



How does social media affect consumer behaviour : A study of apparel purchases in Jaipur and Beawar.

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Abstract

Consumer behaviour refers to the study of customers and the methods they employ to make purchasing decisions, including their emotional, mental, and behavioural reactions. Consumer behaviour is influenced by four variables: psychological, cultural, social, and personal. The purpose of this study is to ascertain whether social media has in fact raised the demand for a specific product's purchase or shopping. This study is based on interviews and a primary database of women in Beawar and Jaipur between the ages of 13 and 56. The women's responses were analysed in order to categorise them, and further research was then carried out. The study concluded that younger women spend a lot more time on social media than older women do. The study also revealed that women who use social media more frequently are more affected by and base their decisions on social media marketing or trends than women who use social media less frequently.

Keywords : Consumer Behaviour, More active vs Less Active, Social Media, Online vs Offline shopping, Post purchase Behaviour.

Introduction

Consumer behaviour is the study of consumers and the processes they use to choose the products and services, including consumers' emotional, mental and behavioural responses.

There are four factors which affect consumer behaviour which are psychological, cultural, social and personal (Anisha et al., 2016)¹. Under the social factors, there comes a platform which plays a vital role in shaping the minds of consumer behaviour which is commonly known as Social Media.

Users of social media can easily share their experiences with different brands and discuss them on the platforms. Social media plays a crucial role in the first stage of the decision-making process, which includes need/problem recognition, information research, alternative evaluation, purchase decision, and post-purchase behaviour. According to the past research conducted by professionals (Adam et al., 2017), there are four pillars evolved in making the mindsets of the consumers which are good quality advertisements, celebrity, attractiveness of a product and lastly transfer of words. People who are influencers or celebrities upload photos, videos, comments, and reviews to influence consumers' minds. This is also known as celebrity endorsement. Consumers immediately believe that a product is credible when an actor or a popular sports

¹ Available at : <https://www.shanlaxjournals.in/journals/index.php/commerce/article/view/2243>

figure endorses it as celebrity endorsement refers to the use of celebrities to attract customers. Sometimes even by reading comments of other buyers related to a particular product can help the consumers in deciding whether the product needs to be purchased or not. Consumers can even be swayed by advertisement and seeing a friend or family member with a particular product, even if they do not need it.

Many studies were conducted in the past to identify the causes and contributing aspects of the relevant issue, but social media has advanced much since then, and there are still some errors and holes that must be addressed using more cutting-edge and practical approaches. My study seeks to find how social media affects consumer behaviour and their purchases in the clothing industry particularly for women and to measure the extent of social media interaction of female consumers using primary samples from the cities of Jaipur and Beawar, Rajasthan. Women are the sole group taken into account for this study's main component since they purchase online more frequently than males do. Women are more likely to purchase apparel and fashion items online than males are, who are more likely to do so for technology goods.² My research also aims to determine whether social media has in fact increased the need for buying or shopping for a particular product. If social media has in fact increased product sales, it will then be compared to how consumers behave after making their purchases under the influence of influencers or social media, as opposed to how consumers behave after making no such purchases. My research will contribute towards finding the answer of the above question in a detailed manner and will try to cover up the still existing gaps in a thoughtful manner.

Literature Review

A study by (Hani et al., 2018) shows the relationship between the consumer and the famous influencers or celebrities who attract people by their actions and influence them to buy certain products. It also points towards the case study of the jewellery industry in the females of Lebanon and also studies the celebrity influence from the earliest period and how it has changed over the years. Thus, the results which are derived from this study is that social media has been a vital part of these changes. This also talks about the factors which affect consumer behaviour because of the influencers. The researchers also found out that people tend to remember advertisements with celebrities due to elegance, classiness and beauty. Women feel confident, beautiful and satisfied while wearing celebrity endorsement products. Nowadays, Social Media is becoming increasingly important to our lives as a means of communicating with people and connecting with strangers around the world. The paper gives a brief information about the factors that affect the consumer's buying behaviour with reference to Instagram. Another article was surveyed in February 2018³ by (Hilde et al., 2018) and has concluded many theories. One of them says that the different functionalities and characteristics of social media platforms translate into different consumer experiences. The article talks about how since ages advertising is prevalent and researchers have shown a positive relationship between the endorser and buying behaviour. The key role of advertising is to promote the product and brand awareness. Most of the advertising industries use celebrity endorsement to carry out their strategies in the market. People think that if a product is used by a certain celebrity it means that the product is authentic, safe, useful and of high quality. Sometimes even if a company or a brand uses a certain image of a celebrity, it may lead to the confusion in the mindsets of the buyers as they may see a celebrity in promotion of one product the one day and the next day, the same celebrity may be promoting a completely different product. Market uses these types of strategies to manipulate or influence consumers to increase their product supplies. A distinct study by (Haider et al., 2017) says that advertisements have a great effect on the consumer's mind. The amount of money spent on advertising a product is directly proportional to the increase in the supply of a particular product. This means that if a brand or company makes an advertisement of a good quality with a superstar like Akshay Kumar or Amitabh Bachhan who can influence people by their words, no doubt it leads to people's attention and this results in

² Available at : <https://www.livemint.com/news/india/guess-who-spends-more-on-online-shopping-no-it-s-not-women-11679985133750.html>

³ Available at : <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00913367.2017.1405754>

the increase in the demand of a certain product. Another study by (Adam et al., 2017) is conducted on the impact of celebrities on the minds of the consumer which says that there are four pillars involved in making the mindset of the consumer and those are good quality advertisements, celebrity, attractiveness of a product and lastly transfer of words. Popular celebrities can be converted into great salesmen which means that they act for a particular brand and play with the mindsets of the people. It is true that consumers' thinking depends on the reputation of the celebrity and their acting skills and marketers use them to endorse their products in order to give their brand advantage and edge over their other competitors. In today's world, widespread use of the internet has evolved our life and decision making factors of our minds. A study was made in the paper by (Rekha, 2022a) to study the impact of social media on consumer's buying decision process with special reference to a special city ' Jaipur ' of Rajasthan.⁴ Social media impacts purchasing decisions even if it's unplanned. This is due to frequent exposure to social media and advertisements. When asked during a survey, the impact of social media products in their decision making, the results were 20% thought changing regarding the product. Another study by (Chaturvedi et al., 2014) discusses how social media has become an excellent channel for marketers to reach consumers. The purpose of their study is to investigate the impact of social networking sites on online shopping behaviour in the Rajasthani city of Jaipur. For this investigation, the researchers have used a secondary method of survey to find more information about the given topic. After carrying out their research on a certain topic the investigators concluded to a certain point that people are buying certain products online but they are hesitating due to security concerns and lack of physical approach or delay in product delivery along with price and quality. Another study by (Mishra, S., 2021) shows how digital marketing and social media marketing influences consumer buying behaviour for lifestyle and electronic products in Gorakhpur. Nowadays, people trust influencers more than typical company advertisements. Their study assesses the depth of the relationship between influencers and the general public with the goal of searching for the conversion rate that can be achieved by changing their market strategy. Their study gives proof that despite social media becoming popular for marketing, the number of people considering or purchasing the things promoted remains low. The study also shows that the sample tends to trust reviews produced by non - sponsored reviewers. One more study by (Pais et al., 2021) gives a brief about purchase intention which is an important factor to look for when examining a customer's desire to buy a product or a service. This research work carries out an in - depth study of customer purchase intent which judges businesses in looking for what product or services consumers are buying and why they are buying. After carrying out further research, the report says that if a consumer uses instagram in a specific way then he is more likely to get affected by those sites which communicate with consumers in similar ways. If a consumer is interested in learning new things or purchasing new products, then he is more likely to be influenced by the stories or feed their peers. One of the studies by (Nalkande S., 2022) gives a brief about how social media is a dynamic source of social proof. What people see and search on social media is what they tend to follow in their real life whether it's a trend or stalking their favourite celebrity. A report by a researcher shows that social media⁵ reviews have a significant impact on consumer behaviour. In order to examine a product or to research about them before making a purchase, statistics show that 51% of consumers read reviews on forums or social media and they even tend to believe it. People believe that what social media reviews say about the product are truer than what advertising companies inform them about their products.

