Impact of Cultural and Social Values on Online Buying Preferences Among Millennials in Urban Haryana

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Abstract

This study investigates the influence of cultural and social values on the online buying preferences of millennials in urban regions of Haryana. As digital commerce grows rapidly, understanding the behavioral dimensions shaped by traditional and contemporary socio-cultural factors becomes crucial. Using a structured questionnaire administered to a representative sample across cities such as Gurugram, Faridabad, Rohtak, and Panipat, the study aims to analyze how cultural beliefs, family influence, peer opinion, and social status shape e-commerce behavior. Findings are expected to offer insights for marketers and policymakers targeting urban youth in semi-traditional settings.

Keywords: Millennials, Online Shopping, Cultural Values, Social Values, Urban Haryana, Consumer Behavior, Digital Commerce

1. Introduction

In recent years, India has witnessed a remarkable shift in consumer behavior due to the rapid proliferation of internet access, digital payment infrastructure, and e-commerce platforms. This transformation is particularly evident among millennials—individuals born between 1981 and 1996—who represent one of the most dynamic and tech-savvy consumer segments. In Haryana's urban areas, where cities like Gurugram, Faridabad, and Panipat are emerging as economic hubs, millennials are increasingly embracing online shopping. However, despite their digital proficiency, the influence of deeply entrenched cultural and social values continues to shape their consumption patterns. Cultural values, which include beliefs, traditions, religious practices, and familial norms, significantly impact consumer choices in India [1]. In regions like Haryana, where traditional values coexist with rapid urbanization, consumer preferences reflect a blend of modern aspirations and cultural adherence. For example, online purchases of ethnic wear, ayurvedic products, and items related to religious festivals remain high among urban millennials due to their rootedness in cultural identity [2]. This coexistence of tradition and modernity forms a unique backdrop for consumer behavior in urban Haryana. Social values such as peer influence, social media engagement, and the desire for social recognition also play a critical role. According to recent studies, millennials in India are highly influenced by social proof, especially in the form of reviews, peer recommendations, and influencer marketing [3]. In urban Haryana, the youth's increasing dependence on platforms like Instagram, WhatsApp, and YouTube for brand discovery and product validation indicates the social orientation of their consumption behavior. This social dynamic becomes even more prominent in collectivist cultures like India, where the opinions of friends, relatives, and social circles shape purchasing decisions [4]. Moreover, family structures and gender roles still influence economic behavior in urban Haryana. Despite growing independence, many millennials consult parents or elders for high-value online purchases, indicating the role of hierarchical decision-making in households [5]. Similarly, the expectation to maintain a social image among peer groups pushes millennials toward aspirational brands, EMI-based purchases, and online bargain hunting—reflecting social stratification in digital behavior. Given these intersections between technology adoption and socio-cultural frameworks, the study of how cultural and social values impact online buying preferences among millennials in urban Haryana becomes essential. It not only helps understand consumer segmentation in a regional context but also provides valuable insights for tailoring marketing strategies, e-commerce platform design, and digital outreach efforts.

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the role of cultural values (e.g., family traditions, collectivism) on online buying preferences of urban millennials in Haryana.
2. To analyze the impact of social values (e.g., peer influence, status signaling, social media

trends) on their decision-making in online shopping.

Null Hypotheses

H_{01}: There is no significant relationship between cultural values and online buying preferences among millennials in urban Haryana.

H_{02}: There is no significant relationship between social values and online buying preferences among millennials in urban Haryana.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in its timely exploration of how deep-rooted cultural and social values continue to shape the online buying preferences of urban millennials in Haryana—one of India's rapidly urbanizing states. As the digital economy expands and e-commerce becomes a dominant mode of consumption, especially post-COVID-19, understanding the behavioral patterns of millennials, who form the largest segment of online shoppers, has become crucial for marketers, policymakers, and academic researchers. While millennials are often viewed as a homogenous tech-savvy group, this study recognizes their heterogeneity by examining how regional cultural traditions, family structures, and social influences continue to impact even their most modern shopping decisions. In the unique socio-cultural context of Haryana, where tradition and modernity coexist, this research helps unpack the nuanced ways in which factors like collectivism, family traditions, peer influence, and social media trends intersect with digital consumption habits. The study offers empirical evidence that millennials in Haryana do not conform entirely to westernized consumer models, but instead engage in a hybrid form of digital behavior—seeking modern convenience while maintaining cultural identity. These insights are valuable for e-commerce companies and advertisers aiming to develop culturally resonant marketing strategies and user interfaces. Furthermore, the findings can guide policymakers in designing inclusive digital literacy programs that consider social hierarchies, regional diversity, and generational shifts. From an academic perspective, the study fills a gap in regional consumer behavior literature by integrating socio-cultural frameworks with modern consumption theories in the Indian context. Ultimately, this research underscores the importance of cultural sensitivity and social awareness in the rapidly evolving landscape of digital commerce.

