International Journal of Advanced Biochemistry Research

Regatipally Divya
M.Sc. Scholar, Department of
Resource Management and
Consumer Science, College of
Community Science,
University of Agricultural
Sciences, Dharwad,
Karnataka, India

Renuka Salunke
Professor, Department of
Resource Management and
Consumer Science, College of
Community Science,
University of Agricultural
Sciences, Dharwad,
Karnataka, India

Biradar Gayatri
Assistant Professor, College of
Community Science, Professor
Jayashankar Telangana
Agricultural University,
Hyderabad, Telangana, India

Madhumati K Mantur
Ph.D Scholar, Department of
Human Development and
Family Studies, College of
Community Science,
University of Agricultural
Sciences, Dharwad,
Karnataka, India

Corresponding Author:
Regatipally Divya
M.Sc. Scholar, Department of
Resource Management and
Consumer Science, College of
Community Science,
University of Agricultural
Sciences, Dharwad,
Karnataka, India

Understanding consumer buying behavior among college students: A study on preferences and influences

Regatipally Divya, Renuka Salunke, Biradar Gayatri and Madhumati K Mantur

DOI: https://www.doi.org/10.33545/26174693.2025.v9.i9Sd.5507

Abstract
Consumer buying behavior among college students is shaped by various psychological, social, and economic factors. This study, conducted at the College of Community Science, UAS Dharwad, explored their preferences for online shopping platforms, payment methods, and the factors influencing their purchasing decisions. A sample of 60 undergraduate and postgraduate students was selected through random sampling, and data were collected via a structured online questionnaire. The results indicated a strong preference for digital platforms like Zomato, Myntra, and Instagram pages due to convenience and variety, while Unified Payment Interface (UPI) was the most favored payment method for its ease and speed. Social media and peer recommendations played a significant role in influencing buying behavior, especially for non-essential items like clothing and electronics. Despite the increasing use of online platforms, offline shopping remained prevalent for essentials such as food and educational materials, reflecting a blend of traditional and modern purchasing habits. In conclusion, affordability, digital engagement, and social influence are key drivers of consumer behavior among college students. Businesses targeting this demographic should focus on creating value-driven strategies, leveraging digital platforms, and offering promotions tailored to their needs and preferences.

Keywords: Consumer buying behavior, online shopping platforms, social media influence, payment preferences, digital engagement

Introduction
Consumer buying behavior is a dynamic and intricate process that involves the choices and actions individuals take when identifying, purchasing, and utilizing products or services. For businesses, understanding these behaviors is essential to align their offerings with consumer needs and preferences, as it significantly impacts product development, marketing strategies, and sales. The process of consumer buying encompasses various stages, such as recognizing a need, searching for information, evaluating alternatives, making a purchase, and post-purchase evaluation (Kotler & Keller, 2016) [1]. These stages are shaped by an interplay of psychological, social, cultural, and personal factors, making consumer behavior analysis a vital element of marketing strategies.

University students constitute a critical consumer segment due to their higher educational background, advanced knowledge, and complex thought processes. They are often considered a highly dynamic and responsive group, playing a pivotal role in driving future societal growth.

This demographic group displays distinct buying patterns influenced by a mix of social, economic, and psychological elements. Their purchasing decisions are shaped not only by limited financial resources but also by changing lifestyle needs, peer influences, and advancements in technology. As young adults, they frequently navigate newfound independence while managing academic responsibilities and social engagements, making purchases that reflect their values and identity (Bakshi, 2021) [2].

A notable trait of college student's buying behavior is their inclination toward convenience, affordability, and digital engagement. Studies show that this group is highly responsive to promotions, discounts, and loyalty programs, with price sensitivity being a key factor in their decision-making process (Schwarz & Timm, 2020) [4].

Moreover, the widespread adoption of e-commerce and mobile shopping has profoundly influenced their buying habits, with many relying on digital platforms for both product information and purchases. Social media significantly impacts their choices, as they are swayed by peer recommendations, online reviews, and endorsements from influencers and celebrities (Nguyen *et al.*, 2022) [3].

