

## **"A STUDY ON CONSUMERS USAGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA FOR PURCHASE DECISION OF IMITATION JEWELLERY, ANDHRA PRADESH, EKB MODE"**

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### **ABSTRACT :-**

Every sector or industry has been impacted by the rise of social media. Consumers' decisions to buy imitation jewellery are increasingly influenced by social media. The study's major goal was to discover which phases of the decision-making process are most influenced by social media when it comes to purchasing imitation jewellery. The study used a cross-sectional design and was supported by a quantitative research method. Consumers utilise social media for purchase planning of imitation jewellery at all phases of the decision-making process, according to the study. Surprisingly, the ANOVA study found that using social media throughout the assessment and purchase stages influenced consumers' decisions to buy imitation jewellery in a positive way. Finally, consumers' decisions to buy imitation jewellery are influenced by social media since it provides them with vital information. It is suggested that manufacturers provide adequate information to consumers on social media and make their businesses visible on these platforms in order to swiftly reach consumers who utilise them.

**Keywords**:- Social media, Imitation jewellery, Decision-making, EKB model

**INTRODUCTION:-** In today's society, there is a growing desire for jewelry, but the soaring prices of gold and silver have made genuine jewelry less accessible. This has led to an increased popularity of imitation jewellery. As gold prices continue to rise, the demand for imitation jewelry is on the rise. Young professional women, in particular, are seeking fashionable, everyday jewelry that complements their Western clothing. Even during weddings, there is a shift from heavy traditional jewelry to more lightweight gold-plated options. This shift has led to a nearly fourfold increase in fashion and costume jewelry sales in the past year due to the rising price of gold. This type of jewelry, often referred to as fashion or imitation jewelry, is gaining popularity, especially among the upper middle and upper-income classes. It offers an affordable and elegant alternative to traditional jewelry. Unlike genuine jewelry, which is often acquired for sentimental or investment purposes, fashion jewelry is primarily chosen for its style. High-end fashion jewelry has even become collectible, appreciating in value over time. This makes the fashion jewelry industry an appealing investment opportunity that keeps pace with the latest fashion trends.

The fashion jewelry industry is one of India's fastest-growing sectors. With increasing demand, the artificial jewelry industry in India is projected to reach INR 65,620 Crore by the end of 2022, with an expected compound annual growth rate of around 23.5% between 2017 and 2022. Interestingly, a significant percentage of the 2.5 million artists working in the imitation jewelry sector have a background in precious metals.

EKB Model (Engel, Kollat, and Blackwell): The Engel, Kollat, and Blackwell consumer decision-making model was developed in 1978. This model is based on various consumer psychology theories and models, including Howard's buyer behavior theory and Nicosia's consumer decision process theory. It incorporates environmental factors that influence consumer decision-making. The decision-making process begins with the recognition of a need or problem, followed by the search for alternative solutions by gathering information from both external and internal sources. In the third stage, consumers use their personal criteria to evaluate and make a choice. The central framework of the EKB model starts with unmet desires and needs.

However, it's worth noting that this model has some limitations. It aims to define variables and their interactions but may oversimplify the complexity of real-world decision-making.

Social Media: Social media encompasses the activities, practices, and behaviors of online communities where individuals come together to share information, knowledge, and ideas using various digital media platforms, such as blogs, social networking sites, media sharing sites, and content aggregators. However, there's no universally accepted definition or classification of social media platforms in academic literature.

Conceptualizing the Use of the EKB Consumer Decision Model in Understanding Social Media's Role in Imitation Jewelry Purchases in Andhra Pradesh: This study investigates how consumers employ social media to make purchasing decisions related to imitation jewelry, focusing on cognitive decision-making processes. Although various consumer behavior theories exist, scholars have paid less attention to the Engel, Kollat, and Blackwell Consumer Decision Model in the context of social media and imitation jewelry purchases. The EKB model was chosen for its ability to encompass a wide range of consumer activities beyond just purchases. It helps outline the stages of pre-purchase behaviors, making it particularly suitable for examining the use of social media in jewelry buying decisions.