Conceptual Framework

For carrying out the research, we have focused on some parts of the stages of the consumer decision making process to find out further answers. The theory and model used in this paper is taken from another study conducted in Jaipur, Rajasthan. (Rekha, 2022b)⁶

⁴ Available at : <https://www.inspirajournals.com/issue/downloadfile/2/Volumne-Pages/RbjaQGKgPQjB32OZ79Mq>

⁵ Available at : <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/readersblog/marketingempire/social-medias-impact-on-consumer-behavior-44636/>

⁶ Available at: <https://www.inspirajournals.com/issue/downloadfile/2/Volumne-Pages/RbjaQGKgPQjB32OZ79Mq>

Five stages of consumer decision making process are:

- Need/ problem recognition, which occurs whenever the consumer sees a significant difference between his or her current state of affairs and some desired or ideal state. Social media content motivates new consumer needs. Every photo, video, comment, review and other content posted on social media to which consumers are exposed plays a vital role in stimulating or recognising a new need.
- Information search: Is the second stage in the decision-making process by which the consumer surveys his or her environment for appropriate data to make a reasonable decision. The Internet, these days, is the most commonly used source of information search.
- Alternative evaluation: Almost everyone searches for online reviews and gets more detailed, accurate and reliable information, because that information is from people who have already tried those alternatives. This way, consumers come to know the positive and negative sides of each alternative and decide to choose the best one.
- Purchase Decision: The reviews of others tend to change consumers' mind regarding a product and push them to buy or not to buy something.

Post purchase behaviour: social media provides different alternatives for people to react in case of dissatisfaction after purchase, like writing messages to the company, posting on the social media companies accounts, commenting in public posts and writing negative reviews.

Data & Methodology

My study seeks to find out how social media and/or influencers affect customer behaviour. The apparel sector has been chosen as the primary product for this study in order to learn more about the subject. Females of all ages residing in Beawar and Jaipur across occupations were recruited via questionnaires, whereas primary data for this study was gathered offline through telephone interviews or in-person discussions. The ladies of all age groups were emailed questionnaires with questions on their buying habits and use of social media using links to Google forms delivered via WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, and telephone. Based on their replies, the data was subsequently evaluated in order to conduct more study. Then, based on their responses, they were divided into two groups: those who are more active on social media and those who are not: those who are less active on social media. Statistics were created for each group based on the categories assigned, and additional research was done to ensure the results were accurate. According to the number of social media sites that each group uses and maintains an account on, these groupings were divided into the ones stated above. They were split based on whether they had accounts on three or more platforms because the average number of platforms they have accounts on is three, according to data that was obtained. Women who had accounts on less than three apps were thought to be less active on social media, while those who have profiles on more than three applications were thought to be more active.

Results & Discussion

A questionnaire was distributed to various persons (only females) via various social media platforms including Instagram, Whatsapp, etc., coupled with a few in-person interviews. Snowball sampling is a type of sampling that has been employed in research. Females were divided into two groups based on their responses: those who are less active on social media and those who are more active on social media. Women who had accounts on more than three social media sites were classified as being more active on those platforms, while those who had accounts on less than three platforms were classified as being less active on those platforms. Their responses were analysed, and comparisons between less and more active women were conducted. Additionally, they were compared based on their usage of social media, their shopping habits, the amount of money they spent shopping, the urge to shop as a result of social media, and their post-purchase actions. The average has been used in certain questions where numerical answers are given in ranges, and in others when

comparison words like "yes" or "no" are used, those words have been translated into binary numbers. For better results analysis, yes has been treated as 1 and no has been treated as 0. Further data analysis revealed that younger women are more engaged on social media than older women. Additionally, a comparison between them revealed that women who are less engaged on social media are less persuaded by social media influencers or marketing than women who are more active. Contrarily, women who are more active on social media are more happy with their online purchases and require fewer returns than women who are less engaged on these platforms.

Sample Characteristics

There are 63 women in the study's overall sample. Only females aged 13 to 56 were taken into account for this study, and female questionnaire respondents had an average age of 26. According to how active they were on social media, the females were split into two groups: the less active and the more active. According to their comments, women who use social media less frequently are on average 31 years old, while those who use it more frequently are on average 19 years old. Younger women thus utilise social media more regularly than their older counterparts.

Characteristics/ Variables	Less Active	More active
Mean Age	31.72	19.43
Avg. Money spent on online shopping	2266.67	5037.5
Avg percentage of money spent on online shopping	54.65	69.58
Max times actually bought the product advertised by influencers	7	9

Level of social media interaction

Level of social media interaction has been determined on the basis of the fact that how much do people spend their time on internet, how many platforms do they have account on, how many influencers do they follow which also plays a vital role in determining that how much influenced they are getting by them and also whether do they use social media for shopping or not. On the basis of all these questions and their results, people are bifurcated into two groups which are mainly : People who are More Active on Social Media and People who are Less Active on Social Media. Women were given a questionnaire, and the findings of the analysis and comparison performed using their responses led to the classification of the respondents into two groups: those who use social media less frequently and those who use it more frequently. The majority of people who use social media less frequently only have accounts on one or two platforms, and the only person who appears to be an outlier has accounts on twenty or more of them. In contrast, the majority of people who use social media more frequently typically have accounts on three or four platforms.

On the basis of the amount of hours spent on social media each day, Figures 1 and 2 compare persons who are less and more active on the site. From the preceding graph, it can be inferred that those in Figure 2 spend

more time on social media than those in Figure 1 do. People are thus separated into two groups based on how much time they spend on social media: those who are less active and those who are more active

Figures 3 and 4 compare the two groups' levels of influence from social media influencers and the number of those they follow. Comparing these two images, it can be observed that those who use social media less often follow just 4–20 influencers, and those who use it more frequently follow 500–2000 influencers. They have a stronger preference for and interest in the lives of social media influencers.

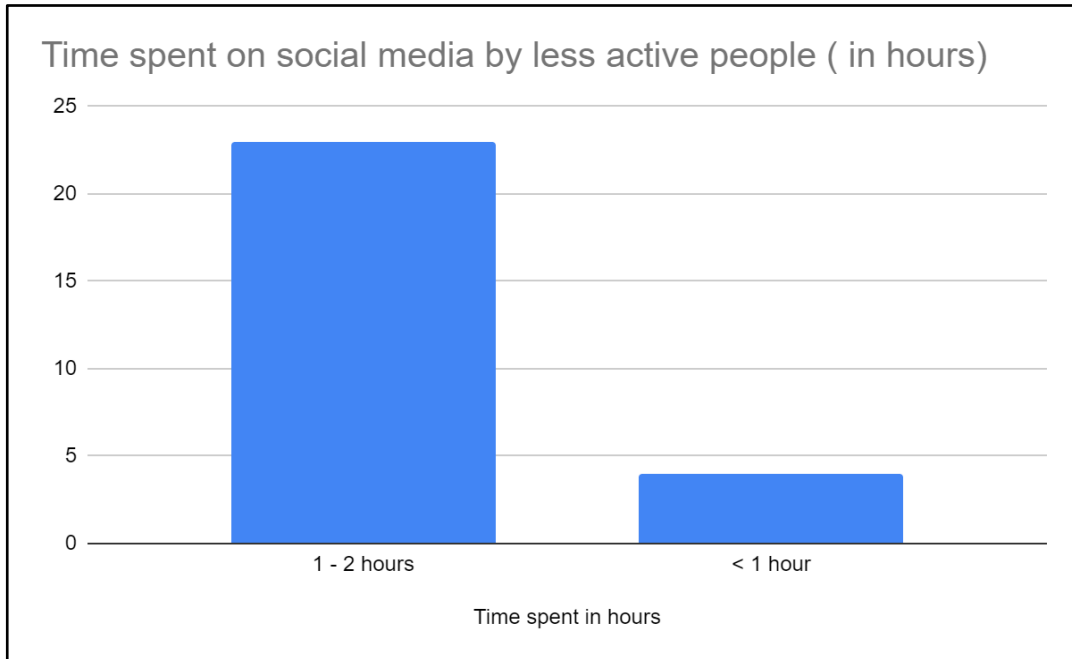


Figure 1: Time spent on social media by less active people (in hours)

Shopping Patterns of the Sample

Figures 5 and 6 depict the purchasing habits of two distinct groups. The less active group, which accounts for 55.6% of the total, spends more money at offline retailers like local markets and designers, while the proportion of women who shop online is only 40.7%, and only 3.7% of women buy both online and offline. Comparatively, women who are more engaged on social media spend more money online (77.3%), whereas just 22.7% of women shop in local markets.