To conclude, gaining insights into the buying behavior of college students is crucial for businesses seeking to build loyalty within this tech-savvy and socially conscious group. By addressing factors such as affordability, convenience, social media engagement, and value alignment, brands can craft marketing strategies that effectively resonate with this demographic, fostering both short-term and long-term connections.

Objectives
To study the consumer buying behavior of college students with a focus on online apps preferred for purchasing different products and mode of payment.

Materials and Methods
This study was conducted at the College of Community Science, UAS Dharwad, during the academic year 2023-2024. The population included undergraduate and postgraduate students enrolled at the main campus, comprising four colleges i.e., College of Agriculture, College of Agri-business management, College of Food technology and College of Community Science. The random sampling technique was employed to select 60 participants, with 40 students from the B.Sc. (Hons) program and 20 from the postgraduate program. A self-structured questionnaire consisting of sources of information for buying, online apps preferred and mode of payment was used to collect the data from the students. The questionnaire was digitized using Google Forms and distributed online to facilitate data collection. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequency and percentage distributions.

Results and Discussion
The socio-demographic details of the respondents are summarized in the table 1, highlighting key characteristics such as age, gender, education, family type, and family income. The majority of respondents (88.30%) were in the age group of 18-26 years, reflecting the predominant age range of college students. A smaller proportion (10.00%) belonged to the 27-35 age group, while only one respondent (1.70%) was over 36 years of age. The gender distribution was equally balanced, with 50 percent female and 50 percent male respondents. Among the participants, 60 percent were undergraduate students, while 40 percent were postgraduate students. The inclusion of both educational levels provides a comprehensive understanding of consumer behavior across different academic stages. A significant majority of the respondents (90%) came from nuclear families, while only 10 percent belonged to joint families. This trend reflects the broader societal shift towards nuclear family structures, which may influence individual decision-making and buying behaviors due to less reliance on collective family income and preferences. The family income data indicates that more than half of the respondents (53.30%) came from families with an annual income below 1 lakh, highlighting financial constraints within this group.

Another 18.30 percent reported incomes between 1 lakh and 3 lakhs, 11.70 percent had incomes between 3 lakhs and 5 lakhs, and 16.70 percent had family incomes exceeding 5 lakhs. This distribution demonstrates a diverse economic background among the respondents, with a majority belonging to lower-income households, which could significantly shape their price sensitivity and purchasing preference

The table 2 shows the different source of information for purchasing various products related to food, clothing, electronics and stationary materials. The respondents reported that family and friends were act as major source of information for food products (70%) followed by clothing (56.66%), electronics (36.66%) and stationary materials (30%). The same trend followed in case of Posters/Banners. Whereas social media was one of the major sources of information for purchasing of clothing (56.66%) followed by electronics (46.66%), food products (38.33%) and stationary materials (18.33%). The same trend followed in online reviews. One of the similar study Jadhav and Khanna (2016) [8] reported that online reviews and shopping apps also play a key role in the decision-making process for students. Convenience and cost comparisons were primary motivators, especially for food delivery services and online grocery shopping.

Health professionals were act as source of information majorly for food products (55%) and very least to other products. As the name itself indicated that health professional deals with health issues which is directly related to food consumption. Hence these were import source of information for food products. Door to door advertisement reduced in recent days but still reported as source of information mainly for food products (60%) followed by electronics and clothing. Whereas displays in shops were mainly for clothing (46.66%) followed by electronics, food and stationary materials.

However both news paper and TV were reported as source information mainly for electronics (83.33 and 45%) followed by clothing (33.33 and 30%), food (25 and 25%) and stationary materials (21.66 and 15%). Magazine, folders/leaflets and radio also were the source for information for purchasing different products but less spread out than other sources. In contrary Biediger-Friedman *et al*. (2016) [9] stated that for electronics and educational supplies, students often rely on both peer and professor recommendations, while product reviews on sites like Amazon and specialized tech review platforms were also influential. Academic necessities and affordability drive choices for electronic products and stationery, as highlighted by the frequency of purchases through Amazon and other discounted retailers

