



# A Study on Students' Online Buying Behaviour Influenced by Facebook

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**Abstract** – In today's digital era, social media platforms have become powerful influencers of consumer behaviour, particularly among the student community. Facebook, being one of the most widely used social networking platforms in India, plays a significant role in shaping students' purchasing decisions through advertisements, peer recommendations, sponsored posts, and marketplace features. This study explores the impact of Facebook on the online buying behaviour of students, focusing on factors such as social influence, product awareness, peer reviews, and promotional offers. The research analyses the frequency of Facebook usage, the nature of purchases made, and the degree to which Facebook content drives buying decisions among college students. The findings reveal that Facebook significantly influences product discovery and purchase intent among students, while also highlighting concerns related to trust, product quality, and data privacy. The study provides strategic recommendations for businesses targeting the student demographic through Facebook marketing.

**Keywords:** Facebook, Online Buying Behaviour, Students, Social Media Marketing, Consumer Decision Making, Digital Commerce

## I. INTRODUCTION OF THE STUDY

The emergence of social media has fundamentally transformed the way individuals communicate, share information, and make purchasing decisions. Among all social media platforms, Facebook remains one of the most dominant, boasting over 350 million active users in India alone. For students, Facebook serves not merely as a social networking site but as a comprehensive digital ecosystem encompassing news feeds, advertisements, group discussions, marketplace listings, and live shopping features.

Students represent one of the most active and influential segments of digital consumers. As digital natives, they are highly comfortable navigating online platforms and are particularly susceptible to social media influence when making purchase decisions. Facebook's sophisticated algorithm-driven advertising system allows businesses to precisely target students based on their interests, browsing history, and social interactions, making it a powerful tool for online retail marketing.

The influence of Facebook on buying behaviour operates through multiple channels. Sponsored advertisements introduce students to new products and brands, while peer reviews and likes on product posts create a sense of social validation. Facebook groups dedicated to student communities often facilitate informal commerce, where students buy and sell products directly. The Facebook Marketplace has further expanded the platform's role in facilitating direct transactions between buyers and sellers.

However, this growing reliance on Facebook for purchase decisions also raises concerns. Students often encounter misleading advertisements, counterfeit products, and fraudulent sellers on the platform. Issues of data privacy, impulsive buying triggered by targeted ads, and the lack of

a clear return policy in peer-to-peer transactions add to the complexity of Facebook-influenced commerce. This study aims to comprehensively examine how Facebook influences the online buying behaviour of students and identify the key factors that drive or hinder their purchase decisions.

### Objectives of the Study

- To identify the extent to which Facebook influences the online buying behaviour of students.
- To analyse the key Facebook features that drive product discovery and purchase decisions among students.
- To examine the level of trust students place in Facebook advertisements and peer reviews.
- To study the common types of products purchased by students through Facebook influence.
- To suggest strategies for businesses and policymakers to promote safe and informed online buying behaviour among students.

## II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The rapid proliferation of Facebook among college students has created a new dimension of consumer behaviour that is largely driven by social influence, algorithmic targeting, and peer engagement. While businesses have leveraged Facebook's advertising capabilities to reach the student market effectively, students themselves often lack the digital literacy required to critically evaluate online advertisements and make informed purchasing decisions.

Many students make impulsive purchases based on emotionally appealing Facebook ads or peer recommendations without thoroughly researching product quality, seller credibility, or return policies. The prevalence of fake reviews, misleading product images,



and scam sellers on Facebook Marketplace further exposes students to financial risk. Additionally, the collection and commercial use of students' personal data by Facebook raises serious concerns about privacy and ethical marketing practices. Despite the growing significance of this issue, limited research has examined the specific patterns of Facebook-influenced buying behaviour among Indian college students. This study therefore seeks to fill this gap by investigating the scope, nature, and implications of Facebook's influence on students' online purchasing decisions.

### Limitations of the Study

- The study is limited to college students and may not represent the broader youth demographic or working professionals.
- The sample size is restricted, and findings may not be generalizable across all geographic regions in India.
- Responses are self-reported and may be subject to recall bias or social desirability bias.

## III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 1. Research Design

The study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design to examine the influence of Facebook on students' online buying behaviour.

### 2. Data Collection

- **Primary Data:** Collected through structured questionnaires distributed among undergraduate and postgraduate commerce students.
- **Secondary Data:** Gathered from academic journals, digital marketing reports, NASSCOM publications, and research articles related to social media and consumer behaviour.

## III. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### Venkatesan & Priya (2021)

Venkatesan and Priya (2021) examined the influence of social media advertising on the purchase intentions of college students in Tamil Nadu. Their study of 180 respondents found that Facebook advertisements significantly impacted product awareness among 74% of participants. The researchers highlighted that visually engaging ad formats such as video reels and carousel posts were most effective in triggering purchase interest. The study also revealed that student respondents were more likely to make a purchase when they saw positive comments or likes from peers. The authors concluded that social proof on Facebook is a decisive factor in student purchase decisions and recommended businesses to actively manage their Facebook community engagement.

