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## **Decoding Virality: Analyzing the Factors That Drive Viral Marketing Campaigns on Social Media Platforms**

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### **Abstract**

*Social media is pivotal in influencing consumer buying behaviour, impacting awareness, trust, and immediate purchasing decisions through promotions, discounts, and interactive features. The viral marketing campaigns become a powerful tool for brands to maximise their reach and impact among the audience. This research investigates the underlying factors driving viral marketing campaigns that influence consumers in cultural, social, personal, and psychological factors contributing to complex buying behaviour. The sampling framework for the study included data from 100 respondents from different parts of Kannur. The insights derived offer valuable guidance for businesses, marketers, and scholars navigating the evolving landscape of consumer behaviour in the digital age, intending to deepen our understanding of how the virality of social media transforms the consumer decision-making process. Online shopping preferences are driven by convenience, accessibility, and visual appeal on social media. These findings collectively underscore the pervasive and nuanced influence of social media, providing valuable insights into its integral role in shaping contemporary lifestyles and consumer choices.*

**Keywords:** *Social Media, purchase behaviour, Fear of Missing (FMO)*

### **Introduction**

The impact of social media on consumer buying choices has emerged as a compelling and complex phenomenon in the changing landscape of the digital market. Platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube etc. helps not only in fostering global connections but also playing an important role in consumer's purchasing decisions. The interconnection between these facilitates viral marketing, enabling content to spread rapidly across vast networks. This dynamic interaction between consumers and social media platforms introduces a delicate equilibrium between personal interests and communal engagement. Consumers utilize these platforms to

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access reviews, compare prices, and glean insights into products and services, fostering increased levels of trust and loyalty. However, the pervasive influence of social media extends beyond positive interactions, as it can sometimes lead to impulsive decisions driven by targeted ads and influencers. Recognizing the impact of psychological, cultural, social, and economic factors on consumer behaviour is paramount, both for businesses aiming to tailor effective strategies and for individuals seeking to make informed choices aligned with their values and financial well-being. This study endeavours to unravel the motivations behind consumer purchases via social media.

## Literature Review

Social media's influence on shaping consumer behaviour has become a central focus of much research. This surge in interest is propelled by the growing impact of platforms like Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Whatsapp, and Snapchat. The buying decisions of consumers were influenced by these social medias (Deshmukh, Nikam, & Pendse, 2020), especially those in the age group of 15-25 (Chopra & Gupta, 2020) and younger demographics (Dhinagra, 2023). Consumers' attitudes towards the product and their preferences for purchasing are influenced by product information from social media influencers (Savitha & Mittal, 2023). YouTube and Instagram have impacted influences on consumer behaviour. Individuals keep track of brand activities on social media (Mlodkowska, 2019). It plays a crucial role in consumers' decision-making processes for complex purchases, as they actively engage in online discussions by offering product reviews and feedback (Voramontri & Kileb, 2019).

Its role in marketing increases brand loyalty by allowing companies to interact with potential customers regularly in the digital economy. Many companies have recognized the importance and necessity of incorporating social media into their marketing strategies (Ziyalan, Doszhan, Borodin, Omarova, & Illyas, 2019). In social media marketing, the consumers' confidence on product purchase and its profitability while purchasing through online are the most significant factors (Loanas & Stoica, 2014) (Gaurav & Ray, 2020).. Consumers buying items online are typically young individuals often between the ages of 25 and 29. Before making online purchases, the

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majority of consumers usually gather information from websites, reviews, discussions, forums and social media platforms (Madni, 2014) Social media consumers are agreed that feedback on social media sites does affect their purchasing decisions (Lee, 2013) . Consumers are still expected to go through all stages before making a purchase, rather than swiftly arriving at a buying decision after a purchase thought has been triggered (Sahu, 2021) . Consumers are attracted to products through social media advertisements, with offers and discounts identified as motivating factors for shopping on social media platforms and in cases of product uncertainties. They collectively emphasizing that social media holds from the initial stage through purchase and beyond (Davis, 2021) .The consumer perception through content and engagement, emphasizing the effectiveness of social media in generating leads and sales, facilitating direct customer interaction, and suggesting that marketing methods should attract a diverse range of customer (Varghes & Agrwal, 2021)(Bansal & Kumar, 2018).

