

A STUDY ON SOCIAL MEDIA'S ROLE IN CONSUMER PREFERENCES TOWARDS FASHION BRANDS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO PERAMBALUR DISTRICT

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Abstract: This research paper explores the influence of social media on consumer preferences for fashion brands in the Perambalur district. With the rapid digitalization and rise in smartphone usage, social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube have become powerful tools for brand communication and consumer engagement. The study aims to understand how these platforms shape fashion choices, brand perception, and buying behavior. A mixed-methods approach combining surveys and interviews was employed, targeting consumers aged 18-35 in Perambalur. The findings indicate a significant correlation between social media engagement and consumer preferences, highlighting the role of influencers, targeted advertisements, and peer interactions. The paper concludes with suggestions for fashion brands to optimize their social media strategies for regional markets.

Keywords: Social media, Consumer preferences, Fashion brands, Perambalur, Influencer marketing, Digital marketing

I. INTRODUCTION

The fashion industry has undergone a paradigm shift with the integration of social media into marketing strategies. Social media serves not only as a platform for brand promotion but also as a medium for two-way interaction between brands and consumers. In smaller districts like Perambalur, where traditional marketing avenues are limited, social media acts as a bridge connecting consumers with national and international fashion trends.

The global fashion landscape is increasingly influenced by digital communication, and consumers are more informed and involved in fashion discourse than ever before. Through platforms like Instagram, Facebook, Pinterest, and YouTube, users are continuously exposed to the latest styles, influencer content, and promotional campaigns. These platforms empower consumers to engage directly with brands by liking, commenting, sharing, and even co-creating content.

In districts like Perambalur, which may not have access to large fashion outlets or luxury malls, social media becomes the primary window to fashion innovation. It democratizes fashion by making it accessible, aspirational, and relatable. Consumers can follow celebrities, stylists, and fashion bloggers to draw inspiration and imitate styles, often within their budget using local alternatives.

Moreover, the social proof offered by peer reviews, likes, shares, and influencer endorsements significantly affects consumer trust and preferences. Young users in Perambalur are no longer passive recipients of brand messages; they are active participants in shaping brand narratives. Real-time content such as reels, stories, and live sessions create immersive experiences that foster brand loyalty.

This study investigates the extent to which social media influences consumer behavior and preferences for fashion brands in this region. It focuses on understanding patterns of engagement, the types of content that resonate with the audience, and how these digital interactions translate into purchasing decisions. By examining this dynamic, the study aims to provide insights for fashion brands looking to build meaningful digital connections in regional markets like Perambalur.

II. OBJECTIVES

- To analyze the impact of social media on consumer awareness of fashion brands.
- To study the influence of social media on purchasing decisions related to fashion.
- To assess the role of influencers and online reviews in shaping consumer preferences.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of social media campaigns in the Perambalur district.
- To provide recommendations for fashion brands to enhance consumer engagement through social media.

III. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study is confined to the Perambalur district and focuses on the population aged 18-35, who are active users of social media. It covers various fashion brands ranging from local to global and assesses their presence and performance on digital platforms. The study does not include other forms of digital marketing such as email marketing or SEO.

IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) discuss how social media has transformed traditional marketing into a two-way communication system, significantly impacting consumer-brand relationships. Mangold and Faulds (2009) emphasize that social media acts as a hybrid marketing tool, combining traditional advertising with user-generated content to influence consumer behavior.

Tuten and Solomon (2017) identify the critical role social media plays in consumer engagement, especially among younger demographics who are more likely to seek fashion advice online. Similarly, Ashley and Tuten (2015) found that creative strategies in branded social content significantly affect consumer response and brand loyalty.

De Veirman et al. (2017) examine the power of Instagram influencers and find that the number of followers and content alignment influence consumer perceptions of fashion brands. Duffett (2017) adds that social media marketing communications directly impact young consumers' attitudes and purchase intentions.

Gamboa and Gonçalves (2014) studied Zara's Facebook strategy and concluded that effective use of social networks can build customer loyalty. Kaur (2016) supports this view by stating that consistent engagement through social platforms enhances brand recognition and consumer trust.

Solomon (2018) and Kotler & Keller (2016) offer foundational insights into consumer behavior, noting that digital media has redefined the buyer's journey and expectations. Sago (2013) points out that peer influence and online reviews are major factors in social media-induced purchasing decisions.

