remain average, largely due to minimal interaction and feedback from tourism companies, with most users engaging passively.

Vilasini Jadhav and Monica Khanna (2016) The study on online buying behavior of college students in urban Mumbai found that trust, convenience, and enjoyment drive loyalty toward online shopping. Price comparison, variety of products, time consciousness, and best price access were key motivators, while product information, customer service, and ease of use strongly influenced students' intention to shop online.

Jameela M.K. (2022) The study shows that social media feedback significantly impacts purchase decisions, with many customers changing preferences after viewing desired product ads. It also emphasizes that privacy and easy access to information strongly influence buying behavior, especially among college students in Malappuram District.

Subitha N¹ Meena Suguanthi G² Thiyagarajan C³ (2024) The study finds that social media influencers strongly impact college students' purchasing decisions in Ernakulam, driven by authenticity, similarity, and credibility. However, ethical concerns and skepticism among students highlight the need for advertisers to maintain honesty and transparency in promotions.

Archana R Motta et.al (2023) The study highlights the crucial role of social media advertising in shaping consumer behavior, showing that it boosts brand awareness, influences perceptions, and drives engagement through personalized and interactive content. Limited time offers retargeting ads, authentic communication, and user-generated content further build trust and significantly influence purchasing decisions.

Research Objectives:

1. To understand the concept of Social Media Advertisements
2. To study the problems faced while purchasing from social media platforms
3. To understand the purchase preferences of degree college students after viewing social media advertisements.
4. To study the influence of social media advertisements on the buying behavior of degree college students.

General Hypothesis:

Social media advertisements significantly influence the buying behavior of degree college students in Dombivli City.

Hypotheses:

1) **H₀**: There is no significant difference between demographic variables (gender, age, and nature of program pursued) and the level of agreement towards problems faced while making a purchase after viewing social media advertisements.

H₁: There is a significant difference between demographic variables (gender, age, and nature of program pursued) and the level of agreement towards problems faced while making a purchase after viewing social media advertisements.

2) **H₀**: There is no significant difference between frequency of witnessing advertisement and parameters influencing buying behavior.

H₁: There is a significant difference between frequency of witnessing advertisement and parameters influencing buying behavior.

3) **H₀**: There is no significant difference between frequency of making a purchase after watching advertisement and parameters influencing buying behavior.

H₁: There is a significant difference between frequency of making a purchase after watching advertisement and parameters influencing buying behavior.

Scope of the study:

1. Geographical Area – The study will focus on Dombivli City covering the east, west and MIDC areas.
2. Focus on- The study will focus on students studying in degree colleges of Dombivli or outside Dombivli but residing in Dombivli City.

Limitations of the study:

1. The study will focus on the influence of social

Data Analysis and Interpretation:

Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software was used for data analysis. The study further used Man-Whitney-U test and Kruskal Wallis test. Normality and Reliability of the data was tested by applying Shapiro-Wilk test and Kolmogorov-Smirnov test.

media advertisements on the buying behavior of degree college students.

2. The study will cover the degree college student respondents residing only in Dombivli City.

3. The findings, conclusions, and suggestions of the study will specifically reflect the behaviors, opinions, and experiences of degree college students residing only in Dombivli City.

Research Methodology:
Data Collection:

The research adopted a descriptive design, utilizing primary data through a structured questionnaire, while secondary data was sourced from research papers, journals, articles, blogs, and books.

Population and Sample:

Dombivli is a City in Dombivli City in Thane District of Maharashtra State, India. It belongs to Konkan region. It belongs to Konkan Division. It is located 22 KM towards East from District headquarters Thane. It is a City head quarter. Dombivli is surrounded by Kalyan City towards East, Ulhasnagar City towards East , Bhiwandi City towards North , Thane City towards west . This town is a thickly populated suburb of Mumbai with a total population of about 11, 93,000.

Sample size: This is indicative research thus the sample size is 618.

Sampling Technique: Snowball sampling method was used to conduct the survey.

Data Processing:

The collected data was processed which included editing, coding, classification and tabulation. A total of 618 responses were received, and after processing 558 response were included in the analysis.

Table 1: Demographic Profile

Sr. No.	Variable	Categories	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
1	Gender	Male	229	41.0
		Female	329	59.0
		Total	558	100
2	Age (in years)	18-21	437	78.31
		22-25	121	21.69
		Total	558	100%
3	Nature of Program	Traditional	219	39.2
		Self-financing	300	53.8
		Professional	39	7.0
		Total	558	100%

Source: Primary data

The data in the above table shows that out of the 558 students surveyed, 59.0 % of participants were female as compared to males who were only 41.0 %. About 78.31 % of the respondents were in the age group from 18 of 21 years and 21.69 % of the students were in the age group between 22-25 years. 39.2% students are pursuing traditional programs while 53.8% students are pursuing self-finance program whereas only 7.0% students are pursuing professional courses.

