

EXPLORING THE BUYING BEHAVIOR OF CONSUMERS THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA

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ABSTRACT

The motive of this study is to survey the impact of digital marketing on customers' purchasing habits. It investigates the impact of demographics such as age, gender, education, and income, as well as the influence of social media and the ease with which consumers can access the internet, on consumer purchasing behavior. The findings confirmed the hypothesis that there is a significant difference between demographic factors (age, income, gender, education) and consumer buying behaviour. Also, that ease of use of internet significantly impacts consumer buying behaviour. Influence of social media positively impacts the consumer buying behaviour. The practical implications of the study is to create awareness about the impact of digital marketing on consumer buying behaviour. It will serve as a guiding tool to organizations who wish to market their products via different online channels. Consumer behaviour research is crucial because it enables businesses to better understand the factors affecting consumer decisions. They can fill in the holes in the market and determine what is needed and what is no longer needed by looking at how individuals make purchases.

Keywords: Social Media, Demographic Factors, Ease of Use of Internet, Digital Marketing, Consumer Buying Behaviour.

INTRODUCTION

Digital marketing is a must-have and one of the most versatile tools and approaches in the advertising industry. The cyber uprising has caused a shift in public view of the existing situation (Richa, D. 2012). The aim of this study is to find what impact web-based media promotion will have on last-minute shopper behaviour. It also studies those who commonly use web-based media sites and identifies correlations between various media promotion activities and client behaviour. The execution of social media sites is constantly increasing to meet the social needs of the different online sites. Digital marketing has transformed the advertising industry and reached previously unexplored markets so that those who were not interested in the field before must now use it.

According to statistics (Statista, 2020), in October 2019, nearly 4.48 billion people were active Internet users, representing 58% of the world's population. Digitisation and internet access have created an untapped blueprint for businesses and consumers. These days, when making a purchase, buyers quickly turn to the Internet to research and make a decision within hours or even minutes. Today's customer behaviour is much lighter, and the sales demo is much shorter than in the past. Customers online shopping are attracted by fast delivery and seamless payment tools, which help build buyer confidence.

In this technologically advanced world, we use various computerised devices in our daily lives. Smartphones, portable workstations, computers and other advanced devices are the most commonly used. Online shopping customers are satisfied with the fast shipping and flawless remittance components, which helps build customer confidence. Indeed, online classifieds have made significant progress, with professions and marriages in mind (Shivasankaran, 2013).

The increasing use of computers, smartphones and other electronic devices increased the possibility of online shopping. Computerised online data search media has become commonplace, and most customers prefer to use these new advanced media rather than the traditional ones. These emerging digital media have influenced buyer behaviour. Usually, if a customer wants to buy something, they go to different stores and thoroughly investigate. When purchasing an item, several factors influence the buyer, such as social factors, mental factors, individual factors, etc. The customer behaviour hypothesis based on learning, data management, and dynamics exercises has been developed by renowned scientists in buyer behaviour. With the advent of computing devices, any involvement in shopping has completely changed the situation of a buyer's viewing and buying behaviour. It transferred control from the advertiser to the client. With the trend towards direct marketing, there is more emphasis on using computerised channels to advertise to customers effectively. When it comes to advanced channels, the latest advancement in mobile advertising (Mahalaxmi et al., 2016), customers can use computer-based media to read surveys, gather information on various items, and compare highlights. Companies need to understand customers' behaviour to adapt their marketing campaigns to specific consumers. If they are unhappy with a product or service, they are outspoken about their feelings. Every purchase customer makes researched, evaluated and positioned to ensure it is the best option. Consumer behaviour in the computer age is constantly changing. Tracking customer habits, preferences, and emerging trends keep businesses visible and relevant.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Online buying has become a common retail choice in the majority of non-modern nations. Researchers examined a number of variables that affect consumers' online shopping behaviour (Fram et al., 1995). Changes in consumer purchasing behaviour are a result of advancements in technology systems, rising wages, and bettering lifestyles in general. Shoppers' desire to shop online has been influenced by their attitude towards the online environment and the risks involved. As the interrelationship between updates, mood and behaviour can change, social components help understand online shoppers' behaviour. Customers were often supported on web-based shopping sites with simple highlighting and direct route orders. According to the results, a shopping website's hosting, usability, trust, usability, and experience influence customer behaviour. Western analysts have identified variables as usage. Highlighting, colours, page format, layout, and distraction are essential in generating a positive response on shopping websites (Merisavo et al., 2004). These variables have not been studied in an Indian context—the importance of location factors in influencing the online purchasing behaviour of Indian shoppers. According to various studies, the demographics, motivation, and behaviour of the individual towards different banking technologies and the acceptance of new technologies.