The figure 1 represents the student's preference towards the online apps which are utilized for purchasing of food products. In this study mainly 5 apps (Big basket, Jio mart, Swiggy, Zomato and Dominos) were considered. The results revealed that student's first preference was Zomato followed by Dominos, Swiggy, Big basket and Jio mart. The students expressed that zomoto, Dominos and Swiggy were preferred than Big basket and Jio mart because those apps are meant for immediate delivery of prepared food whereas Big basket and Jio mart provide groceries and other materials which can be purchased occasionally. In support to these findings, a study conducted by Pramila and Patel (2022) [7] revealed that Zomato and Swiggy lead in preference due to their

broad restaurant selections and extensive delivery networks in major Indian cities. Students often prioritize cost-efficiency, promotional offers, and user-friendly app interfaces when selecting an app for meal or grocery delivery.

The figure 2 represents the student's preference towards the online apps which are utilized for purchasing of clothing. In this study mainly 6 apps (Amazon, Flipkart, Myntra, Meshoo, Ajio and Instagram pages) were considered. The findings showed that student's first preference was Instagram pages followed by Myntra. Amazon and Flipkart were equally preferred and fall in 3rd rank. Meshoo and Ajio were 4th and 5th rank respectively. Price sensitivity, product variety, discounts and brand trust play a significant role while using these online platforms. Instagram pages and Myntra often preferred for clothing quality and trendy selections, appealing to students who prioritize fashion and brand options. Myntra is noted for its superior quality and regular discounts, especially in clothing categories, making it a top choice in apparel purchases. Amazon and Flipkart often rank high due to their wide selection and competitive pricing. Meesho has gained attraction among students due to its affordability and casual clothing options, though it is often seen as secondary to Amazon and Flipkart for quality. Ajio is less preferred than other, it might be due to fewer discounts and deals. Nath and Ankit Biswas, 2023 in their study stated that Amazon enjoys the highest overall acceptability (9/10), likely due to its strong reputation for quality, price, and convenience. Flipkart follows closely at 8/10 and is also perceived as offering high quality and price. Myntra takes the lead in quality (9/10) but loses ground on price (8/10), suggesting a premium positioning.

The table 3 and figure 3 indicated that, most of the students were used Unified Payment Interface (UPI) as mode of payment in all the different kinds of products such as food (76.66%), clothing (85%), education (53.33%), movie (71.66%), sports (55%), tour (73.33%) and special occasion (60%) followed by liquid cash (53.33%, 38.33%, 35%, 35%, 35%, 51.66% and 46.66% respectively), debit card and net banking. Only few students were used credit card for

payment. The students expressed that UPI payment was much convenient payment method as it saves time. Cash, though traditional, is declining in use among students due to its inconvenience and the push toward digital options. This shift toward digital payments reflects cashless economy, where UPI and other digital solutions are becoming integral to young consumers' payment habits. Net banking and mobile wallets offer additional options but are less preferred compared to UPI. In line with these results, the study conducted by Jukariya and Singhvi (2018) [5] showed that online payments such as UPI, debit and credit cards help in personal privacy and security followed by transaction security and multiple payment options, convenience and save time.

Table 1: Socio-demographic details of the students

N=60

Demographic details	Frequency	Per cent
Age		
18-26	53	88.30
27-35	6	10.00
36-60	1	1.70
Total	60	100.0
Gender		
Female	30	50.00
Male	30	50.00
Total	60	100.0
Education		
Graduation	40	60.00
Post graduation	20	40.00
Total	60	100.0
Family type		
Nuclear	54	90.00
Joint	6	10.00
Total	60	100.0
Income		
Below 1 lakh	32	53.30
1 lakh to 3 lakhs	11	18.30
3 lakhs to 5 lakhs	7	11.70
Above 5lakhs	10	16.70
Total	60	100.0

