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Research Article

Role of Online Trust and Social Media in Influencing Consumers' Online Fmcg Buying Intention and Buying Behaviour

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Abstract: The rapid growth of e-commerce and digital technologies has transformed consumers' purchasing patterns, particularly in the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) sector. This study examines the factors influencing Online FMCG Product Buying Intention and Online FMCG Product Buying Behaviour. The research investigates the effects of Raises Awareness, Online Trust, Facilitating Conditions, Social Media and Influencers, and Price and Offers on consumers' online purchasing decisions using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM).Primary data were collected from 200 respondents through a structured questionnaire. The collected data were analysed using descriptive statistics and SEM to examine the direct relationships between the study variables. The findings reveal that Raises Awareness, Online Trust, Social Media and Influencers, and Price and Offers have a significant positive influence on Online FMCG Product Buying Intention, whereas Facilitating Conditions do not have a significant effect. Among the significant predictors, Online Trust and Price and Offers emerged as the strongest determinants of purchase intention. However, none of the five exogenous variables exhibited a significant direct influence on Online FMCG Product Buying Behaviour, indicating that these factors primarily shape consumers' purchase intentions rather than their actual buying behaviour.

Keywords: Online Trust, Social Media and Influencers, and Price and Offers.

INTRODUCTION

Internet technology, smartphones, social media, and e-commerce have revolutionized the way consumers search for information, purchase products, and make decisions. Digital marketing has developed as a very powerful marketing strategy as a means of reaching out to customers on online platforms such as social media, search engines, websites, email, mobile applications, and influencer marketing. Digital marketing is unlike traditional marketing and has interactive communication, customized content, real-time engagement, and measurable results, serving as a great marketing tool for consumer buying behaviour. There are many theories about the relationship between digital marketing and consumer behaviour. Consumer Decision-Making Theory states that consumers go through the stages of need recognition, information search, and comparison of alternatives, purchase decisions, and post-purchase evaluation. Digital marketing impacts all of these stages through the delivery of product information, customer reviews, ratings, advertisements, promotional offers, etc. In the same way, through the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), consumers take to digital platforms because of their perceived usefulness and ease of use, which leads to online product search and purchase. The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) also states that consumer attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control influence purchase intentions and are strengthened through digital marketing activities like social media engagement, influencer recommendations, and electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM). Based upon research (Jeyakumar and Saravanan, 2023), online reviews of product information and comparison against online reviews are a big part of digital marketing, and consumers are more likely to use digital platforms to search for information and product recommendations and make decisions about buying products. Arshad (2024) also found a positive correlation between digital marketing and consumer buying behavior and showed that online promotions and digital communication influence purchase behaviour. Social media advertising, brand awareness, ease of access, customer engagement, and electronic word-of-mouth are the key factors affecting consumer buying behaviour according to Mulyawan et al. (2022). Similarly, Li (2024) pointed out that social media marketing, online reviews, and digital communication are important factors in consumer preferences and purchase intentions.

Research Gap

Recent studies on the FMCG market have demonstrated that digital transformation has changed the way consumers shop. Raunaque (2025) noted that quick commerce, influencer marketing, e-commerce platforms, and digital payment systems have become key factors in FMCG purchasing. Verma (2026) found that digital marketing tools like targeted advertising, influencer endorsements, and social media engagement are important to consumer awareness and purchase intent, but socio-economic factors are more important to the relationship. Yadav et al. (2025) also found that effective integration of traditional and digital marketing approaches and marketing strategies is more effective in rural areas where traditional media still plays a key role. Similarly, Goyal et al. (2026) suggested that integrated online and offline marketing strategies enhance brand awareness, customer engagement, and purchase behaviour. Indeed, the literature confirms that digital marketing has become an important factor influencing consumer buying behaviour in the FMCG sector. Digital channels increase awareness among consumers, help move the information system, build trust online through reviews and influencer recommendations, and help them make purchasing decisions. These findings are a good theoretical basis to study the impact of digital marketing on consumer buying behaviour. There are still major gaps in the literature, and several studies have been conducted to understand the impact of digital marketing on consumer buying behaviour.