## **Objectives of the study**

- To investigate consumers' perceptions regarding the virality of social media campaigns
- Analyze the impact of social media on Consumer Buying Behaviour:
- To evaluate the influence of social media algorithms and impact of viral campaigns.

## **Research Methodology**

Primary data is collected through a structured questionnaire distributed among 100 individuals from various locations in Kannur, employing a simple random sampling technique to ensure demographic diversity. This primary data is complemented by secondary data obtained from a comprehensive review of academic journals and articles. The questionnaire is designed to capture insights into psychological, cultural, social, and economic factors influencing consumer buying behaviour, utilizing both closed-ended and likert scale questions. Quantitative analysis, inferential statistics and regression analysis will be employed to analyse the

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primary data. The literature review, derived from secondary sources, serves to contextualize the study within existing theories and frameworks.

## Analysis and Discussion

**Table 1 –Demographic variables**

Demographic Variable	Frequency
Age	
- Below 20	31
- 20-30	54
- 30-40	10
- Above 40	5
Gender	
- Male	25
- Female	75
Educational Qualification	
- Higher Secondary	47
- Pre-University	9
- Graduation	37
- Post-Graduation	7
Family Income	
- 15000-30000	54
- 30000-50000	21
- 50000-70000	14
- Above 70000	11

*Source: primary data*

The study reveals that more than 54 percent of respondents were within the 20-30 age range, indicating a predominant representation of younger individuals. Gender distribution shows a higher percentage of females (75.00%) compared to males (25.00%) in the sample. Educational qualification highlights the diversity, with the majority having Higher Secondary (47.00%) and Graduation (37.00%) qualifications. Family income distribution demonstrates that more than fifty-five percentages of respondents have a family income in between 15000 and 30000.

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**Table 2: Social Media Usage**

Social Media Platform	Frequency
Instagram	56
Facebook	8
YouTube	14
Others ( Snap chat, Twitter, Blogs etc.)	22

*Source: primary data*

The above table depicts that Instagram emerges as the most popular platform, with 56 participants using it. Facebook has the lowest frequency, with only 8 users, while YouTube is used by 14 individuals. Additionally, 22 respondents utilize other social media platforms.

**Table 3: Consumers perception about social media impact on lifestyle**

Variables		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	S.D	t	sig
It revolutionized communication and enabling real-time interaction	N	15	48	26	10	1	3.66	0.890	7.41	0.000
	%	15%	48%	26%	10%	1%				
It serves as a platform for personal branding and self-expression	N	13	47	29	9	2	3.6	0.899	6.67	0.000
	%	13%	47%	29%	9%	2%				
They are influential in shaping consumer preferences and purchasing decisions	N	13	39	34	9	5	3.46	0.999	4.60	0.000
	%	13%	39%	34%	9%	5%				

*Source: primary data*

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The table above underscores a strong consensus among the participants, they express strong agreement that social media significantly impacts communication and connectivity (Mean=3.66, SD=0.890,  $t=7.41$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), as well as identity and self-expression (Mean=3.6, SD=0.899,  $t=6.67$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), both surpassing the population mean of 3 with statistical significance. Moreover, respondents recognize the platform's role in shaping consumer preferences and purchase decisions, albeit with a slightly lower mean score (Mean=3.46, SD=0.999,  $t=4.60$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), indicating some diversity in opinions on this aspect. Overall, the study highlights the consensus among respondents on various dimensions of contemporary lifestyle, including communication, identity, and consumer behaviour.

