Impact of Social Media on Consumer Buying Behaviour in Shekhawati Region

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Abstract

This paper investigates the influence of social media on consumer buying behavior in Shekhawati region, Rajasthan, India. Shekhawati region was a typical combination of rural and semi-urban class people but with the increasing impact of internet and social media for the last several years. The objective of this research was to determine how Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp and YouTube etc., are affecting consumers while making purchases. A number of 200 respondents from different areas, both urban as well as rural, covering all age groups, having different statuses, have been taken into account to conduct surveys. It has been found that now-a-days social media is considered to be one of the powerful tools which tends to increase awareness about products or services. It also augments peer pressure regarding purchase choice and furthermore enhances customer exploration for product or service offerings. Especially young consumers within age group of 18–60 is highly persuaded by content displayed over social media including influencer endorsement post, reviews related to goods and services whereas its overall acceptance among wider population is still low majorly because poor proficiency in handling digital devices; unavailability or irregularity in internet facility across remotest area, inadequate assurance about security measures adopted by e-commerce firm. It highlights the importance for firms to integrate the conventional and digital marketing tools in catering the different characteristics of this region's population. The patterns revealed may also help companies understand strategies to adapt consumer behavior changes for competing in a highly evolving market.

Keywords

Consumer buying behaviour, Social media, Purchase, Awareness, Influencer endorsement, Digital devices, e-commerce, Behavior changes.

1. Introduction

Social media has transformed the way individuals communicate, engage, and make purchasing choices. It significantly influ-

ences consumer preferences and buying habits by offering easy access to product details, reviews, and recommendations. In the Shekhawati region, a culturally rich area in Rajasthan, social media is increasingly shaping consumer behavior, connecting traditional markets with digital platforms. This research explores the effects of social media on consumer decision-making, brand awareness, and trust within the region. The study aims to shed light on the changing role of social media in altering shopping behaviors and its implications for businesses and marketers in this distinctive environment.

1.1. Background of Study

The Shekhawati region of Rajasthan, which includes the districts of Sikar, Churu, and Jhunjhunu, is renowned for its rich cultural heritage and historical sites. However, this area is currently experiencing significant change. Once characterized by rural and semi-urban communities, Shekhawati has recently witnessed a remarkable increase in internet access and social media engagement. This digital shift is not only connecting people to the wider world but also changing how they engage with brands and make buying decisions. Social media has become an integral part of everyday life, shaping behaviors and choices in ways that were unimaginable just a decade ago [1-4].

1.2. The Role of Social Media in Today's Consumer Behavior

Social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and YouTube have transformed from simple communication tools into influential spaces for discovery and decision-making. In Shekhawati, these platforms are increasingly shaping consumer behavior. People are turning to them to learn about products, share their opinions, and follow the guidance of influences and advertisements. Younger consumers, in particular, are attracted to content such as product reviews, influencer suggestions, and targeted ads, which greatly influence their preferences and buying habits. This study seeks to explore how these platforms are changing the purchasing patterns of residents in Shekhawati [3-6].

1.3. Scope of the Study

The study examines the Shekhawati region, specifically the districts of Sikar, Churu, and Jhunjhunu, and includes both urban and rural communities. By involving 200 participants from various age groups and socio-economic backgrounds, it provides a detailed insight into the impact of social media on consumer behavior. Furthermore, it addresses the specific challenges encountered by older adults and those who are less experienced with digital tools, presenting a well-rounded perspective on the changing consumer landscape in the region.

1.4. Why This Study Matters

Social media has evolved beyond a simple means of connection; it now plays a significant role in influencing consumer behavior worldwide, including areas like Shekhawati. For marketers, the findings from this study serve as a guide for integrating traditional marketing methods with contemporary digital strategies to cater to the preferences of Shekhawati's consumers. Additionally, this research highlights the larger digital transformation occurring in rural and semi-urban India, providing important insights for both businesses and policymakers [5-9].

