Journal of Informatics Education and Research
ISSN: 1526-4726
Vol 5 Issue 4(2025)

A Study of the Influence of Social and Digital Marketing on Consumer Behaviour in the Apparel Sector

Mr. Himanshu Gaur[1*], Dr. Priyanka Singh[2]
[1*]Research Scholar, School of Leadership & Management, Manav Rachna International Institute of Research Studies, Faridabad, Haryana, India.
[2]Professor, School of Leadership & Management, Manav Rachna International Institute of Research Studies, Faridabad, Haryana, India.

Abstract
With the widespread usage of digital technologies, there has been a significant shift in the marketing of clothing in India. Electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), the influence of social media, content marketing strategies, and the convenience of online shopping are now major factors in shaping customer behaviour. In order to determine how these four factors affect people's clothing purchases, this study used a quantitative research strategy. Data was collected from 384 individuals using a conventional questionnaire. Our analysis, which included tests for reliability, correlation, and regression, was conducted using SPSS 24. According to the findings, content marketing, electronic word of mouth (eWOM), and the ease of online shopping have the next-largest impacts on consumers' purchasing decisions, followed by social media marketing. The findings demonstrate that platforms that prioritise user experience, compelling story telling, and user-generated content tend to perform better for businesses. In keeping with the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) paradigm, well-crafted digital marketing stimuli do double duty: alter people's perceptions and inspire them to make a purchase. Significant insights for garment manufacturers to strengthen their digital strategy are provided by the study, which emphasises that the quality, not the amount, of connections should be used to measure the success of digital marketing.

Keywords: Social Media Marketing, Content Marketing, Consumer Behaviour, Apparel Industry, Digital Marketing

1. Introduction

The marketing approaches used by the Indian garment sector have seen a sea change in the current digital age. The way Indian consumers search for, compare, and purchase clothing has been greatly impacted by the rise of social media, content marketing, influencer marketing, and the convenience of online shopping. Interactive digital marketing campaigns that are data-driven are gradually replacing more conventional forms of advertising. In India, where the smartphone industry is growing at a rapid pace, social media platforms like YouTube and Instagram and shopping applications like Myntra and AJIO have a greater impact on consumer tastes.

Different digital platforms, such as social media, email, and mobile applications, are utilised in digital marketing (Miller, Fabian, and Lin, 2009). When it comes to buying clothes, more and more Indian customers are using digital content like company ads, customer reviews, influencer posts, and suggestions instead of conventional "Word of Mouth" (eWOM). Kumar and Ayodeji (2021) found that over 60% of young Indians use the internet to learn about and buy garments.

Indian consumers have increasingly engaged in internet purchasing, particularly for apparel. This is due to the enhanced usability of e-commerce interfaces and the improvement of digital infrastructure. Individuals are adopting this trend due to the convenience of shopping, comparing, and acquiring knowledge from home. The apparel industry employs social media marketing for immediate bilateral communication, customised advertising, and real-time consumer engagement. Balakrishnan, Dahnil, and Wong (2014) assert that social media influences the perception of clients by fashion enterprises.

The garment business mainly uses two types of digital marketing: e-commerce and content marketing. Content marketers make and share valuable things like style blogs, lookbooks, and articles by influencers to get and keep customers (Huang & Benyoucef, 2017). But online buying is all about the transaction, when buyers and sellers use digital platforms to do business. All of these strategies have transformed the way Indian shoppers buy garments.

EWOM has become a big part of how customers act in India. It encompasses all reviews published online by current or prospective purchasers of a specific brand or product (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). The effect of eWOM on consumers' willingness to buy is typically substantially stronger than that of traditional types of advertising (Chevalier and Mayzlin, 2006). Indian shoppers typically turn to fashion influencers and online reviews for assistance before buying clothes.

