

## FACTORS INFLUENCING THE PURCHASE DECISION OF APPAREL BRANDS THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

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**Abstract:** *Internet has become an important part of human life across the world. Online activity through social media has drawn a lot of attention to companies and networking landscape. It refers to communication platforms that are generated and sustained by the interpersonal interaction of individuals through the specific medium or tool. The social media has brought a great shift from the traditional broadcast mechanism used for conversation between authors, people and peers to a new fast & interactive social media platforms. Through these social media networking sites, people are inclined to purchase apparel of different brands on social media networking sites. Social media has emerged to be one of the best support for the apparel industry. This new media has enabled the fashion industry to reach out to a large audience with just a single post. The interaction between Brands and clients has been simplified beyond imagination. Apparel brands may also spread word of mouth like wildfire through the evolving user base of social media platforms. Social media and networking sites have a great impact on the apparel industry. The apparels is a true reflection of the people's social and economic status.*

*The purpose of the study is to understand the factors influencing the purchase decision of apparel brands through social media platforms with reference to different occupation like self-employed, employees working in private sector, employees working in public sector and students of Rohilkhand Region.*

*The article has looked at the extant literature in social media and factors influencing the choice of brands on social media. The primary data was collected from 110 respondents comprising of self-employed, private sector employees, public sector employees, and students through the survey using structured questionnaire. Respondents were chosen on the basis of Judgmental methodology. The research instrument used for the analysis was ANOVA through SPSS.*

**Keywords:** *Social media, online purchasing, Apparel industry*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Social media is a key component of organizations marketing strategies ,which has transformed the world in the way of its functioning, bringing the world and people closer. 74% of shoppers make buying decisions based on social media, according to **Sprout Social**. Social media refers to activities, practices, and behaviors among groups of people who gather online to share information, experiences, and perspectives using colloquial media. Colloquial or conversational media are basically online based applications that have enabled them to create and transmit content in the form of words, pictures, videos, and audios (Brake, 2009). Social media has emerged to be powerful tool for the marketer . It has helped the marketer to effectively reach out to consumers and has immense contributed to creating awareness about the brands , amongst the consumers . Social media is considered as most interactive and engaging way to connect with public. It is also transparent medium to communicate with people and share various kinds of information. According to (Moran, 2012),Social media helps in communicating & interacting with people all over the world. The nature of social media makes it perfectly fit to be used by fashion industry. Many social networking websites and other online platforms are used in the fashion industry in connecting with the customers and to engage with them. Today apparel industry is using variety of social media platforms to study the changing trends and to anticipate fashion behaviors(Ahmad & et.all 2015) From the customer's perspective, social media makes it easy to tell a company and everyone else about their experiences with that company whether those experiences are good or bad. The business can also respond very quickly to both positive and negative feedback, attend to customer problems and maintain, regain or rebuild customer confidence. Generally, Social media refers to online communities, social networking sites, blogs, and other online digital platforms. An online community and conventional community share lots of similarities except the fact that former is online. Customers may engage in online business communities for the purpose of obtaining customer support. At many, this support comes in the form of an employee providing guidance and feedback on the query launched by the customer while at other times the feedback may come from other customers present on the online community. In both cases, the customer obtains help and support, they are looking for. Customers can interact with one another and discuss the things that they like and dislike about the company and its products. In addition, some customers may discuss their personal interests also.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

MohitSolanki, Mohit Dhawan, Ripusudan Adhikari, Nancy Yadav ( 2015 ) concluded that online community commitment and community engagement affects buying behavior & purchase intention. Bashar, Ahmad& Wasq (2012) have done empirical research to “understand the effectiveness of social media marketing tool

and an effort has been made to analyze the extent social media helps consumers in buying decision making. The results of the paper suggested that the medium is growing very fast and holds huge potential, but is still in its nascent stage in India, therefore, it is time for the companies to make effective strategies and execute them to win a larger share of business through this revolutionary medium and become the innovative firm of coming future.” Pigg and Crank (2004) suggest how the Internet can facilitate interaction within members of the community. They suggest a concept of “reciprocity transaction”, that implies that “one person provides something of value to another in the expectation that, at some point in time, the other person will act similarly”.

Shared presence combined with a depth of information provides shared meaning (Miranda and Saunders, 2003). Social networks play an increasingly larger role for Internet users.