Table 2: Source of information for buying behavior of students

N=60

| Source of information	Food		Clothing		Electronics		Stationary materials	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Family and friends	42	70.00	34	56.66	22	36.66	18	30.00
Social media	23	38.33	34	56.66	28	46.66	11	18.33
Online reviews	22	36.66	37	61.66	32	53.33	7	11.66
Health professionals	33	55.00	8	13.33	5	8.33	3	5.00
Door to door advertisement	12	60.00	15	25.00	17	28.33	5	8.33
Display in shops	19	31.66	26	43.33	20	33.33	16	26.66
Posters/Banners	12	60.00	19	31.66	16	26.66	14	23.33
Newspapers	15	25.00	20	33.33	23	38.33	13	21.66
Magazine	11	18.33	13	21.66	13	21.66	11	18.33
Folders/Leaflets	7	11.66	10	16.66	7	11.66	12	20.00
TV	15	25.00	18	30.00	27	45.00	9	15.00
Radio	10	16.66	11	18.33	16	26.66	2	3.33

f indicates frequency,% indicates percentage

Table 3: Mode of payment preferred for purchasing of different products by students

N=60

Products	Liquid cash		UPI		Credit card		Debit card		Net banking	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Food	32	53.3	46	76.66	3	5.00	7	11.66	3	5.00
Clothing	23	38.33	51	85.00	4	6.66	8	13.33	6	10.00
Education	21	35.00	32	53.33	6	10.00	13	21.66	7	11.66
Movie	21	35.00	43	71.66	3	5.00	8	13.33	3	5.00
sports	14	35.00	33	55.00	3	5.00	2	3.33	6	10.00
Tour	31	51.66	44	73.33	6	10.00	7	11.66	8	13.33
Special occasion	28	46.66	36	60.00	5	8.33	13	21.66	9	15.00