Apparel producers are similarly utilising digital platforms to customise their marketing communications according to customer preferences. According to Salem & Salem (2021), contemporary marketers utilise big data and AI-driven technologies to deliver tailored content to certain customer segments. Such strategies enhance engagement and personalisation, hence increasing the likelihood of client involvement. Myntra, an online retailer, using predictive analytics to recommend products to customers based on their previous browsing history. The increasing utilisation of digital and social media underscores its significance in influencing consumer shopping behaviour in the contemporary market. In India, where digitalisation is still evolving, it is particularly essential to understand how these platforms influence individuals' purchasing decisions. This study seeks to examine the influence of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), social media marketing, influencer marketing, and digital advertising on consumer decision-making within the Indian garment sector. Mahmud et al. (2024) assert that electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) profoundly affects purchasing intentions, particularly inside digital retail environments.

2. Literature Review

2.1. SM Marketing and Consumer Behaviour

SM has revolutionized how brands engage with consumers, especially in the fashion and apparel industry. Platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok provide highly visual and interactive formats for marketers to showcase apparel, directly influencing consumer awareness, interest, and engagement (Balakrishnan, Dahnil, & Yi, 2014). In India, the increasing smartphone penetration and affordable data plans have expanded social media usage across urban and rural areas, making it a dominant force in shaping consumer preferences.

Social media marketing enables real-time interactions between brands and consumers, which enhances consumer trust and brand attachment. According to Lee, Hosanagar, and Nair (2018), advertising content that aligns with consumer values and aesthetics significantly increases engagement, leading to higher conversion rates. Moreover, visual platforms like Instagram help fashion brands leverage influencer collaborations and storytelling to enhance emotional resonance.

Consumers' engagement with brand material on social media, according to Prasad, Gupta, and Totala (2017), makes them more invested in the purchasing process. In order to better connect with customers' decision-making processes, organisations should recognise the significance of social media content personalisation (Palalic et al., 2021). Social media advertising and viral campaigns help firms stand out in India's extremely competitive apparel sector.

H1: In the Indian clothing sector, SM marketing greatly influences customer behaviour in a good way.

2.2. Content Marketing and Consumer Behaviour

The objective of content marketing is to engage the target audience and maintain their interest by providing valuable and pertinent information. In the garment sector, content marketing encompasses blog articles, videos, lookbooks, fashion guides, and influencer evaluations, which inform and motivate consumers throughout their decision-making process (du Plessis, 2022).

Järvinen and Taiminen (2016) emphasized that strategic content creation fosters brand authority and improves customer loyalty. In the digital-first environment of India, where Gen Z and millennials dominate online apparel purchases, the role of creative and educational content is critical. Dudhela and Chaurasiya (2020) found that effective content strategies in B2C e-commerce help drive higher traffic and better engagement, thereby influencing buying decisions.

Content that is informative and emotionally engaging supports customers in evaluating apparel products by highlighting features, usage, styling tips, and real-user reviews. According to Pulizzi (2013), storytelling and narrative-based marketing are particularly effective in the fashion sector as they create a deeper emotional bond between customer and brand.

H2: Apparel sector significantly benefit from content marketing regarding client purchase behaviour.

2.3. eWOM and Consumer Behaviour

The process of buying clothing is significantly influenced by eWOM. When making selections about what to buy, consumers extensively depend on peer-generated internet reviews, ratings, unboxing videos, and fashion blogs. According to Abd-Elaziz et al. (2015), eWOM significantly influences customers' perceptions and trust, particularly in high-involvement categories like fashion. In the Indian context, Mahmud et al. (2024) highlighted that eWOM's credibility is enhanced when trust is established through online communities or influencers. Prasad et al. (2017) identified that social media eWOM intensifies purchase decision involvement, acting as a psychological trigger in consumer behaviour.

Romadhoni et al. (2023) also revealed that eWOM directly impacts purchase intention and can mediate the effect of other digital marketing activities. As apparel products often involve subjective evaluations such as style, fit, and material, positive eWOM helps consumers reduce perceived risk. The main indicators of trust these days are user-generated material and testimonials on sites like Myntra, Amazon, and Flipkart.

H3: Electronic word-of-mouth significantly influences the impact of digital marketing strategies on clothing purchasing behaviours in India.

2.4. Online Convenience and Consumer Purchase Behaviour

The convenience of online clothing purchasing significantly influences individuals' perceptions of it. It encompasses user-friendly navigation, efficient product filtering, seamless checkout procedures, diverse payment options, and generous return policies.

