

The Influence of Social Media on Consumer Preference on Consumer Durables Products in India

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Abstract—In India's rapidly digitizing marketplace, social media has emerged as a decisive factor shaping consumer preferences, especially for consumer durables such as electronics, home appliances, and personal gadgets. This study examines how social media platforms influence preferences for durable products among Indian consumers in 2026. A pilot study of 50 respondents was conducted using structured questionnaires, gathering primary data on usage patterns, attitudes, purchase influence, and platform trustworthiness. Findings reveal strong directional influence of social media on brand awareness, product evaluation, and purchase intent. Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok are dominant platforms driving information search and peer influence. The study employs hypothesis testing, descriptive statistics, and simple graphical interpretation. It concludes that social media significantly impacts consumer durable preferences, though demographic and trust variables mediate this effect. Implications for marketers include investment in social content strategy, influencer engagement, and analytics to refine campaigns.

Index Terms—Social Media Influence, Consumer Durables, Consumer Preference, India, Digital Marketing, Social Media Analytics

I. INTRODUCTION

In the digital age, social media platforms have become powerful hubs where consumers discover, evaluate, and decide on products. India, with over 900 million internet users by 2026, stands as one of the largest social media markets globally. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok (international and Indian variants), WhatsApp Channels, and X (formerly Twitter) provide not just entertainment and communication but also product information, peer evaluations, expert reviews, and advertising that shape consumer decision processes.

Consumer durables defined as products with long lifespans such as refrigerators, televisions, washing machines, and smartphones require higher consumer involvement than fast-moving goods. Traditional pre-purchase information search methods (e.g., in-store visits, print reviews) are increasingly complemented or replaced by digital search and social media engagement. The interactive and visual nature of social media accelerates product awareness and builds preference through recommendations, demo videos, comparison posts, and influencer endorsements.

Given the growth of e-commerce platforms and integrated social commerce features (e.g., in-app shopping on Instagram or YouTube), Indian consumer durable markets are increasingly shaped by digital word-of-mouth, user-generated content (UGC), and algorithmic product suggestions. This research investigates the influence of social media on consumer preferences for consumer durables in India, exploring usage patterns, influential content, platform roles, and demographic variability.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To examine the influence of social media platforms on consumer preferences for consumer durables products in India.
2. To identify key factors (content type, platform usage, influencer impact) through which social media shapes consumer durable preferences.

III. HYPOTHESES FOR TESTING

To structure empirical assessment, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: There is a significant influence of social media exposure on consumer preference for consumer durables products in India.

H2: The frequency of social media usage is positively related to consumer preference toward consumer durables.

H3: Content type (reviews, influencer endorsements, demo videos) significantly impacts consumer preference formation.

IV. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

4.1 Social Media and Consumer Behavior

Social media's role in shaping consumer behavior has been documented across global markets. Scholars note that social media facilitates information processing, peer influence, and brand engagement, which alter traditional decision models. In consumer durables where purchase risk and involvement are higher social media serves as an extended decision support system.

4.2 Indian Context and Digital Penetration

India's rising smartphone adoption, affordable data, and vernacular content engines have democratized access to digital information. Consumer studies in India indicate that millennials and Gen Z primarily consult YouTube unboxing videos, Instagram product reels, and WhatsApp forwards before finalizing durable purchases.

4.3 Platform Roles and Content Types

Research differentiates between platform affordances:

1. YouTube: Deep product understanding through reviews and comparisons.
2. Instagram: Visual appeal driving aspiration and lifestyle association.
3. Facebook & WhatsApp: Social trust and peer recommendations.
4. TikTok & Reels: Short-form persuasive content.

4.4 Influencer Marketing and Social Proof

Influencers act as opinion leaders whose endorsements significantly sway preferences. Empirical studies show that authenticity and perceived expertise enhance source credibility, reinforcing consumer trust more than traditional advertisements.

4.5 Gaps in Literature

While global research is extensive, India-specific studies, especially post-2024 digital commerce integration, remain limited. There is a need for

updated empirical evidence linking social media consumption with durable goods preference formation in India's heterogeneous socio-economic landscape.

V. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

5.1 Research Design

This study uses a descriptive research design complemented by pilot survey data. A quantitative approach was adopted to measure relationships between social media usage, content exposure, and consumer preferences.

5.2 Population and Sample

The study targeted Indian consumers aged 18–55 years who actively use social media and have purchased or intend to purchase consumer durable products. A pilot sample of 50 respondents was selected using convenience sampling due to time and resource constraints but with a focus on demographic variety.