Site-related elements such as ease of use, comfort, trust, and information accessibility of shopping sites would influence Indian buyers' internet shopping behaviour. Web-based purchasing by buyers Researchers examined the impact of customer profiles and Internet appropriation behaviour (Charan et al., 2015). According to some studies, age, education, and gender play a role in determining online purchasing behaviour. Various studies have attempted to order shoppers' consistent Internet use behaviour. These groups had the option of highlighting characteristics of online customers and no customers. The ability to rethink comfort, control site content, and customise administration are the specific qualities for web purchasers. Indiscreet purchasing is a common practice today and can occur at any time (Bagga et al., 2013).

India Being a brief economic system revolutionary blast like TV purchasing channels and hence the Internet makes more significant customers' force shopping for openings, increasing the accessibility to objects. The connection between the variable and the effect of exploratory propensities on impulsive shopping behaviour in younger ladies is better than in younger males. It discovers that collection chasing, inventiveness, and hobby stimulated behaviour in younger ladies have a better final result than unrestricted shopping behaviour.

The populace of human beings 15-25 has grown dramatically, from 353 million in 2001 to 530 million in 2011. According to modern-day projections, the kid populace will boom in a balanced way to 564 million via means of 2021. Their research on consumer behaviour and buying behaviour promotion is a standard client technique. A client's buying behaviour was decided via the number of collaborations and his modern-day situation (Sakkthivel et al., 2009). Purchasing behaviour is an integrated association of a person's mentalities, values, interests, sentiments, and standard behaviour Advancements, for example, the buying behaviour concept cope with strategies to transfer purchaser research from isolated, regularly disconnected endeavours to more excellent enormous coordinated frameworks and exam procedures (King et al., 2019).

There is little doubt that rising fortunes would lead to extremist decisions in the long run. Advertisers have long considered youth to be an important demographic. In India, where everything and everyone is young, this model is at a disadvantage (Bhatt et al., 2013). The Internet has influenced almost every facet of modern life to a great extent.

In every way, the web is a step forward. Online media stages unquestionably play the most critical role in computerised advertising. When people talk about a product, organisations become more familiar with it and may get a deal (Sai Vijay et al., 2016). Facebook has now no longer best revolutionised the social affiliation scene. However, it has additionally ushered withinside the age of verbal showcasing plays.

Organisations presently speak with their clients through web-primarily based media. The speedy boom of the net as a platform for customer-vendor interplay during the last a long time demonstrates the popularity of online transactions. With the upward push of net-primarily based e-commerce totally, there was a boom in There has been a significant boom withinside the variety of online transactions. Online buying is described as the acquisition and sale of products over the net (Deepika et al., 2016). Viral styles are getting used and integrated into the logo, which affords an excellent way to lure clients into buying extra. Client-proposed commercials are created primarily based on consumer preferences, online audits, and likes and are then improved inside their feeds to unfold deals. They are giving consumers pride in an extra comfortable setting, inclusive of online media, effects in a fine consumer experience. The online process includes five steps that a purchaser goes through while buying a product or service (Kotler, 2008). A marketer has to be aware of those steps as an excellent way to the higher role of his creation and lure clients into shopping for it.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Do demographic factors influence online consumer purchasing behaviour?
2. Do the internet as a medium influence the online consumer purchasing behaviour
3. To understand the positive impact of social media on online consumer purchasing behaviour

From the preceding literature, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H₁: *There is a statistically significant relationship between demographic factors (age, income, gender, and education) and consumer purchasing behaviour.*

H₂: *The ease of use of the Internet significantly impacts consumer purchasing behaviour.*

H₃: *The influence of social media has a positive impact on consumer purchasing behaviour.*