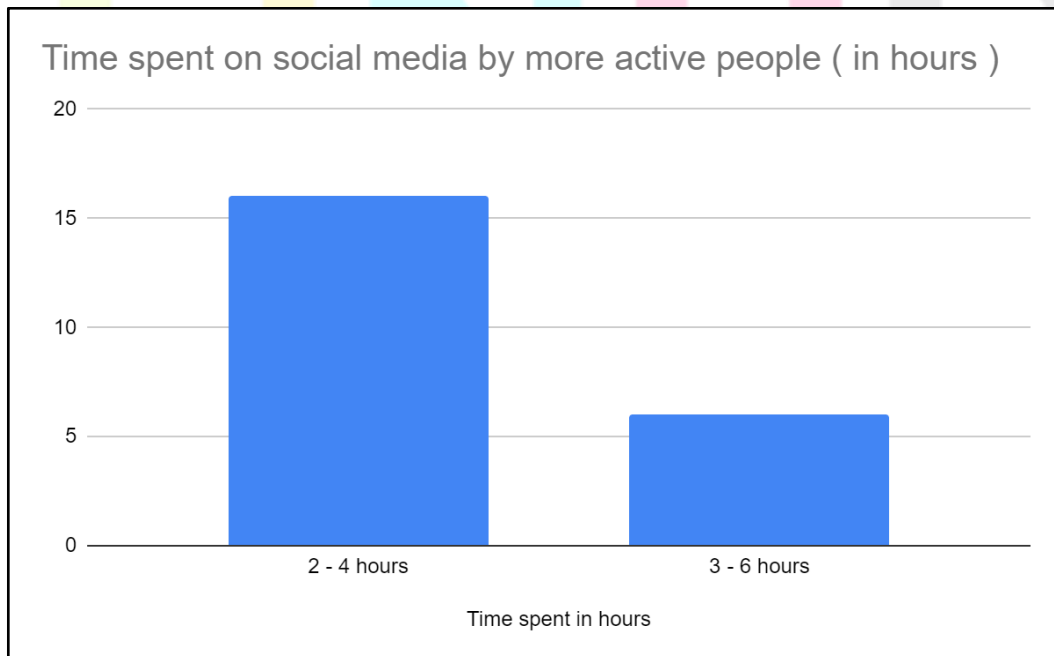


Figure 2: Time spent on social media by more active people (in hours)

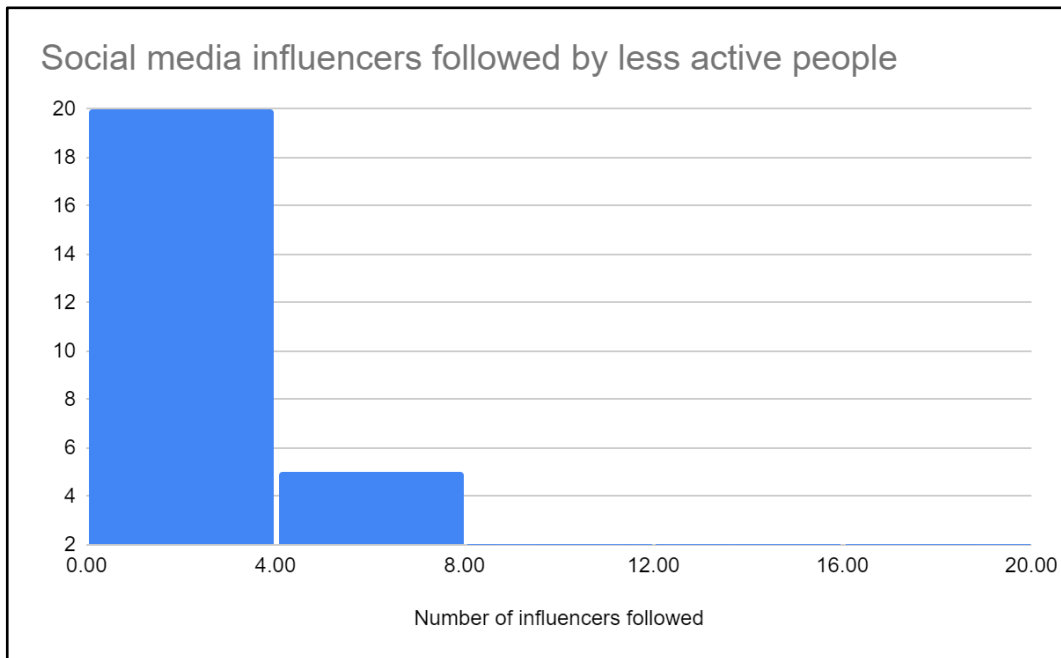


Figure 3 : Number of social media influencers followed by less active people

Money spent on shopping

Money spent by women on average per month is seen in figures 7 and 8. These numbers only provide an overview of how much money was spent on clothing by less and more active women over the course of a month, not a comparison of how much money they spent on online shopping.

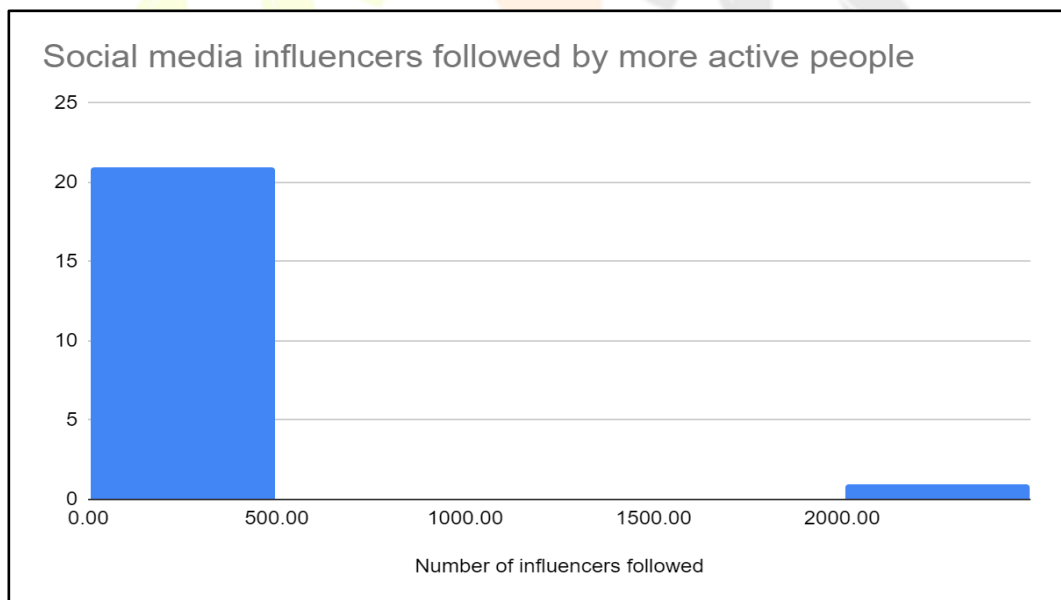


Figure 4 : Number of social media influencers followed by more active people

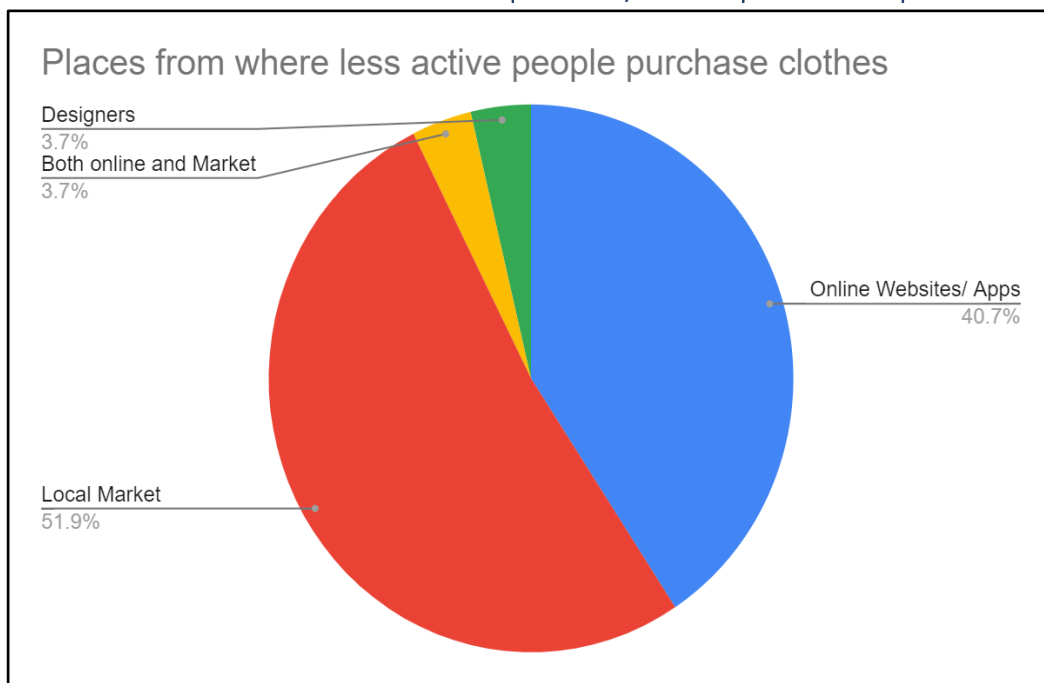


Figure 5 : Places from where less active people purchase clothes

Figures 9 and 10 compare how much of their overall spending on internet shopping less and more active and less active women spend. According to the aforementioned statistics, persons who are less engaged on social media spend between Rs 1,000 and Rs 9,000 on online purchases, while those who are more involved spend between Rs 8,000 and Rs 35,000 on purchases linked to clothing. Additionally, it was determined from the questionnaire that those who use social media less frequently spend 2425.93 rupees on average, whilst those who use it more frequently spend 5404.55 rupees on average.

