

Social Media Usage and Consumption Patterns: An Analytical Study of Mizo Youth

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ABSTRACT:

This study investigates the behavioural patterns associated with social media usage and corresponding spending habits among the youth of Mizoram. With the rapid digitalization, there has been significant growth in social media engagement, accompanied by a notable rise in consumers' online purchase behaviour. As the majority of social media users consist of the youth population, it is imperative for marketers to gain insights into their consumption patterns on social media to leverage this platform as an effective marketing tool. The findings indicate that social media is mostly used for low-value purchase and the monthly spending via social media platforms have statistically significant association with gender and occupation of the respondents, while no statistically significant association is found with respect to the respondents' education level and their monthly income. This study contributes to the broader discourse on digital consumerism and offers strategic implications for marketers for engaging a tech-savvy, culturally rooted youth segment in Mizoram.

Keywords: Social Media, Social Media Usage, Consumption Habits, Mizo Youth

INTRODUCTION

Social commerce – an evolution of e-commerce with the integration of social networking sites - has empowered brand to connect directly with the potential consumers through integrated shopping experiences via various social media platforms. With the increase in smartphone penetration, greater internet accessibility, and platform-led innovations, the use of social media has significantly increased. This presents valuable opportunities for businesses to harness social media as a dynamic and multifaceted platforms.

The concept of online shopping attitude refers to a consumer's psychological disposition toward purchasing goods and services over the Internet (Zhang et al., 2003). Socio-demographic factors such as age, education, income, and geographic location significantly affect consumers' attitudes toward online shopping. These variables impact trust levels, preferences for certain platforms, and responsiveness to digital marketing tactics. Younger demographics, for instance, are more likely to engage with interactive content and adopt newer shopping formats.

Based on recent statistics, 491 million Indians are active users of social media at the start of 2025, equating to 33.7 percent of the total population. (Kemp, 2025). Millennials (aged between 25-34) are the most active demographics on social media, followed by Gen Z users (aged between 16-34) (Sheikh, 2025). Moreover, research conducted by Global Web Index's shows that 97.3 percent of connected adults are using at least one social networking platforms each month. This high level of engagement among younger generations highlights social media's strategic relevance for marketers.

While global studies provide broad insights into the impact of social media on youth, region-specific analysis remain essential to understand the local nuances. This study contributes to the growing discourse on youth digital behaviour and provides insights for marketers who seeks to engage this vibrant demographic effectively.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Using Consumer Socialization Theory model, Jorgensen and Kean (2018) investigated the influence of visual online social networking websites (VSNS), online customer reviews and personal communication on consumers' attitude and purchase intention of a product. The survey results indicated that young adult consumers seek information through different sources including family, peers, online customer reviews and VSNS, in particular Pinterest and Instagram, before forming an attitude and purchase intention for a product. Antecedent factors such as age and gender were found to have significant influence on VSNS and familial communication's influence on attitude and purchase intention. They also mentioned that mothers serve as the most influential socialization agent for young adults.

The investigation done by Mehrotra et. al. (2020) on the effect of demographic factors of consumer on online shopping behaviour concluded that age, income and educational level has significant impact on the buying behaviour, whereas gender do not have significant impact.

Pandey and Hasan (2020) found that the demographic variables such as gender, age, education, occupation and monthly family income have significantly impact the consumers' e-shopping behaviour, whereas, marital status of the consumer was found to have no significant impact on the same.

Croes & Bartels (2021) in their study examines the motives for young people to follow social influencers and buy the products endorsed by those social influencers on social media platforms. The study found that the motivation factors differ between age groups, genders and educational background.

The findings from Prihananto et.al. (2021) shows that Instagram is the most efficient social media platform due to its features such as time saving and ease of comparison of product's quality and price. The study also highlighted that the motivation to use social media platforms for online purchase differ with age groups and occupations.

Al-Azzam & Al-Mizeed (2021) highlights the need of adopting digital marketing strategies to increase brand awareness and to effectively combat market competitiveness through digital platforms.

OBJECTIVE

- i. To study the social media usage and consumption habits on social media platforms
- ii. To determine the effect of the demographic factors on the monthly spending through social media

To find out the second objective, the following hypotheses are formulated:

H1: There is no significant association between gender and monthly spending from social media

H2: There is no significant association between education level and monthly spending from social media

H3: There is no significant association between occupation and monthly spending from social media

H4: There is no significant association between monthly income and monthly spending from social media

METHODOLOGY

The primary data was collected from a total of 384 individuals ranging in age from 13 to 40 years, residing in Aizawl city. A self-constructed questionnaire was employed to collect the responses, designed to capture relevant information based on the research objectives. To ensure a representative sample, random sampling techniques were utilized, allowing for unbiased selection across demographic groups.