According to Castells (1999), “social networks substitute for communities, with locally based communities being one of the many possible alternatives for the creation and maintenance of social networks, and the Internet providing another such alternative. Social networks provide possibilities to create new relationships, and to maintain existing ones”.

Young Ae Kim, Jaideep Srivastava (2007) found that as Web-based social networks have become more popular, consumers who may not have complete information about a product or service often make use of previous customers opinions.

Elisabeta Ioană, Ivona Stoica (2014) concluded that social networks have a role in influencing the behavior of consumers in the virtual environment.

M. Nick Hajli (2014) founds that “social media empower participants to generate content through online communities, reviews, and recommendations”. Consumers, facilitated by social media, generate online social support for their peers. And consequently, these interactions establish trust in the networks used. Further, he founds that the trust, encouraged by social media, significantly affects intention to buy.

D. Scaraboto, C. A.V. Rossi, D. Costa (2012) “observed that consumers create persuasive texts as they discuss brands, products, and consumption experiences in the online community”

Kem Z.K. Zhang, Bing Hu, Sesia J. Zhao(2014) in their study found that online social interactions can be important consumer-generated stimuli that drive consumers online impulse purchase.

The study on Brand strategies in social media (Tsimonis Georgios and Dimitriadis Sergios, 2014) focused on qualitative study and found that mainly actions of the organizations focuses on prize competitions i.e. announcing new products/ services, interacting with fans, providing advice , useful information and handling

customer service issues. Interaction with customers is to create and enhance relationships with customers, brand awareness, customer engagement, promote products and increase sales to target the acquisition of new customers was referred to as the main expected outcomes for companies. It reveals that social influence exerted by online communities play a significant role in molding the buying behavior of consumers.

While companies aim at engaging with loyal customers, influencing members perceptions about the brand, disseminating information, and learning from and about customers (Algesheimer et al., 2005), customers gain value through the variety of practices that they perform online and offline . In such communities, people may engage in several types of behaviors, such as helping other customers or sharing experiences with them. Furthermore, many consumers engage in non-interactive behaviors such as reading others comments. According to Park and Cho (2012), this is one of the reasons that consumers will go to social networking sites, that is, to learn about previous product or service experiences, which will be posted on these sites.

Erkan Ismail & Evans Chris (2016) Electronic word of mouth( E-WOM) is an efficient method to help marketers to convert the prospective consumers to actual consumers of their product and services because it provides product information from the user view point . For this purpose, a conceptual model was developed based on the integration of Information Adoption Model (IAM) and related components of Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA). The new model, which is named as Information Acceptance Model (IACM), was validated through structural equation modelling (SEM) based on surveys of 384 university students who use social media websites. The results confirm that quality, credibility, usefulness and adoption of information, needs of information and attitude towards information are the key factors of E-WOM in social media that influence consumers' purchase intentions.

### **THE OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

- To evaluate the importance given to different factors that influence the purchase through social media with respect to different occupations.

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The major input contribution to the present research is the primary data. The data was collected using self-administered questionnaires. A total of 110 respondents was contacted for the survey, out of whom only 100 respondents gave their responses. Further, 10 responses were incomplete, and hence the final sample size for the study is 100. Responses were collected through offline and online survey. The online survey was conducted through email and posting the link of the questionnaire on social media networks like Facebook and Google forms. The offline

survey was conducted by distributing printed copies of the questionnaire to the respondents. Respondents were chosen on the basis of judgmental sampling method. The participants were users of social networking sites who are using at least one social media platform. The major social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Google plus were considered for the study. Software packages SPSS was used to test the hypothesis and relationship among different variables.

The research study includes the people having their accounts on social media networking sites in Bareilly and nearby regions. A time period of data collection was from January 2019- March 2019. Primary, as well as secondary data, has been collected.

**Data analysis and results:** The study is done on the basis of responses collected from the target audience. The primary data has been analyzed by ANOVA for results.

### Demographic profile of the respondents

The Demographic information captured during the study includes respondents age, gender education, and occupation. Table 1 provides the over view of sample demographics.