1.5. Limitations of the Study

While the study offers important insights, it does have some limitations. The sample size of 200 participants might not accurately reflect the entire population of Shekhawati, and there could be biases in the self-reported data. Furthermore, the findings are tailored to this region and may not be relevant to other areas with different socio-economic or cultural contexts. Nonetheless, the methodology provides a solid basis for exploring how social media influences consumer behavior in Shek-

hawati.

1.6. Objectives of the Study

This research aims to investigate how social media affects consumer behavior in the Shekhawati region. The main objectives are:

- To examine how social media platforms enhance product awareness and shape purchasing decisions.
- To evaluate the effects of peer recommendations, influence endorsements, and advertisements on consumer choices.
- To offer practical insights for businesses seeking to engage more effectively with the diverse communities in Shekhawati

2. Review of Literature

Social media has become a defining trend of the 21st century. Online messages are increasingly shaping various aspects of consumer choices, including buying behavior, product evaluation, and communication with brands. The rise of social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook is starting to significantly impact business practices and academic research. In recent years, numerous academic papers have explored the influence of social media in the business sector. Twitter, in particular, has been examined for its role in various marketing strategies, including aiding brand promotion. To boost profitability, companies must prioritize understanding their customers better. As noted, traditional distribution channels have been challenged as consumers increasingly turn to online shopping for easier access to product and service information. Businesses are adopting a customer-centric approach to build social networks and engage with their target audiences. The marketing landscape has shifted from traditional methods to a focus on interactions. Research has identified and analyzed the motivations behind consumers joining social networks, revealing that they often seek information, assistance, and ways to enhance their knowledge about specific products or services. Users connect with the symbols and meanings associated with brands, sharing their passions and deriving satisfaction from being part of a community. Social media now offers extensive information about products and brands, catering to a diverse range of opinions [9].

Researchers examine the relevance of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) in the context of adopting and using mobile learning technologies. Their study, published in the British Journal of Mathematics & Computer Science, looks into how key TAM elements—perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, attitude toward use, and behavioral intention—affect the acceptance of mobile learning tools. The authors effectively demonstrate the model's significance in understanding how users engage with new technologies, especially in educational settings. They emphasize the need for mobile learning systems to be designed with user-friendly interfaces and clear value propositions to improve adoption rates. This study offers important insights for educators, technologists, and policymakers who are looking to enhance mobile learning platforms[10].

Kalia (2013) offers a thoughtful examination of social media as a powerful tool for education, as published in Issues and Ideas in Education. The article discusses how platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube can move beyond their usual entertainment roles to serve as innovative educational resources. Kalia highlights the interactive and collaborative nature of social media, which encourages knowledge sharing, critical thinking, and greater student involvement. The research points out various educational uses, such as virtual classrooms, resource sharing, and improved communication between teachers and students. However, it also acknowledges challenges like distractions, privacy issues, and the digital divide. While the paper effectively emphasizes the potential benefits of social media in education, it would be strengthened by including empirical studies to back up its assertions. Overall, it makes a strong case for the integration of social media into contemporary educational practices[8].

There are several social media platforms that support these activities, including Wikipedia, Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter. People use various social media tools, such as online forums, communities, recommendations, ratings, and reviews,

to engage with other users online. In fact, many individuals are drawn to the internet to share information and seek social support. Social media encompasses communication sites that foster relationship building among users from diverse backgrounds, resulting in a vibrant social network. User-generated content stimulates requests and interactions. Reviews have become a crucial aspect of social media. Customers can easily find reviews for various products and services, which provide significant benefits for both buyers and businesses. In fact, companies often motivate consumers to share their ratings and reviews online. These actions create electronic word of mouth, which, facilitated by social media, assists consumers in making informed purchasing choices [8-11].

Marketers should recognize that social media plays a significant role in influencing buying behavior. A survey revealed that 59% of respondents turned to Facebook when they received product recommendations, while 37% used Twitter. These findings indicate that social media has a notable impact on their purchasing decisions.