**Table 4: Consumers perception about virality of social media campaigns**

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	S.D	t	sig
Social media platforms facilitate the rapid spread of emotions through the sharing and engagement with content	N	11	41	36	9	3	3.48	0.915	5.24	0.000
	%	11%	41%	36%	9%	3%				
Do you believe that viral campaigns are more trustworthy than traditional advertisements	N	19	59	18	2	2	3.91	0.793	11.48	0.000
	%	19%	59%	18%	2%	2%				
Social media platforms often operate on a system of likes, comments, and shares, providing a mechanism for social validation	N	8	28	47	15	2	3.25	0.880	2.84	0.000
	%	8%	28%	47%	15%	2%				

*Source: primary data*

The survey findings reveal a noteworthy consensus among respondents regarding the impact of social media on emotions. Participants strongly agree that social media influences emotional contagion and spread (Mean=3.48, SD=0.915) ( $t=$

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5.24  $p < 0.001$ ), highlighting the acknowledgment of social media's role in triggering and spreading emotions. Similarly, there is a robust agreement on their opinion that viral campaigns are more trustworthy than traditional advertisements (Mean=3.91, SD=0.793), ( $t=11.48$  ( $p < 0.001$ ), underscoring the platform's substantial role in shaping individuals' self-perceptions and emotional states. Furthermore, respondents recognize the impact of social media on validation and well-being (Mean=3.25, SD=0.880), ( $t= 2.84$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), emphasizing the significance of social validation mechanisms in shaping emotional experiences online.

**Table 5: Perception about the social media influence on viral fashion and trends**

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	mean	S.D	t	sig
Speed of information exchange on platforms like In contributes to the rapid adoption of emerging fashion trends	N	32	53	13		0	4.15	0.716	16.06	0.000
	%	32%	53%	13%	2%	0%				
Influencers play a important role in fashion trends and inspiring individual styles	N	18	53	26	3	0	3.86	0.739	11.64	0.000
	%	18%	53%	26%	3%	0%				
Social media encourages user-generated content, enabling individuals to showcase their unique fashion styles	N	12	46	36	6	0	3.64	0.772	8.29	0.000
	%	12%	46%	36%	6%	0%				

*Source: Primary data*

The data analysis underscores a robust consensus, participants strongly agree that the speed of information exchange on platforms significantly contributes to the rapid adoption of emerging fashion trends, (  $M = 4.15$  ( $SD=0.716$ ) ( $t=16.06$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

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Additionally, respondents acknowledge the pivotal role of social media influencers in shaping fashion trends and inspiring individual styles, evident in the strong agreement (  $M=3.86$  ( $SD=0.739$ ) ( $t=11.64$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). Furthermore, the encouragement of user-generated content on social media, allowing individuals to showcase their unique fashion styles, is widely recognized ( $M=3.64$  ( $SD=0.772$ )( $t=8.29$ , $p<0.001$ ). These findings collectively emphasize the central role of social media in driving dynamic and diverse fashion trends, supported by statistical significance.

**Table 6: Perception about social media influence on culture & tradition**

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	S.D	t	sig
Social media serves as a powerful tool for exposing individuals to diverse cultures, fostering cultural awareness, and facilitating cross-cultural exchanges	N	13	48	31	7	1	3.65	0.833	7.80	0.000
	%	13%	48%	31%	7%	1%				
The social media platform shapes purchasing decisions, fashion choices, and lifestyle preferences	N	9	43	39	8	1	3.51	0.810	6.29	0.000
	%	9%	43%	39%	8%	1%				
Social media enables cultural dialogues, discussions, and activism	N	9	38	43	10	0	3.46	0.797	5.77	0.000
	%	9%	38%	43%	10%	0%				

*Source: Primary data*

The above table reveals, that participants strongly agree that social media serves as a powerful tool for exposing individuals to diverse cultures, fostering cultural awareness, and facilitating cross-cultural exchanges ( $M= 3.65$  ( $SD=0.833$ ) ( $t= 7.80$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). Similarly, respondents express agreement that the social media platform plays a key role in shaping purchasing decisions, fashion choices, and lifestyle preferences( $M= 3.51$ , ( $SD=0.810$ ) ( $t= 6.29$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). Additionally, social media's impact on enabling cultural dialogues, discussions, and activism is acknowledged ( $M= 3.46$  ( $SD=0.797$ ) ( $t=5.77$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). These findings collectively

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emphasize the multifaceted influence of social media on cultural perceptions and behaviours, supported by the statistical significance of the results.