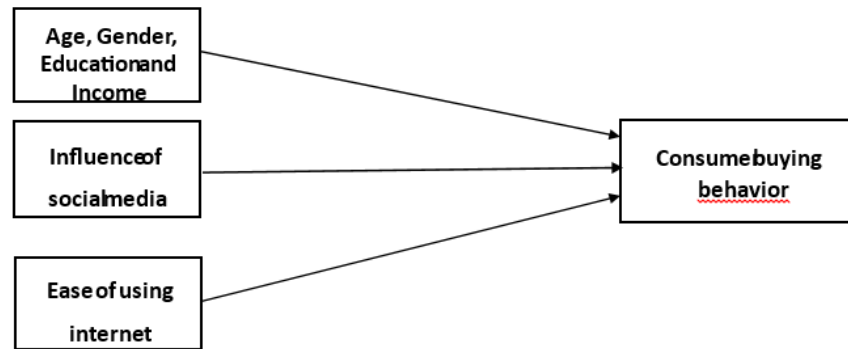


FIGURE 1
CONCEPTUAL MODEL

Methodology Measures

Ease of Use

Ease of use consists of 9 items which are measured on a 5-point Likert scale Prasha et al. (2016). Sample items such as "You are comfortable with online shopping" and "Purchasing online is safe and secure" were included. The reliability of the ease-of-use scale is .625.

Haslam's ease of use scale is estimated on a 5-point scale (1-strongly disagree to 5-strongly agree) using items measuring the ease of use of the Internet by the consumers Varghese & Agrawal (2021).

Social Media

Social Media consists of 12 items which are measured on a 5-point Likert scale. Sample items such as "You get influenced through social media to purchase something" and "Feedback and reviews on social media affect your purchase decision" were included. The reliability of the social media scale is .812.

Haslam's ease of use scale is estimated on a 5-point scale (1-strongly disagree to 5-strongly agree) using items measuring the impact of social media on the consumers.

Consumer Buying Behaviour

Consumer buying behaviour consists of 7 units. Sample items such as "I prefer to buy products of a company which is good at digital marketing" and "I am likely to open and purchase

products in suggested ads based on my internet search" were included. The reliability of the consumer buying behaviour scale is .734 Sivasankaran (2013).

Research Design

This research mainly focuses on the ease of using the Internet on the digital platform on the purchasing behaviour of Indian consumers. The research is on consumer purchase intent across digital marketing channels. This study uses both quantitative and qualitative research to achieve its goals. A preliminary study was conducted by reviewing the already existing literature, which helped extract and test all essential factors and variables. Respondents were cross-checked using structured questionnaires for the descriptive phase. Study data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. Detailed interviews and questionnaires were used as preliminary data, and magazines, newspapers, domestic and foreign publications, the Internet, personal books, and libraries were used as secondary data Baggio et al. (2022).

Two hundred seventy-four online shopping customers were selected for the study to maintain efficiency, and their preferences were investigated. To reduce bias, these participants are chosen randomly. To avoid bias, relatives and friends are excluded from this study.

Sampling Technique

Snowball and evaluation sampling were used for the study. An initial set of responders was selected using an assessment sample. After that, additional units were obtained based on the information provided by the original sampling unit, and additional references were obtained from the teams selected from the sample. The following criteria were used to determine samples. The sample consisted of people who made purchases on the Internet. The sample consisted of people with minimum graduation qualifications. Samples were taken from metropolitan areas with high internet penetration Ramesh & Vidhya, (2019).

A questionnaire was prepared to contain several personal questions about the student, such as name, age, gender, and occupation. Some questions could provide information about the participants' shopping habits.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1 MEAN, STANDARD DEVIATION AND ONE -WAY ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE AMONG DEMOGRAPHICS				
Gender				
	M	SD	F	n ²
Male	3.6093	0.5078	(1,273) = 2.603	0.0094
Female	3.5035	0.5793		
Age			F	n ²
20-30 years	3.6142	0.5206	(3,271) = 10.000	0.0996
31-40 years	3.5567	0.4491		
41-50 years	2.8929	0.6216		
Above 50 years	3.0204	0.5046		
Education			F	n ²
Graduate	3.5832	0.4282	(2,271) = 10.335	0.0706
Postgraduate	3.5987	0.5983		
Ph.D.	2.8571	0.6547		
Income			F	n ²
Less than 25000	3.5645	0.5502	(4,270) = 3.137	0.0444
25001-50000	3.6790	0.4240		
50001-100000	3.4750	0.5160		
100001-150000	3.4184	0.6964		
Above 150000	3.1868	0.8378		

N= 274

Source- Primary data.