The research involved questioning consumers who purchase imitation jewelry through social media using the EKB model as a framework, which allowed for the clear definition of variables and questions related to the decision-making process.

### **Need for the study:-**

In today's society, everyone wants to wear jewellery. However, gold and silver prices have also risen sharply. That's why Imitation jewellery is becoming more popular. Marketers also using different ways to promote imitation jewellery and the same time Consumers also using social media to know about imitation jewellery, comparison of information, and make their purchasing decisions. No research is available about consumer's usage of social media for making purchase decision of imitation jewellery. Hence this study has been undertaken to study the social media usage of consumers to make decision to purchase imitation jewellery through EKB model of consumer behaviour.

### **Objective of the study :-**

1. To research about the buying behaviour of customers towards purchase of imitation jewellery.
2. To know about the usage of social media by customers to make purchase decision about imitation jewellery.

3. To investigate the usage of social media by customers to make purchase decision about imitation jewellery through EKB model.

**Hypothesis of the study:-**

H1. Consumers' usage of social media to influences their decision to buy imitation jewellery at the stage of need awareness.

H2. Consumers' usage of social media to influences their decision to buy imitation jewellery during the information seeking stage.

H3. Consumers' usage of social media to influences their decision to buy imitation jewellery during the evaluation of alternatives stage.

H4. Consumers' usage of social media to influences their decision to buy imitation jewellery during the buying stage.

**Research Methodology:-**

The survey conducted for this study adopted a cross-sectional approach, which examines the current beliefs, attitudes, opinions, and practices of the participants. This approach was chosen because the study aimed to explore how consumers leverage social media in their decision-making process when it comes to purchasing imitation jewelry.

The survey questionnaire was structured into three main sections. The first section focused on gathering information about the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. The second section delved into the use of social media across various stages of the decision-making process related to imitation jewelry purchases. A total of 800 questionnaires were distributed at three different locations using the snowball sampling technique. After accounting for potential inaccuracies and non-responses, 600 completed questionnaires were considered suitable for analysis.

The collected data was carefully processed and coded, with the removal of any outliers that could potentially skew the results. To analyze the data, various statistical methods were employed, including descriptive statistics, crosstabs, and ANOVA analysis. The researcher designed survey items to assess variables relevant to the stages outlined in the Engel, Kollat, and Blackwell (EKB) model, using a 4-point Likert scale with anchors ranging from 1.0 to 3.0.

**Table 1**

*Analysis of Variance Table for need awareness stage by Age, Gender, Marital Status, Profession, Religion, Average monthly Income, Location, and How frequently do you use social media for purchase of goods*

Term	SS	df	F	p	$\eta_p^2$
Age	88.36	4	3.07	.016	0.02
Gender	7.79	1	1.08	.298	0.00
Marital Status	1.04	1	0.14	.704	0.00
Profession	29.77	4	1.04	.388	0.01
Religion	12.90	3	0.60	.616	0.00
Average monthly Income	27.43	4	0.95	.432	0.01
Location	90.66	2	6.31	.002	0.02
How frequently do you use social media for purchase of goods	339.13	3	15.74	<.001	0.08
Residuals	4,145.18	577			

**Differences in need awareness stage by Age, Gender, Marital Status, Profession, Religion, Average monthly Income, Location, and How frequently do you use social media for purchase of goods:-** An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to assess whether there were significant differences in the need awareness stage based on various factors, including Age, Gender, Marital Status, Profession, Religion, Average Monthly Income, Location, and Frequency of Social Media Usage for making purchases. A significance level of  $\alpha = 0.05$  was used to evaluate the ANOVA results.

The findings indicated that there were significant differences in the need awareness stage, as evidenced by a significant overall effect,  $F(22, 577) = 4.15, p < 0.001$ . This suggests that Age, Gender, Marital Status, Profession, Religion, Average Monthly Income, Location, and Frequency of Social Media Usage for purchases all played a role in influencing the need awareness stage (Table 1).

