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THE ROLE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL, TECHNOLOGICAL, AND SOCIETAL DRIVERS IN SHAPING CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOUR: INSIGHTS INTO SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCE AND CULTURAL TRENDS

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Abstract

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Understanding the intricate interactions between psychological, technological, and societal aspects is essential for deciphering contemporary consumer purchasing behaviour in the quickly changing digital economy. With a focus on the influence of social media and cultural trends, this study investigates how these factors affect purchasing decisions. Alongside technological enablers like digital platforms, algorithms, and personalized marketing, psychological elements like perception, motivation, and personality are examined. At the same time, the study looks at how social media amplifies cultural norms, peer pressure, influencer culture, and other societal factors. The study uses a mixed-method approach, combining qualitative interviews and survey data to provide complex consumer insights. The results demonstrate how important cultural identification and internet interaction are in determining customer preferences and brand loyalty. By providing a comprehensive framework for comprehending consumer behaviour in the context of cultural change and digital transition, the research adds to the body of literature.

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Introduction:-

The purchasing habits of consumers are an important area of research in marketing, psychology, and sociology since they have a direct impact on market trends and corporate performance. Due to the dynamic interplay of societal, technological, and psychological elements, consumer behaviour has changed throughout time (Solomon, 2017; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2014). Specifically, the emergence of social media and the evolution of cultural trends have brought forth new factors that impact customers' decision-making while making purchases (Kumar & Gupta, 2016; Mangold & Faulds, 2009). This study examines these factors and how they together affect customer purchasing decisions in the current cultural and digital environment.

1.1 Psychological Factors Influencing Consumer Purchase Behaviour

Decisions made by consumers are based on psychological considerations. Purchase decisions are heavily influenced by motivation, perception, learning, attitudes, and personality (Blackwell, Miniard, & Engel, 2006). Maslow's 1943 theory of the hierarchy of needs

is still widely used to describe how customers rank various demands, ranging from self-actualization to fundamental survival. This knowledge is expanded by Ajzen's theory of planned conduct (1991), which connects behavioural intentions to attitudes, social norms, and perceived control. Additionally, Festinger's cognitive dissonance theory (1957) elucidates post-purchase satisfaction and brand loyalty. The dual roles of emotion and cognition are highlighted by contemporary consumer psychology, which demonstrates that emotive reactions frequently influence decisions in addition to rational assessments (Pham, 2004; Baumeister et al., 2007). Digital contexts, where emotional interaction with businesses and social material is intensified, especially on social media platforms, make psychological notions even more pertinent (Hajli, 2014). A crucial field of research for comprehending modern customer behaviour is the combination of psychological knowledge and technical interaction.

1.2 Technological Factors Affecting Consumer Behaviour

Modes of engagement and consumer marketplaces have been profoundly changed by technological innovation. Shopping has been easier and more accessible thanks to the development of e-commerce and mobile commerce, which has been fuelled by the internet, mobile devices, and digital payment methods (Laudon & Traver, 2021). Social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok have become important avenues for sharing content, peer influence, and brand communication (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Appel et al., 2020). Consumer trust and purchase intents are significantly impacted by user-generated content, online reviews, and influencer endorsements, according to empirical research (Cheung & Thadani, 2012; Freberg et al., 2011). Additionally, tailored marketing initiatives are made possible by artificial intelligence (AI) and big data analytics, which improve client engagement and experience (Wedel & Kannan, 2016; Davenport et al., 2020). Consumer decisions are made more difficult by the difficulties these technological drivers bring, such as privacy issues and information overload (Beldad, de Jong, & Steehouder, 2011).