**Table. 1 demographic profile**

Sample Demographics(n=110)		Frequency
Age (Years)		
20-35years		76
35-45years		16
45-55years		6
above 55years		2
Gender		
Male		48
Female		52
Education		
Undergraduate		4
Graduate		41
Postgraduate		51
PhD		4
Occupation		
Student		44
Private sector Employee		44
Self employed		12

It can be seen from table.1 that a majority of the respondents fall in the age group of 20-25 years , which shows that mostly youth participated in the survey . This is appropriate for the study, as youths are the most active group on social media among all the age groups. Further, 51% of the respondents have their education level as post-graduation and above, which implies that they are qualified enough to participate in purchase decisions through social media platforms.

### The pattern of Social media Usage

**Table -2 Social Media Usage**

Social Media Usage and Online Purchase Pattern					
Items	choices	occupation			total frequency
		student	Employees working in private sector (private sector employee)	self employed	
Since how long you have been using social media platforms	less than 6 months	0	0	0	0
	6 months to 1 year	0	0	0	0
	1 - 3 years	0	0	0	0
	more than 3 years	44	44	12	100
No. of times connecting on social media	always connected	26	14	6	46
	several times a day	8	24	4	36
	once a day	8	4	2	14
	occasionally	2	2	0	4
Time spent on social media in a day	less than 15 minutes	2	12	2	16
	15 -30 minutes	10	15	8	33
	30- 60 minutes	20	13	2	35
	more than 60 minutes	12	4	0	16
Most visited social media website	Facebook	40	34	12	86
	Instagram	0	2	0	2
	You tube	4	6	0	10
	Google plus	0	2	0	2
Frequency of purchasing apparel online	Once in a month	6	2	4	12
	Once in 2 or 3 months	30	12	2	44
	More than once a month	4	26	6	36
	None	4	4	0	8

It can be seen from table.2 all the respondents irrespective to different occupations are been engaged on social media from more than 3 years. By the above data Students are always connected on social media, This is appropriate for the study, as youths seems to be most active on social media among all the age groups. Further, Facebook is most visited social media site by the students to purchase the apparel online .

### **Testing of Hypothesis**

The **one-way analysis** of variance (ANOVA) is used to determine whether there are any statistically significant differences between the means of two or more independent (unrelated) groups. The test was conducted to judge the importance given to various factors that influence the purchase of apparel initiated through social media with respect to different occupational groups. The factors considered are Price, Aesthetics, Brand, Fashion Sense ,Quality , Comfort , Style, Advertising and Promotion.

**1) H<sub>0</sub> The importance given to price during purchase initiated through social media platform does not significantly vary with occupation**

**H<sub>1</sub> The importance given to price during purchase initiated through social media platform does significantly vary with occupation**

**Table-3** Author's research

The results of one way ANOVA are represented in table no.3, which indicates that significant value is less than 0.05, therefore the null hypothesis is rejected and it can be interpreted that importance of price during purchase through social media platform significantly varies with occupation.

Post Hoc test was conducted( refer to the table .4) to identify in which occupations the influence of price significantly vary . The post Hoc test indicates that the influence of price on the choice of brands is significantly high in the case of a student as compared with private sector and self employed.

**2) H<sub>0</sub> The importance of aesthetics during purchase initiated through social media platform does not significantly vary with occupation**

**H<sub>2</sub> The importance of aesthetics during purchase initiated through social media platform does significantly vary with occupation**

The results of one way ANOVA are represented in table no.3 which indicates the significance value for aesthetics is greater than 0.05 , therefore null hypothesis is accepted and it can be interpreted that importance given to aesthetics during purchase through social media platform does not significantly vary with occupation.

**3) H<sub>0</sub> The importance of a brand during purchase initiated through**

**social media platform does not significantly vary with occupation**

**H<sub>3</sub> The importance of brand during purchase initiated through social media platform does significantly vary with occupation**

The results of one way ANOVA are represented in the table no.3 ANOVA table indicates the significance value of the brand is less than 0.05, it indicates that the importance of brand during purchase through social media platform does significantly vary with the occupation. Hence H<sub>0</sub><sub>3</sub> is rejected and H<sub>3</sub> is accepted.

Post Hoc test was conducted( refer to the table.5) to identify in which occupations the influence of brand significantly vary . The post Hoc test indicates that the influence of brand on the choice of brands is significantly high in case of student and self-employed as compared with employees working in private sector .