Lina, Hou, and Ali (2022) observed that convenience markedly affects impulsive purchasing behaviour, particularly among Generation Z customers.

In India, with the rapid adoption of digital payment systems (UPI, Paytm, Google Pay), faster delivery systems, and 24/7 availability of e-commerce platforms, online convenience has become a strong differentiator. Toler (2000) explained that perceived convenience enhances satisfaction, reduces cognitive effort, and increases the likelihood of repeat purchases.

Mofokeng (2021) found that online convenience positively affects both satisfaction and loyalty, especially in mobile commerce. For busy professionals and students in metro cities, convenient digital interfaces and time-saving experiences directly contribute to their willingness to purchase fashion items online.

H4: The simplicity of online buying significantly impacts customers' purchase behaviours.

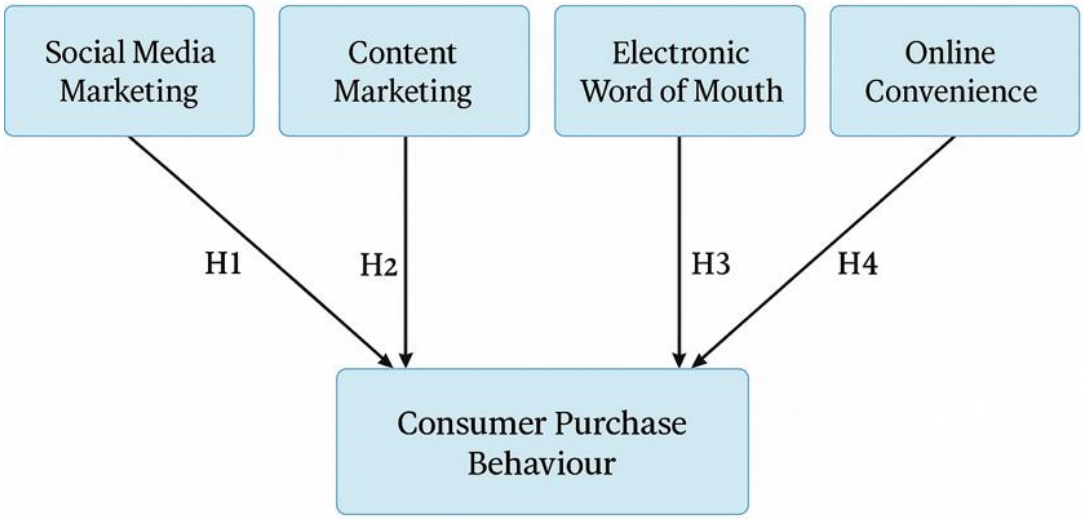

Figure 1: The Influence of Digital and Social Media Ads on Indian Consumers' Purchase Behaviour

3. Research Methodology

This quantitative, descriptive, and hypothesis-driven study examined the influence of digital marketing and social media on the purchasing behaviour of garment consumers in India. The research aimed to determine the impact of digital marketing strategies—specifically social media participation, online advertising, electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), content marketing, and online convenience—on customer decision-making. The target demographic consisted of Indian consumers who frequently interact with apparel-related marketing content via digital platforms. A sample size of 384 respondents was selected using Cochran's method to guarantee representative results with a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error. Participants were selected by non-probability purposive sampling, focussing on those knowledgeable in digital and social marketing pertaining to apparel purchases. A standardised questionnaire divided into five sections was employed to gather data: online convenience, electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), content marketing, digital brand engagement, and consumer decision-making. Each section contained items evaluated on a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). The consumer decision section documented purchase data, and the average scores were calculated by dividing the total scores by the quantity of items. A pilot research involving 30 participants was conducted to ensure clarity and precision. This resulted in minor alterations to the phrase and cadence. The most recent survey was conducted online via Google Forms for a duration of one month. We employed SPSS version 24 to encode and analyse the replies. Descriptive statistics (means, frequencies, and standard deviations) were used to characterise respondents, whereas Cronbach's alpha was applied to evaluate internal consistency and scale reliability. Inferential statistics, including correlation and regression analysis, were conducted to assess hypotheses and examine correlations among variables. Ethical standards were meticulously maintained, ensuring voluntary participation, informed permission, and complete anonymity for respondents.