f indicates frequency,% indicates percentage
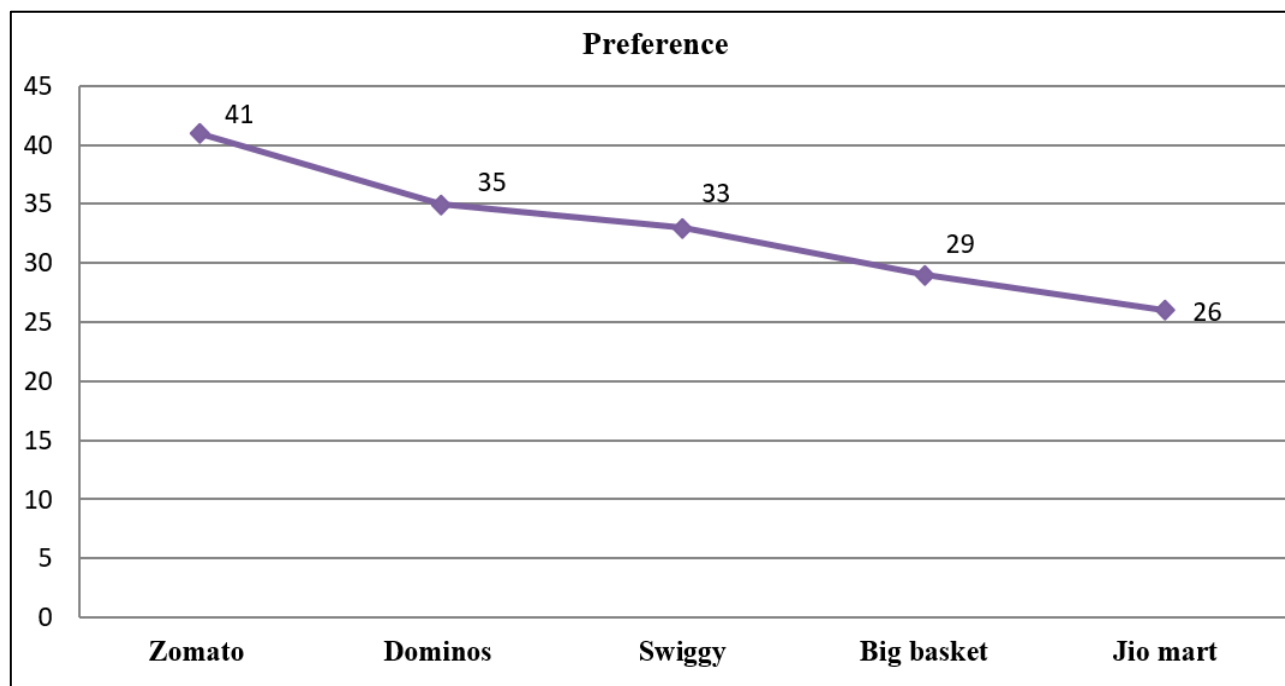
Fig 1: Online apps preferred for purchasing of food products by students
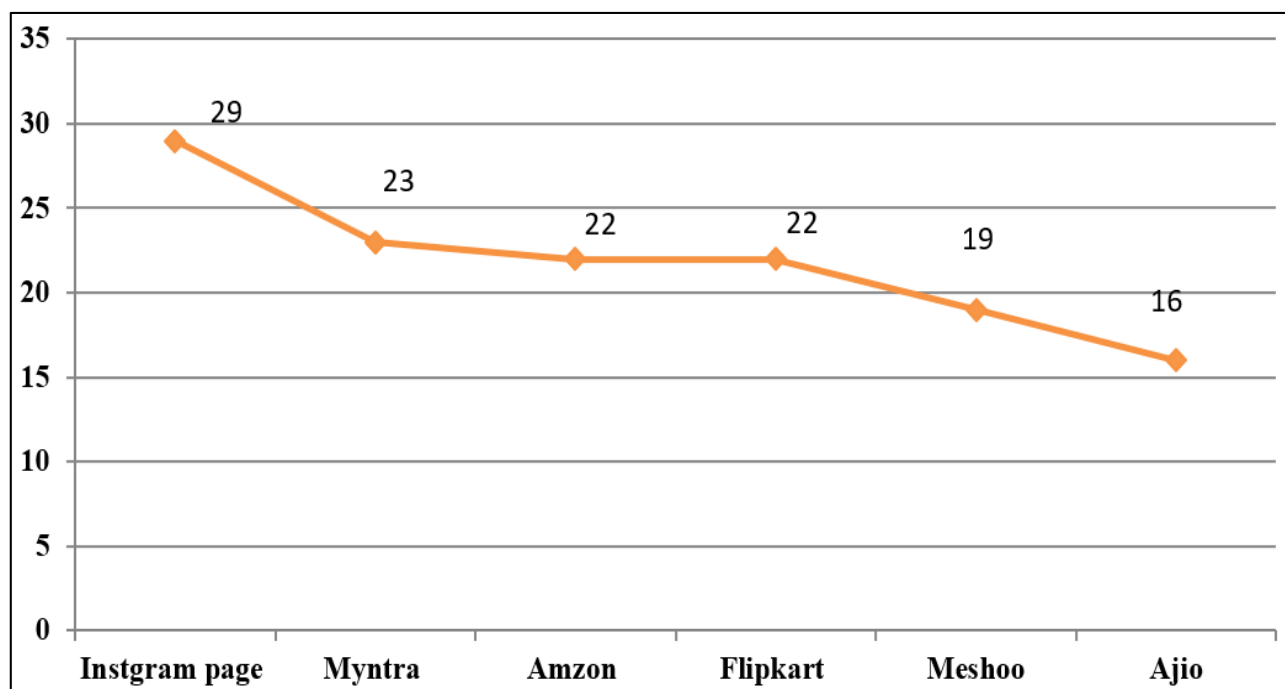
Fig 2: Online apps preferred for purchasing of clothing by students
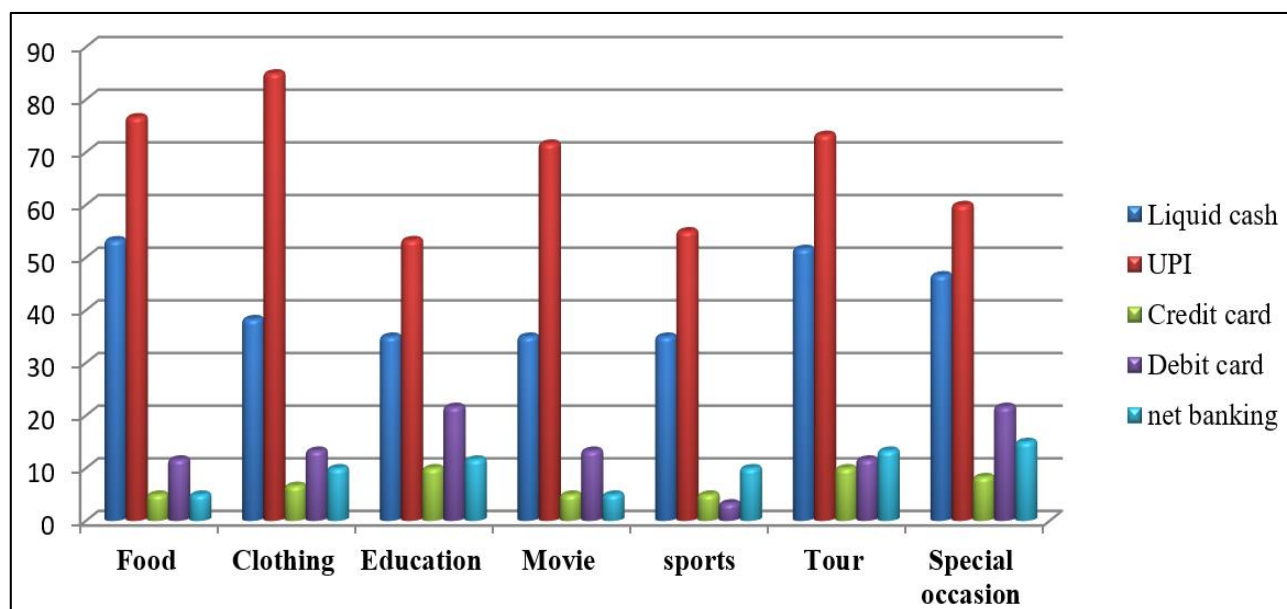
Fig 3: Mode of payment preferred for purchasing of different products by students