Table 1 provides an overview of respondent's characteristics. The sample size consists of 274 respondents i.e., Male (n=151), Female(n=124). The table represents the sociodemographic characteristics of the participants which carries the sample characteristics that is Gender, Age, Education and Income. Gender has a n² value of 0.0094. Age consists of four categories, 20- 30 years, 31-40 years, 41-50 years and above 50 years with 20-30 years category having the highest mean of 3.6142 and standard deviation of 0.5206 followed by category 31-40 years with a mean of 3.5567 and standard deviation of 0.4491. Age has a n² value of 0.0996. Education has three categories namely graduate, postgraduate and PH.D. Postgraduate has the highest mean of 3.5987 and standard deviation of 0.5983, very closely followed by graduate with mean of 3.5832 and standard deviation of 0.4282. Education has a n² value of 0.0706. Income has five categories, less than 25000, 25001-50000, 50001-100000, 100001-150000, Above 150000. 25001-50000 category has the highest mean of 3.6790 and standard deviation of 0.4240. Income has a n² value of 0.0444.

Table 2 CORRELATION OF EASE OF USE OF INTERNET AND INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOUR			
	SM	EOU	CBB
SM	1	0.480**	0.610**
EOU	0.480**	1	0.417**
CBB	0.610**	0.417**	1

*p<0.005, **p<0.001, *SM: influence of social media, *EOU: ease of use of internet, CBB: Consumer buying behaviour.

Source- Primary data.

Table 2 shows the Correlation of Ease of use of internet on consumer buying behaviour, the factor influence is to have a positive correlation with the value(r=.610), which is significant at

level $p < 0.001$. The factor Ease of use of internet is having a positive correlation on consumer buying behaviour ($r = 0.417$) which is significant at the level $p < 0.001$.

Table 3 REGRESSION OF IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON BEHAVIOUR OF CONSUMER'S PURCHASING			
Influence of Social Media of CBB			
Variable	B	β	SE
(constant)	1.105		.229
SM1	.039	.051	.046
SM2	.041	.064	.039
SM3	.063	.105	.035
SM4	-.097**	-.142	.040
SM5	.060	.103	.031
SM6	.050	.074	.042
SM7	.053	.077	.043
SM8	.034	.039	.042
SM9	.097**	.137	.046
SM10	.011	.016	.039
SM11	.166***	.255	.040
SM12	.158***	.221	.043
R²		0.44	
EOU on CBB			
Variable	B	B	SE
(constant)	1.721		.296
EOU1	-.037	-.057	.051
EOU2	.151***	.236	.047
EOU3	-.079	-.061	.075
EOU4	.117***	.171	.039
EOU5	.106***	.163	.038
EOU6	.110***	.157	.041
EOU7	.112**	.157	.047
EOU8	-.047**	-.122	.020
EOU9	-.036	-.067	.027
R²		0.35	

** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.001$.

Source: Primary Data.

Table 3 shows the impact of predictors i.e., influence of social media and ease of use of internet on consumer buying behaviour. The R^2 value of 0.44 revealed that the predictor variable, influence of social media explained 44 percent significance in the outcome variable. SM4 is significant at a level $p < 0.05$ ($\beta = -.142$). SM9 is significant at a level $p < 0.05$ ($\beta = .137$). SM11 is significant at a level $p < 0.001$ ($\beta = .255$). SM12 is significant at a level $p < 0.001$ ($\beta = .221$).

EOU2 is significant at a level $p < 0.001$ ($\beta = .236$). EOU4, EOU5, EOU6 are significant at a level $p < 0.001$ with β values .171, .163, .157 respectively. EOU7, EOU8 are significant at a level $p < 0.05$ with β values .157, -.122 respectively. The R^2 value of 0.35 revealed that ease of use of internet explained 35 percent of significance in the outcome variable.

Discussion and Implication

There is a considerable difference in customer purchase behaviour based on demographic parameters. The idea that these variables are related in a reciprocal manner has been proposed multiple times in the literature. This adds to the current literature showing the variable Ease of use of the internet has a substantial impact on Consumer buying behaviour, indicating that it isn't only a case of these two elements.

Using an expert technique and input from working millennials as well as students, this study developed and validated a quick, easy-to-use assessment behaviour. The final score, which is divided into three subscales, evaluates several demographic factors, the impact of social media, and the ease with which people can use the internet. Individuals' buying behaviour is influenced by these types of purchases, according to research.