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Research Design

This study investigates the impact of social media on consumer behavior in the Shekhawati region of Rajasthan, encompassing the districts of Sikar, Churu, and Jhunjhunu. Given its blend of rural and urban areas, this region provides a unique opportunity to analyze how social media is influencing people's purchasing decisions.

3.2. Data Collection Method and Sampling Design

To conduct this research, we used a descriptive approach that relied exclusively on a questionnaire survey for data collection. We selected 200 participants from different age groups, socio-economic backgrounds, and both urban and rural areas through stratified random sampling.

3.3. Data Analysis Tools

The surveys were analyzed using statistical methods to uncover trends and patterns in consumer behavior. Throughout the process, ethical guidelines were strictly adhered to, ensuring that participants were fully informed about the study's purpose and provided their consent before taking part in the survey.
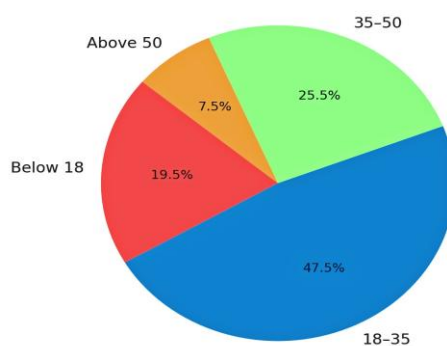
4. Data Analysis

The following sections provide detailed analysis and findings of the study. We examine data collected from 200 participants to explore how social media influences consumer buying behavior in the Shekhawati region. The discussion highlights key patterns, trends, and insights from the study, offering a thorough understanding of the topic.
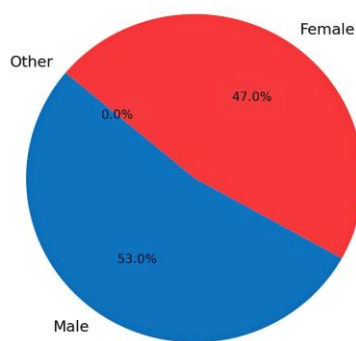
4.1. Age Distribution

The pie chart illustrates that the largest segment of participants, at 47.5%, falls within the 18–35 age range, indicating a strong representation of young and middle-aged adults in the study. The 35–50 age group accounts for 25.5%, while those under 18 represent 19.5%. Participants over 50 years old are the least represented, comprising only 7.5%. This distribution suggests that social media usage and its influence on purchasing behavior may be particularly significant among younger age groups.

Age Group Distribution of Participants (Total: 200)

Figure 1. Age group distribution of participants
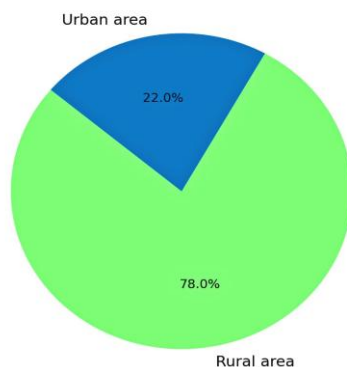
4.2. Gender Distribution

Gender Distribution of Participants (Total: 200)

Figure 2. Gender distribution of participants

The pie chart shows that among 200 participants, 53% are male and 47% are female, with no participants identifying as "Other." This nearly equal representation of genders allows for a comprehensive understanding of how social media affects consumer behavior from both male and female viewpoints.

4.3. Residential Distribution

Living Area Distribution of Participants (Total: 200)

Figure 3. Area distribution of participants

The pie chart illustrates that a significant portion of participants (78%) live in rural areas, compared to 22% who come from

