

IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE AND INFLUENCER MARKETING ON CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOUR: EVIDENCE FROM CHURU DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

The rapid growth of digital technologies and increasing internet penetration have significantly transformed consumer behaviour and marketing practices in India. Social media platforms and digital marketing tools have become central to communication, promotion, and consumer engagement, while the rise of influencer marketing has further reshaped purchasing patterns. In this context, understanding the interplay between social media usage, digital marketing awareness, and influencer impact has become essential, particularly in semi-urban and rural regions. The present study aims to analyse social media usage addiction and dependency, assess consumer awareness of digital marketing, and examine the impact of social media influencers on consumers' buying behaviour in Churu district of Rajasthan.

KEYWORDS: *Social Media Addiction, Digital Marketing, Influencer, Buying Behaviour, Impact, Churu District*

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INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of digital technologies has significantly transformed the marketing landscape across the globe. Digital marketing has emerged as a dominant mode of communication between businesses and consumers, enabling organizations to promote products and services through online platforms such as social media, search engines, websites, email, and mobile applications. Unlike traditional marketing, digital marketing offers greater reach, interactivity, cost efficiency, and real-time engagement, making it a preferred strategy for modern businesses. In India, the expansion of internet connectivity and smartphone usage has further accelerated the adoption of digital marketing practices, even in semi-urban and rural regions. The emergence of digital marketing has played a pivotal role in this transformation by enabling businesses to interact with consumers beyond geographical boundaries through internet-based platforms (Chaffey et al., 2003; Kotler et al., 2009). The rapid growth of internet connectivity, widespread smartphone usage, and increasing engagement on social media platforms have accelerated the adoption of digital marketing strategies across India (Praveen et al., 2024). Digital marketing offers several advantages, including real-time communication, enhanced consumer engagement, access to detailed product information, ease of comparison, and 24/7 purchasing convenience, thereby significantly influencing consumer buying behaviour (Kumar, 2020). Consequently, marketing practices have become more data-driven, interactive, and consumer-centric. Consumer behaviour, which examines how individuals search for, evaluate, purchase, and use products or services, is central to understanding the effectiveness of digital and influencer

marketing strategies. In the digital era, consumer behaviour has become increasingly complex, influenced by social media exposure, online reviews, peer recommendations, and influencer endorsements. Factors such as social media usage patterns, awareness of digital marketing tools, emotional attachment to platforms, and trust in influencers significantly shape consumers' buying behaviour. The present study aims to explore how influencer-driven digital marketing affects consumer awareness, attitudes, and purchasing decisions in urban and rural context.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Study Area

The present study is primarily concentrated in the Churu district, selected due to its growing exposure to digital platforms, increasing internet penetration, and active consumer engagement with social media. Churu district is geographically located between 27°24' to 29°00' north latitudes and 73°40' to 75°41' east longitudes in the northern part of Rajasthan.



Figure 1: Map of Study Area

Data Collection

In the present study, various research tools were employed to analyse the perceptions, experiences, and behavioural responses of consumers. The primary tools used for data collection included a structured questionnaire and standardized measurement scales, particularly Likert scales. A specially designed questionnaire was developed and administered to collect primary data from consumers regarding their awareness of digital marketing, social media usage habits, addiction and dependency, and the influence of social media influencers on their buying behaviour. The questionnaire consisted of systematically organized and clearly worded questions aligned with the objectives of the study. The use of a questionnaire facilitated efficient data collection from a large sample of respondents and ensured consistency and accuracy in responses.

Data Analysis

In the present study, the collected data were analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). To analyse the responses obtained from consumers, various statistical techniques were employed such as Mean, Standard Deviation and Factorial ANOVA.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The study included 800 consumers from Churu district, ensuring a balanced and representative sample. The gender composition was evenly distributed, with equal participation of males and females (50% each). The age groups were also fairly balanced, with the highest representation in the 25–30 and 31–35 categories (20% each), while the remaining groups each contributed 15%. In terms of residence, 55% of respondents belonged to urban areas and 45% to rural areas, providing a good mix of both settings. Notably, all respondents (100%) followed at least one social media influencer, highlighting the widespread reach of influencer culture. Among the categories followed, Technology, Gadgets, and Digital Reviews were most popular (40%), followed by Fashion, Beauty, and Lifestyle (35%), Food and Travel (15%), and others (10%), indicating varied consumer preferences.