3.1 Respondents' Demographic Profiles

Table 1: Respondent Demographics (N= 384)

Variable	Category	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
1. Gender	a) Male	192	50.0%
	b) Female	192	50.0%
2. Age	a) Below 20 years	38	9.9%
	b) 21–30 years	153	39.8%
	c) 31–40 years	92	24.0%
	d) 41–50 years	61	15.9%
	e) Above 50 years	40	10.4%
3. Education Qualification	a) 10th or below	20	5.2%
	b) 12th pass	52	13.5%
	c) Graduate	155	40.4%
	d) Postgraduate	124	32.3%
	e) Doctorate or above	33	8.6%
4. Occupation	a) Student	94	24.5%
	b) Working professional	162	42.2%
	c) Self-employed	56	14.6%
	d) Homemaker	35	9.1%
	e) Others	37	9.6%
5. Monthly Income	a) Less than ₹10,000	48	12.5%
	b) ₹10,001 – ₹25,000	91	23.7%
	c) ₹25,001 – ₹50,000	109	28.4%
	d) ₹50,001 – ₹1,00,000	81	21.1%
	e) Above ₹1,00,000	55	14.3%
6. Frequency of Online Apparel Shopping	a) Never	14	3.6%
	b) Rarely (1–2 times a year)	39	10.2%
	c) Occasionally (3–6 times a year)	86	22.4%
	d) Frequently (once a month)	117	30.5%
	e) Very Frequently (more than once a month)	128	33.3%

The demographic analysis of the 384 respondents reveals a balanced gender distribution, with 50% identifying as male in addition 50% as female. The majority of participants (39.8%) are in their twenties and thirties, indicating that the bulk of online clothes buyers are young adults. This is followed by respondents aged 31–40 years (24%) and 41–50 years (15.9%), suggesting considerable engagement across mid-age consumers as well. Educationally, the majority of respondents are well-qualified, with 40.4% being graduates and 32.3% postgraduates, while a smaller segment holds doctorate-level qualifications (8.6%). The occupational profile highlights that 42.2% are working professionals, followed by students (24.5%) and self-employed individuals (14.6%), indicating that both income-earning and younger non-earning groups are actively involved in online apparel behavior. A significant portion (21.1%) earn between ₹50,001 and ₹1,00,000, indicating a solid middle-class customer base. The largest group, in terms of monthly income, earns between ₹25,001 and ₹50,000 (28.4%). The majority of respondents (30.5%) or very regularly (33.3%) purchase online, demonstrating strong levels of digital connection with clothing businesses. According to these demographic findings, the garment industry's digital and social media marketing

tactics work best when they are directed toward educated, young to middle-aged professionals and students possessing moderate to high spending capacities.

Table 2: The reliability statistics for all the major constructs used

Construct	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Online Convenience	5	0.867
e-WOM	5	0.846
Content Marketing	5	0.799
Digital Brand Engagement	5	0.865
Consumer Decision	5	0.846

Interpretation:
Given that their Cronbach's Alpha values were higher than the generally recognised cutoff of 0.70, the results showed that all five components had excellent internal consistency and satisfactory dependability. With an Alpha value of 0.867, the construct Online Convenience showed the greatest dependability, indicating that the components pertaining to user experience and ease of navigation in online clothing buying were very reliable. Likewise, Digital Brand Engagement showed strong dependability ($\alpha = 0.865$), indicating that respondents often assessed their social media interactions with clothing companies.

With a good Alpha value of 0.846, the e-WOM and Consumer Decision constructs demonstrated consistency in respondents' perceptions of online reviews, recommendations, and the ways in which digital influence influenced their purchase decisions. While Content Marketing has the lowest dependability value ($\alpha = 0.799$), it is still well within the acceptable range, suggesting that it is a credible indicator of the influence of branded content on customer behavior, including articles, videos, and style advice.