Conclusion
The study highlights that college students exhibit distinct buying behaviors influenced by affordability, convenience, and digital engagement. While offline shopping remains dominant for essential items like food and educational materials, online platforms are preferred for non-essential purchases due to their variety and ease of use. Social media, peer recommendations, and online reviews significantly shape their buying decisions, particularly in categories such as clothing and electronics. Unified Payment Interface (UPI) has emerged as the most favored mode of payment, reflecting a shift towards digital transactions among this demographic.

Marketers targeting college students should prioritize affordability and convenience, leveraging digital platforms and social media to engage this tech-savvy audience. Tailored promotional strategies, loyalty programs, and seamless digital payment options can help businesses effectively connect with this financially conscious and socially active group, fostering long-term brand loyalty.

References
1. Kotler P, Keller KL. Marketing management. 15th ed. Pearson Education; 2016. p. 1-832.
2. Bakshi S. Influence of peer and social media on consumer buying behavior of college students. Journal of Consumer Research. 2021;47(2):120-135.
3. Nguyen H, Lee K, Sim S. The role of digital platforms in shaping buying decisions of Gen Z college students. Marketing Science Quarterly. 2022;38(4):45-62.
4. Schwarz T, Timm A. Price sensitivity and digital shopping trends among university students: a quantitative analysis. Journal of Retail Marketing. 2020;65(1):78-89.
5. Jukariya T, Singhvi R. A study of factors affecting online buying behaviour of students. International Journal of Current Microbiology and Applied Sciences. 2018;7(1):2319-2325.
6. Nath T, Biswas A. Investigating factors influencing consumer behaviour by the top e-commerce platforms in India. International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts. 2023;1(12):7-14.
7. Pramila N, Patel A. A study on customer preference between Swiggy and Zomato: case analysis. International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews. 2022;3(3):1501-1506.
8. Jadhav V, Khanna M. Factors influencing online buying behavior of college students: a qualitative analysis. The Qualitative Report. 2016;21(1):1-15.
9. Friedman BL, Sanchez B, He M, Guan J, Yin Z. Food purchasing behaviors and food insecurity among college students at the University of Texas at San Antonio. Journal of Food Security. 2016;4(3):52-57.