1.3 Social and Cultural Factors

Consumer preferences and actions are significantly influenced by societal factors, such as family, socioeconomic class, culture, and peer groups (Hofstede, 1984; De Mooij, 2010). The common values and customs that shape how people view products and their consumption habits are provided by culture. Product adoption by consumers as a means of expressing distinction or belonging within social groupings is explained by social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Traditional and modern values have been blended in hybrid cultural consumption patterns brought about by globalisation and demographic changes (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). Social media speeds up the spread of cultural trends, promoting intercultural communication and affecting global consumer behaviour (Kozinets et al., 2010). Furthermore, economic variables like employment and income have an impact on risk tolerance and purchasing power, which in turn influences consumer choices (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

1.4 Social Media's Influence on Consumer Behaviour

Through the creation of new platforms for social influence, brand interaction, and identity building, social media has completely changed how customers engage with brands and one another (Boyd & Ellison, 2007; Kietzmann et al., 2011). By enabling transparent feedback methods and giving customers access to peer perspectives, it empowers them (Hajli, 2015). According to Freberg et al. (2011) and Lou and Yuan (2019), influencer marketing makes use of parasocial relationships in which followers develop emotional bonds with influencers, which have a big impact on their opinions and purchase intentions. Additionally, social media promotes social proof and viral marketing, whereby consumers make decisions based on the actions of others, affecting market performance and company reputation (Berger & Milkman, 2012; Cialdini, 2009).

1.5 Cultural Trends' Effect on Consumer Behaviour

Consumer ideals and spending patterns are constantly being reshaped by cultural trends. A movement in society towards environmental and social responsibility is reflected in the increased focus on sustainability and ethical consumption (Peattie & Crane, 2005; White et al., 2019). Younger generations, like Gen Z and Millennials, exhibit distinct consuming characteristics by placing a higher value on digital interaction, social impact, and authenticity (Fromm & Read, 2018; Smith, 2011). With consumers using online personas and carefully chosen digital content to showcase their identity and position, conspicuous consumption has changed (Belk, 2013). In order to better engage varied consumer segments, marketers are increasingly implementing localisation techniques that respect cultural specificities (Usunier & Lee, 2013).

1.6 Data Insights on Psychological, Technological, and Societal Drivers

Consumer buying behaviour is shaped by multiple interrelated drivers including psychological factors, technological advances, and societal influences. The increasing penetration of social media and the dynamic shifts in cultural trends have further intensified these effects (Solomon, 2017; Hajli, 2014). To understand the magnitude of these influences, the following table summarizes recent statistics on social media usage, e-commerce growth, and consumer preferences reflecting psychological and cultural shifts.

Key Drivers	Statistic	Source	Year
Global social media users	4.76 billion (60% of world population)	Kemp, 2023 (DataReportal)	2023
Influence of social media on purchases	74% of consumers rely on social media for purchase decisions	Sprout Social, 2022	2022
E-commerce sales worldwide	\$5.7 trillion (projected global e-commerce revenue)	Statista, 2024	2024
Millennials & Gen Z preferring brands with strong social responsibility	83% prefer to buy from socially responsible brands	Nielsen, 2019	2019
Consumers trusting online reviews	92% read online reviews before making a purchase	BrightLocal, 2022	2022
Average daily time spent on social media	2 hours 27 minutes	GlobalWebIndex, 2023	2023

Table 1: Key statistics on social media influence and consumer behaviour trends

The data above demonstrate how social media platforms have become central to consumer engagement and decision-making. For instance, the majority of consumers now consult social media content and online reviews before purchasing, highlighting the psychological need for social proof and peer validation (Cheung & Thadani, 2012; Cialdini, 2009). Simultaneously, the rapid growth in e-commerce sales underscores technological drivers expanding consumer accessibility and convenience (Laudon & Traver, 2021). Additionally, cultural trends show that younger generations emphasize ethical consumption and social responsibility, which marketers must increasingly address (Peattie & Crane, 2005; Fromm & Read, 2018).

1.7. Research Questions

RQ1: How can psychological forces influence customer purchasing behaviour on social media platforms?

RQ2: How do technology innovations like artificial intelligence and tailored suggestions affect the decisions that consumers make about what to buy?

RQ3: How do cultural and sociological changes impact brand loyalty and consumer preferences on social media?

RQ4: What effects does social media have on consumers' perceptions of product validity and trust?