Jeyakumar and Saravanan (2023) demonstrated that online marketing has a major influence on consumer behaviour and recommended making digital marketing a more active strategy. However, their study only focused on the general effect of digital marketing and did not explore the individual effects of different digital marketing tools like social media marketing, influencer marketing, SEO, and email marketing. Mulyawan, Alamsyah, and Marimin (2022) identified social media advertising, e-WOM, brand awareness, customer engagement, and ease of access as factors that influence consumer buying behaviour. The study did not analyze demographic characteristics but did not provide detailed empirical evidence and therefore did not provide the same kind of evidence for the effectiveness of the various digital marketing strategies. Arshad (2024) found a strong correlation between digital marketing and consumer buying behaviour based on primary survey data but was limited to a segmented group of organized retail consumers in a particular location. However, the research cannot be generalized to the larger FMCG region. Li (2024) discussed the importance of social media marketing and online consumer reviews in influencing consumer purchasing decision-making processes. The development of quick commerce, influencer marketing, social commerce, and digital payment systems, which are key aspects of digital marketing in the FMCG sector, was discussed by Raunaque (2025). However, the research is based mostly on literature and market reports and not on consumer data. Yadav, Pundlik, and Patidar (2025) compared the benefits of traditional and digital marketing approaches for rural, urban, and regional consumers and concluded that using the latter is more effective. However, it only focused on rural markets and did not consider consumer behaviour in urban or semi-urban markets. Verma (2026) examined the influence of digital marketing strategies and socio-economic factors on FMCG purchasing behaviour in the National Capital Region (NCR). Though the study considers demographic factors, it is limited to one metropolitan area and may not be representative of consumer behaviour in other parts of India. Goyal, Sen, and Lalravi (2026) examined the combined effect of online and offline marketing on consumer buying behaviour. But the study mainly compared marketing approaches and failed to investigate the effect of individual dimensions of digital marketing like content marketing, influencer marketing, and mobile marketing. Kaur and Tailor (2023) highlighted the increasing importance of digital marketing in consumer buying behaviour but only discussed the concept without providing an integrated empirical model covering the different aspects of digital marketing. Vidhani (2025) discussed the importance of SEO, SEM, social media, influencer marketing, and email marketing in improving customer engagement. However, the study focused more on marketing practices than on measuring their direct impact on consumer purchase behaviour. Sharma (2025) investigated the impact of digitalization on FMCG sales in rural and urban markets. But the research was focused on digital transformation rather than how individual digital marketing strategies affect consumer buying decisions. Owusu-Mensah et al. (2025) examined live commerce, influencer marketing, and user-generated content in social commerce and found that psychological and emotional factors influence purchase intention. However, the study focused on social commerce and did not delve into digital marketing in the context of FMCG. The reviews of these works show that most previous studies have examined only a few dimensions of digital marketing or they have been limited to certain regions or consumer groups. There is limited research that has combined different dimensions of digital marketing with consumer buying behaviour within the FMCG industry in a combined context, especially in terms of demographic and socio-economic aspects. Moreover, there are very few empirical studies in the Indian context that have explored the impact of digital marketing strategies on consumer buying behaviour in combination with a full-scale analysis to explore the impact in terms of various digital marketing dimensions on FMCG consumer buying behaviour.

DIGITAL MARKETING AND SOCIAL MEDIA AND INFLUENCERS.

The use of social media and influencer marketing has become the most important digital marketing tools that influence consumer buying behaviour. Mulyawan, Alamsyah, and Marimin (2022) have showed that social media advertising, e-

WOM, customer interaction and brand awareness influence FMCG purchase decisions. Jeyakumar and Saravanan (2023) stated that consumers use digital platforms to find product information, read reviews, and make decisions online and so on. According to Li (2024), social media and online reviews impact consumer attitudes and purchase intention very much. Raunaque (2025) found that micro-influencers and social commerce raise consumer trust, purchasing intention, and brand loyalty. On the other hand, Owusu-Mensah et al. (2025) concluded that influencer marketing and user-generated content enhance purchase intention via increased brand trust. In general, the research suggests that social media and influencers have a major role in customer engagement and positively influence consumer buying behaviour.