Need for Shopping because of social media

The comparison between two groups based on how many items of clothing were purchased as a consequence of social media advertising is shown in Figures 11 and 12. According to the aforementioned statistics, those who are less engaged on social media tend to buy less things than those who are more active. Based on these two numbers, 44.4% of less active users and 4.5% of more active users of social media never purchase any clothes being advertised by social media influencers. Additionally, some people occasionally partake in some type of apparel shopping advertised by social media influencers. Compared to the 72.7% of more active individuals in this category, 40.7% are less active.

Research Through Innovation

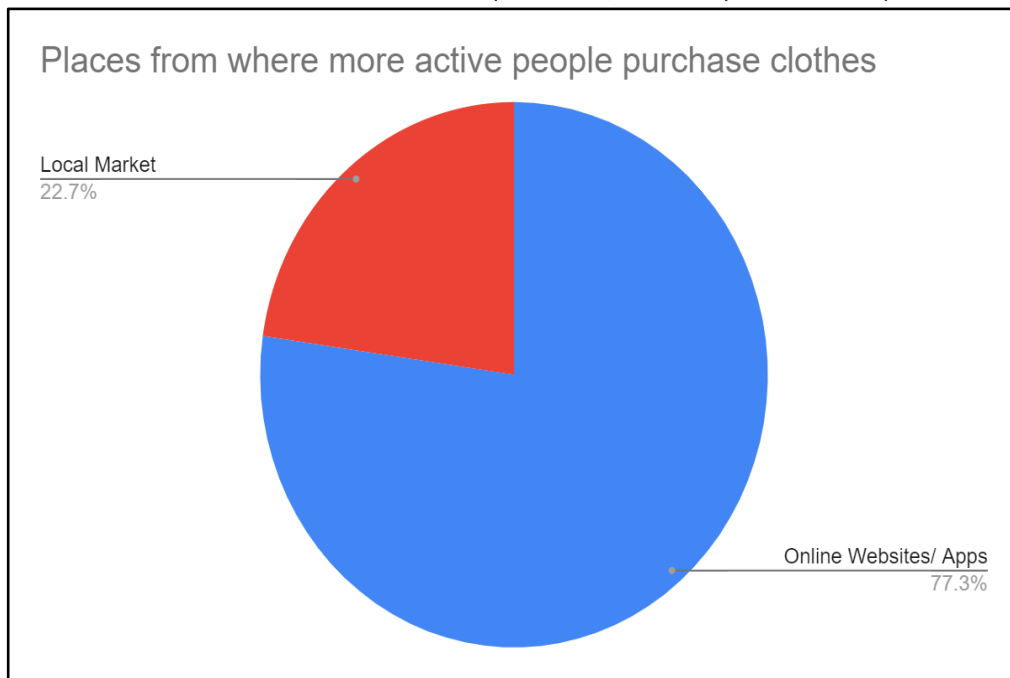


Figure 6 : Places from where more active people purchase clothes

In Figures 13 and 14, a comparison between two groups may be noted. These statistics demonstrate how frequently consumers believe it is unnecessary or advantageous to spend money on internet purchases. In the comparison, it was discovered that less active social media users tend to feel less like they have spent money unnecessarily than more active users. More frequently than those in more active groups, people in less active groups have felt like they've never spent money on anything that wasn't required.

In Figures 15 and 16, a comparison between two groups may be noted. These statistics demonstrate how frequently consumers believe it is unnecessary or advantageous to spend money on internet purchases. In the comparison, it was discovered that less active social media users tend to feel less like they have spent money unnecessarily than more active users. Considering this, it is clear that the more people are active on social media and are influenced by it, the more clothes they purchase according to trends or to their needs.

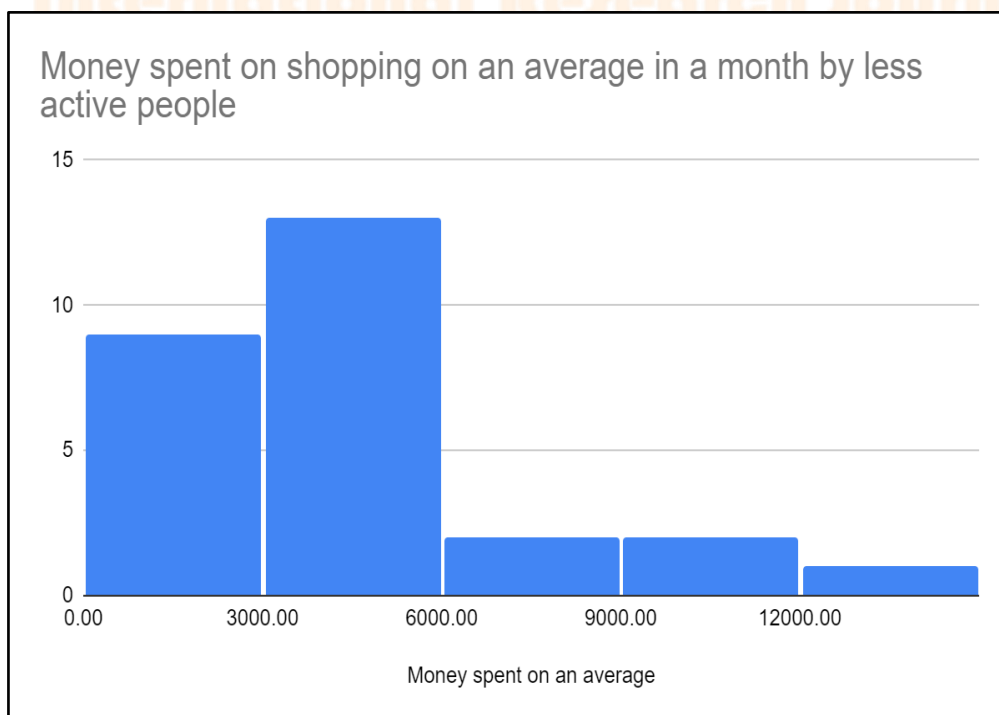


Figure 7: Money spent on shopping on an average by less active people in a month.

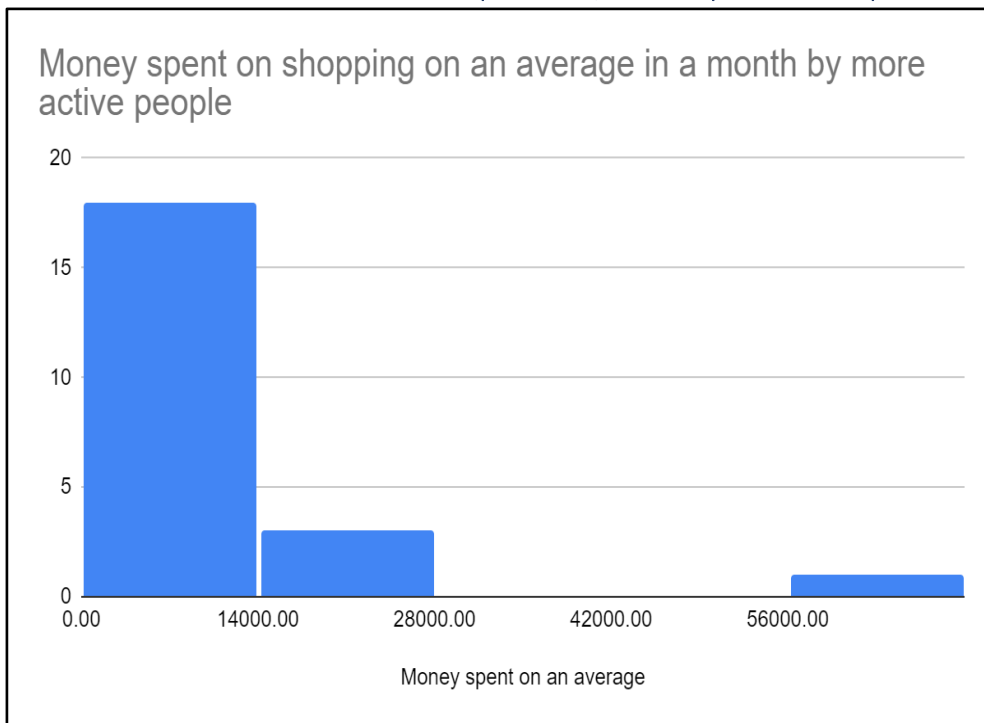


Figure 8: Money spent on shopping on an average by more active people in a month

Post purchase behaviour

Figures 17 and 18 show how satisfied customers are with their purchases of clothing that has been promoted on social media. According to the aforementioned figures, persons who are less engaged on social media have lower satisfaction ratings than those who are more active. Because they follow more social media influencers than those who are less active on social media, people who are more active on social media may follow more trends or have more exposure to fashion. This might be the source of these satisfaction ratings.