### Mehta & Singh (2020)

Mehta and Singh (2020) conducted a study on impulsive buying behaviour among young consumers on social media platforms. Their research found that Facebook's

targeted advertising, based on users' previous browsing and purchase history, led to a 38% increase in unplanned purchases among student respondents. The study identified that limited-time offers, flash sales promoted through Facebook stories, and influencer endorsements were the primary triggers for impulsive buying. The authors emphasized that emotional engagement with Facebook content lowered rational evaluation in purchasing decisions. They recommended that consumer protection bodies develop guidelines for transparent advertising practices targeting young and vulnerable digital consumers.

### Rajan & Krishnamoorthy (2022)

Rajan and Krishnamoorthy (2022) investigated the role of Facebook Marketplace in shaping the buying behaviour of undergraduate students in South India. Their survey of 220 students revealed that 61% had made at least one purchase through Facebook Marketplace in the past six months, primarily for fashion and electronics. The study found that peer-to-peer trust, based on mutual Facebook friend connections, was a key motivator for transacting on the platform. However, the research also highlighted significant concerns about product authenticity and post-purchase support. The authors concluded that while Facebook Marketplace offers students a convenient and affordable alternative to formal e-commerce platforms, regulatory mechanisms are needed to ensure transaction safety.

## IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1: Frequency of Online Purchases Influenced by Facebook

Purchase Frequency	Respondents	Percentage
Very Frequently	18	18%
Frequently	35	35%
Occasionally	30	30%
Rarely	17	17%
Total	100	100%

### Interpretation

The table indicates that 35% of student respondents frequently make online purchases influenced by Facebook content, while 18% do so very frequently. A combined 53% are regular Facebook-influenced buyers, reflecting the platform's strong role in shaping student purchase behaviour. Only 17% rarely buy influenced by Facebook, suggesting widespread platform impact.



Table 2: Key Facebook Features Influencing Purchase Decisions

Facebook Feature	Respondents	Percentage
Sponsored Advertisements	38	38%
Peer Reviews & Recommendations	28	28%
Facebook Marketplace	20	20%
Facebook Groups & Pages	14	14%
Total	100	100%

### Interpretation

Sponsored advertisements are the most influential Facebook feature in driving student purchases (38%), followed by peer reviews and recommendations (28%). Facebook Marketplace accounts for 20% of purchase influence, while group and page content contributes 14%, reflecting the diverse pathways through which Facebook shapes buying behaviour.

### Findings

- A majority of students (53%) are regularly influenced by Facebook content when making online purchases.
- Sponsored advertisements are the most powerful Facebook feature influencing student buying decisions, followed by peer reviews and social validation.
- Fashion, electronics, and food delivery services are the most commonly purchased product categories under Facebook influence.
- Many students report making impulsive purchases triggered by limited-time offers and emotionally engaging Facebook advertisements.
- Trust concerns regarding product authenticity, seller credibility, and data privacy remain significant barriers to deeper engagement in Facebook-driven commerce.

### Suggestions

- Educational institutions should introduce digital literacy modules to help students critically evaluate online advertisements and make informed purchasing decisions.
- Businesses targeting students on Facebook should ensure transparent advertising with accurate product descriptions, genuine reviews, and clearly stated return policies.
- Facebook should strengthen its seller verification process on the Marketplace to reduce instances of fraud and counterfeit product listings.
- Students should be encouraged to compare prices and verify seller credibility across multiple platforms before completing purchases influenced by Facebook.

- Consumer protection authorities should develop specific guidelines governing social media advertising targeted at the student demographic to ensure ethical marketing practices.

## V. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that Facebook exerts a significant and multifaceted influence on the online buying behaviour of students. Through sponsored advertisements, peer recommendations, Facebook Marketplace, and group interactions, the platform has become an integral part of the student purchase journey — from product discovery to transaction completion. The findings confirm that a majority of students are actively influenced by Facebook content in their buying decisions, with sponsored advertisements and social proof emerging as the most powerful drivers.

However, the study also reveals that impulsive buying, trust deficits, and data privacy concerns present meaningful challenges that must be addressed for Facebook-driven commerce to be both effective and ethical. For businesses, understanding the nuances of student buying behaviour on Facebook offers valuable opportunities to craft targeted, authentic, and trust-building marketing strategies. For students, developing informed digital consumption habits is essential in navigating the persuasive landscape of social media marketing. With the right combination of digital literacy, regulatory oversight, and responsible business practices, Facebook can serve as a positive and empowering platform for student commerce.

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