In summary, Table 2's internal consistency scores attest to the validity as well as reliability of every measuring scale used in the research for further statistical analysis, such as regression, correlation, and hypothesis testing.

Hypothesis 1: SM marketing greatly influences customer behaviour in a good way

Table 3: Model Summary				
Mode 1	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.752[a]	.565	.559	.666
a. Predictors: (Constant), I prefer online shopping due to time-saving convenience., It is easy to browse apparel products online., I can quickly find the information I need about apparel products online., Online payment and checkout processes are convenient., Online shopping platforms are user-friendly.				

Interpretation

high correlation (R = 0.752) exists between the dependent variable (average score for consumer purchase selections) and the predictors (social media marketing expediency landscapes), as the model summary shows. The R2 score of 0.565 shows that the model's predictors explain around 56.5% of the differences in how people buy things. The corrected R^2 value of 0.559, which is similar to the initial R^2 value, shows that the model still has a lot of explanatory power and isn't overfitting. The model's predictions are probably pretty accurate, since the standard error of the estimate is only 0.666.

Table 4: ANOVAa						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	218.065	5	43.613	98.217	.000[b]
	Residual	167.849	378	.444		
	Total	385.914	383			
a. Dependent Variable: Consumer Decision						
b. Predictors: (Constant), I prefer online shopping due to time-saving convenience.						

Interpretation

The full regression model is shown to be statistically significant according to the ANOVA results ($F = 98.217$, $p < 0.001$). This indicates that the purchase decisions are significantly impacted by one of the predictors. We can certainly reject the null hypothesis, which states that the predictors do not affect the dependent variable, because the significance value is much below the threshold of 0.05.

Table 5: Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.235	.195		11.487	.000
	It is easy to browse apparel products online.	-.348	.055	-.281	-6.378	.000
	Online shopping platforms are user-friendly.	.505	.051	.512	9.834	.000
	I can quickly find the information I need about apparel products online.	.493	.048	.532	10.343	.000
	Online payment and checkout processes are convenient.	-.034	.047	-.038	-.727	.467
	I prefer online shopping due to time-saving convenience.	-.092	.046	-.098	-2.020	.044

a. Dependent Variable: Consumer Decision Average Score

Interpretation

"Online shopping platforms are user-friendly" ($\beta = 0.512$, $p < 0.001$) and "quickly finding information about apparel products online" ($\beta = 0.532$, $p < 0.001$) had the most beneficial influence on purchasing behavior, according to the coefficients analysis. The results indicate that "convenient online payment processes" have no substantial impact on customer purchasing behaviour ($\beta = -0.038$, $p = 0.467$). Conversely, both "time-saving convenience" ($\beta = -0.098$, $p = 0.044$) and "ease of browsing apparel products online" ($\beta = -0.281$, $p < 0.001$) have significant negative effects. In general, the results support the alternative hypothesis (H_{11}) and reject the null hypothesis (H_{01}). This shows that social media marketing has a big effect on how people in India decide what to buy in the clothing business.

Hypothesis 2 Apparel sector significantly benefit from content marketing regarding client purchase behaviour.

Table 6: Model Summary

Mode 1	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.622[a]	.387	.378	.791

a. Predictors: (Constant), I am more likely to buy apparel that is highly rated online., Recommendations from others on social media influence my apparel purchases., I read customer reviews before purchasing apparel online., I trust online feedback more than advertisements., I share my experiences with apparel products on digital platforms.

Interpretation

According to the model summary, there is a somewhat positive association (R = 0.622) between the Indian clothing industry's customer purchasing behavior and content marketing parameters. The R2 value of 0.387 causes consumers' buying habits to fluctuate, with the detected content marketing characteristics accounting for a possible 38.7 percent of that variance. which is appropriate for behavioural research, and the enhanced R2 of 0.378 indicates the model's reliability.

Table 7: ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	149.184	5	29.837	47.642	.000[b]
	Residual	236.730	378	.626		
	Total	385.914	383			

a. Dependent Variable: Consumer Decision Average Score

Interpretation

The ANOVA findings ($F = 47.642$, $p < 0.001$) show that the regression model is statistically significant. This means that the chosen content marketing factors have a significant effect on how people buy things.