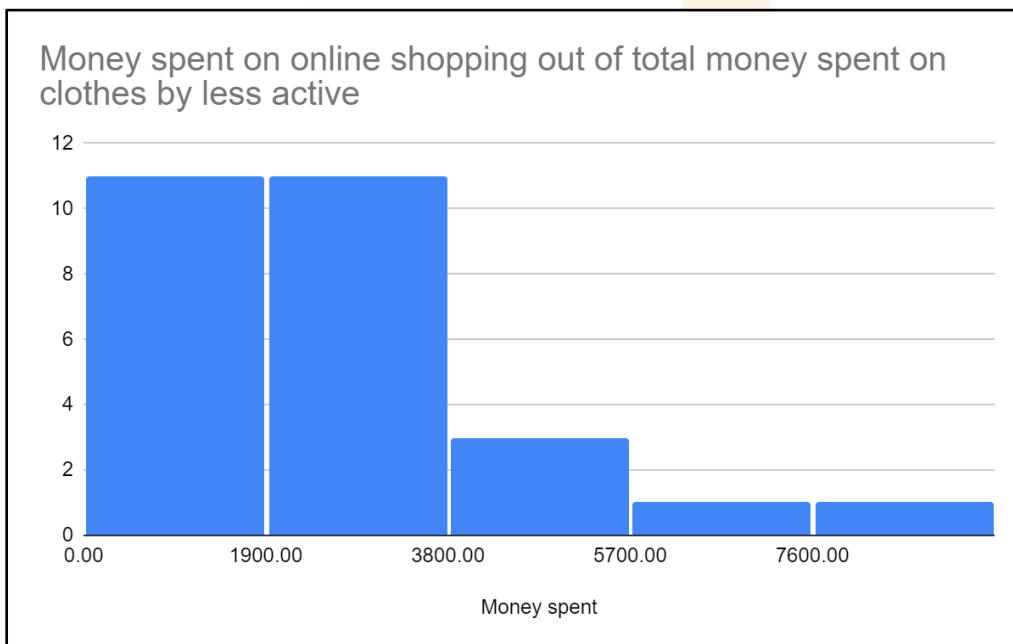


Figure 9 : Money spent on online shopping out of total money spent on online shopping by less active group



Figure 10 : Money spent on online shopping out of total money spent on online shopping by more active group

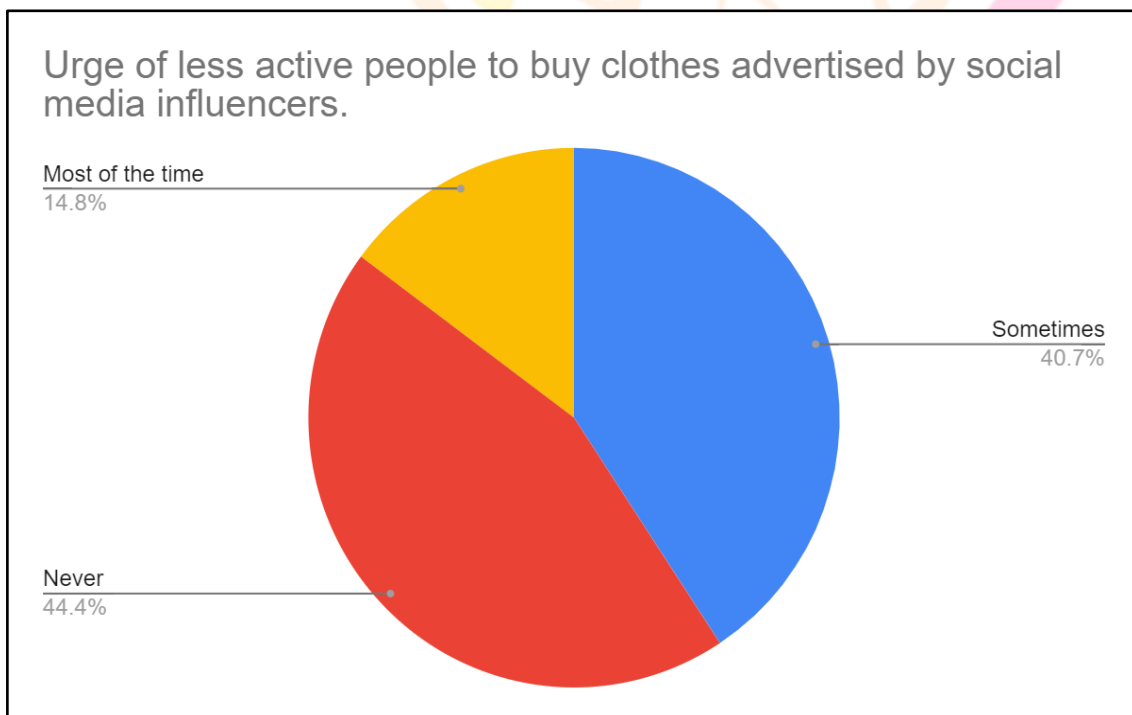


Figure 11 : Urge of less active people to purchase clothes advertised by influencers

Figures 19 and 20 shows the comparison between two groups on the basis of their post purchase behaviour

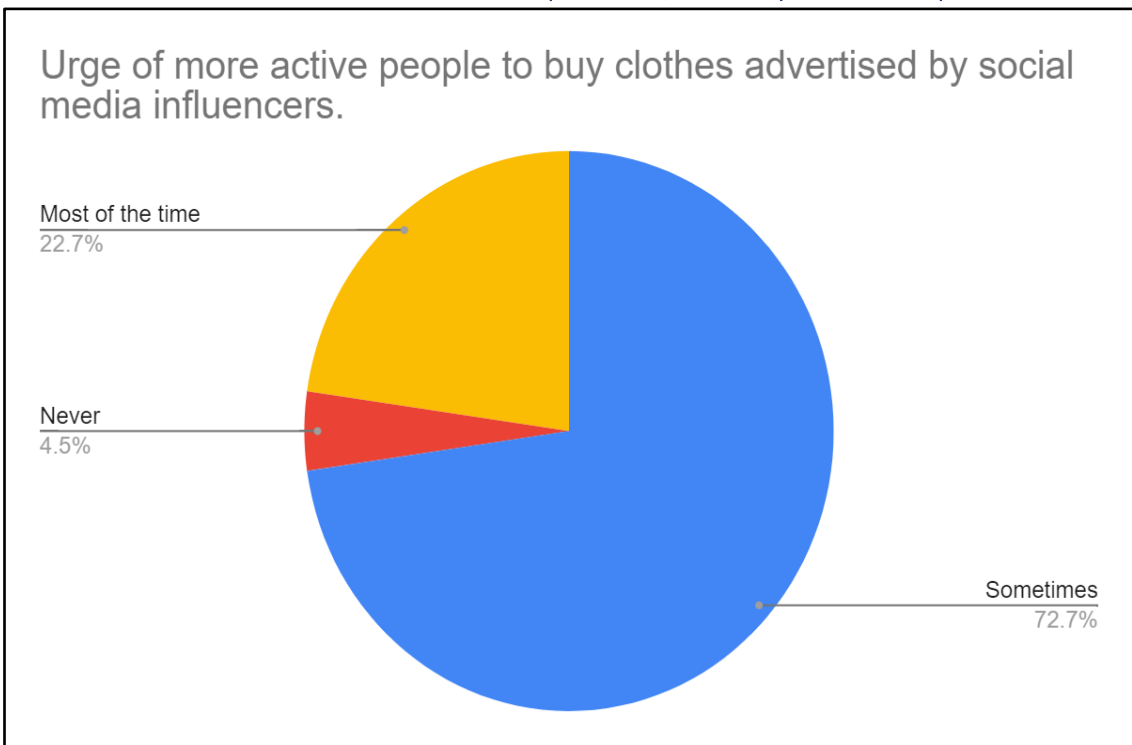


Figure 12 : Urge of more active people to purchase clothes advertised by influencers