**4) H<sub>0</sub><sub>4</sub> The importance of fashion sense during purchase initiated through social media platform in influencing online purchase does not significantly vary with occupation**

**H<sub>4</sub> The importance of fashion sense during purchase initiated through social media platform in influencing online purchase does significantly vary with occupation**

The results of one way ANOVA are represented in the following table no.3 , ANOVA table indicates the P value of fashion sense is more than 0.05 it indicates that the importance of fashion sense during purchase through social media platform does not significantly vary with occupation. Hence H<sub>0</sub><sub>4</sub> is accepted and H<sub>4</sub> is rejected .

**5) H<sub>0</sub><sub>5</sub> The importance of quality during purchase through social media platform does not significantly vary with occupation**

**H<sub>5</sub> The importance of quality during purchase through social media platform does significantly vary with occupation**

The results of one way ANOVA are represented in the following table no .3, ANOVA table indicates the P value of quality is less than 0.05 it indicates that importance of quality during purchase through social media platform significantly varies with occupation. Hence H<sub>0</sub><sub>5</sub> is rejected and H<sub>5</sub> is accepted.

Table -6 represents the Post Hoc test to identify in which occupations the influence of quality significantly vary. The post Hoc test indicates that the influence of quality on the choice of brands is significantly high in case of a student as compared with employees working in private sector and who are self employed .

**6 ) H<sub>0</sub><sub>6</sub> The importance of comfort during purchase initiated through social media platform does not significantly vary with occupation**

**H<sub>6</sub> The importance of comfort during purchase initiated through social media platform does significantly vary with occupation**

The results of one way ANOVA are represented in the above table no. 3 , ANOVA table indicates the P value of comfort is more than 0.05 it indicates that the importance of comfort during purchase through social media platform does not significantly vary with occupation. Hence  $H_0_6$  is accepted and  $H_6$  is rejected .

**7)  $H_0_7$  The importance of style during purchase initiated through social media platform in influencing online purchase does not significantly vary with occupation**

**$H_7$  The importance of style during purchase initiated through social media platform in influencing online purchase does significantly vary with occupation**

The results of one way ANOVA are represented in table no .7 , ANOVA table indicates the P value of style is less than 0.05 it indicates that the importance of style during purchase through social media platform does significantly vary with the occupation. Hence  $H_0_7$  is rejected and  $H_7$  is accepted.

Table.7 represents Post Hoc test was conducted to identify in which occupations the influence of style significantly vary . The post Hoc test indicates that the influence of style on the choice of brands is significantly high in case of student as compared with private sector and self-employed.

**8)  $H_0_8$  The importance of advertising and promotion during purchase through social media platform does not significantly vary with occupation**

**$H_8$  The importance of advertising and promotion during purchase through social media platform does significantly vary with occupation**

The results of one way ANOVA are represented in the following table no.3, ANOVA table indicates the P value of advertising promotion is more than 0.05 it indicates that the importance of advertising and promotion during purchase through social media platform does not significantly vary with occupation Hence  $H_0_8$  is accepted and  $H_8$  is rejected.

### **Managerial Implications**

As customers vary in their demand a clear understanding of factors influencing the purchase decision of consumers is inevitable for e-retailers. The learnings from the study will help brand managers to appraise the role of social media platforms in creating brand equity .

People get influenced while being on social media platforms and their purchase behavior for every person occupied differently can be traced and tracked , it can be emergent tool to analyze the purchase behavior related to the occupation. Social media interactions among consumers have changed the marketing scenario.

Business is actively present on social media platforms so that they can understand how consumers are responding to anything related to their apparel brand.

## **CONCLUSION**

Through this research, we concluded that there are mainly five factors which are given different importance by the occupational group while purchasing through social media. These are mainly as price, brand, fashion sense, quality and style that impact consumer purchase decisions through social media networking sites. The post Hoc test indicates that the influence of price, brand, style on the choice of brands is significantly high in the case of a student as compared with the private sector and self-employed. Consumers across the world, while choosing product or services, have preferences based on the factors which are inherent to their decision-making process. The study will help to understand how occupation influences the purchase of apparel through social media.