The collected data was analysed using descriptive statistical tools, including percentage calculations to summarize demographic and categorical responses. Furthermore, Fisher's Exact Test (using Monte Carlo Bootstrapping) was applied to examine the relationships between demographic profile and their monthly spending on social media.

Secondary data are obtained from various sources like journals, books and websites. These materials provided valuable background knowledge, theoretical frameworks, and comparative insights that supported the interpretation of primary findings.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Profile

Out of the 384 respondents, 177 are male, representing 46.1% of the total, while the remaining 207 are female, accounting for 53.9% of the total. The majority of the respondents are between the ages of 13 and 18. Regarding educational qualification, most of the respondents stated that they have completed Higher Secondary School. Students account for majority of the respondents (70.05%) and there exist a diverse income landscape among the respondents.

Table1: Descriptive Statistics of Respondents

		No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	177	46.1
	Female	207	53.9
Age Categories of Respondents	13-18	148	38.54
	19-24	126	32.81
	24-30	66	17.19
	31-35	22	5.73
	36-40	22	5.73
Educational Qualification	Below HSLC	36	9.38
	HSLC	52	13.5
	HSSLC	159	41.4
	Graduate	61	15.9
	Post-Graduate	76	19.8
Occupation	Student	269	70.05
	Employee	59	15.36
	Professional	28	7.29
	Self-employed	15	3.91

	Unemployed	13	3.39
Family Income per month	Below ₹10,000	18	4.69
	₹10,000 - ₹20,000	64	16.7
	₹20,000 - ₹30,000	39	10.2
	₹30,000 - ₹40,000	37	9.64
	₹40,000 - ₹50,000	53	13.8
	₹50,000 - ₹60,000	41	10.7
	₹60,000 - ₹70,000	17	4.43
	₹70,000 - ₹80,000	18	4.69
	₹80,000 - ₹90,000	21	5.47
	₹90,000 - ₹1,00,000	30	7.81
	Above ₹1,00,000	46	12

Source: Primary Data

Social Media Usage

More than half (53.13%) of the respondents have used social media for more than 3 hours a day, suggesting that it is a major part of their daily routine. Despite this heavy usage, majority of the respondents, i.e., 67.45% have spent less than an hour browsing or purchasing products or services. This finding implies that while social media is widely used, its role as a platform for online shopping or product exploration remains limited among these users. Additionally, only 6.77% of respondents are frequent buyers through social media platforms. Regardless, nearly half of the respondents have been engaged in online purchase through social media for less than 2 years which indicates the growth of social media usage as a medium of acquiring products and services in recent years.