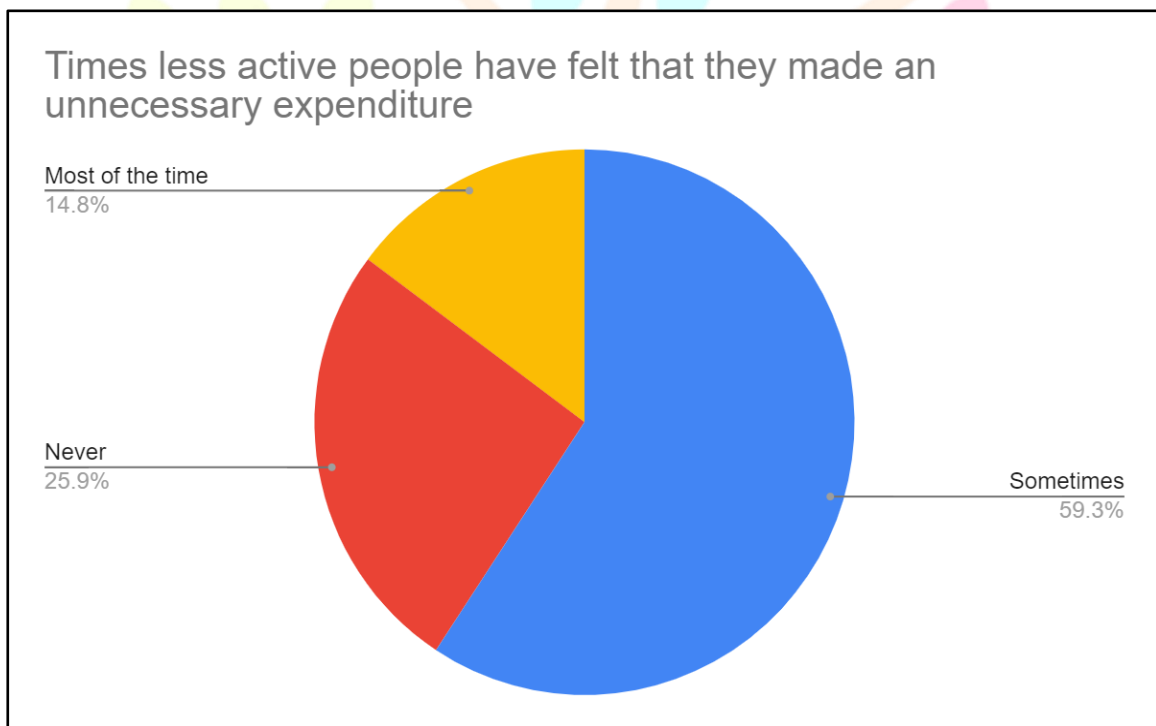


Figure 13 : Times when persons who are less active believed their spending was unnecessary.

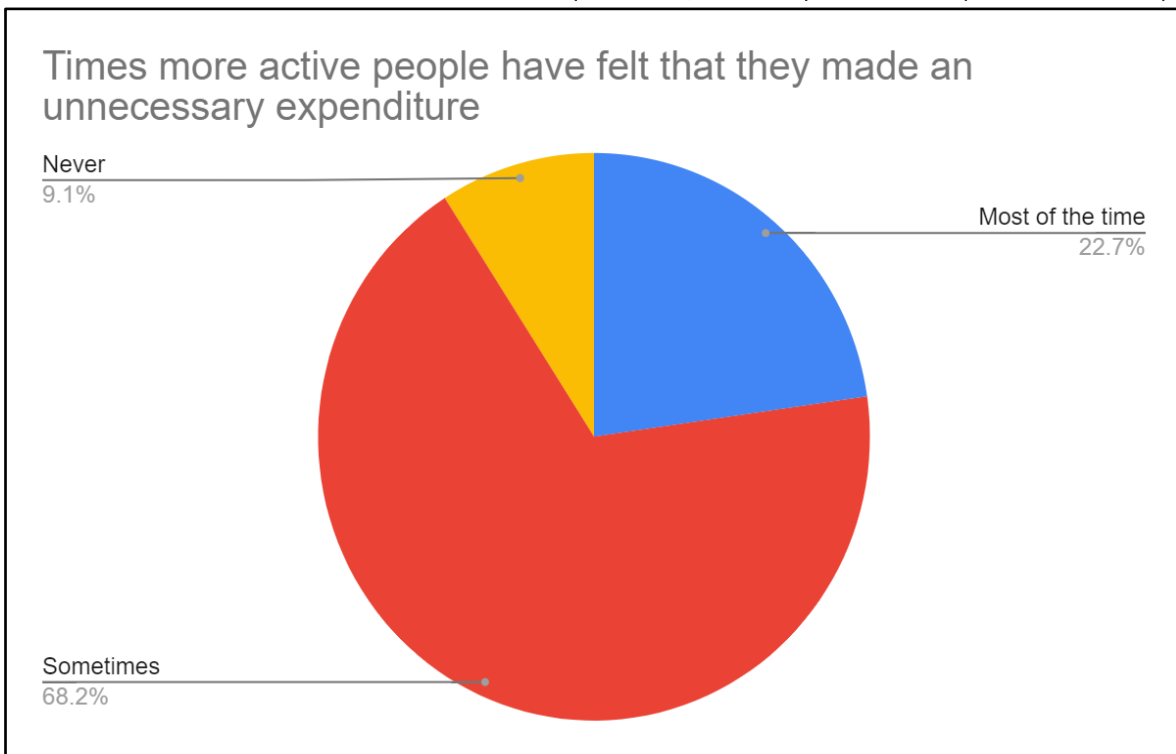


Figure 14 : Times when persons who are more active believed their spending was unnecessary.

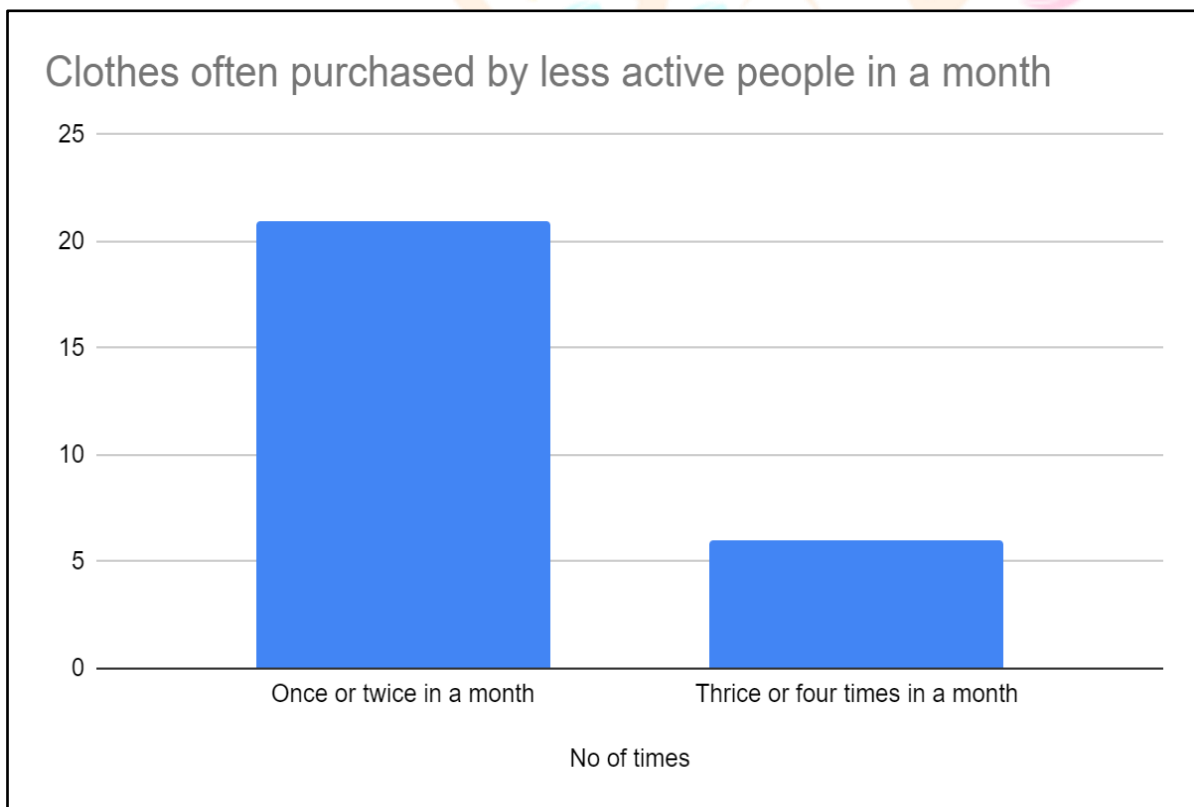


Figure 15: Clothes often purchased by less active people in a month.