2. Literature Review

In recent decades, there has been a great deal of scholarly interest in comprehending the intricate interactions of psychological, technological, and societal factors that influence consumer purchasing behaviour. How customers engage with companies and make decisions about what to buy has changed significantly as a result of the spread of digital technology, the increasing significance of cultural identity, and the emergence of social media as a marketing and communication tool. To provide a thorough background for our investigation, this literature review integrates current empirical data with fundamental theories.

2.1 Psychological Factors Influencing Purchase Behaviour

Internal elements including motivation, perception, learning, beliefs, attitudes, and personality are all included in the psychological component of consumer behaviour (Kotler & Keller, 2016). The foundation for comprehending post-purchase assessments and the mental pain customers feel when presented with contradicting information was established by Festinger's (1957) cognitive dissonance theory. By combining attitudes, subjective standards, and perceived behavioural control as predictors of intentional behaviour, Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behaviour subsequently broadened this knowledge. The psychological foundations of consumer identity were further explored by Belk (2013), who made the case that digital environments have given consumers new ways to establish and project identities through purchasing. According to Pham (2004), who underlined the crucial role that affective reactions play in consumer judgements and decisions, emotional influences have also taken centre stage in psychological models. According to Cialdini (2009), social proof and authority highlight the psychological desire for conformity, especially in instances with unclear purchases. Understanding how consumers process marketing messages in the digital sphere requires an awareness of these internal motives, which are bolstered by external indications like reviews and influencer endorsements.

2.2 Technological Drivers and the Role of Social Media

The landscape of consumer behaviour has changed dramatically as a result of technology, especially digital and social media platforms. The idea of social networking sites and their function in promoting user-generated content and social interaction were initially introduced by Boyd and Ellison (2007). Their research paved the way for our current understanding of how customers interact with brands on the internet. Social media was divided into different categories by Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), who also examined the ways in which each format affects customer contact. awareness the many effects that social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter have on consumer behaviour requires an awareness of these classifications. By creating the

functional building pieces of social media—identity, conversations, sharing, presence, connections, reputation, and groups—Kietzmann et al. (2011) expanded on this. Also, a lot of research has been done on the function of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM). Online reviews have a major influence on purchase intentions, according to Cheung and Thadani (2012), particularly when they originate from sources that are seen as reliable. Hajli (2014) investigated how trust functions as a mediator in social commerce, proposing that interactions on social media might foster trust, which in turn influences consumer behaviour. Lou and Yuan (2019) looked at the efficacy of social media influencers more recently. According to their research, influencer credibility—which is determined by factors like competence, dependability, and beauty—significantly increases customer trust and has a favourable effect on purchase decisions. Another level of complexity has been introduced by the incorporation of artificial intelligence (AI) into digital marketing. According to Davenport et al. (2020), big data analytics and AI-driven personalization can improve customer satisfaction and loyalty.

2.3 Social and Cultural Factors

One important contextual component affecting customer behaviour is culture. A fundamental framework for comprehending how cultural values influence consumer preferences and brand impressions is Hofstede's (1984) theory of cultural dimensions. The significance of matching marketing tactics with cultural norms in various geographical areas was also underlined by De Mooij (2010). From and Read (2018) investigated how consumption patterns are changing due to generational cohorts, particularly Gen Z and Millennials. Authenticity, inclusivity, and digital-first experiences are more important to these groups. Nielsen (2019) claims that consumers are seeking more ethical behaviour and transparency from firms as they increasingly match their purchases with social beliefs.

2.4 Integrated perspectives and contemporary insights

Kotler and Keller (2016) offered a thorough analysis that combined the cultural, technological, and psychological aspects of consumer behaviour. Their concept is still very applicable in the modern digital economy, where customers are impacted by both dynamic external stimuli and internal impulses. According to Hajli (2015), social trust, information sharing, and peer influence are essential components of consumer engagement in online buying communities, and social commerce has become a crucial area for this convergence. By examining how cutting-edge technologies like block chain and data analytics are influencing future patterns in consumer behavior, Mikalef et al. (2020) expanded on this perspective. A growing awareness of how organizations may leverage psychological incentives and social connections to increase customer engagement and loyalty is also shown in the growth of influencer marketing, digital storytelling, and community-building tactics (Kumar & Gupta, 2016; Solomon, 2017).