**Table 7: Reasons for choosing viral online shopping trends over traditional shopping**

Variables		Always	Very often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Mean	S.D	t	sig
Convenience and Accessibility	N	19	31	39	5	6	3.52	1.049	4.96	0.000
	%	19%	31%	39%	5%	6%				
Influence of Visual Appeal on Social Media	N	27	29	24	16	4	3.59	1.164	5.07	0.000
	%	27%	29%	24%	16%	4%				
Variety, Reviews, and Personalization	N	29	33	26	8	4	3.75	1.086	6.91	0.000
	%	29%	33%	26%	8%	4%				

*Source: Primary data*

The data analysis illustrates a strong inclination towards online shopping over traditional methods, with significant findings across key variables. Respondents highly prioritize the convenience and accessibility of online platforms (Mean=3.52, SD=1.049) ( $t=4.96, p<0.001$ ). The influence of visual appeal on social media emerges as a decisive factor, with a mean score of 3.59 ( $t= 5.07, p<0.001$ ), underscoring the impact of visually engaging content in shaping consumer choices. Moreover, the variety, reviews, and personalization features of online shopping strongly influence preferences, reflected in a mean score of 3.75, ( $t= 6.91, p<0.001$ ). These results collectively signify the robust appeal of online shopping, supported by statistical significance, and emphasize the pivotal role of convenience, visual appeal on social media, and personalized shopping experiences in driving the preference for virtual storefronts.

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**Table 8: Social media influence on consumer behaviour**

		Always	Very often	sometimes	Rarely	Never	mean	S.D	t	ss
New products, services, and brands through social media increased my awareness and consideration	N	22	44	29	3	2				
	%	22%	44%	29%	3%	2%	3.81	0.884	9.16	0.000
Influencers and Reviewers play a crucial role in shaping my preferences	N	24	42	28	5	1				
	%	24%	42%	28%	5%	1%	3.83	0.888	9.34	0.000
User-generated content, including reviews, ratings, and recommendations, has a profound impact on my trust and decision-making	N	24	32	35	8	1				
	%	24%	32%	35%	8%	1%	3.7	0.959	7.30	0.000
Social media enhances convenience, prompting more immediate purchasing decisions.	N	17	36	40	5	2				
	%	17%	36%	40%	5%	2%	3.61	0.898	6.79	0.000
The fear of missing out on popular products or experiences, and the desire to align with what is trending among peers, could drive my immediate purchasing decisions	N	32	35	25	5	3				
	%	32%	35%	25%	5%	3%	3.88	1.018	8.65	0.000
Social media facilitates post-purchase engagement strategies and loyalty	N	22	38	32	6	2				
	%	22%	38%	32%	6%	2%	3.72	0.944	7.63	0.000

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		Always	Very often	sometimes	Rarely	Never	mean	S.D	t	sg
Viral advertisements of promotions and discounts pivotal role in influencing purchasing decisions	N	29	28	29	5	3				
	%	29%	28%	29%	5%	3%	3.87	1.05	8.28	0.000
interactive shopping features within social media platforms facilitates seamless online transaction	N	26	30	35	6	3				
	%	26%	30%	35%	6%	3%	3.7	1.02	6.86	0.000
Social media empowers consumers to voice their opinion and complaints	N	25	37	29	5	4				
	%	25%	37%	29%	5%	4%	3.74	1.02	7.25	0.000

*Source: Primary data*

The data demonstrate a heightened awareness and consideration for new products, services, and brands introduced through social media, as indicated by a substantial mean score of (M=3.81 (SD=0.884), (t= 9.16,p<0.001). The influential role of social media influencers in shaping preferences is underscored by a significant mean score of M=3.83 (SD=0.888) (t=9.34, p<0.001). User-generated content, including reviews and recommendations, significantly impacts trust and decision-making, reflected in a mean score of 3.7 (SD=0.959)(t=7.30, p<0.001). Additionally, social media's effect on enhancing convenience and prompting immediate purchasing decisions is evident, with a mean score of 3.61 (SD=0.898)( t= 6.79 , p<0.001). The fear of missing out (FOMO) and the desire to align with trends among peers strongly influence immediate purchasing decisions, highlighted by a significant mean score of 3.88 (SD=1.018) (t= 8.65,(p<0.001). Furthermore, the data emphasizes the noteworthy impact of promotions and discounts promoted on social media platforms on purchasing decisions, with a mean score of 3.87 (SD=1.05) (t=8.28, p<0.001). The integration of interactive shopping features within social media platforms