Specifically, Age had a significant main effect,  $F(4, 577) = 3.07, p = 0.016, \eta_p^2 = 0.02$ , indicating that different age groups exhibited significant variations in the need awareness stage. Gender, on the other hand, did not have a significant main effect, as indicated by  $F(1, 577) = 1.08, p = 0.298$ , suggesting that gender did not significantly impact the need awareness stage. Similarly, Marital Status had no significant main effect, with  $F(1, 577) =$

0.14,  $p = 0.704$ , signifying that variations in marital status did not lead to significant differences in the need awareness stage.

Profession, as a factor, also did not yield significant differences in need awareness stage, as indicated by  $F(4, 577) = 1.04$ ,  $p = 0.388$ . Religion did not exhibit a significant main effect either, with  $F(3, 577) = 0.60$ ,  $p = 0.616$ , signifying that religious affiliations did not significantly influence the need awareness stage. Similarly, Average Monthly Income did not produce a significant main effect, with  $F(4, 577) = 0.95$ ,  $p = 0.432$ , suggesting that income levels did not result in notable variations in the need awareness stage.

In contrast, Location had a significant main effect, as reflected by  $F(2, 577) = 6.31$ ,  $p = 0.002$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0.02$ , indicating significant differences in the need awareness stage based on geographic location. The frequency of using social media for purchasing items also had a significant impact, with  $F(3, 577) = 15.74$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0.08$ , revealing that varying levels of social media usage for making purchases led to substantial differences in the need awareness stage. Table 1 presents the means and standard deviations for a more detailed overview of the results.

**Table 2**

*Analysis of Variance Table for information search stage by Age, Gender, Marital Status, Profession, Religion, Average monthly Income, Location, and How frequently do you use social media for purchase of goods*

Term	SS	df	F	p	$\eta_p^2$
Age	579.37	4	7.31	< .001	0.05
Gender	109.32	1	5.51	.019	0.01
Marital Status	17.55	1	0.89	.347	0.00
Profession	136.29	4	1.72	.144	0.01
Religion	14.22	3	0.24	.869	0.00
Average monthly Income	111.18	4	1.40	.232	0.01
Location	24.30	2	0.61	.542	0.00
How frequently do you use social media for purchase of goods	798.91	3	13.43	< .001	0.07
Residuals	11,438.29	577			

### Differences in information search stage by Age, Gender, Marital Status, Profession, Religion, Average monthly Income, Location, and How frequently do you use social media for purchase of goods.

Age, gender, marital status, profession, religion, average monthly income, location, and frequency of social media use for purchasing decisions, on the information search stage. Utilizing an alpha value of .05, the ANOVA results were significant,  $F(22, 577) = 3.85$ ,  $p < .001$ , indicating noteworthy disparities in the information search stage across these demographic and behavioral variables. Specifically, age exhibited a substantial main effect ( $F(4, 577) = 7.31$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0.05$ ), signifying significant variations in information search by age groups. Gender also had a significant main effect ( $F(1, 577) = 5.51$ ,  $p = .019$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0.01$ ), highlighting differences based on gender. However, marital status, profession, religion, average monthly income, and location did not have significant main effects on the information search stage. Notably, the frequency of social media use for purchasing goods showed a significant impact ( $F(3, 577) = 13.43$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0.07$ ) on the information search stage. For a detailed breakdown, please refer to Table 2, which provides the means and standard deviations.

**Table 3**

*Analysis of Variance Table for evaluation stage by Age, Gender, Marital Status, Profession, Religion, Average monthly Income, and Location*

Term	SS	df	F	p	$\eta^2$
Age	240.58	4	4.49	.001	0.03
Gender	67.89	1	5.07	.025	0.01
Marital Status	11.93	1	0.89	.346	0.00
Profession	15.76	4	0.29	.882	0.00
Religion	37.50	3	0.93	.424	0.00
Average monthly Income	130.83	4	2.44	.046	0.02
Location	37.41	2	1.40	.248	0.00
Residuals	7,762.08	580			

### Differences in evaluation stage by Age, Gender, Marital Status, Profession, Religion, Average monthly Income, and Location