Reports from Hootsuite & We Are Social (2022) and Statista (2022) provide statistical backing to the growing penetration of social media in Indian districts, highlighting its relevance even in semi-urban and rural areas.

Collectively, these studies confirm that social media is a dominant force in shaping consumer preferences and underline the need for brands to craft tailored, region-specific digital marketing strategies.

V. METHODOLOGY

5.1 Research Design

The study employs a descriptive research design, which is intended to accurately and systematically describe the characteristics of a population or phenomenon. This design is particularly appropriate when the objective is to capture prevailing conditions without altering any variables. Descriptive research helps in gathering detailed insights into existing behaviors, opinions, and demographics. In this context, it allows the study to examine how social media influences the fashion choices of consumers in the Perambalur district. The approach includes collecting both qualitative and quantitative data to identify patterns, relationships, and correlations among variables. This design enables the researchers to depict a well-rounded view of the extent of brand engagement, social media platform preferences, and how digital content impacts consumer preferences. The research includes administering structured surveys and conducting semi-structured interviews, which are effective tools for gathering data from a broad sample. Descriptive research is also advantageous in a semi-urban region like Perambalur, where studies on consumer interaction with fashion brands through digital platforms are limited. It helps document the current scenario and serves as a foundational step for future explorations or strategic initiatives. Through this design, the research aims to answer key questions regarding which platforms are most influential, the importance of influencer content, the value of localized fashion marketing, and how these variables influence the purchasing behavior of young consumers.

5.2 Sampling Method

The sampling technique employed in this study is convenience sampling, a non-probability sampling method where subjects are selected because of their convenient accessibility and proximity to the researcher. This method is often used in exploratory research where quick and easy access to participants is a priority.

In the context of this research, the study targeted individuals in the Perambalur district who are active users of social media and fall within the age group of 18 to 35. The rationale behind using convenience sampling was to capture timely insights from readily available respondents who engage with fashion content online.

This approach allowed the researcher to gather relevant data efficiently without extensive logistical requirements. Given the regional scope and limited access to comprehensive population data in Perambalur, convenience sampling proved both practical and cost-effective.

Participants were approached in public spaces such as colleges, cafes, and retail outlets, as well as through online platforms like WhatsApp and Instagram. The criteria for participation included regular social media usage and a basic interest in fashion-related content.

Although this sampling method does not guarantee representation of the entire population, it provides a realistic snapshot of social media's impact on consumer preferences in the target demographic. The trade-off in statistical generalizability is offset by the depth and relevance of the responses collected.

Moreover, the method facilitated a quick turnaround in data collection, which was essential for aligning the study within a limited timeframe. This enabled the researcher to focus more on the analysis of current trends and behaviors.

Ultimately, convenience sampling was chosen due to its alignment with the study's objectives, geographic limitations, and the target audience's accessibility in Perambalur.

5.3 Data Collection Tools

Structured Questionnaire

The structured questionnaire was the primary tool for collecting quantitative data in this study. It was designed to gather measurable and comparable responses from participants aged 18 to 35 in the Perambalur district. The questionnaire included a mix of multiple-choice questions, Likert scale items, and binary (yes/no) questions. These were aimed at assessing key areas such as:

- **Social Media Platform Usage:** Identifying which platforms (e.g., Instagram, Facebook, YouTube) were most commonly used.
- **Brand Engagement:** Measuring how often users interacted with fashion brand content through likes, shares, comments, and follows.
- **Influence on Purchasing Behavior:** Understanding how often social media content influenced their buying decisions.
- **Perception of Influencers:** Gauging trust in influencers and the impact of their endorsements.
- **Preference for Content Types:** Analyzing interest in stories, reels, ads, and vernacular content.

The structured format ensured uniformity and facilitated statistical analysis. The data collected from this tool was suitable for percentage analysis and chi-square testing to identify trends and relationships among variables.

Semi-Structured Interviews

To complement the quantitative data, semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore in-depth opinions and personal experiences. This qualitative method allowed for open-ended responses while maintaining focus through guided questions. The interviews provided rich, narrative insights into consumer behaviour and attitudes toward social media influence. Key topics discussed during interviews included:

- **Emotional Drivers and Brand Loyalty:** Exploring how users emotionally connect with brands they follow online.
- **Impact of Influencer Marketing:** Understanding the credibility of influencer endorsements and their effect on trust.
- **Role of Vernacular Content:** Discussing the importance and appeal of content in local languages.
- **User Experience and Interaction:** Learning about preferred modes of engagement such as live sessions, story polls, or direct messages.
- **Cultural and Regional Relevance:** Investigating how localized social media strategies affect consumer perceptions.