Table 2: Usage of Social Media

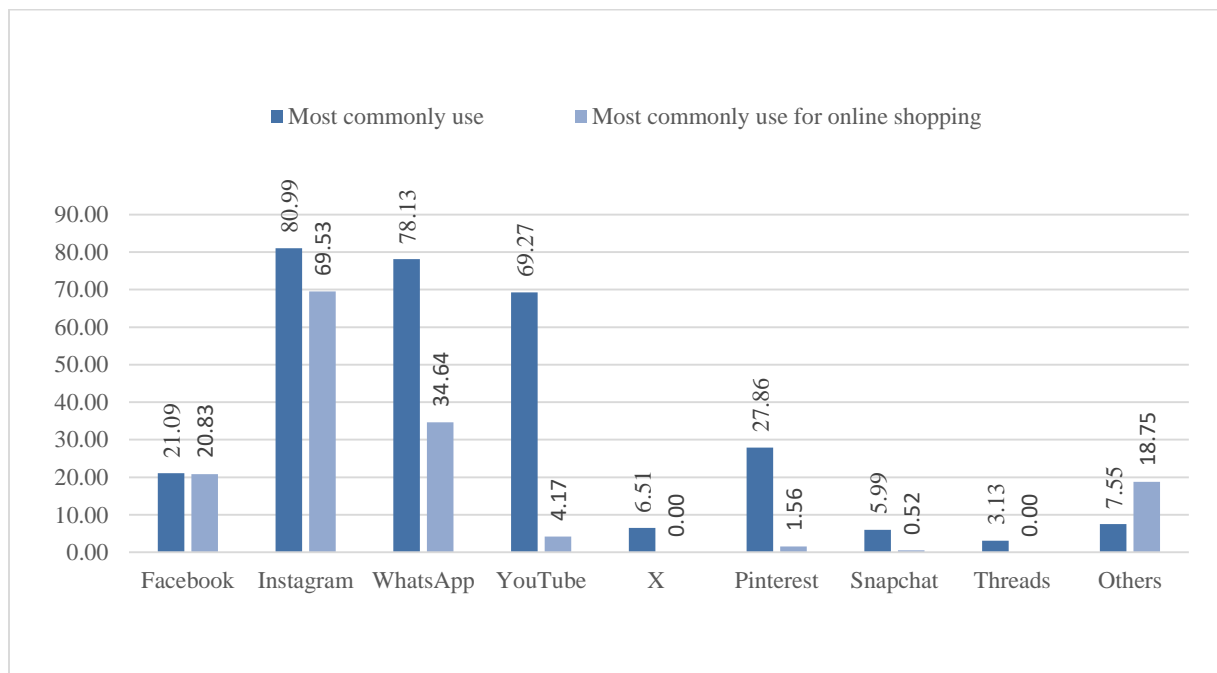
		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Time spent on social media	Less than 1 Hour	33	8.59
	1 to 2 hours	64	16.67
	2 to 3 hours	83	21.61
	3 to 4 hours	77	20.05
	4 to 5 hours	67	17.45
	5 to 6 hours	23	5.99
	More than 6 hours	37	9.64
Time spent for shopping/browsing on social media	Less than 1 Hour	259	67.45
	1 to 2 hours	84	21.88
	2 to 3 hours	24	6.25
	3 to 4 hours	10	2.6
	4 to 5 hours	3	0.78
	5 to 6 hours	0	0
	More than 6 hours	4	1.04
Purchase products/services through social media	Always	26	6.77
	Often	53	13.8
	Sometimes	214	55.73
	Rarely	91	23.7
Years engaged in buying products/services through social media	Less than 1 year	118	30.73
	1 to 2 years	73	19.01
	2 to 3 years	63	16.41
	3 to 4 years	33	8.584
	4 to 5 years	22	5.729
	More than 5 years	75	19.53

Source: Primary Data

Use of Social Media Applications

Instagram has the most number of frequent users (80.99%) as well as the most number of users as a platform for buying products and services 69.53%. Although WhatsApp has significant number of frequent users, (78.13%), when it comes to online shopping, there exists a significant drop to 34.64%. This suggest that Instagram have more potential to convert normal into consumer interest due to its features like shoppable posts and digital marketing. While YouTube and Pinterest are heavily used (69.27% and 27.86% respectively), they are hardly tapped for shopping, highlighting that user engagement does not always translate to consumer action.