Age, Gender, Marital Status, Profession, Religion, Average Monthly Income, and Location were all used to assess whether there were any significant differences in evaluation stage. An

alpha value of .05. was used to examine the ANOVA. The ANOVA revealed significant differences in evaluation stage among the levels of Age, Gender, Marital Status, Profession, Religion, Average Monthly Income, and Location, with  $F(19, 580) = 2.26, p = .002$ . Age had a significant main effect, with  $F(4, 580) = 4.49, p = .001, \eta^2 = 0.03$ , showing that there were significant differences in evaluation stage by Age levels. Gender was a significant main effect, with  $F(1, 580) = 5.07, p = .025, \eta^2 = 0.01$ , showing that there were significant differences in evaluation stage by gender levels.  $F(1, 580) = 0.89, p = .346$ , showing that there were no significant differences in evaluation stage by Marital Status levels.  $F(4, 580) = 0.29, p = .882$ , demonstrating that there were no significant differences in evaluation stage by Profession levels. Religion was not a significant main effect, with  $F(3, 580) = 0.93, p = .424$ , showing no significant variations in appraisal stage by Religion levels.  $F(4, 580) = 2.44, p = .046, \eta^2 = 0.02$ , demonstrating that there were significant differences in evaluation stage by Average monthly Income levels.  $F(2, 580) = 1.40, p = .248$ , showing that there were no significant differences in evaluation stage by location levels. Table 3 shows the averages and standard deviations.

**Table 4**  
Analysis of Variance Table for purchase stage by Age, Gender, Marital Status, Religion, Average monthly Income, Location, and Profession

Term	SS	df	F	p	$\eta_p^2$
Age	174.74	4	6.31	< .001	0.04
Gender	4.06	1	0.59	.444	0.00
Marital Status	11.67	1	1.69	.195	0.00
Religion	13.33	3	0.64	.588	0.00
Average monthly Income	77.45	4	2.80	.025	0.02
Location	30.50	2	2.20	.111	0.01
Profession	14.68	4	0.53	.713	0.00
Residuals	4,013.90	580			

#### Differences in purchase stage by Age, Gender, Marital Status, Religion, Average monthly Income, Location, and Profession

Age, Gender, Marital Status, Religion, Average Monthly Income, Location, and Profession were all used to assess whether there were any significant differences in buying stage. An alpha value of .05. was used to examine the ANOVA. The ANOVA revealed significant differences



in purchasing stage among the levels of Age, Gender, Marital Status, Religion, Average Monthly Income, Location, and Profession, with  $F(19, 580) = 2.46$ ,  $p=0.001$  (Table 20). Age had a significant main effect, with  $F(4, 580) = 6.31$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0.04$ , showing that there were significant changes in purchase stage by Age levels. Gender was not a significant main effect, with  $F(1, 580) = 0.59$ ,  $p = .444$ , indicating no significant differences in purchase stage by gender levels.  $F(1, 580) = 1.69$ ,  $p = .195$ , demonstrating that there were no significant differences in purchasing stage by Marital Status levels. Religion was not a significant main effect, with  $F(3, 580) = 0.64$ ,  $p = .588$ , showing that there were no significant differences in purchase stage by Religion levels. The main effect, Average monthly Income, was significant,  $F(4, 580) = 2.80$ ,  $p = .025$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0.02$ , demonstrating that Average monthly Income levels had a substantial impact on purchase stage.  $F(2, 580) = 2.20$ ,  $p = .111$ , demonstrating that there were no significant changes in purchase stage by location levels.  $F(4, 580) = 0.53$ ,  $p = .713$ , demonstrating that there were no significant differences in buying stage by Profession levels. Table 4 shows the averages and standard deviations.