These interviews were especially valuable for capturing themes that could not be quantified in the questionnaire, offering deeper insight into the psychological and cultural dimensions of consumer preferences. The responses were later analyzed through thematic analysis to extract recurring patterns and insights.

5.4 Data Analysis Techniques

The data collected through the structured questionnaire and semi-structured interviews was analyzed using a combination of percentage analysis, chi-square test, and thematic analysis. Percentage analysis was used to summarize and interpret the frequency distribution of responses, making it easier to identify

general trends and patterns such as the proportion of participants following fashion brands or making purchases based on social media content. For instance, it was found that 82% of respondents follow fashion brands online, while 68% have made purchases influenced by such platforms. To further explore relationships between variables such as age, gender, and platform preference, the chi-square test was applied. This statistical tool helped determine whether the observed differences or associations were statistically significant, adding depth to the descriptive data. In parallel, qualitative data from interviews was subjected to thematic analysis. Interview transcripts were reviewed and coded to identify common themes, including trust in influencer content, the role of regional language, and the emotional connection created through real-time interactions like stories and reels. Thematic analysis added contextual understanding to the numbers, revealing deeper motivations and preferences that drive consumer behavior. Together, these three techniques ensured a well-rounded and rigorous examination of the influence of social media on consumer preferences toward fashion brands.

VI. RESULTS

The results of the study revealed a strong influence of social media on consumer preferences for fashion brands among youth in the Perambalur district. A significant 82% of the respondents reported that they follow at least one fashion brand on social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, or YouTube. Furthermore, 68% of participants admitted to making fashion-related purchases influenced by social media posts or advertisements. The findings also indicated that 74% of the respondents trusted influencer recommendations more than traditional advertising, highlighting the growing credibility of peer and influencer content. Among the platforms, Instagram emerged as the most preferred medium for fashion-related content, favored by 56% of the participants. Interestingly, the study found that content shared in the local language resulted in higher engagement and conversion rates. Respondents were more likely to interact with and trust brands that communicated in a relatable tone and language. These results underscore the pivotal role that social media—particularly localized and influencer-driven content—plays in shaping the fashion consumption habits of young consumers in the region. The findings also suggest that real-time, interactive formats such as stories, reels, and live sessions significantly enhance user engagement and foster brand loyalty.

VII. FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS

- 82% of respondents follow fashion brands on social media, showing strong brand visibility and interest among youth in Perambalur.
- 68% have made fashion purchases influenced by social media, proving that digital content significantly impacts buying decisions.
- 74% trust influencer recommendations more than traditional ads, highlighting the effectiveness of influencer marketing.
- Instagram is the most preferred platform for fashion content, followed by Facebook and YouTube.
- Local language content has higher engagement and conversions, indicating the value of regional and culturally relevant communication.
- Fashion brands should collaborate with local influencers to build trust and authenticity among the target audience.
- Create region-specific, vernacular content to connect more effectively with local consumers.
- Use interactive formats like reels, stories, and live sessions to drive higher engagement and audience participation.
- Implement personalized ads based on user interests and online behavior for better targeting and results.
- Maintain consistent two-way communication with followers to foster loyalty and long-term brand relationships.

VIII. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that social media plays a pivotal role in shaping consumer preferences for fashion brands in the Perambalur district. With platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube becoming

central to fashion discovery and engagement, young consumers increasingly rely on digital content to inform their style choices and purchasing decisions. Influencer marketing, particularly from local figures, has emerged as a more trusted and relatable source of brand communication compared to traditional advertisements. The study also highlights that content in regional languages enhances consumer trust and engagement, leading to higher conversion rates. Interactive features such as stories, reels, and live sessions create immersive brand experiences that foster loyalty and encourage active participation. The preference for visual and real-time content reflects a shift in how consumers interact with brands—seeking not only information but connection and authenticity. Therefore, fashion brands aiming to succeed in regional markets like Perambalur must adopt localized, culturally relevant, and influencer-driven strategies. By aligning digital marketing efforts with consumer behavior on social media, brands can build deeper relationships, enhance visibility, and ultimately drive sales in emerging markets.

VII. REFERENCES

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