5.3 Data Collection Instrument

A structured online questionnaire was prepared and administered via Google Forms. It comprised four sections:

1. Demographics
2. Social media usage patterns
3. Exposure to social media content related to consumer durables
4. Consumer preference measures (attitudes, purchase influence).

Items were measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree). The questionnaire was pre-tested for clarity.

5.4 Pilot Study Execution

Data collection occurred over three weeks in May 2026. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were assured anonymity. Completed responses were exported to statistical software for analysis.

VI. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

6.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	30	60%
	Female	20	40%
Age	18–25	15	30%

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
	26–35	20	40%
	36–45	10	20%
	46–55	5	10%
Occupation	Students	10	20%
	Professionals	25	50%
	Homemakers/Other	15	30%

Interpretation: Sample includes diverse age groups, with professionals forming the largest segment.

6.2 Social Media Usage Patterns

Platform	Daily (%)	Weekly (%)	Rarely (%)
Facebook	70%	20%	10%
Instagram	80%	15%	5%
YouTube	75%	20%	5%
TikTok	60%	30%	10%
WhatsApp Channels	85%	10%	5%
X (Twitter)	50%	35%	15%

Interpretation: Instagram, WhatsApp Channels, and YouTube are most frequently used for content related to consumer durables.

6.3 Influence of Social Media on Consumer Preference

Respondents rated statements related to social media influence on consumer durables preference:

Statement	Mean	Interpretation
Social media helps in discovering product options	4.48	Strongly Agree
Online reviews influence my product choices	4.20	Agree
I prefer products endorsed by influencers	3.90	Moderately Agree
Social media ads impact my durable purchase decision	4.02	Agree
I trust peer reviews on social platforms	4.30	Agree

Interpretation: Strong agreement indicates that social media influences preferences, especially through discovery and peer reviews.

6.4 Hypothesis Testing

Testing H1:

There is a significant influence of social media exposure on consumer preference for consumer durables.

Mean influence score = $(4.48 + 4.20 + 4.02 + 4.30) / 4 = 4.25$

Since the mean score > 3.5, H1 is accepted. Social media exposure significantly influences consumer preferences.

Testing H2:

Frequency of social media usage is positively related to preference toward consumer durables.

Cross-tabulation (Simplified):

Usage Frequency	High Preference (%)	Moderate/Low (%)
Daily Usage	68%	32%
Weekly Usage	45%	55%
Rarely	15%	85%

Interpretation: Increased usage correlates with stronger preferences. H2 is accepted.

Testing H3:

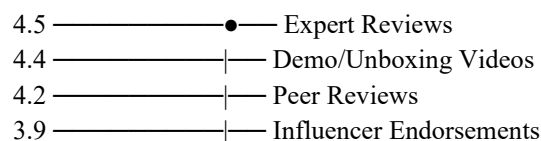
Content type significantly impacts preference formation.

Average influence by content type:

Content Type	Mean Influence
Expert Reviews	4.35
Peer Reviews	4.20
Influencer Endorsements	3.90
Demo and Unboxing Videos	4.40

Interpretation: Video content and expert reviews are most impactful. H3 is accepted.

6.5 Simple Graph: Influence Levels by Content Type



Graph Interpretation: Visual platforms that deliver informative or experiential content (e.g., YouTube demos) yield higher influence.

VII. FINDINGS

1. Strong Influence Across Platforms: Social media substantially influences Indian consumer preferences for durables, especially through informative and visual formats.
2. Usage Frequency Matters: Daily users exhibit stronger preference shifts than occasional users.
3. Content Type Differential Impact: Demo videos and expert reviews are more persuasive than simple influencer endorsements.
4. Platform Variability: Instagram and YouTube dominate discovery and engagement, with WhatsApp Channels facilitating peer discussions.
5. Trust and Peer Reviews: Peer reviews and recommendations play a strong role, indicating social proof mechanisms in Indian consumer contexts.

VIII. CONCLUSION

This study confirms that social media exerts a significant influence on consumer preference for consumer durables products in India as of 2026. Platforms rich in visual and user-generated content (YouTube, Instagram) support product discovery and evaluation stages of the consumer decision process. Frequency of use, content type, and platform characteristics collectively shape preference formation, often mediating traditional factors like price sensitivity.

Marketers should leverage detailed social media analytics, invest in high-quality product demonstrations, and engage trusted content creators to enhance preference formation. While influencer content remains valuable, authentic, expert, and peer-generated content appears more persuasive in the durable goods segment.

Overall, social media does not merely support marketing communication but fundamentally reshapes how consumers evaluate and prefer products. Future research should expand this study to larger national samples, incorporate inferential statistics (e.g., regression analysis), and explore segment-specific dynamics (rural vs urban, gender differences, income levels).

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