Table: Summary of Key Literature on Consumer Buying Behaviour (2007–2024)

Year	Author(s)	Focus Area	Key Findings	Relevance to Study
2007	Boyd & Ellison	Technological - Social Media	Defined social networking and its role in consumer interaction.	Basis for social platform impact analysis.
2010	Kaplan & Haenlein	Technological - Social Media	Categorized social media formats for marketing.	Highlights media type influence on buyer behavior.
2012	Cheung & Thadani	Technological - eWOM	eWOM significantly shapes purchase intentions.	Supports digital peer influence as a behavior driver.
2013	Belk	Psychological - Identity	Digital consumption fosters identity expression.	Links psychological identity with brand choice.
2014	Hajli	Social Commerce	Trust mediates social media influence on buying behavior.	Critical for online trust-building strategies.
2016	Kotler & Keller	Integrated Drivers	Synthesized psychological, tech, and cultural behavior models.	Validates integrated approach of this research.
2018	Fromm & Read	Generational Trends	Gen Z and Millennials prefer authentic, digital brand experiences.	Aligns with cultural and tech-savvy consumer profiles.
2019	Lou & Yuan	Influencer Credibility	Influencer trustworthiness impacts buyer decision.	Reinforces importance of credible digital endorsements.
2020	Davenport et al.	AI Personalization	AI enhances personalized marketing and loyalty.	Supports tech-driven customization of buyer journeys.
2023	Statista	Consumer Data	76% of global consumers are influenced by social media ads.	Empirical backing for social media's role in purchase intent.

2.5 Research Gap

Several gaps remain unfilled despite a great deal of research in these areas:

1. The majority of research lack integrated models and are divided within disciplines, such as technology or psychology.
2. Few studies have looked at how psychological and cultural elements work together to control social media's impact on consumer behaviour.
3. The intersection of consumer psychology with AI and emerging technologies in the context of social media has not received much attention in research.
4. Studies that are now available mostly concentrate on Western or metropolitan populations, with little attention paid to rural or culturally diverse environments, particularly in emerging nations.

3. Research Objectives:-

1. To identify and investigate psychological elements that affect customer purchasing decisions in the setting of social media, such as motivation, perception, attitudes, beliefs, and personality.
2. To examine technology drivers, including social media platforms, influencer marketing, AI personalization, and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), affecting consumer decision-making.
3. To assess the effects of peer referrals, digital trust, and online community interactions on consumer loyalty and brand impression.
4. To investigate how socioeconomic and cultural factors, including cultural identity, social values, and generational preferences, shape consumer purchasing behaviour

Research Methodology:-

Psychological, technological, and societal conditions are considered to be influential factors of consumer buying behaviour; thus, the study has employed a quantitative research design. Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire that was distributed among consumers of different ages, gender, and demographic backgrounds. A purposive sampling approach was employed to satisfy the condition that the respondents must have had experience in purchasing goods online, as required per the context of the study. The final sample consisted of 250 respondents. The questionnaire items involved standardized Likert-type questions on psychological characteristics, for example, motivation, emotion; technological usages, for example, use of social media; and societal or cultural impacts, for instance, influence of friends and family.

The data collected were coded and analysed using the IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 24). To investigate the strength and direction of the relationships between variables, Pearson correlation analysis was employed. Multiple regression analyses were thereafter tested to establish the main and interaction effects of the predictors on consumer buying behaviour. Ethical considerations, including informed consent and participant confidentiality, were stringently adhered to throughout the study.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Hypotheses Testing

Model Fit

Statistic	Value	Interpretation
R ²	0.272	27.2% of the variance in buying behaviour is explained by the model.
F-statistic	18.59	Model is statistically significant overall ($p < 0.001$).