urban locations. This distribution indicates that the study mainly captures the consumer behavior of people in rural environments, offering valuable insights into the impact of social media on purchasing decisions in less urbanized areas.
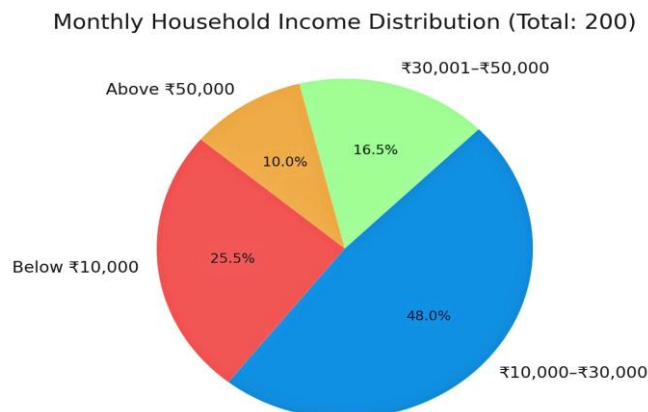
4.4. Monthly Household Income Distribution

Figure 4. Monthly Household Income distribution

The pie chart illustrates that the majority of participants (48%) come from households with a monthly income ranging from ₹10,000 to ₹30,000, suggesting a strong presence of middle-income groups in the study. Approximately 25.5% of participants earn less than ₹10,000, while 16.5% have incomes between ₹30,001 and ₹50,000. Only 10% of the participants report a household income exceeding ₹50,000. These statistics emphasize the study's emphasis on lower to middle-income groups and their engagement with social media's impact on purchasing choices.

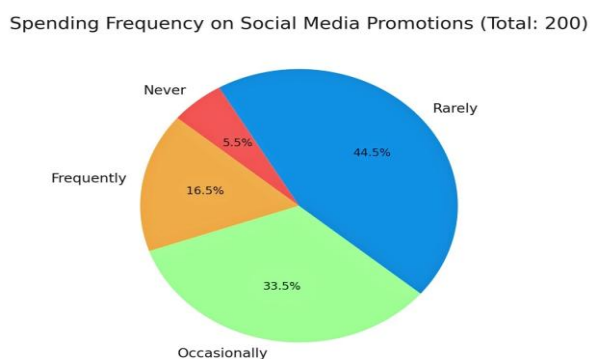## 4.5. Money Spending On Products and Services Promoted on Social Media

Figure 5. Spending on social media promotions

The pie chart shows that the largest segment of participants, 44.5%, rarely (a few times a year) spend money on products or services advertised on social media. In contrast, 33.5% do so occasionally (1–2 times a month). Only 16.5% make purchases frequently (once a week or more), and 5.5% never spend on these promotions. This data suggests that while social media

does impact consumer behavior, the majority of consumers are careful or selective when it comes to their purchasing choices.

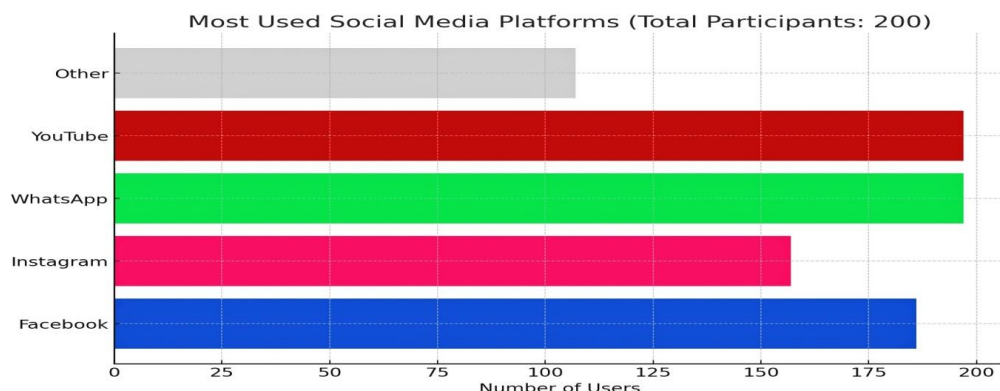## 4.6. Social Media Platforms Used Most for Products Awareness

Figure 6. Most used social media platform

The bar chart illustrates that WhatsApp and YouTube are the most commonly used social media platforms, each with 197 participants (98.5%). Facebook follows closely with 186 users (93%), while Instagram has 157 users (78.5%). Additionally, "Other" platforms are utilized by 107 participants (53.5%). These findings suggest that messaging and video-sharing platforms are essential for raising product awareness among participants.