RAISES AWARENESS.

Digital marketing is a key component of the awareness of the consumer by delivering accurate information about products and services in a timely manner on digital platforms. Social media, search engines, websites and online advertisements and influencer marketing help consumers to know new products, promotional offers, and brand features. Increased awareness helps customers compare alternative products, understand product benefits, and make purchasing decisions. The publications of Mulyawan, Alamsyah, and Marimin (2022), Jeyakumar and Saravanan (2023), Li (2024), and Raunaque (2025) indicate that digital marketing, particularly social media marketing and influencer promotion, is one of the most effective and positive ways to increase brand awareness and consumer buying behaviour. Online trust is a key factor influencing the buying behaviour of consumers in digital marketing. When online customers are confident and secure in the website, seller and payment system, they are more likely to buy products from online as it is easier.

Trust

Trust is established by good customer reviews, safe payment options, transparent product information, and credible brand communication. Online reviews and social media interactions, Li (2024) said, build trust in the buyer and make consumers more likely to buy products in a trusting manner and therefore, influence purchase decisions. In fact, brand trust mediates the relationship between influencer marketing and purchase intention (Raunaque 2025). In the same way, digital payment systems, influencer marketing and e-commerce platforms increase consumer confidence and encourage repeat purchases. Overall, online trust is critical for customer confidence, purchase intention and brand loyalty.

Facilitating Conditions

Facilitating conditions refer to resources, technology and infrastructure that will make it easier for consumers to use digital marketing platforms. Internet access, mobile availability, secure digital payment systems, user-friendly websites and technical support are all factors that promote online shopping. Mulyawan, Alamsyah and Marimin (2022) demonstrated that ease of access to the internet and technological support have a positive effect on consumer buying behaviour in digital marketplaces. Raunaque (2025) stated that use of e-commerce platforms, quick commerce and Unified Payments Interface (UPI) had made online shopping easier and generated repeat purchases. Sharma (2025) also reported that better Internet access, smartphones and digital infrastructure have led to a higher adoption of digital channels for FMCG purchases. Overall, the facilitating conditions contribute to the adoption of digital marketing platforms and enable consumers to make online shopping decisions more easily and confidently in terms of decision making.

Price and Offers

The price and promotional offers are important factors in consumer buying behaviour in digital marketing. Online platforms attract consumers with discounts, cashback, coupons, free delivery and limited-time promotional deals that promote better purchase intentions and repeat purchase habits. Arshad (2024) found that digital marketing has an impact on consumer purchasing behaviour as it is easy to access product information and offers good promotional offers online. Raunaque (2025) said that e-commerce platforms, quick commerce and digital payment offers have made online shopping easier and cheaper and that it leads to greater consumer engagement and repeat purchasing.Similarly, Goyal, Sen, and Lalravi (2026) identified pricing, convenience, promotions, and trust as key factors influencing consumer buying behaviour in the FMCG sector. Overall, competitive pricing and attractive promotional offers play a significant role in enhancing consumer satisfaction and encouraging online purchase decisions.

- H_1: Raises awareness has a significant positive influence on consumers' online FMCG buying intention.
- H_2: Raises awareness has a significant positive influence on consumers' online FMCG buying behaviour.
- H_3: Online trust has a significant positive influence on consumers' online FMCG buying intention.
- H_4: Online trust has a significant positive influence on consumers' online FMCG buying behaviour.
- H_5: Facilitating conditions have a significant positive influence on consumers' online FMCG buying intention.
- H_6: Facilitating conditions have a significant positive influence on consumers' online FMCG buying behaviour.
- H_7: Social media and influencers have a significant positive influence on consumers' online FMCG buying intention.
- H_8: Social media and influencers have a significant positive influence on consumers' online FMCG buying behaviour.
- H9: Price and offers have a significant positive influence on consumers' online FMCG product buying intention.
- H10: Price and offers have a significant positive influence on consumers' online FMCG buying behaviour.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study adopted a descriptive research design to examine the impact of digital marketing on consumers' online buying behaviour of FMCG products. A simple random sampling technique was employed to select the respondents. A sample size of 200 respondents was determined for the study, and primary data were collected from consumers residing in Thanjavur District. A structured questionnaire was used as the data collection instrument. The collected data were analysed using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) to examine the relationships among the study variables and to test the proposed hypotheses. Before applying Measured Structural Equation Modelling (MSEM), several preliminary analyses were carried out to ensure the suitability and quality of the data. Initially, the collected data were screened for missing values, outliers, and data entry errors. Descriptive statistics were then used to summarize the demographic characteristics of the respondents and the distribution of the study variables. Reliability analysis was conducted using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR) to assess the internal consistency of the measurement scales. Convergent validity was evaluated through factor loadings and Average Variance Extracted (AVE), while discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell-Larcker criterion and the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio. Where necessary, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was performed to validate the measurement model. After confirming the reliability, validity, and overall model fit, Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was employed to examine the relationships among the constructs and to test the proposed hypotheses.