Table 8: Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.259	.216		10.456	.000
	I read customer reviews before purchasing apparel online.	.011	.043	.013	.266	.791
	Recommendations from others on social media influence my apparel purchases.	.215	.051	.239	4.177	.000
	I trust online feedback more than advertisements.	-.296	.068	-.285	-4.341	.000
	I share my experiences with apparel products on digital platforms.	.626	.064	.682	9.701	.000
	I am more likely to buy apparel that is highly rated online.	-.077	.056	-.070	-1.360	.175

a. Dependent Variable: Consumer Decision Average Score

Interpretation

"Recommendations from others on social media" and "sharing my experiences with apparel products on digital platforms" The coefficient analysis showed that some parts of content marketing had the best effects on how people bought things. On the other hand, the factor "trusting online feedback more than ads" had a big but negative effect, which means that relying too much on peer reviews may sometimes stop people from buying. Also, there was no big difference between "being more likely to buy clothes that are highly rated online" and "reading customer reviews before buying clothes online." In general, the results show that content marketing has a big effect on how people in India decide what to buy, which means that the null hypothesis (H_{02}) is wrong and the alternative hypothesis (H_{12}) is right.

Hypothesis 3: Electronic word-of-mouth significantly influences the impact of digital marketing strategies on clothing purchasing behaviours in India.

Table 9: Model Summary

Mode 1	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.527[a]	.278	.268	.859

a. Predictors: (Constant), I prefer brands that use creative storytelling in their content., Apparel brands that provide styling tips/content attract me more., I follow brands that regularly post useful or entertaining content., I am influenced by fashion-related posts and videos on social media., Content on social platforms helps me understand apparel quality and fit.

Interpretation

The model summary shows a somewhat positive connection (R = 0.527) between eWOM features and how people buy clothes in India. The R^2 value of 0.278 shows that the eWOM variables chosen can explain 27.8% of the differences in how people buy things. The standard error of the estimate (0.859) is also within an acceptable range for behavioural research, and the modified R^2 value of 0.268 shows that the model is stable and reliable.

Table 10: ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	107.297	5	21.459	29.114	.000[b]
	Residual	278.617	378	.737		
	Total	385.914	383			

a. Dependent Variable: Consumer Decision Average Score

Interpretation

According to the results of the ANOVA, The Regression Model is statistically significant ($F = 29.114$, $p < 0.001$).indicating that the selected eWOM predictors taken together significantly affect consumers' purchase decisions.

Table 11: Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.514	.306		8.201	.000
	I am influenced by fashion-related posts and videos on social media.	.221	.072	.187	3.065	.002
	Apparel brands that provide styling tips/content attract me more.	.253	.069	.219	3.662	.000
	I follow brands that regularly post useful or entertaining content.	-.343	.068	-.284	-5.009	.000
	Content on social platforms helps me understand apparel quality and fit.	-.175	.071	-.192	-2.444	.015
	I prefer brands that use creative storytelling in their content.	.436	.082	.411	5.328	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Consumer Decision Average Score

Interpretation

The strongest positive predictor, according to coefficient analysis, is "preferring brands that use creative storytelling in their content" ($\beta = 0.411$, $p < 0.001$), followed by "being influenced by fashion-related posts and videos" ($\beta = 0.187$, $p = 0.002$) and "apparel brands that provide styling tips/content" ($\beta = 0.219$, $p < 0.001$). In contrast, there are significant but negative effects of "following brands that regularly post useful or entertaining content" ($\beta = -0.284$, $p < 0.001$) and "content on social platforms helping me understand apparel quality and fit" ($\beta = -0.192$, $p = 0.015$), indicating that these factors alone may not result in increased purchase intention.

The alternative hypothesis (H_{13}) was supported, whereas the null hypothesis (H_{03}) was rejected, showing that eWOM has a big effect on how people in India buy clothes.

Hypothesis 4: The simplicity of online buying significantly impacts customers' purchase behaviours

Table 12: Model Summary				
Mode 1	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.586[a]	.343	.334	.819
a. Predictors: (Constant), I feel more connected to a brand when I engage with its online content., I like or comment on apparel-related posts., social media helps me stay updated with new apparel collections., I follow apparel brands on social media platforms., I engage with brands through online polls, contests, or Q&As.				