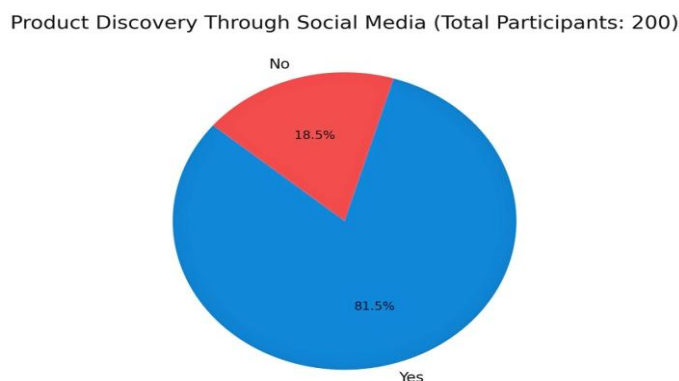## 4.7. Founding New Products Through Social Media

Figure 7. Products discovery through social media

The pie chart indicates that a substantial 81.5% of participants found new products via social media, whereas just 18.5% did not. This highlights the crucial impact social media has on enhancing product awareness and shaping consumer purchasing decisions in the Shekhawati region. Companies should take advantage of social media platforms to effectively connect with and engage potential customers.

4.8. Impact of social media ads to buy something

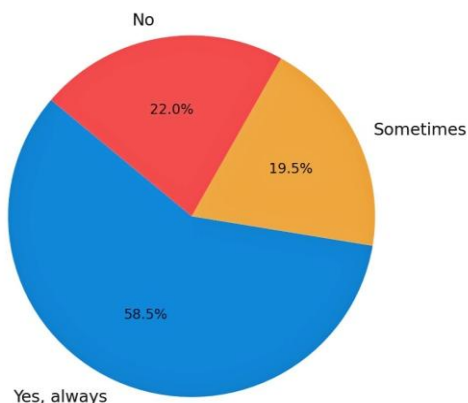Influence of Social Media Ads on Buying Behavior (Total Participants: 200)

Figure 8. Influence of social media ads on buying behavior

The pie chart indicates that a large percentage of participants (58.5%) reported that social media ads consistently influence their purchasing decisions. In contrast, 19.5% acknowledged that they are occasionally swayed, while 22% claimed that ads do not affect their buying choices. This information underscores the effectiveness of targeted advertising on social media and its ability to generate consumer interest and boost sales.

4.9. Trust on product information on social media

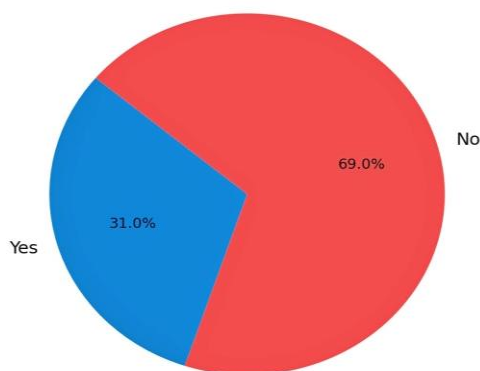Trust in Product Information on Social Media (Total Participants: 200)

Figure 9. Trust in product information on social media

The pie chart reveals that just 31% of participants have confidence in product information sourced from social media, whereas a significant 69% do not. This suggests a widespread skepticism regarding the reliability of product-related content on these platforms. To tackle this issue, businesses should prioritize establishing trust through genuine reviews, open communication, and trustworthy endorsements.