Table 1: Demographic Profile

S.No	Variable	No of Respondents (n:500)	Percentage
1.	Domicile		
	Urban	126	63
	Rural	74	37
2.	Gender		0
	Male	95	47.5
	Female	105	52.5
3.	Age		0
	Below 30 years	75	37.5
	30 -40 years	57	28.5
	41 - 50 years	35	17.5
	Above 50 years	33	16.5
4.	Marital status		0
	Single	37	18.5
	Married	163	81.5
6.	Educational qualification		0
	SHS/Secondary	46	23
	Under Graduation	75	37.5
	Post-Graduation	34	17
	Diploma	45	22.5
7.	Occupational status		0
	Self-employee	57	28.5
	Government employee	34	17
	Private employee	102	51
	Professional	7	3.5

Source: Primary data

The demographic profile of the respondents indicates that the majority (63%) belonged to urban areas, while 37% were from rural areas. In terms of gender, female respondents accounted for a slightly higher proportion (52.5%) than male respondents (47.5%). Regarding age, 37.5% of the respondents were below 30 years, followed by 28.5% in the 30–40 years age group, 17.5% in the 41–50 years category, and 16.5% were above 50 years, indicating that younger consumers constituted the largest segment of the sample. With respect to marital status, the majority of the respondents (81.5%) were married, while only 18.5% were single. In terms of educational qualification, 37.5% were graduates, followed by 23% who had completed higher secondary education, 22.5% held diplomas, and 17% were postgraduates. Regarding occupational status, more than half of the respondents (51%) were private employees, followed by 28.5% who were self-employed, 17% who were government employees, and 3.5% who were professionals. Overall, the sample consisted predominantly of urban, married, well-educated, and privately employed respondents, providing a suitable representation for analysing consumers' online buying behaviour of FMCG products.

Table 2: Measured structural equation modelling (MSEM) results

	Endogenous		Exogenous	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
H1	Online FMGC product buying intention	<---	Raises awareness	.093	.039	2.384	.017
H3	Online FMGC product buying intention	<---	Online trust	.403	.137	2.945	.003
H5	Online FMGC product buying intention	<---	Facilitating conditions	.047	.036	1.289	.197
H7	Online FMGC product buying intention	<---	Social media and influencers	.173	.042	4.105	***
H9	Online FMGC product buying intention	<---	Price and offers	.221	.037	5.914	***
H2	Online FMGC product buying behaviour	<---	Raises awareness	.044	.038	1.166	.244
H4	Online FMGC product buying behaviour	<---	Online trust	.011	.038	.279	.780
H6	Online FMGC product buying behaviour	<---	Facilitating conditions	-.031	.045	-.682	.495
H8	Online FMGC product buying behaviour	<---	Social media and influencers	.005	.040	.128	.898
H10	Online FMGC product buying behaviour	<---	Price and offers	.020	.042	.481	.631