Interpretation

In the Indian garment business, the model summary indicates a somewhat favorable association (R = 0.586) between online convenience features and customer purchasing behavior. The R^2 value of 0.343 indicates that specific online convenience variables explain 34.3% of the variance in consumer buying behavior, while the adjusted R^2 value of 0.334 further validates the stability of the model. Moreover, the standard error of the estimate (0.819) falls within an acceptable range, suggesting a satisfactory level of predictive accuracy.

Table 13: ANOVAa						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	132.329	5	26.466	39.451	.000[b]
	Residual	253.585	378	.671		
	Total	385.914	383			
a. Dependent Variable: Consumer Decision Average Score						

Interpretation

The combined effect of online convenience predictors considerably explains variance in consumer purchasing behavior, The regression model is found to be statistically significant ($F = 39.451$, $p < 0.001$) based on the ANOVA findings.

Table 14: Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.260	.248		5.089	.000
	I follow apparel brands on social media platforms.	.120	.074	.101	1.624	.105
	I like or comment on apparel-related posts.	.074	.078	.061	.944	.346
	I engage with brands through online polls, contests, or Q&As.	-.094	.083	-.082	-1.134	.258
	Social media helps me stay updated with new apparel collections.	.304	.069	.301	4.415	.000
	I feel more connected to a brand when I engage with its online content.	.320	.056	.310	5.707	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Consumer Decision Average Score

Interpretation

The coefficients table indicates that "social media helps me stay updated with new apparel collections" ($\beta = 0.301$, $p < 0.001$) and "feeling more connected to a brand when engaging with its online content. In contrast, "following apparel brands on social media platforms" ($\beta = 0.101$, $p = 0.105$), "liking or commenting on apparel-related posts" ($\beta = 0.061$, $p = 0.346$), and "engaging with brands through online polls, contests. The results demonstrate that customer buying behavior in the Indian textile sector is greatly influenced by online convenience, rejecting the null hypothesis (H_{04}) and adopting the alternative hypothesis (H_{14}).

4. Discussion & Findings

Social media and digital marketing methods have a substantial and quantifiable impact on customer purchasing behaviour, according to this study's results. This impact is especially true in the Indian garment business. Digital marketing stimuli influence consumers' perceptions, which in turn drive their buy intentions and behaviours, according to the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) paradigm.

Examples of these stimuli include platform usability, engaging content, peer recommendations, and convenient online interactions.

Hypothesis 1, the strong explanatory power of social media marketing ($R^2 = 0.565$) highlights the centrality of platform usability and ease of information access in driving online purchase decisions. The negative coefficients for browsing ease and time-saving convenience suggest that while these attributes are appreciated, they may not directly lead to purchases unless combined with richer experiential factors. This supports the idea that cognitive engagement outweighs mere convenience in high-involvement product categories like apparel.

Hypothesis 2, the contribution of content marketing in influencing purchase behaviour ($R^2 = 0.387$) Shows how persuasive user-generated content and peer endorsements can be The strong positive effect of sharing personal experiences reflects how consumers derive value from identity construction and social connection through shared brand experiences. However, the insignificant role of product ratings and reviews suggests that Indian apparel consumers may prioritise narrative and community trust over numerical evaluation.

Hypothesis 3, eWOM's explanatory power ($R^2 = 0.278$) and the strong positive influence of creative storytelling indicate that narrative-driven brand communications foster emotional resonance and long-term loyalty. The negative effects associated with frequent brand content and quality-focused posts point towards a possible information overload effect, wherein repetitive or overly technical content diminishes purchase motivation.

Hypothesis 4, the significance of online convenience ($R^2 = 0.343$) confirms that continuous brand engagement and informational updates stimulate purchase intent. The insignificance of low-effort interactions such as liking posts or following pages suggests that passive engagement may not be a reliable predictor of purchase behaviour. This finding reinforces the view that active, emotionally engaging interactions—rather than superficial signals—are key drivers of conversion in digital retail environments.