4.10. Suggestions from friends or family on social media

Influence of Suggestions from Friends/Family on Social Media (Total Participants: 200)

No

39.5%

Yes, always   26.5%
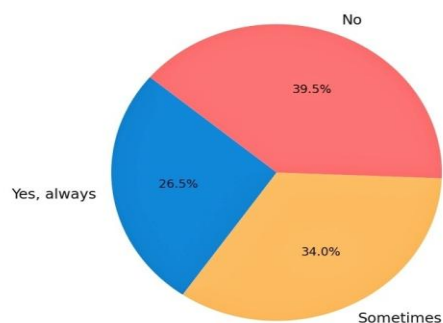
34.0%

Sometimes

Figure 10. Influence of suggestions from friends or family on social media

The pie chart reveals that just 26.5% of participants consistently heed suggestions from friends or family on social media, whereas 34% occasionally take them into account. A more significant segment, 39.5%, completely disregards these recommendations. This suggests that although personal endorsements have some impact, they are not the main influence on consumer choices in the realm of social media.

4.11. Buying anything because of an influence

Purchases Influenced by Social Media Influencers (Total Participants: 200)
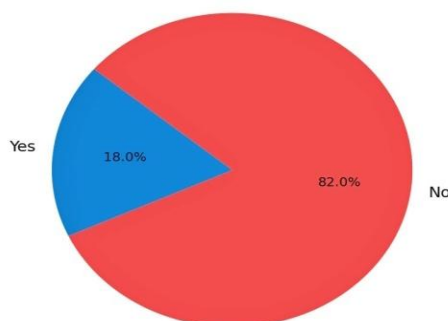
Yes   18.0%

82.0%   No

Figure 11. Purchase influenced by social media influences

The pie chart indicates that just 18% of participants made a purchase based on an influencer's recommendation, whereas a substantial 82% did not. This implies that influencers may have a restricted influence on consumer purchasing habits in the Shekhawati region, and their success could be influenced by additional factors like trust, relevance, and how well they target their audience.

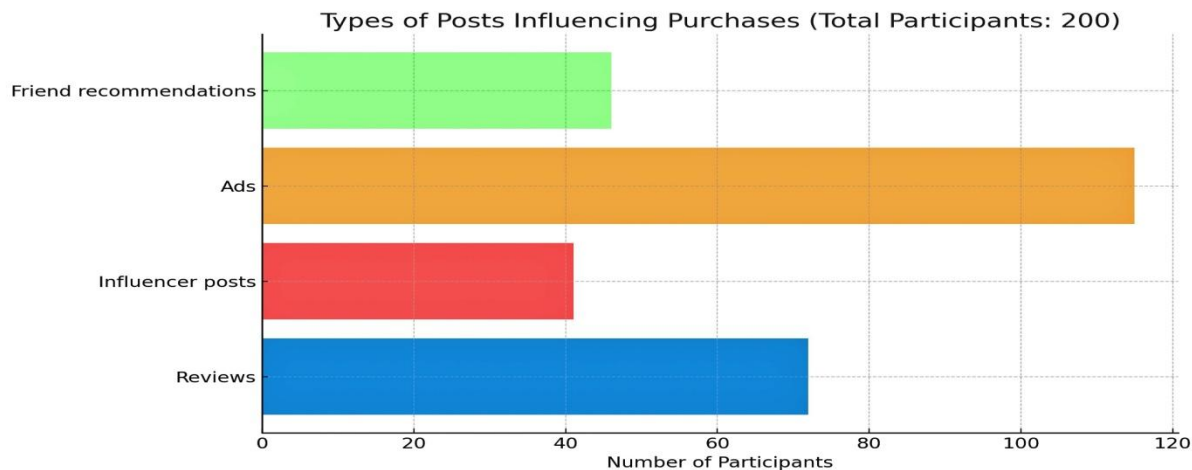## 4.12. Type of posts make anyone want to buy something

Figure 12. Type of posts influencing purchasing

The bar chart illustrates that social media advertisements are the most impactful type of post, with 115 participants (57.5%) indicating that they encourage purchases. Reviews also have a considerable influence, affecting 72 participants (36%). Recommendations from friends (23%) and posts from influencers (20.5%) have a smaller effect. This information emphasizes that ads and reviews are crucial factors in purchase decisions, indicating that businesses should focus on targeted advertising and genuine customer feedback.