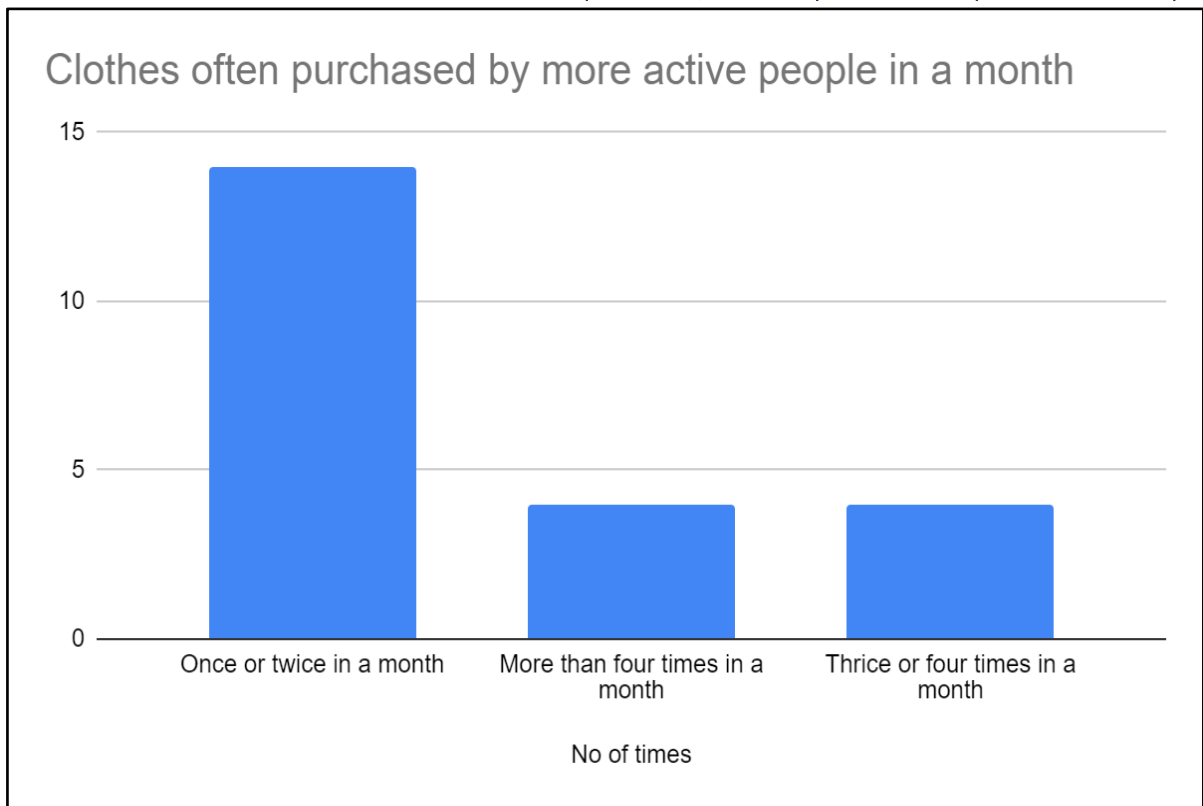


Figure 16 : Clothes often purchased by more active people in a month.