Figure 1: Usage of Social Media Platform

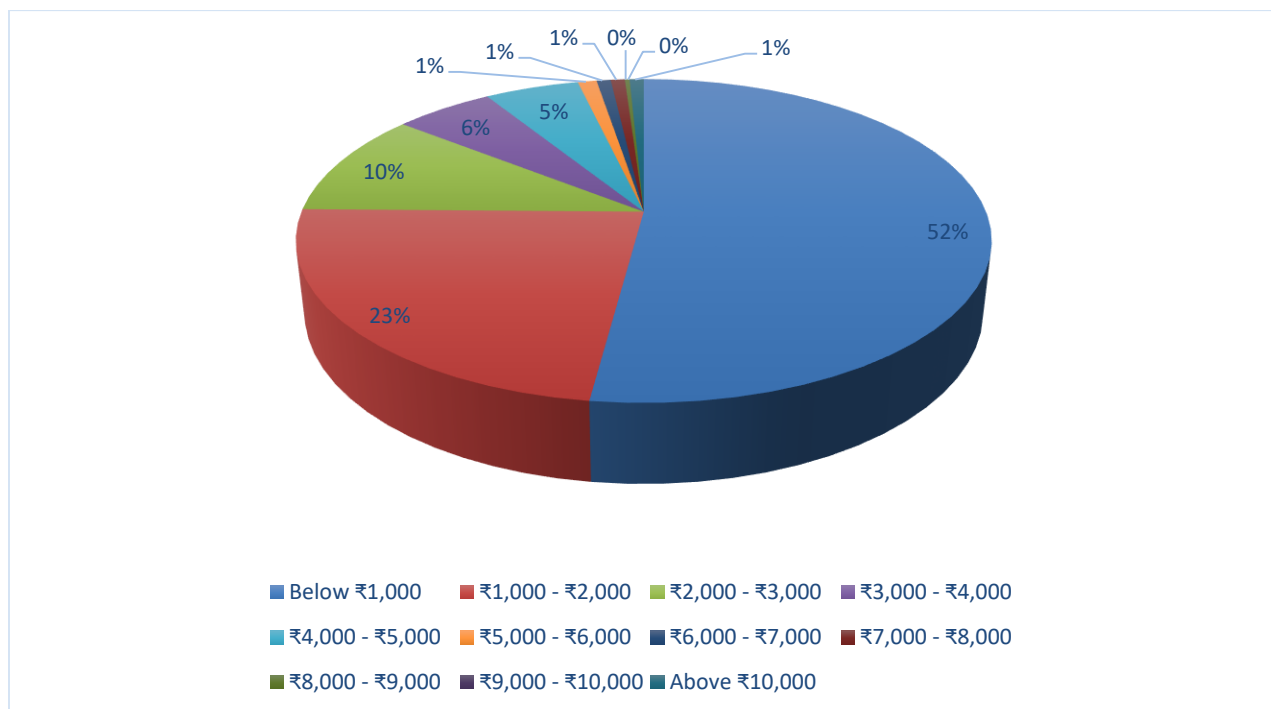


Source: Primary Data

Monthly Spending from Social Media

A majority (52.08%) spend below ₹1,000 per month, which strongly suggest a price-sensitive segment – potentially impulse buyers, students or first-time online shoppers. The next largest segment is between ₹1,000 to ₹2,000 per month (23.18%), showing a gradual decline as we move up the spending scale and the figures trickle down to under 2% on the monthly spending above ₹5,000. This could be an indicator that while social media platforms drive smaller purchases, users tend to lean towards more established e-commerce channels for high-value purchases.

Figure 2: Monthly spending from social media



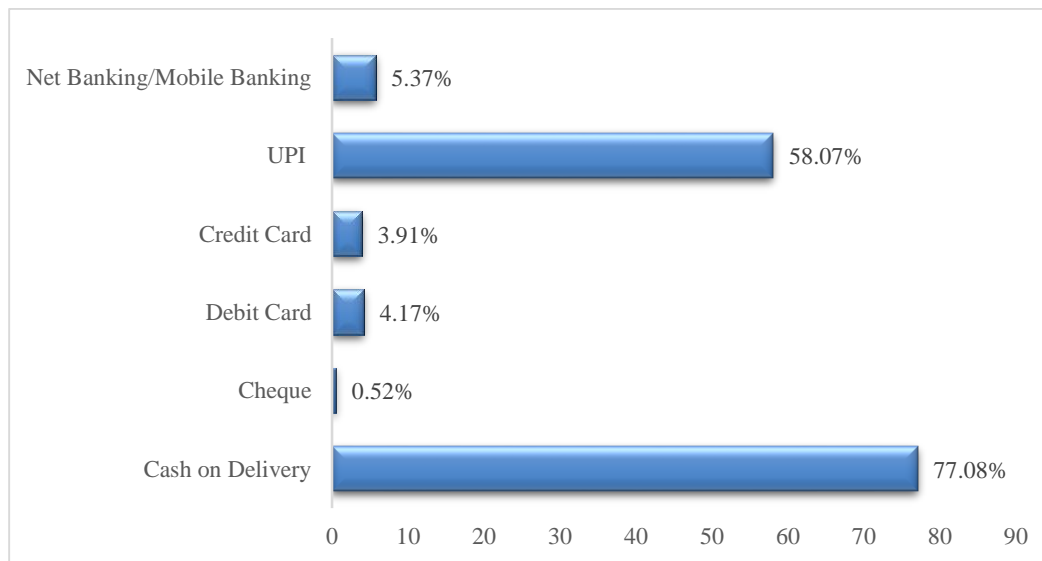
Source: Primary Data

Mode of Payment

Cash on Delivery (COD) is commonly used by the respondents (77.08%) which suggests at perceived online shopping risk. The reasons include high caution, low trust in digital payments or online sellers, infrastructural issues like delivery reliability or limited access to online banking.

The findings also show a robust adoption of UPI (58.07%) indicating that users are growing more comfortable with mobile payment systems due to several factors like perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness. Government initiatives like *Digital India* or *UPI 2.0* could fuel the high digital payment acceptance among the youth.