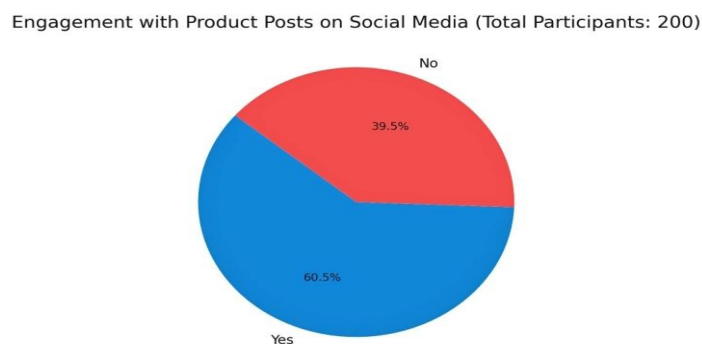## 4.13. Like, commenting, or sharing product posts

Figure 13. Engagement with product posts on social media

The pie chart illustrates that most participants (60.5%) engage with product posts through likes, comments, or shares, whereas 39.5% do not participate. This suggests that a significant number of users interact with product-related content, which could increase its reach and visibility. Companies should prioritize crafting engaging and shareable content to boost user interaction and promote their products effectively.

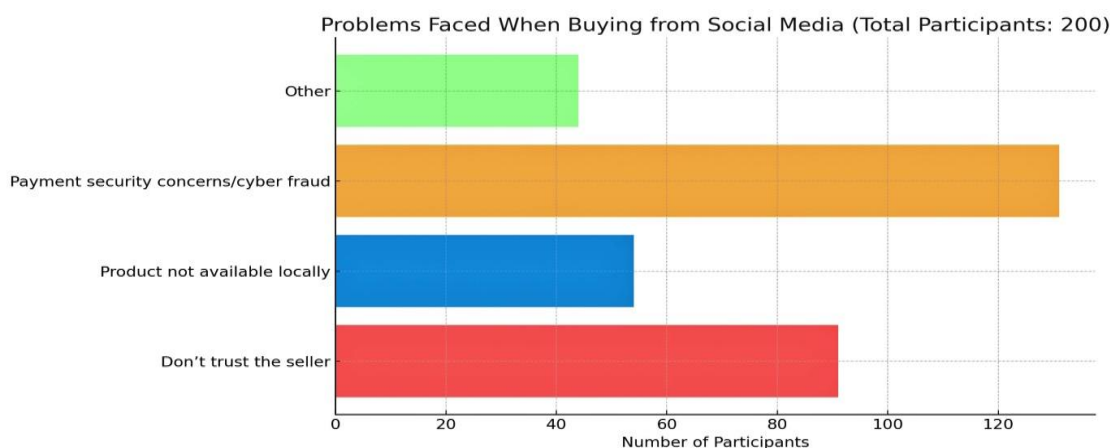## 4.14. Problems faced when buying from social media

Figure 14. Problems faced when buying from social media

The bar chart illustrates that the primary challenge encountered by participants is concerns over payment security and fear of cyber fraud, which stands at 65.5%. This is followed by a distrust in the seller at 45.5%. Additionally, 27% of participants are affected by product unavailability in their local area, while 22% report facing other issues. These results suggest that businesses should focus on fostering trust by implementing secure payment options, ensuring transparency, and enhancing local product availability to effectively tackle these obstacles.