Table 2: Frequency of Advertisements watched on social media

Variable	Categories	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)	Result
Frequency of advertisements watched on social media	Always	236	42.3	58.2%
	Occasionally	89	15.9	
	Sometimes	174	31.2	41.8%
	Rarely	59	10.6	
	Total	558	100	100%

Source: Primary Data

Table 2 show that a majority of respondents (58.2%) are frequently exposed to advertisements on social media whereas 41.8% watch advertisement less frequently while they are using social media. This indicates that social media is a highly effective platform for advertising.

Table 3: Frequency of Purchase

Sr. No.	Variable	Categories	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)	Result
1	Frequency of purchases after viewing social media advertisements	Always	42	7.5	22%
		Occasionally	81	14.5	
		Sometimes	188	33.7	78%
		Rarely	247	44.3	
		Total	558	100	100%

Source: Primary Data

The above table shows that only 22% of respondents make purchases frequently, whereas a majority of 78% respondents make purchases less frequently. Though social media advertisements are viewed by users, their tendency of purchasing a product after viewing social media advertisements is generally low, they do not get motivated to purchase goods often, indicating cautious buying behavior.

Table 4: Frequency of social media usage

Sr. No.	Variable	Categories	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
1	Frequency of social media usage	Facebook	269	19.2
		Instagram	275	19.7
		YouTube	287	20.5
		Snapchat	295	21.1
		X (Twitter)	273	19.5
		Total	1399	100%

Source: Primary Data

NOTE: The total of frequency of social media usage is 1399 due to multiple responses for each social media. The data in the above table shows the usage frequency of different social media platforms which represents that mostly all students are active across all social media platforms, with Facebook showing 19.2%, Twitter 19.5%, Instagram 19.7%, YouTube 20.5%, Snapchat 21.1%, being used almost proportionately indicating their active and enthusiastic presence on social media.

Table 5: Purchase of different product categories

Variable	Categories	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Purchase preferences after viewing social media advertisements	Cosmetics & Personal Care	286	12.6
	Clothing	287	12.6
	Footwear	291	12.8
	Electronic Gadgets & Accessories	276	12.1
	Stationery	279	12.2
	Fashion Accessories	288	12.6
	Health & Wellness	293	12.9
	Food	278	12.2
	Total	2278	100%

Source: Primary Data

NOTE: The total is 2278 due to multiple responses for each category of product.

Degree college students showed almost equal preference for different product categories after viewing social media advertisements. The most preferred category was Health and wellness (12.9%), followed closely by footwear (12.8%). Cosmetics and personal care, fashion accessories, and clothing were each chosen by 12.6% of students. Electronic gadgets and accessories (12.1%), stationery (12.2%), and food (12.2%) were also similarly preferred. Overall, the results indicate that students' preferences are evenly distributed across product categories, with only minor differences.

Table 6: Normality Testing

	Tests of Normality					
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Influencing parameters towards purchase decisions while making purchase witnessing social medial advertisements.	.107	558	.000	.962	558	.000
Agreements towards problems faced while making purchase witnessing social medial advertisements.	.066	558	.000	.985	558	.000

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Source: Primary data

Table 6 shows that both variables, influencing parameters towards purchase decisions after viewing social media advertisements and agreement towards problems faced during such purchase significantly deviate from normality. Since the significance values for both are below 0.05, the data does not follow a normal distribution. Therefore, non-parametric statistical techniques were used for further analysis and hypothesis testing.

Testing of Hypotheses and Interpretation:

Hypothesis testing was done by applying Man-Whitney-U test and Kruskal Wallis test.

1) **H₀**: There is no significant difference between demographic variables and the level of agreement towards problems faced while making a purchase after viewing social media advertisements.

H₁: There is a significant difference between demographic variables and the level of agreement towards problems faced while making a purchase after viewing social media advertisements.

Table No. 7: Testing of Null hypothesis- Man-Whitney-U test

Independent variable	Dependent variable	Significant value	Result
Gender	Problems faced while purchasing.	0.674	H ₀ A
Age (in years)		0.026	H ₀ R
Nature of Program pursued		0.324	H ₀ A

Source: Primary data

Note: A denotes accepted/retained and R denotes rejected

Table No. 7 indicates that the significant values for gender and the nature of the program pursued by students were greater than the 0.05 threshold. Therefore, the null hypotheses were retained, suggesting that there is no significant difference between gender, program type, and the problems faced while making a purchase after watching social media advertisements. However, for age, the significant value was found to be less than 0.05. As a result, the null hypothesis was rejected, indicating a significant difference between the age of students and the problems they encounter when making purchases influenced by social media advertisements.

Table showing the mean score of respondents across different age groups

Table 8: Mean Rank

Particulars (Age group)	Mean Score
18-21	284.72
22-25	235.39

Source: Primary data

It can be interpreted from the above table that as compared to students aged 18-21 years going to degree colleges, students aged 22–25 years were less impacted due to problems like getting the wrong or damaged item, late delivery, high delivery or extra charges, privacy concerns, trouble getting refunds or reaching customer care, and confusing website layout, which indicated that most students had a satisfactory and uninterrupted experience when buying things online after seeing social media advertisements.