Table 1: Gender-wise Distribution of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	400	50
Female	400	50
Total	800	100

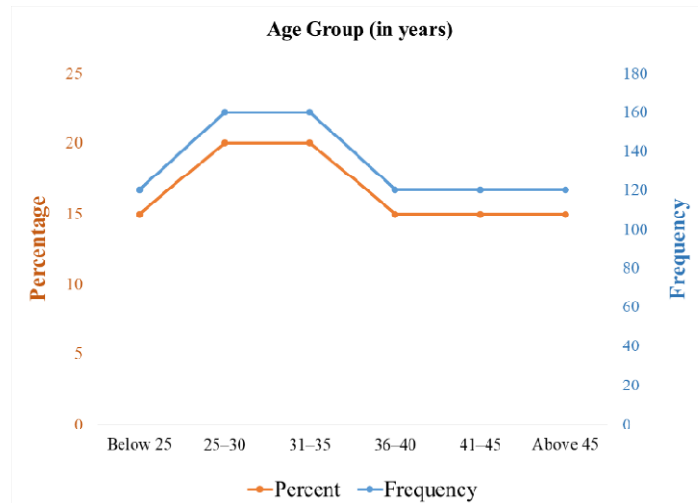


Figure 2: Graph showing Age-wise Distribution of Respondents

Table 2: Location-wise Distribution of Respondents

Location	Frequency	Percent
Urban	440	55
Rural	360	45
Total	800	100

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents Based on Following Social Media Influencers

Do you follow any influencer on social media platforms?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	800	100
No	0	0

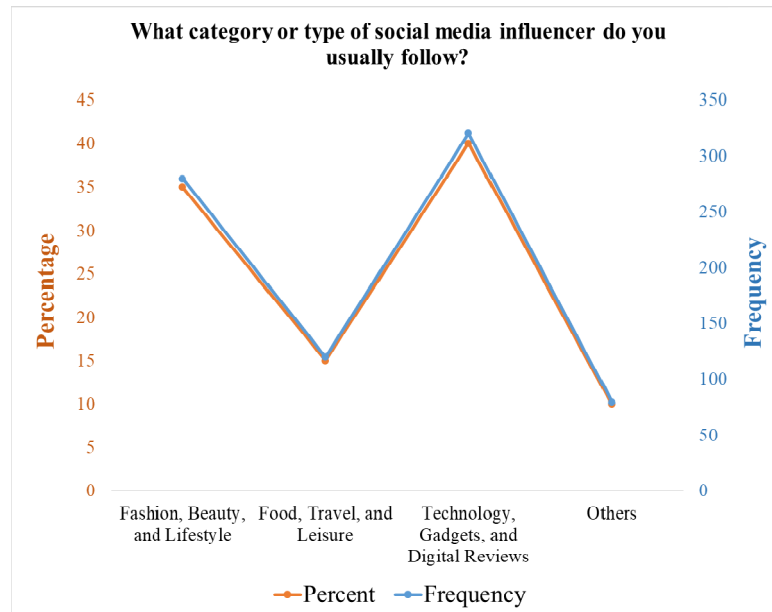


Figure 3: Graph showing Type of Social Media Influencers Followed by Respondents

Social Media Usage Addiction and Dependency

The descriptive statistics further support the frequency findings. The highest mean score (3.85) was observed for thinking about social media when not actively using it, followed by losing awareness of time spent on social media (Mean = 3.75). Moderate mean values were recorded for frequent purposeless usage (Mean = 3.55) and difficulty in reducing usage (Mean = 3.50). Lower mean values were found for delaying other activities (Mean = 2.75) and emotional discomfort without access (Mean = 3.15), indicating relatively lesser behavioural interference and emotional distress. Overall, the mean scores suggest moderate to high levels of social media usage addiction, particularly in terms of cognitive involvement and habitual use.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics of Social Media Usage Addiction and Dependency