**Table 5**

*Analysis of Variance Table for outcome stage by Age, Gender, Profession, Marital Status, Religion, Average monthly Income, Location, and How frequently do you use social media for purchase of goods*

Term	SS	df	F	p	$\eta^2$
Age	62.76	4	4.10	.003	0.03
Gender	4.85	1	1.27	.260	0.00
Profession	18.40	4	1.20	.308	0.01
Marital Status	8.68	1	2.27	.132	0.00
Religion	12.32	3	1.07	.359	0.01
Average monthly Income	30.13	4	1.97	.098	0.01
Location	25.33	2	3.31	.037	0.01
How frequently do you use social media for purchase of goods	141.82	3	12.36	< .001	0.06
Residuals	2,206.40	577			

**Differences in outcome stage by Age, Gender, Profession, Marital Status, Religion, Average monthly Income, Location, and How frequently do you use social media for purchase of goods**

To evaluate whether there were notable differences in the outcome stage, several factors, including Age, Gender, Profession, Marital Status, Religion, Average Monthly Income, Location, and Frequency of Social Media Usage for purchasing items, were considered. The analysis employed an alpha level of 0.05 to conduct the ANOVA.

The ANOVA results were statistically significant, as indicated by  $F(22, 577) = 3.69$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , suggesting that there were significant disparities in the outcome stage among different levels of Age, Gender, Profession, Marital Status, Religion, Average Monthly Income, Location, and Frequency of Social Media Usage for product purchases (Table 22).

In terms of Age, a significant main effect was observed, with  $F(4, 577) = 4.10$ ,  $p = 0.003$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0.03$ , indicating significant differences in the outcome stage based on various age groups. However, Gender did not show a significant main effect, with  $F(1, 577) = 1.27$ ,  $p = 0.260$ , signifying that gender did not lead to significant variations in the outcome stage.

Similarly, Profession did not exhibit a significant main effect, as indicated by  $F(4, 577) = 1.20$ ,  $p = 0.308$ , suggesting that different professions did not significantly impact the outcome stage. Marital Status also did not have a significant main effect, with  $F(1, 577) = 2.27$ ,  $p = 0.132$ , showing that marital status levels did not result in significant differences in the outcome stage.

Religion, as a factor, did not yield a significant main effect, with  $F(3, 577) = 1.07$ ,  $p = 0.359$ , indicating that religious affiliations did not substantially influence the outcome stage. In a similar vein, Average Monthly Income did not produce a significant main effect, as shown by  $F(4, 577) = 1.97$ ,  $p = 0.098$ , signifying that income levels did not significantly impact the outcome stage.

On the other hand, Location had a significant main effect, with  $F(2, 577) = 3.31$ ,  $p = 0.037$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0.01$ , demonstrating meaningful variations in the outcome stage based on geographic location. Notably, the frequency of using social media for purchasing items had a significant effect, with significant differences in the outcome stage based on different levels of social media usage, as indicated by  $F(3, 577) = 12.36$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0.06$ . For a detailed overview of the results, please refer to Table 5, which includes the averages and standard deviations.

**Table 6***Results for Linear Regression with purchase stage and evaluation stage predicting social media*

Variable	B	SE	95.00% CI	$\beta$	t	p
(Intercept)	1.02	0.24	[0.56, 1.49]	0.00	4.32	< .001
Purchase stage	0.57	0.02	[0.52, 0.62]	0.75	23.91	< .001
Evaluation stage	0.09	0.02	[0.05, 0.12]	0.16	5.15	< .001

Note. Results:  $F(2,597) = 991.68, p < .001, R^2 = .77$

Unstandardized Regression Equation: social media = 1.02 + 0.57\*purchase stage + 0.09\*evaluation stage

### **Linear Regression with social media predicted by purchase stage and evaluation stage:-**

A linear regression analysis was used to see if the purchase and evaluation stages had any bearing on social media usage. The findings of the linear regression model were significant,  $F(2,597) = 991.68, p.001, R2 = .77$ , showing that the purchase and assessment stages account for about 76.86 percent of the variance in social media.  $B = 0.57, t(597) = 23.91, p.001$ , purchase stage substantially predicted social media. This means that a one-unit rise in the buying stage increases the value of social media by 0.57 units on average. Social media was substantially predicted by evolution stage,  $B = 0.09, t(597) = 5.15, p < .001$ . This means that a one-unit rise in evaluation stage will raise the value of social media by 0.09 units on average, according to the regression model's findings.