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## APPENDIX

**Table-3 Author's research ANOVA table for various factors influencing purchase through Social Media with Occupation as a mediating variable**

		N	Mean	Std. Devi- ation	F	Sig.
Price	Student	44	4.636	.6503	12.294	.000
	private sector Em- ployee	44	3.818	1.1263		
	self em- ployed	12	3.333	1.3027		
	Total	100	4.120	1.0757		
Aesthetics	Student	44	4.5909	.78705	1.981	.143
	private sector Em- ployee	44	4.2273	1.00842		
	self em- ployed	12	4.5000	.52223		
	Total	100	4.4200	.87824		
brand	Student	44	4.7727	.52223	7.856	.001
	private sector Em- ployee	44	4.1818	.99470		
	self em- ployed	12	4.0000	.85280		
	Total	100	4.4200	.85493		
fashionsense	Student	44	4.5455	.79107	3.795	.026
	private sector Em- ployee	44	4.1818	.99470		
	self em- ployed	12	3.8333	.71774		
	Total	100	4.3000	.90453		
quality	Student	44	4.8182	.39015	3.360	.039
	private sector Em- ployee	44	4.5455	.66313		
	self em- ployed	12	4.8333	.38925		
	Total	100	4.7000	.54123		
comfort	Student	44	4.3636	.57429	0.201	0.818
	private sector Em- ployee	44	4.4091	.78705		
	self-em- ployed	12	4.5000	.52223		
	Total	100	4.4000	.66667		

style	Student	44	4.7727	.42392	5.542	0.005
	private sector Employee	44	4.3182	.82892		
	self-employed	12	4.3333	.77850		
	Total	100	4.5200	.70324		
advertising_promotion	Student	44	3.2273	.91152	1.757	.178
	private sector Employee	44	2.8636	.87845		
	self-employed	12	3.0000	1.04447		
	Total	100	3.0400	.92025		

**Table -4 Author’s research**

Post Hoc Test								
Multiple Comparisons								
Dependent Variable	(I) Occupation	(J) Occupation	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval		
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound	
Price	Tukey HSD	Student	private sector Employee	.8182	.2069	.000	.326	1.311
			self employed	1.3030	.3161	.000	.551	2.055
		private sector Employee	Student	-.8182	.2069	.000	-1.311	-.326
			self-employed	.4848	.3161	.280	-.268	1.237
	self-employed	Student	private sector Employee	-1.3030	.3161	.000	-2.055	-.551
			self employed	-.4848	.3161	.280	-1.237	.268

**Table-5 Author’s research**

Post- Hoc Test								
Dependent Variable	(I) Occupation	(J) Occupation	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval		
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound	
brand	Tukey HSD	Student	private sector Employee	.59091	.17083	.002	.1843	.9975
			self employed	.77273	.26094	.011	.1516	1.3938
		private sector Employee	Student	-.59091	.17083	.002	-.9975	-.1843
			self employed	.18182	.26094	.766	-.4393	.8029
	self employed	Student	private sector Employee	-.77273	.26094	.011	-1.3938	-.1516
			self employed	-.18182	.26094	.766	-.8029	.4393

**Table-6 Author's research Post Hoc Test Multiple Comparisons**

Dependent Variable	(I) Occupation	(J) Occupation	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval		
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound	
quality	Tukey HSD	Student	private sector Employee	.27273	.11273	.045	.0044	.5411
			self employed	-.01515	.17220	.996	-.4250	.3947
		private sector Employee	Student	-.27273	.11273	.045	-.5411	-.0044
			self employed	-.28788	.17220	.221	-.6978	.1220
		self employed	Student	.01515	.17220	.996	-.3947	.4250
			private sector Employee	.28788	.17220	.221	-.1220	.6978

**Table-7 Author's research**

Post Hoc Test  
Multiple Comparisons

Dependent Variable	(I) Occupation	(J) Occupation	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval		
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound	
style	Tukey HSD	Student	private sector Employee	.45455	.14349	.006	.1130	.7961
			self employed	.43939	.21919	.117	-.0823	.9611
		private sector Employee	Student	-.45455	.14349	.006	-.7961	-.1130
			self employed	-.01515	.21919	.997	-.5369	.5066
		self employed	Student	-.43939	.21919	.117	-.9611	.0823
			private sector Employee	.01515	.21919	.997	-.5066	.5369