The regression model set up to ascertain the effect of psychological, technological, and societal drivers on the purchasing behaviour of consumers was found to be statistically significant and resulted in an R² value of 0.272. This essentially suggests that perhaps around 27.2% of the variance in consumer buying behaviour may be attributed to the entire set of predictors and their interaction effects. The F-Statistic value of 18.59 at a $p < 0.001$ has shown the overall model to fit well and confirm that the predictors are meaningfully contributing to explaining variance in the buying behaviour. While this may not be an exhaustive list of influences, it nevertheless conveys a reasonable amount of explanation, which signifies that the variables in this model offer significant insights into analyzing consumer behaviour patterns.

Predictor	Coefficient	p-value
Psychological (Psych)	0.3223	0.158
Technological (Tech)	0.8314	0.001
Societal/Cultural (Society)	0.2907	0.215

◆ H1: Psychological Drivers Influence Buying Behaviour

The effect of psychological factors on buying behaviour was statistically found to be insignificant (coefficient = 0.3223, $p = 0.158$). This implies that psychological determinants such as emotions, attitudes, or motivations, when taken alone, have no strong or direct

bearing on buying decisions in the case under study. On the contrary, the interaction term between the psychological and technological drivers (Psych $\times$ Tech) was close to being significant at $p = 0.058$. This shows that psychological influences may gain more significance when accompanied by technological ones, say, social media engagement. Hence, with a weak impact on its own, psychological drivers can indeed be conditional or moderating in nature, thereby granting partial favour to Hypothesis H₁₁.

◆ H2: Technological (e.g., Social Media) Drivers Influence Buying Behaviour

The evaluation shows that technological drivers act as an important predictor of consumer buying behaviour, with a coefficient of 0.8314 and a p-value of 0.001. This result sheds light on the significance stronghold that digital platforms, especially social media, hold over consumer decision making. It can further be deduced that the strong and significant relationship between the two lends credence to the validity of Hypothesis H₁₂, thereby implying that consumers are highly susceptible to technological cues and engaging activities while making purchase decisions. This is in full accordance with trends in modern marketing, where the digital presence of a brand largely influences consumer preferences and behaviour.

◆ H3: Societal and Cultural Drivers Influence Buying Behaviour

Societal and cultural effects do not significantly influence consumer buying behavior when examined alone, as the coefficient was 0.2907 with a p-value of 0.215. Accordingly, this model assumes that cultural, peer, or social pressures do not directly guide consumers' choices. Societal factors are not significant enough to impact the dependent variable, despite a fair amount of correlation. Hypothesis H₁₃ does not receive support, so it is important to look into both social and cultural aspects further when linked with other hypotheses.

H4: There is a significant interaction effect between psychological, technological, and societal drivers on consumer purchasing behavior.

	Psychological Drivers	Technological Drivers	Societal and Cultural Drivers	Consumer Buying Behaviour
Psychological Drivers	1	0.494581	0.474098	0.361758
Technological Drivers	0.494581	1	0.528104	0.390072
Societal and Cultural Drivers	0.474098	0.528104	1	0.454921
Consumer Buying Behaviour	0.361758	0.390072	0.454921	1

The correlation matrix reveals how independent factors (drivers from psychology, technology, and society) relate to consumer buying behavior. Of all the drivers studied, society and culture had the most connection to consumer buying behavior ($r=0.4549$), followed by technology ($r=0.3901$) and then psychology ($r=0.3618$). The findings show that influencer marketing, user-generated content, and brand storytelling are all positively connected to consumer buying behavior, yet they have different impacts.

Furthermore, on the matrix, moderate relationships are seen between the three sets of drivers: $P \leftrightarrow T$ (0.4946); $P \leftrightarrow S$ (0.4741); and $T \leftrightarrow S$ (0.5281). These numbers suggest that the predictors are related, though not completely redundant. Because of this, including all three variables in the regression model is safe from major concerns about multicollinearity. Generally, these results indicate that all the drivers are connected and that social and technological elements play a stronger part in influencing how people make buying decisions in this study.