4.15. What can businesses do better on social media?
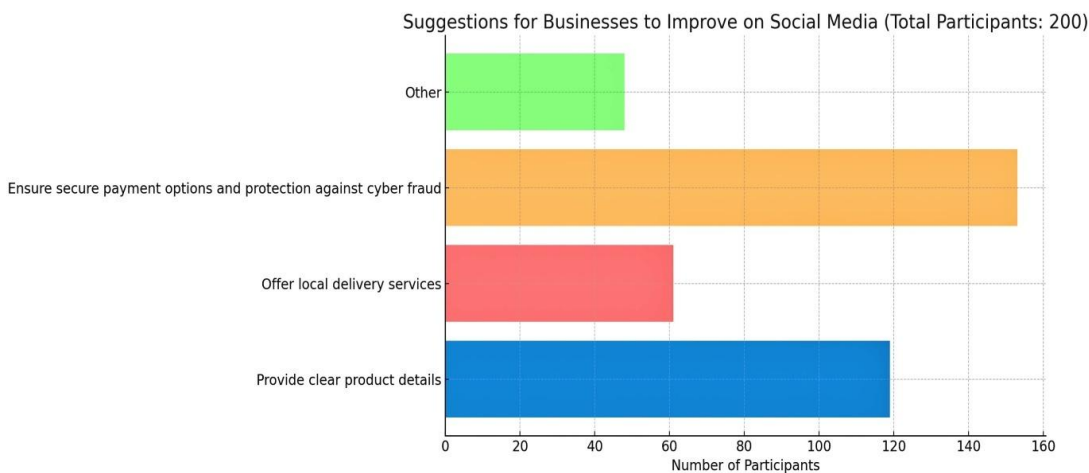

Figure 15. Suggestions for business on social media

The bar chart indicates that the most popular suggestion from participants (76.5%) is for businesses to provide secure payment options and protection against cyber fraud. Additionally, 59.5% of respondents emphasized the importance of clear product details. While offering local delivery services (30.5%) and addressing other concerns (24%) are less prioritized, they

remain significant. These findings suggest that businesses should concentrate on transparency, security, and accessibility to build trust and improve customer satisfaction on social media.

5. Findings and Suggestions

a. The largest demographic of social media users falls within the 18–35 age range, making up 47.5% of the total. Additionally, 78% of respondents reside in rural areas. To effectively engage this audience, businesses should focus on creating content that resonates with younger users and consider strategies to enhance their presence in rural markets.

b. Gender representation among participants is fairly balanced, with 53% identifying as male and 47% as female. To appeal to a wider audience, marketing strategies should incorporate perspectives from both genders equally.

c. The most widely used social media platforms are WhatsApp and YouTube, each utilized by 98.5% of participants, followed closely by Facebook at 93% and Instagram at 78.5%. To maximize advertising effectiveness, businesses should prioritize these platforms for their promotional efforts.

d. A notable 81.5% of participants reported discovering new products through social media channels. Brands should leverage these platforms for product launches and awareness initiatives to reach potential customers.

e. Social media advertisements impact the purchasing decisions of 58.5% of participants, while 22% remain unaffected. To engage a broader audience, businesses should develop creative and targeted advertising campaigns.

f. Trust in product information shared on social media is low, with only 31% of participants expressing confidence, while 69% are skeptical. Building trust can be achieved through authentic reviews, customer testimonials, and transparent communication.

g. Only 18% of participants have made purchases based on influencer recommendations, whereas 82% have not. Partnering with credible influencers who resonate with the local audience can enhance trust and effectiveness in marketing.

h. Key challenges identified include concerns over payment security (65.5%) and distrust in sellers (45.5%). Addressing these issues through secure payment gateways, clear refund policies, and building seller credibility is essential.

i. Participants suggest implementing secure payment systems (76.5%), providing clear product information (59.5%), and offering local delivery services (30.5%). By concentrating on these areas, businesses can enhance customer experience and build trust within the Shekhawati region.

6. Conclusion

This research indicates that social media plays a crucial role in shaping consumer behavior in the Shekhawati region, especially among younger individuals. Platforms such as WhatsApp, YouTube, and Facebook are key in raising product awareness, while advertisements and reviews have a significant impact on purchasing choices. Nonetheless, issues like payment security, distrust in sellers, and skepticism about product information reveal important areas that need attention. Businesses in this region should focus on providing secure payment methods, clear communication, and engaging content that resonates with both rural and urban consumers. By tackling these challenges and harnessing the power of social media, companies can effectively build trust, improve customer experiences, and foster growth in this fast-changing digital environment.

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