According to the findings, social media influence has a favourable relationship with customer purchasing behaviour. The literature supports the H2 of this paper, namely, that social media influence has a positive relationship with customer purchasing behaviour, as shown by regression analysis. The H3 of this paper is "Ease of Using the Internet Has a Positive Relationship with Consumer buying behaviour," which indicates that consumers check the different aspects of products and services as well as watch their updates on social media websites regularly. They can also contact the marketers on the social media website for whatever information they require, and they will automatically receive feedback. This communication approach contributes to a recognition of various companies' goods and services, allowing the consumer to become more involved in the decision-making process.

The poll was completed by 356 participants, with males (24 percent) and females (76 percent) participating. The difference in percent is due to the fact that the poll was distributed online, and we were unable to limit the genders' rate. These people come from a variety of Indian states. After completing an online survey, they were contacted via Google Drive. The purpose of creating and surveying and the purpose of conducting interviews is to provide additional information about questionnaire results.

Online Insiders and Social Clickers are influenced by a variety of factors during the purchase experience. The ratio of Online Insiders (online shoppers) is 48 percent, according to the report, made up 52 percent of all responders (frequent online users). The majority of them are 18 to 25-year-old consumers (response rate = 84 percent). This is due to the fact that they are more exposed to online facilities than other regions, as internet services are available in almost every corner of the country. When asked what factors motivated consumers to buy online, 61 percent indicated informational considerations related with products affected them the most. "I believe that things are cheaper since a portion of their retail costs is derived from the service provided by store employees, taxes, shop rent, and electricity provided by the stores, making them feel safer and more secure. Furthermore, culture plays a significant impact in shaping the purchasing decisions of online Insiders.

This issue has an impact on 10% of them. "I don't trust posting my account information online because it could be hacked, and I prefer to physically inspect the products that I buy because of security concerns." Furthermore, some said they didn't have credit cards, while others said they had no idea how to make a transaction. As the customers was prepared in order to match the results of the surveys and the data from the interviews. This poll, however, does not provide particular information on the products selected by individual consumers. As a result, interviews were performed in order to clarify this topic. The products have been classed as physical or intangible, as stated above. They, for example, devote far more time to purchasing accessories, cosmetics, and

clothing. In the study, a total of 24 individuals claimed they absolutely agreed with buying fashion things online. "I prefer to buy fashion products on Instagram since I can't locate my style in local stores." Fashion products are widely acknowledged as being preferred over buying online because they are difficult to find in local markets and less hazardous in terms of pricing. Similarly, past research on this product has yielded the same results. According to these studies, expensive items like luxury goods and automobiles are difficult to sell online due to a lack of or incorrect information on these items. Some respondents (27%) choose to acquire intangible assets such as online newspapers, hotel reservations, airline tickets, training courses, and computer software over other forms of things. This is owing to the low costs connected with these products, such as shipping expenses and the requirement that the product be delivered quickly. The findings revealed that more than three sites are listed in the survey to allow respondents to choose the most suited one. However, the focus of this research is on three popular social media platforms: Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter. Indeed, according to our analysis, these are the most popular and often visited sites by Omani customers. According to previous study, the use of Facebook for online purchasing has increased, but Instagram has reversed that tendency. Unlike prior research, which suggested that Facebook had the highest rate (response rate = 51%), the study results revealed that the majority of online shoppers (response rate = 45%) use the Instagram app as their primary method of purchasing on the site. Internet users in Western countries (response rate = 45%). As 15 interviewees put it, "I prefer to use Instagram because..." "I like utilising Instagram since the marketers are well-known and trustworthy, based on my previous experiences. They also publish comments on what other customers have to say about certain products." As a result, most people who sell things on Instagram are well-known and trustworthy, such as relatives and friends. Additionally, the photographs and videos are accompanied by product-related comments. These findings also found that some Omanis use Facebook to shop online (response rate = 12%), whereas only 3% utilise Twitter for this purpose.

By contrast, 40% of customers purchase from other websites such as Amazon, eBay, and Google+. The explanation for this high percentage is that consumers prefer to use familiar websites with which they are already familiar. Questionnaires and interviews were utilised in this study and were combined to offer thorough data. Each of the study's objectives has a direct impact on the others by complimenting them. Both customer preferences and product presentation are influenced by social media. The results show that Instagram has a big impact on fashion goods because it enables users to showcase goods in popular photos and videos, drawing in more young customers, especially women, who are largely impacted by informational, design, psychological, and cultural elements. Additionally, Instagram has improved the relationship between fashion products and young consumers. Due to this connection, young student consumers (response rate = 62%) between the ages of 18 and 60 are directly influenced by fashion, which makes the process of buying this kind of product much more flexible, distinctive, effective, and efficient. Customers believe that Instagram is the best and most suitable site for online fashion purchasing, to put it briefly.