These findings show that although eWOM, online convenience, social media marketing, along with content marketing all significantly impact consumer behavior, their relative contributions vary. Importantly, the study reveals that quality and meaningfulness of engagement outweigh frequency and superficiality, offering actionable insights for practitioners seeking to optimise their digital strategies.

5. Conclusion

With a focus on social media marketing, content marketing, eWOM, and online convenience, this study investigated how social and digital marketing affected consumer behaviour in the Indian textile industry. Based on 384 replies, we can see that each element had a considerable impact on consumers' intents to buy, albeit to different degrees.

Social media marketing was the variable that predicted the most, and the platform's accessibility and the simplicity with which pertinent product information could be accessed had the biggest beneficial impact. The influence of peer-created content and sharing experiences in the form of content marketing was proved effective, whereas eWOM turned out to be the most influential when informed by means of creative storytelling and personalization. The online convenience helped contribute to the purchase decision, especially when it is accompanied by continuous brand interaction and relevant brand updates and information.

All things considered, the results demonstrate a shift away from static, one-way promotion tactics and towards more dynamic, consumer-centric marketing approaches that prioritise high-quality engagement, story power, and an integrated, problem-free digital experience. By promoting customer thinking and converting activity to quantitative behavioural outcomes, the study verifies that the concept of digital marketing stimulus as described is true. Fashion companies seeking to optimise their digital marketing strategies in a highly competitive and more digital industry may find the insights to be of real use.

6. Suggestion

Considering the results of this investigation, several strategic recommendations can be proposed for apparel brands aiming to enhance consumer engagement and drive purchase behaviour through social and digital marketing initiatives:

1. **Prioritise platform usability and information accessibility** – Digital platforms should be optimised for intuitive navigation, fast-loading interfaces, and easy access to product details. Enhancing user experience can significantly improve consumer decision-making and increase conversion rates.
2. **Leverage narrative-driven and personalised content** – Creative storytelling, combined with personalised recommendations based on consumer preferences and browsing history, can deepen emotional engagement and brand affinity. This approach aligns with the observed positive effects of eWOM and content marketing.
3. **Encourage consumer-generated content and peer endorsements** – Apparel brands should actively promote the sharing of customer experiences, reviews, and styling tips. Peer-generated content builds trust and authenticity, which are critical in high-involvement purchase categories like fashion.
4. **Adopt a balanced posting strategy to avoid content fatigue** – While regular updates are necessary, excessive or repetitive brand content may lead to disengagement. Brands should focus on delivering value-driven, varied, and visually appealing content to sustain consumer interest.
5. **Integrate convenience-enhancing features into digital touchpoints** – Streamlined checkout processes, flexible payment options, transparent return policies, and prompt customer support can strengthen consumer satisfaction and encourage repeat purchases.
6. **Strengthen interactive engagement** – Brands should create opportunities for active participation through polls, contests, Q&A sessions, and live product demonstrations. Such interactive elements foster a sense of community and deepen brand–consumer relationships.

7. Limitation

It is important to acknowledge the study's limitations, despite the fact that it provides valuable insights into how social and digital marketing affect consumer behaviour in the Indian textile industry.

1. **Sampling limitations** – Because the study employed non-probability purposive sampling, the results may not apply to the entire Indian market. The sample may have excluded viewpoints from less digitally involved sectors because it was mostly taken from those who are already active on digital channels.
2. **Self-reported data** – Every response was based on self-reported views and actions, which might be biased by things like recollection errors or social desirability. The stated intentions of the respondents may not match their actual purchasing behavior.
3. **Cross-sectional design** – A cross-sectional survey was employed in the study to record consumer opinions and behaviors a specific moment. This makes more difficult determine causal linkages or take into consideration how trends in digital marketing have changed over time.
4. **Focus on the apparel sector** – The results are unique to the clothing sector and may not apply directly to other categories of goods where consumer involvement or decision-making processes vary.
5. **Limited scope of variables** – While the study examined key dimensions—social media marketing, content marketing, eWOM, in addition online convenience—other potentially influential factors such as brand trust, cultural influences, and offline–online integration were beyond the scope of this research.

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