Social Media Usage Addiction and Dependency	Mean	Std. Deviation
Do you find yourself thinking about social media even when you are not actively using it?	3.85	1.152
Do you use social media frequently without having a specific reason or purpose?	3.55	0.974
Do you stop or delay other activities when you feel the need to check social media?	2.75	0.829
Do you often lose awareness of how much time you spend on social media platforms?	3.75	1.043
Does the idea of being unable to access social media make you feel uneasy or stressed?	3.15	0.853
Have you found it difficult to reduce your social media usage despite trying to do so?	3.5	1.073

Consumer Awareness of Digital Marketing

The mean scores further support the frequency analysis. High mean values (Mean = 4.05) were observed for awareness of website advertisements, social media promotions, and video-based advertisements, indicating strong consumer awareness of these digital marketing forms. Moderate mean values were recorded for search engine advertisements and pop-up advertisements (Mean = 3.75), reflecting consistent but slightly varied awareness levels. Lower mean scores were found for email marketing (Mean = 3.35) and SMS advertising (Mean = 3.10), suggesting comparatively lower consumer attention toward these channels. The relatively low standard deviation values across items indicate consistency in respondents' awareness levels.

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics of Consumer Awareness of Digital Marketing

Consumer Awareness of Digital Marketing	Mean	Std. Deviation
Are you aware of advertisements that appear while you browse websites or use the internet?	4.05	0.669
Are you familiar with advertisements that appear on search engines such as Google?	3.75	0.698
Are you aware of promotional activities carried out through social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter?	4.05	0.669
Are you aware of marketing and promotional messages sent through email?	3.35	0.477
Are you aware of advertising messages received on your mobile phone through SMS?	3.1	0.624
Are you aware of pop-up or flash advertisements displayed on websites and digital platforms?	3.75	0.698
Are you aware of video-based advertisements shown on platforms such as YouTube and other streaming services?	4.05	0.669

Impact of Influencers on Consumers' Buying Behaviour

The mean scores further validate the frequency analysis. Higher mean values were observed for the influence of social media recommendations (Mean = 3.75), the impact of influencer messages on shopping behaviour (Mean = 3.70), and likelihood of purchasing products promoted by followed influencers (Mean = 3.70), indicating a strong influencer effect. Moderate mean scores were recorded for attention to promotional posts (Mean = 3.55) and purchasing recommended products (Mean = 3.60). Lower mean values for searching influencer-promoted products and preference for influencer-endorsed alternatives (Mean = 3.05) suggest that while influencers shape awareness and attitudes, their impact on active product comparison is comparatively limited. The standard deviation values indicate moderate variability, reflecting differences in individual consumer responsiveness to influencer marketing.

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics of Impact of Influencers on Consumers' Buying Behaviour

Impact of Influencers on Consumers' Buying Behaviour	Mean	Std. Deviation
Do frequent promotional posts by influencers attract more of your attention?	3.55	0.865
Do promotional messages shared by influencers influence the way you shop for products?	3.7	0.714
Do you look for products that are promoted or used by social media influencers?	3.05	0.669
Do you purchase products that are recommended by social media influencers?	3.6	0.917
When choosing between similar products, do you prefer those endorsed by influencers?	3.05	0.669
Are you more likely to buy a product if it is promoted by a social media influencer you follow?	3.7	0.714
Do social media recommendations play an important role in your purchasing decisions?	3.75	0.698

HYPOTHESIS TESTING

Hypothesis 1: There is No Significant Difference in the Awareness Level of Consumers on Digital Marketing across Various Demographics

A factorial ANOVA was conducted to examine the effect of demographic variables—gender, age group, and location—on consumers' awareness of digital marketing. The results revealed that the overall model was statistically significant ($F = 1372.20$, $p < 0.001$), explaining a substantial proportion of variance in awareness levels ($R^2 = 0.968$). The main effects of gender ($F = 967.08$, $p < 0.001$), age group ($F = 3080.60$, $p < 0.001$), and location ($F = 293.25$, $p < 0.001$) were found to be statistically significant. In addition, significant interaction effects were observed between gender and age ($F = 446.50$, $p <$

0.001) and between age and location ($F = 343.94$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that awareness levels varied across combined demographic categories. Since statistically significant differences were observed across demographic variables, the null hypothesis (H_{01}) is rejected. The findings suggest that consumers' awareness of digital marketing differs significantly across gender, age groups, and location, as well as across certain combinations of these demographic factors.