The matrix model that follows shows how social media, products, and consumer preferences interact to affect customer purchase behaviour as a whole.

Furthermore, merging all social media into a single selling plan is a ground-breaking step that customers applaud. Nonetheless, some experts feel that social media has substantial downsides in terms of monitoring corporate quality control. It's also shown that the items obtained don't match the ones ordered, despite the fact that the items on the website look to be more polished and appealing. Until now, many businesses have failed to make effective purchases with their

customers. Individual firms, on the other hand, provide their customers an online payment gateway that accepts both credit and debit cards as well as bank accounts. As a result, consumers may not be obliged to provide a bank account in situations when repayment is impossible owing to the suspension of transfers. As a result, developing the digital payment infrastructure is vital so that consumers may readily obtain online services from businesses. As a result, the study's final conclusion emerges from the prolonged discussion. According to the respondents, consumers profit considerably from social media because they may search for information about a certain commodity offered by a single company.

CONCLUSION

It is important for marketers to understand how social and digital media are used in purchasing decisions, their impact on shopper behavior, and their current position as a marketing medium or tool. Overall, the results show that traditional decision-making models can still be used to explain consumer decision-making in the social media era. Simplicity, fun, trust and confidence are all contributing factors to higher levels of customer satisfaction. Stage 3 and final purchase were found to be more satisfactory for those evaluating the decision-making process. Higher levels of trust lead to milestones and greater satisfaction with purchases.

People who use social media make decisions easier than people who use other sources of information. They also felt more confident and happier in the process. Overall, those who felt that the quality and quantity of social media content exceeded their expectations were happier. This suggests that information overload did not affect customer satisfaction with social media.

Social media did improve consumer pleasure in the early phases of information seeking and alternative appraisal, according to the study, but it had no effect on satisfaction throughout or after the stage of making a purchase decision. Indicating that brick-and-mortar stores have not yet lost their value, many customers are glad to shop at conventional brick-and-mortar stores after conducting their research and reading internet evaluations. Social media has given marketers easy access to and the ability to continuously and in real-time monitor customer opinions by listening to and participating in online discussions, as well as by analysing what people are talking about in blogs, online communities, and other forums. Businesses must use technology to their advantage to better their product offerings, customer relationship management, and profitability given the abundance of free information available on social media.

The study's findings also demonstrate that social media is commendable in terms of increasing user acquisition, since all aware Social Media sites want to collect client figures, and all of these channels aspire customers to adopt certain behaviours. As a result, it succeeds in achieving the first objective since more customers are attracted to online platforms. E-commerce enterprises in India discuss specific tactics for ensuring customer happiness through social media. As a result, it achieves the second goal because the most recent ecommerce tactics are more easily able to pique consumer attention. Furthermore, by using social media techniques, e-commerce firms will grow trade in a meritocratic and strategic manner. In addition, Indian e-commerce clients desire to establish new product and service qualities. In other words, it's still a good idea to hunt for new discounts and ideas to keep customers from becoming bored with their daily routines. Consumers are always happy to support e-commerce businesses, therefore the company should be prepared to listen to what they have to say. The current ways of the e-commerce organisation should be reinforced in order to rectify emerging economy developments.

As a result, the study's fourth goal has been met. The changing behaviours of consumers should also be examined, and the Indian e-commerce company should devise appropriate

strategies for resolving their issues. It bridges the gap in explaining consumer purchasing behaviour by leveraging consumers' perceptions, experiences, and offers presented by the company. Companies will be able to ensure better consumer purchasing behaviour online as a practical contribution. Companies can establish a branded e-commerce in the business sector by utilizing social media. It will be possible if Social Media tools are used effectively. Customers will buy better products as a result, and more avenues for future research will be revealed. While conducting the study, researchers encountered some significant limitations.

However, doing this type of large-scale investigation, time becomes one of the most significant hurdles. Last but not least, some interviewees posed significant challenges by refusing to offer correct and suitable information. There is need for research into the use of Smartphone apps for branded e-commerce businesses. The findings of this study have important implications for academic research, resulting primarily from the extraction of the relationship between study objectives.

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