#### **4.1 Findings:-**

The analysis aimed to determine variations in the stages of consumer behavior, specifically need awareness, information search, evaluation, purchase, and outcome, based on various demographic and behavioral factors. The study included a total of 600 respondents, and here are the findings for each stage of the consumer behavior process:

##### **1. Need Awareness Stage:**

- Age was a significant factor, indicating that there were significant differences in need awareness stage by age groups.
- Gender did not have a significant effect on need awareness stage.
- Marital Status did not show significant differences in need awareness stage.

- Profession also did not significantly impact need awareness.
- Religion had no significant influence on need awareness.
- Average monthly income levels did not affect need awareness.
- Location was a significant factor, showing significant differences in need awareness by location.
- The frequency of using social media for purchasing goods was significant in influencing need awareness.

## **2. Information Search Stage:**

- Age had a significant impact on information search, with significant changes by age groups.
- Gender was significant, indicating differences in information search based on gender.
- Marital Status did not show significant differences in information search.
- Profession had no significant effect on information search.
- Religion did not significantly influence information search.
- Average monthly income levels did not affect information search.
- Location did not significantly impact information search.
- The frequency of using social media for purchasing goods was significant in influencing the information search stage.

## **3. Evaluation Stage:**

- Age had a significant impact on the evaluation stage, showing significant differences by age groups.
- Gender was significant, indicating differences in evaluation based on gender.
- Marital Status did not show significant differences in the evaluation stage.
- Profession did not significantly influence the evaluation stage.
- Religion had no significant impact on the evaluation stage.
- Average monthly income levels were significant in affecting the evaluation stage.
- Location did not significantly impact the evaluation stage.

## **4. Purchase Stage:**

- Age had a significant impact on the purchase stage, with significant changes by age groups.

- Gender did not significantly influence the purchase stage.
- Marital Status did not show significant differences in the purchase stage.
- Religion did not have a significant effect on the purchase stage.
- Average monthly income levels were significant in affecting the purchase stage.
- Location did not significantly impact the purchase stage.
- Profession also did not significantly influence the purchase stage.

#### 5. Outcome Stage:

- Age had a significant impact on the outcome stage, showing significant differences by age groups.
- Gender did not significantly influence the outcome stage.
- Profession had no significant effect on the outcome stage.
- Marital Status did not show significant differences in the outcome stage.
- Religion did not significantly influence the outcome stage.
- Average monthly income levels were significant in affecting the outcome stage.
- Location did not significantly impact the outcome stage.
- The frequency of using social media for purchasing goods was significant in influencing the outcome stage.

In summary, the study found that various factors, including age, gender, location, income, and social media usage, play significant roles in influencing the different stages of consumer behavior. These findings provide valuable insights for businesses and marketers looking to tailor their strategies to different consumer segments.

#### **Suggestions :-**

The study revealed that consumers predominantly used platforms such as Whatsapp, Instagram, Telegram, and Facebook for their social media engagement. Interestingly, social media usage was closely associated with individual characteristics like age and income but did not seem to correlate with academic performance. Social media played a significant role throughout the decision-making process, primarily in creating awareness. Marketers in the imitation jewelry industry are advised to establish a presence on platforms such as Whatsapp, Telegram, and Facebook to engage with potential customers effectively. This approach can serve as a

valuable, cost-effective marketing tool. Social media also influenced consumers' purchasing decisions, often influenced by ratings and reviews. This study utilized the EKB model, widely recognized in academia for understanding consumer decision-making across various sectors, and demonstrated its applicability to social media's role in imitation jewelry decision-making. Although the research contributes to the limited literature on social media and the EKB model, further studies are needed to substantiate these findings.

### **Conclusions :-**

The study found that a significant majority of customers utilize social media for both gathering information and making purchasing decisions related to imitation jewelry. This highlights an opportunity for marketers to effectively promote their products by providing comprehensive details and information on social media platforms. Notably, WhatsApp emerged as a prominent choice for information-seeking, indicating that marketers should prioritize this platform and offer substantial product information through it. Given that customers heavily rely on this information for their purchase decisions, providing accurate and detailed data can help customers make informed choices and foster stronger connections with them.

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