Findings and Discussion:-

Using multiple regression and correlation analysis, this study sought to examine the ways in which various factors, such as psychological, technological, and social drivers, affect consumer buying behavior. There was a significant regression model ($F = 18.59$, $p < 0.001$) with an R^2 value of 0.272, suggesting that around 27.2% of why consumer behavior changes can be explained by the chosen predictors.

The most important predictor turned out to be technology ($\beta = 0.8314$, $p = 0.001$). This result suggests that H₁² is correct and agrees with studies confirming that digital and social platforms now have more impact on buying choices (Pentina & Zhang, 2017; Dwivedi et al., 2021). Reviews, influencers, and advertisements on the web now lead many people to buy products more swiftly and emotionally.

Though psychological drivers did not reach statistical significance on their own ($p = 0.158$), they seemed to be positively related to buying behavior ($\beta = 0.3223$). This find backs up previous studies showing that feelings, drive, and individual mindsets influence how people make choices as consumers (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Good thing, the connection between psychological traits and the amount of technology used was just below significant ($\beta = -0.1405$, $p = 0.058$) and revealed partial support for H₁₁ and H₅. So,

psychological feelings such as anxiety, happiness, or curiosity can affect how much technology influences what we buy, keeping with Wang and Yu's research (2017).

There was a fair relationship between drivers of society and culture and consumer behaviour, yet the regression coefficient was not significant ($\beta = 0.2907$, $p = 0.215$). This also supports results from research that emphasize the connection between people's cultural background and their ways of buying (Hofstede, 2001; Solomon, 2018), but also hints that online spaces can bring about indirect societal influence.

The analysis of correlation supported the findings from regression. Both technological and psychological drivers had similar amounts of influence on consumer behaviour: $r = 0.3901$ for technology and $r = 0.3618$ for psychology. While psychological and societal influences did not impact the regression analysis, the results suggest they are nonetheless important for consumer behaviour models in more qualitative contexts.

In general, the results confirm that technological factors play a direct and leading role in driving buying behavior in today's digital world. These types of factors do not work alone as good predictors, but they impact results by fitting together and by the background circumstances. For people creating marketing strategies, these insights mean they should integrate emotional impact, digital actions and responses to cultural norms.

Conclusion, Suggestions, and Future Scope

The study presents a detailed look into the reasons that influence consumers during online shopping. Evidence shows that social media and the influence of digital platforms significantly improve consumers' decision to make a purchase. It likewise follows research that points to technology's important place in influencing how we buy things (Dwivedi et al., 2021; Pentina & Zhang, 2017). Even though psychological and societal drivers didn't show key associations by themselves, they still indicated positive links and interesting complex results, especially that between psychological and technological variables. It means that consumers' moods and thought processes can help shape their buying behaviors influenced by technology, so both technology and mental factors should be considered.

According to these results, companies and marketing teams should work on combining relevant digital strategies with understanding the unique thoughts and situations of consumers. Personalized information, along with carefully chosen social media celebrities and friends' suggestions, often results in better results for product purchases. Being mindful of cultural and social norms matters to brands because they play a key role in shaping consumer attitudes and brand loyalty, although these effects are not obvious in detailed data analysis.

A number of potential avenues for further research have been suggested. Increasing the number of participants and including those from many diversity groups across regions and cultures can improve the chances of results fitting different populations. In addition, having interviews or holding focus groups using qualitative methods can help identify the finer details of both psychological and cultural factors that quantitative research sometimes fails to reach. Including other mediating or moderating factors—like age, gender, income level, or character traits—could offer extra information on why certain segments act the way they do in consumer terms. What's more, following people over a long period would help see the changes in how they interact with one another, as technology and social media are changing so often. By looking at the model for different types of products, we could discover that drivers affect purchases differently based on the type of purchase being made.

To conclude, technology is key in shaping what shoppers choose, and this work recognizes how both small and big mental and social pressures can influence shoppers as well. When all these drivers are considered together, future studies and marketing can handle the difficulties related to consumer behavior in digital times.

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