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significantly facilitates seamless online transactions, demonstrated by a mean score of 3.7 (SD=1.02)( t=6.86 ,p<0.001). Finally, social media empowers consumers to voice their opinions and complaints, evident in a mean score of 3.74 (SD=1.02)(t=7.25 (p<0.001). Overall, these findings underscore the robust impact of social media across various facets of consumer buying behaviour, portraying it as a dynamic force shaping the contemporary consumer landscape.

**Table 8: To evaluate the influence of social media algorithms on the reach and impact of viral campaigns**

Hypotheses	Regression weights	B	t	P value	Results	VIF	
H1	LS	BR	0.008	0.084	0.993	Not supported	1.525
H2	EM	BR	0.156	1.794	0.076	Not supported	1.518
H3	FS	BR	0.357	5.583	0.000	Supported	1.210
H4	CL	BR	0.282	2.927	0.004	Supported	1.320
R <sup>2</sup>		0.464					
F (4, 95)		20.546, P=0.000					
Durbin Watson		1.99					

*Note: P < 0.05, LS-Life Style, EM-Emotion, FS-Fashion, CL-Culture, BR-Buying behaviour*

H1: ‘There is no significant relationship between Lifestyle (LS) and Buying Behaviour (BR)’

H2: ‘There is no significant relationship between Emotion (EM) and Buying Behaviour (BR)’

H3: ‘There is no significant relationship between Fashion (FS) and Buying Behaviour (BR)’

H4: ‘There is no significant relationship between Culture (CL) and Buying Behaviour (BR)’

The regression analysis aimed to explore the relationships between lifestyle (LS), emotion (EM), fashion (FS), and culture (CL) as independent variables, and

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their impact on buying behaviour (BR) as the dependent variable. The results revealed that lifestyle and emotion did not significantly influence buying behaviour, as indicated by non-significant regression weights (0.008 and 0.156, respectively) with p-values exceeding 0.05. In contrast, fashion demonstrated a strong positive relationship (regression weight = 0.357,  $p < 0.001$ ), supporting the hypothesis that fashion influences buying behaviour. Similarly, culture exhibited a significant positive relationship (regression weight = 0.282,  $p = 0.004$ ), reinforcing the hypothesis that culture plays a role in shaping consumer buying behaviour. The overall model demonstrated a good fit ( $R^2 = 0.464$ ,  $F = 20.546$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), suggesting that the included variables collectively explain a substantial portion of the variance in buying behaviour. The Durbin-Watson statistic of 1.99 indicates no significant autocorrelation. These findings provide valuable insights into the differential impact of lifestyle, emotion, fashion, and culture on consumer buying behaviour

## **Findings and Conclusion**

The study's major findings indicate a significant impact of social media across diverse dimensions. Demographically, the sample comprises predominantly younger individuals, with a higher representation of females and varied educational backgrounds and family incomes. Instagram emerges as the most popular platform, reflecting diverse social media preferences. Participants strongly agree on social media's influence on communication, identity, emotional contagion, and social comparison. The platform significantly shapes fashion trends, with a pronounced impact on adopting trends rapidly and the crucial role of influencers. Online shopping preferences are driven by convenience, accessibility, and visual appeal on social media. Moreover, social media plays a pivotal role of, impacting awareness, trust, and immediate purchasing decisions through promotions, discounts, and interactive features. These findings collectively underscore the pervasive influence of social media on lifestyle, emotions, fashion, and consumer choices, contributing to a nuanced understanding of its multifaceted role in contemporary society. The demographic diversity highlights varied preferences, with Instagram being the favoured platform. These insights collectively underscore social media's pervasive influence, shaping contemporary lifestyles and consumer choices.

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