Hypothesis 2: There is No Significant Difference in the Social Media usage Addiction and Dependency of Consumers across Various Demographics

To test this hypothesis, a factorial ANOVA was performed with social media usage addiction and dependency as the dependent variable and gender, age group, and location as independent variables. The results indicated that the corrected model was statistically significant ($F = 753.94$, $p < 0.001$), accounting for 94.2% of the variance in addiction and dependency ($R^2 = 0.942$). The main effects of gender ($F = 63.58$, $p < 0.001$), age group ($F = 1649.00$, $p < 0.001$), and location ($F = 29.33$, $p < 0.001$) were statistically significant. Furthermore, significant interaction effects were found between gender and age ($F = 214.08$, $p < 0.001$) and age and location ($F = 309.54$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that levels of social media addiction vary notably across different demographic combinations. As significant differences were observed, the null hypothesis (H_{02}) is rejected. These results clearly indicate that social media usage addiction and dependency among consumers are significantly influenced by demographic factors, particularly age, and their interaction with gender and location.

Hypothesis 3: There is No Significant Difference in the Endorsers Influenced Buying Behaviour of Consumers across Various Demographics

A factorial ANOVA was applied to assess the impact of demographic variables on influencer-induced buying behaviour. The analysis showed that the overall model was statistically significant ($F = 788.60$, $p < 0.001$), explaining 94.5% of the variance in buying behaviour ($R^2 = 0.945$). The main effects of gender ($F = 122.84$, $p < 0.001$), age group ($F = 1806.50$, $p < 0.001$), and location ($F = 157.38$, $p < 0.001$) were statistically significant. Significant interaction effects were also observed between gender and age ($F = 247.06$, $p < 0.001$) and age and location ($F = 167.22$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that the influence of endorsers on buying behaviour differs across combined demographic profiles. In view of the significant results, the null hypothesis (H_{03}) is rejected. The findings demonstrate that influencer-driven buying behaviour varies significantly across demographic groups and their interactions, highlighting the importance of demographic segmentation in influencer marketing strategies.

The factorial ANOVA results confirm that demographic variables significantly influence digital marketing awareness, social media addiction, and influencer-driven buying behaviour, with age emerging as the most critical factor. Significant interaction effects indicate that consumer responses must be understood within combined demographic contexts, supporting the need for targeted segmentation. The findings show high digital awareness, moderate to high social media dependency, and strong influencer impact, though behaviour remains selective. These results extend earlier studies by Kadam et al. (2021), Awati (2024), and Bhalla (2025) by highlighting interaction effects, while supporting Pan et al. (2025) and Gupta et al. (2025) on the importance of demographic characteristics. The study also addresses gaps related to non-metropolitan contexts (Gupta et al., 2025). Overall, the findings confirm that influencer marketing is a powerful yet nuanced tool shaped by demographics, platform use, and consumer rationality, requiring context-specific strategies.

CONCLUSION

The present study concludes that digital marketing and social media have become deeply integrated into the daily lives of consumers, significantly influencing their awareness, behaviour, and decision-making processes. The findings indicate that consumers in Churu district exhibit moderate to high levels of social media addiction, particularly in terms of cognitive engagement and habitual usage patterns. While behavioural interference and emotional dependency are relatively moderate, the overall trend reflects increasing reliance on digital platforms. The study further reveals a high level of consumer awareness regarding digital marketing, especially in relation to social media promotions, website advertisements, and video-based content. However, comparatively lower awareness of email and SMS marketing suggests that traditional digital channels may be losing effectiveness in the current digital ecosystem. A key conclusion of the study is the significant role of social media influencers in shaping consumer buying behaviour. Influencers effectively attract attention, influence shopping behaviour, and contribute to purchase decisions. However, their influence is not absolute, as consumers continue to consider factors such as product quality, price, and personal preferences when making final decisions.

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