2) **H₀**: There is no significant difference between frequency of witnessing advertisement and parameters influencing buying behavior.

H₁: There is a significant difference between frequency of witnessing advertisement and parameters influencing buying behavior.

Table 9: Testing of Null Hypothesis - Kruskal Wallis test

Independent variable	Dependent variable	Significant value	Result
Frequency of watching Advertisement	Parameters influencing buying behavior	0.100	H ₀ A

Source: Primary data

Note: A denotes accepted/retained

Table 9 indicated that the significant values were greater than the 0.05 threshold. Hence, the null hypotheses were retained/accepted implying that there is no significant difference between frequency of witnessing advertisement and parameters influencing buying behavior.

3) **H₀**: There is no significant difference between frequency of making a purchase after watching advertisement and parameters influencing buying behavior.

H₁: There is a significant difference between frequency of making a purchase after watching advertisement and parameters influencing buying behavior.

Table 10: Testing of Null Hypothesis- Kruskal Wallis test

Independent variable	Dependent variable	Significant value	Result
Frequency of making a purchase after watching advertisement	Parameters influencing buying behavior	0.678	H ₀ A

Source: Primary data

Note: A denotes accepted/retained

Table 7 indicated that the significant value was greater than the 0.05 threshold. Hence, the null hypotheses were accepted implying that there is no significant difference between frequency of making a purchase after watching advertisement and parameters influencing buying behavior.

Findings:

- Out of the total 558 respondents, the majority were female. Most of the respondents fall within the age group of 18 to 21 years, while respondents aged between 22 to 25 years were few in number.
- Out of 558 respondents, most people (78%) rarely or sometimes make purchases after seeing social media advertisements, while only a small percentage of respondents (22%) always or occasionally make purchases.
- Out of 558 respondents, 42.3% always see advertisements on social media, 31.2% sometimes, 15.9% occasionally, and 10.6% rarely watch such advertisements on the various social media platforms.
- Respondents use all major social media platforms almost equally, with Snapchat (21.1%) being used the most, followed closely by YouTube (20.5%), Instagram (19.7%), X/Twitter (19.5%), and Facebook (19.2%).
- 12.9% Degree College Students preferred to purchase Health & wellness products, followed closely by footwear (12.8%), while other categories such as clothing, cosmetics, fashion accessories, food, stationery, and electronics were preferred in nearly the same proportion.
- As compared to students aged 18-21 years going to degree colleges, students aged 22–25 years were less impacted due to problems while making online purchase.
- Degree College Students when making purchases after viewing social media advertisements. were highly influenced by several factors such as reviews and ratings, refund and return policies in case the

product did not meet expectations, flexible modes of payment, appearance and description of the product.

Suggestions:

- 1) Companies can collaborate with local popular young influencers or popular student figures on colleges campuses to showcase products and share their experience live. Their genuine reviews and experiences can provide authentic testimonials, helping to build trust and credibility among students through peer-to-peer recommendations.
- 2) Young college-going influencers can build trust by creating honest content that includes verified reviews, non-sponsored experiences, and even product drawbacks to show authenticity. They should use engaging formats like videos, blogs, and short reels not only to explain product usage, benefits, and student-friendly features but also to showcase different product categories such as gadgets, fashion, food, and books through their personal experiences.
- 3) Companies can also offer attractive deals and discounts which may create a sense of value and urgency, hassle free returns, instant support which will be student specific, making it more likely for students to act and buy the product.
- 4) Companies can engage directly with the students on their college campus preferably during college fests and create interactive stalls with live demos, AR or VR experiences, or try before you buy, product corners. Companies can also organize various fun contests with instant product giveaways and discounts only for students.
- 5) Companies can effectively connect with students in Dombivli by actively participating in local exhibitions and fairs such as the Dombivli Utsav and Aagri Mohotsav. Additionally, during festive occasions companies can sponsor events and provide special passes to students for entry, thereby

creating a sense of exclusivity and engagement. Such initiatives not only promote sales but also build stronger connections with the student community, making them feel valued while enhancing brand visibility in the city.

Conclusion: Social media has become a powerful advertising medium among degree college students, especially young undergraduates belonging to Gen Z. Students are highly active across multiple platforms such as Snapchat, YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, and X (Twitter), and their purchase decisions are often influenced by advertisements, reels, reviews, and influencer content. However, exposure to advertisements does not always lead to immediate buying. Most students prefer to read reviews, check feedback, and watch live demonstrations before purchasing. While impulse buying happens for certain products, many students remain cautious and may return products if they do not meet expectations related to quality or feel. The study shows that social media influences a wide range of product categories, with Health & Wellness, Fashion, and Footwear being the most preferred, followed by Cosmetics, Clothing, and Food.

Overall, students reported a satisfactory online buying experience. To strengthen their impact, businesses should focus on building trust by using relatable influencers, offering student-friendly deals, creating platform-specific content, and staying active and responsive on social media. Encouraging young college influencers to share honest experiences through videos, reels, and blogs can further help students make informed choices and build long-term brand loyalty among students in Dombivli City.

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