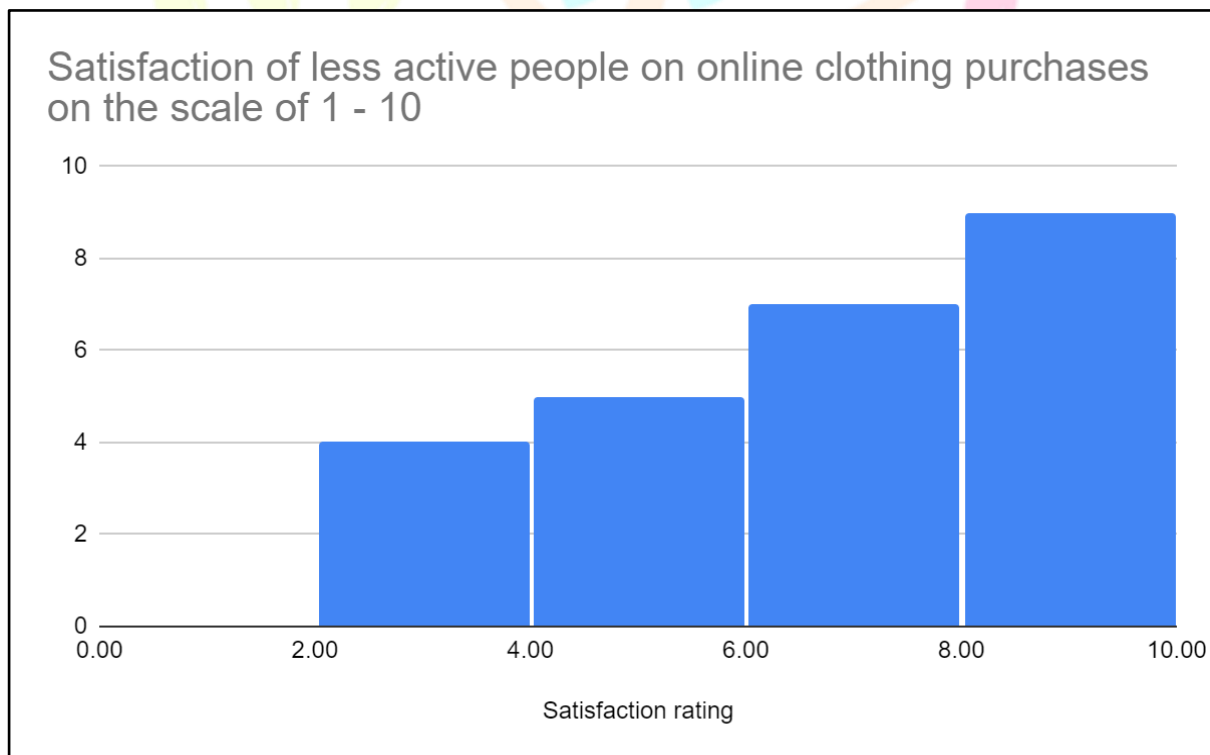


Figure 17 : Satisfaction rating of less active people on the scale of 1 - 10

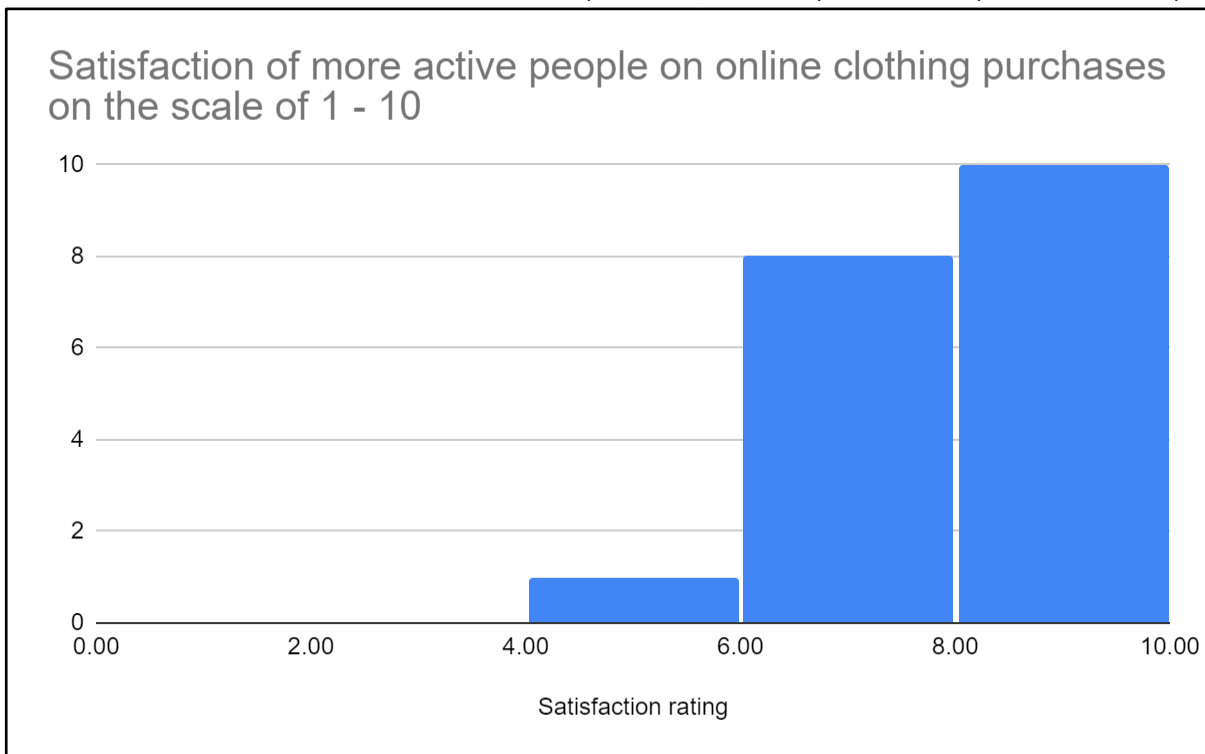


Figure 18 : Satisfaction rating of more active people on scale of 1 - 10

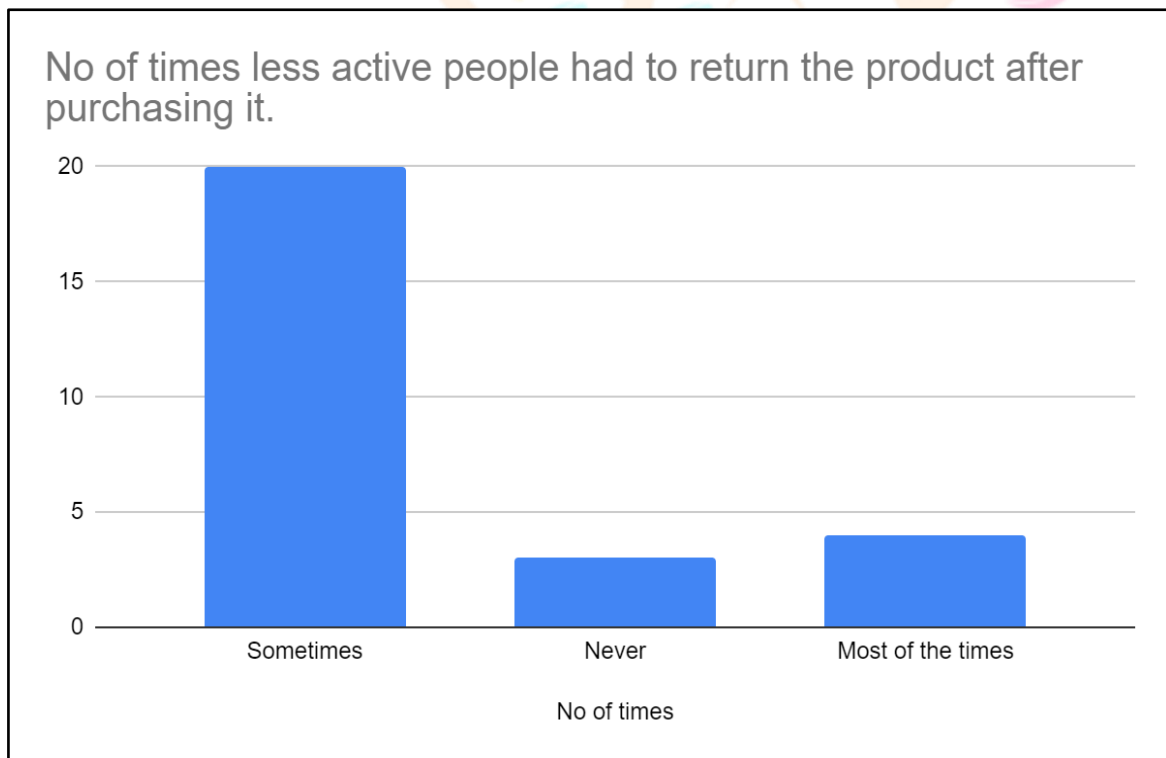


Figure 19 : Number of times less active people had to return the product.

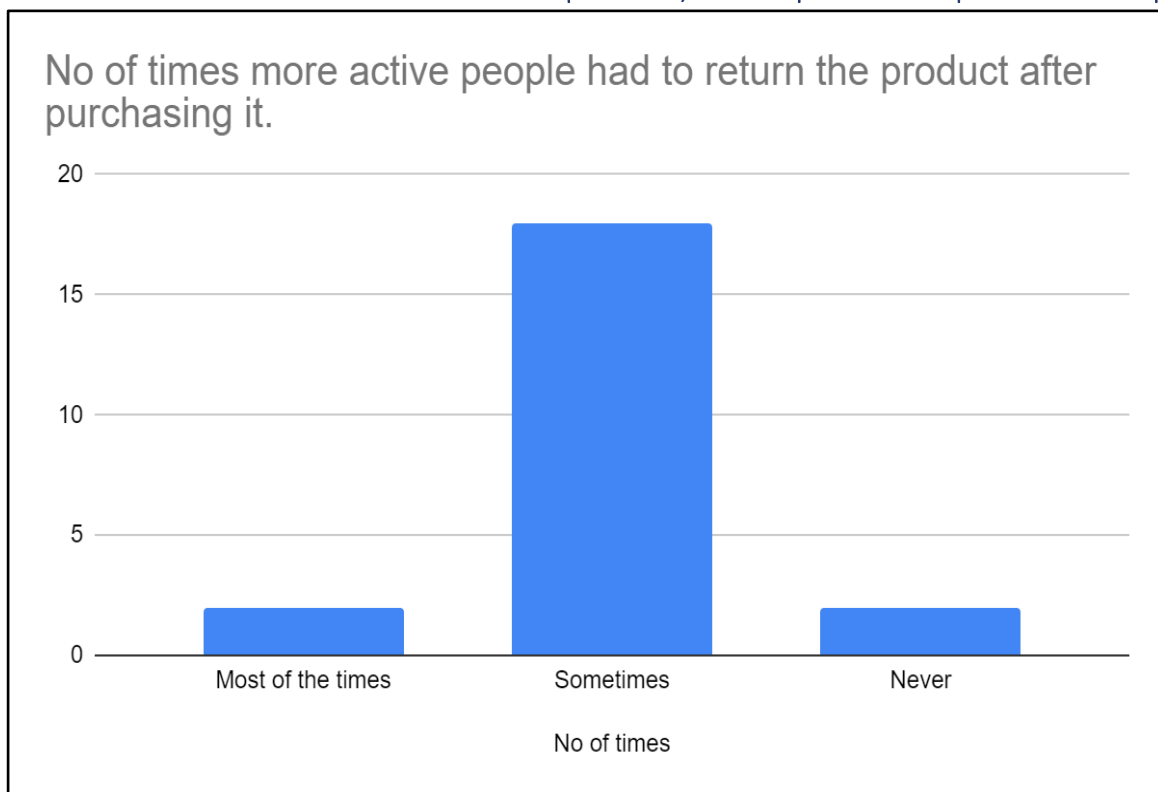


Figure 20 : Number of times more active people had to return the product

Conclusions

It was concluded that women who are less active on social media tend to spend less time on social media platforms as compared to more active people who spend more time on these platforms. Also, women who are less active on social media ought to feel less that they have made any unnecessary expenditure as compared to more active women who purchase their clothes more from social media which are being advertised by influencers. They often feel the need to return their products more as compared to less active people because they are not satisfied much with online shopping as compared to people who purchase more from local markets, malls and shops etc., as compared to more active people who purchase more from social media platforms. Hence, it was also found out from the above study that women who use social media more are more influenced and their decisions are based more on the advertisements or trends of social media as compared to women who are less active on social media. Although the study was done on a main basis, there are still some limitations since it may be difficult to distinguish respondents' bias given the difficulties in distinguishing their own judgments from those affected by social media influencers.

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Annexure

QUESTIONNAIRE USED FOR PRIMARY SURVEY

1. Are you there on Social Media? If yes, how many platforms ? (please mention the number. for example : 1,2,3,4.)
2. How much time do you spend on Social Media in a day (in hours)?
 - 1 - 2 hours
 - 2 - 4 hours
 - 3 - 6 hours
 - Other
-
3. How many Social Media influencers do you follow? (social media influencers are just some famous people who use social media and have a following of more than 10,000. For example : Kim Kadarshian, Avneet Kaur)
-
4. Do you use Social Media for shopping?

- Yes
 - No
5. Where do you purchase your clothes from?
- Local Market
 - Whatsapp
 - Online Websites / Apps
 - Instagram / Facebook page
 - Other
6. How much money on an average do you spend on shopping related to clothes in a month?
7. How much of that money do you spend on online shopping (related to clothes only)?
8. For what reason do you buy clothes online?
- Seasonal Change
 - Wedding / Functions
 - Due to unavailability of size in offline mode
 - Trends
 - Lack of clothes / Need more clothes
 - Other

THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS REQUIRE YOU TO ANSWER BASED ON THE CLOTHING PURCHASES YOU HAVE MADE IN THE LAST 3 MONTHS

9. How often have you felt the urge to buy the clothes advertised by Social Media influencers?
- Never
 - Sometimes
 - Most of the times
 - Always
10. Out of all the advertisements you see by influencers, on an average how many times do you actually buy the product? Eg out of 10 you actually bought about 7 times.
11. How often have you felt that you made an unnecessary expenditure?
- Never
 - Sometimes
 - Most of the times
 - Always
12. How often have you purchased clothes in the last months?
- Once or twice in a month
 - Thrice or four times in a month
 - More than four times in a month
13. On a scale of 1 to 10 how would you rate your satisfaction from your clothing purchases.
14. How many times have you felt the need to return the product after purchasing it?
- Never
 - Sometimes
 - Most of the times
15. What was the reason for returning?
- The product was damaged
 - You expected the product to be different
 - You did not like the fabric
 - The product was not of your fitting
 - Other
16. How many times has your issue been resolved?
- Never
 - Sometimes
 - Most of the times

17. In the last three Questions, how many of your experiences were related to online shopping?

- None of them
- Some of them
- All of them