Source: Primary data

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Measured structural equation modelling (MSEM) results suggest that the factors contributing to Online FMCG Product Buying Intention and Online FMCG Product Buying Behaviour appear to be quite different. Out of the five exogenous variables (Raises Awareness, Online Trust, Social Media and Influencers, and Price and Offers), they all positively influence the buying intention of consumers while Facilitating Conditions does not. The exogenous variables have no statistically significant impact on the actual online FMCG buying behaviour. Raises Awareness strongly affects online FMCG product buying intention ($\beta = 0.093$, C.R. = 2.384, $p = 0.017$). This suggests that consumers are more likely to develop an intention to purchase online FMCG products, brands, and purchasing opportunities when they are aware of these. Advertisements, digital campaigns, and promotional activities promote awareness and increase consumer familiarity with products and thus decrease uncertainty when buying. It does not have any measurable impact on online buying behaviour ($\beta = 0.044$, $p = 0.244$), meaning that in this sense awareness alone is not enough to convert purchase intention into actual buying behaviour. Online Trust has a significant positive impact on buying intention ($\beta = 0.403$, C.R. = 2.945, $p = 0.003$) and is one of the strongest predictors of purchase intention. It shows that consumers' confidence in the security, reliability, and credibility of online shopping platforms is important for them to purchase FMCG products online. However, the relationship between online trust and actual buying behaviour is very small ($\beta = 0.011$, $p = 0.780$). In this sense, although trust motivates consumers to purchase, it does not directly determine whether they do so.We find that Facilitating Conditions have a positive but insignificant impact on buying intention ($\beta = 0.047$, $p = 0.197$) and a negative insignificant effect on buying behaviour ($\beta = -0.031$, $p = 0.495$). This suggests that the available internet access, digital devices, payment facilities, and technology support are no longer the major determinants of consumers' online FMCG purchasing decisions. Now that these facilities are available, they will no longer differentiate the consumers' intentions and behaviours.In terms of the buying intention, social media and influencers have a strong effect in the study ($\beta = 0.173$, C.R. = 4.105, $p < 0.001$). This study confirms the growing influence of social media and influencer marketing in creating awareness of the products, and in promoting the purchase intention. Consumers become more likely to purchase FMCG products following reviews, recommendations, and promotional posts on social media and online communities. Nevertheless, the influence of social media and influencers on the buying behaviour is insignificant ($\beta = 0.005$ and $p = 0.898$), indicating that the effect of social media and influencer influence is more on the intention stage rather than the final purchase decision.

Price and Offers are important in the online purchasing intention ($\beta = 0.221$, C.R. = 5.914, $p < 0.001$) of consumers, and it is therefore another important driver of consumers' purchase intention. Discounts, promotional offers, cashback schemes, and competitive pricing make consumers buy FMCG products online. Yet, the direct relationship between price and offers is insignificant ($\beta = 0.020$, $p = 0.631$), so even when promotional incentives are an inducement to purchase products, they don't necessarily result in immediate buying behaviour.Overall, findings suggest that Online FMCG Product Buying Intention is mainly influenced by psychological and marketing factors such as awareness, trust, social media influence, and promotional pricing. On the other hand, actual Online FMCG Product Buying Behaviour is not affected by these factors and is influenced by other factors not included in the model. In this way, the behaviour of FMCG is influenced by purchase intention as it is a key link between consumers' perceptions and what they actually buy. Therefore, online FMCG marketers should build trust, consumer awareness, influencer marketing, and offer attractive promotional incentives to drive purchase intentions up and also address the key factors that drive the change from intention to actual buying behaviour.

CONCLUSION

The findings of the study conclude that Online FMCG Product Buying Intention is significantly influenced by Raises Awareness, Online Trust, Social Media and Influencers, and Price and Offers, while Facilitating Conditions do not have a significant effect. Among these factors, Online Trust and Price and Offers emerge as the strongest predictors of consumers' intention to purchase FMCG products online. This indicates that consumers are more likely to develop purchase intentions when they trust online shopping platforms, are well-informed about products, are influenced by social media and influencers, and perceive attractive pricing and promotional offers.In contrast, none of the five exogenous variables have a significant direct influence on Online FMCG Product Buying Behaviour. This suggests that although these factors successfully encourage consumers to form purchase intentions, they do not directly translate into actual purchasing behaviour. The findings imply that buying intention acts as a crucial intermediary between the influencing factors and actual buying behaviour, indicating that consumers may still encounter personal, situational, or contextual barriers before completing an online purchase.

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