Figure 3: Mode of Payment



Source: Primary Data

Gender and Monthly Spending from Social Media:

This section aims to test the association between gender of the respondents and the monthly spending through social media. In order to test the two variables, a hypothesis has been formulated:

H1: There is no significant association between gender and monthly spending from social media

Table 3: Gender and Monthly Spending from Social Media

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Monte Carlo Sig. (2-sided)		
				Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Pearson Chi-Square	17.595 ^a	9	.040	0.024	0.021	0.027
Fisher's Exact Test	17.407			0.021	0.018	0.023
N of Valid Cases	384					

a. 10 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .46.

Table 3 test the association between gender of the respondents and monthly expenditure incurred using social media platforms. Since more than 20% (50%) have expected count less than 5, which violated the Chi-square test assumptions, we look at Fisher's Exact Test (using Monte Carlo Bootstrapping) which equals to 0.021, which is less than the level of significance at 0.05. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and state that there is a significant association between gender and the monthly spending via social media.

Education Level and Monthly Spending from Social Media

This section aims to find out the association between the education level of the respondents and their spending from social media per month. For this purpose, a hypothesis has been formulated as follows:

H2: There is no significant association between education level and monthly spending from social media

Table 4: Education Level and Monthly Spending from Social Media

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Monte Carlo Sig. (2-sided)		
				Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Pearson Chi-Square	30.331 ^a	36	.735	.743	.734	.751
Fisher's Exact Test	30.062			.654	.645	.663
N of Valid Cases	384					

a. 34 cells (68.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .09.

Table 4 test the association between the education level of the respondents and the monthly spending through social media platforms. More than 20% have expected count less than 5, hence, we look at Fisher's Exact Test (using Monte Carlo Bootstrapping) where p-value equals to 0.654, which is greater than the level of significance at 0.05. Thus, we accept the null hypothesis and concluded that there is no significant association between education level and monthly expenditure of the respondents.

Occupation and Monthly Spending from Social Media

The purpose of this section is to examine the association between occupation of the respondents and their monthly expenditure through social media. A hypothesis has been developed in order to examine the two variables:

H3: There is no significant association between occupation and monthly spending from social media

Table 5: Occupation and Monthly Spending from Social Media

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Monte Carlo Sig. (2-sided)		
				Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Pearson Chi-Square	56.192 ^a	36	.017	0.079	0.074	0.084
Fisher's Exact Test	55.922			0.007	0.006	0.009
N of Valid Cases	384					

a. 38 cells (76.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .03.

Table 5 test the association between the occupation status of the respondents and the monthly spending through social media platforms. Due to the violation of Chi-square assumptions as more than 20% have expected count less than 5, we use Fisher's Exact Test (using Monte Carlo Bootstrapping). Here, p equals to 0.007, which is less than the level of significance at 0.05. Thus, we reject the null hypothesis and concluded that there is statistically significant association between occupation and monthly expenditure of the respondents.

Monthly Income and Monthly Spending from Social Media

The purpose of this section is to examine the association between monthly income and monthly expenditure. A hypothesis has been developed in order to examine the two variables:

H4: There is no significant association between monthly income and monthly spending from social media

Table 6: Monthly Income and Monthly Spending from Social Media

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Monte Carlo Sig. (2-sided)		
				Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Pearson Chi-Square	112.288 ^a	90	.056	0.63	0.058	0.67
Fisher's Exact Test	96.947			0.077	0.072	0.082
N of Valid Cases	384					

a. 90 cells (81.8%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .04.

The above table indicates that more than 20% (81.8%) have expected count less than 5. Hence, we analyse using Fisher's Exact Test (using Monte Carlo Bootstrapping) which shows p-value equals to 0.077 which is more than the level of significance at 0.05. Thus, we accept the null hypothesis and state that monthly spending through social media is independent of the income per month.

CONCLUSION

The findings of the study highlight that today's youth are highly active on social media platforms and thus contributing to the growth of social commerce platform in the recent years. Hence, it is important for marketers to engage this vibrant demographic and formulate plans to strategically leverage social media to tailor effective marketing strategies.

Despite the significant growth of social commerce, the data reveals a noticeable gap in the sale of high-value products through social media, suggesting that trust and perceived value remain key barriers. It is important to employ a cohesive strategy to unlock higher spending potential and position their offerings as not just products, but experiences that align with the values and aspirations of their audience.

With youth shaping digital consumption patterns and driving online conversations, brands must prioritize capturing their attention through targeted and strategic marketing approaches.

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