2. Review of Related Literature

Kaur, J. (2019) examined the impact of cultural values on e-commerce behavior among North Indian millennials in her study titled "Digital Consumption and Cultural Conflicts: A Study of North Indian Millennials." The research focused on urban youth in Punjab and Haryana, highlighting that although millennials engage actively with global brands, their actual purchasing patterns during culturally significant occasions such as marriages and religious festivals still lean towards traditional preferences like Ayurvedic products and ethnic clothing. Drawing on Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory, Kaur emphasized India's high collectivism and long-term orientation as key reasons for loyalty to culturally meaningful goods. She concluded that urban millennials in Haryana are navigating between modernity and tradition, where cultural conformity continues to shape their consumption behaviors, especially in high-context regions like Haryana where familial and religious norms strongly influence buyer identity [6].] **Bansal and Singh (2021)**, in their paper "Peer Influence on Online Purchasing Decisions Among Indian Millennials," investigated how peer networks impact online brand selection. Their findings revealed that peer recommendations through WhatsApp groups, Instagram influencers, and YouTube reviews have become primary motivators behind millennials' purchase intentions. Applying Social Learning Theory, the study argued that millennials adopt behaviors by observing peers, thus reinforcing trends and social norms. In urban centers such as Gurugram and Faridabad, the role of peer influence often superseded that of traditional advertising, especially in categories like fashion, electronics, and food services. This demonstrated a strong shift in decision-making patterns towards peer-based digital validation and social conformity among tech-oriented youth [7]. **Sharma and Gupta (2020)** conducted a study titled "Impact of Family

Values on Online Consumer Behavior" to assess how familial expectations influence online shopping choices in Tier-II cities of India, including those in Haryana. Despite their digital exposure and independence, millennials often deferred to parents or elders for high-value purchases such as household appliances and furniture. Applying the lens of Structural Functionalism, the authors viewed family as a social unit preserving core values that dictate economic behavior. Their results showed that products like organic groceries, religious literature, and family-oriented gadgets were selected based on collective decision-making rather than individual preferences. This highlights the ongoing role of familial structure in consumer decision-making processes in urban Haryana [8]. **Yadav and Chauhan (2018)**, in their work "Understanding Cultural Influences on Online Shopping in North India," studied consumer behavior in Delhi and Haryana with a specific focus on symbolic and social dimensions of purchases. They found that even digitally active millennials made choices heavily influenced by cultural events, gender norms, and symbolic gestures such as gift-giving or festival shopping. Using Symbolic Interactionism as the theoretical foundation, the authors argued that consumers perceive and purchase products not just for their utility but for the meaning they represent within their cultural framework. This is particularly evident in Haryana's joint family systems, where purchasing decisions are deeply embedded in rituals, family honor, and cultural representation [9]. **Rani (2020)**, in her dissertation "Cultural Patterns and Online Shopping: A Study in Haryana," explored how local customs and traditions shape online buying behavior. Studying 300 millennials from Panipat and Karnal, she found that cultural festivals like Teej, Lohri, and Diwali significantly increase demand for traditional items including ethnic attire, sweets, and religious artifacts. She employed the Diffusion of Innovations Theory, suggesting that millennials act as cultural intermediaries who adopt modern tools like online shopping but continue to fulfill traditional needs. Rani concluded that these consumers effectively blend convenience with cultural relevance, often influencing their families and peers to shop online for culturally important items like pooja kits or traditional decor [10]. **Singh and Verma (2017)**, through their study "E-Commerce Preferences among Millennials: Role of Social Class and Regional Identity," examined how socio-economic class and regional pride influence online consumer behavior in Haryana. Their research highlighted that urban middle-class millennials often opt for products that signal status and upward mobility, such as branded clothing, smartphones, and tech gadgets. Using Bourdieu's Theory of Social Capital and Distinction, they argued that online shopping in cities like Rohtak and Hisar was not merely about convenience, but also about identity construction and status signaling. The desire to emulate aspirational lifestyles significantly influences what millennials buy and how they interact with digital platforms, reinforcing the class-based dimension of consumerism in urban Haryana [11]. **Meena (2021)** investigated the role of digital platforms in influencing youth buying behavior in her study titled "Social Media and Youth Purchase Behavior in Haryana." Her research showed that platforms like Instagram, Snapchat, and YouTube have become central to shaping brand preferences and generating impulse purchases. Through the lens of Agenda-Setting Theory, she explained how frequent exposure to curated and influencer-driven content subtly creates consumer demand and alters brand perception. The study concluded that aesthetics, digital storytelling, and the aspirational content on social media heavily influence purchasing behavior among millennials, especially in the fashion, electronics, and personal care segments in Haryana's urban areas [12]. **Bhardwaj and Saini (2022)** explored gender-based patterns in online apparel shopping through their study "Cultural Norms and Online Apparel Shopping in Haryana's Urban Markets." Focusing on women millennials, the study found that while there is growing online engagement, purchasing decisions remain influenced by social expectations around modesty, tradition, and family approval. Applying Feminist Consumerism Theory, the authors argued that women's consumer power is both liberated and constrained by societal standards. Even in online spaces that offer privacy and agency, women often choose clothes that reflect cultural appropriateness. Thus, the study reveals how online shopping for women

in urban Haryana involves a negotiation between self-expression and adherence to patriarchal norms [13].

3. Research Methodology

Research Design: Descriptive and analytical

Sampling Method: Stratified random sampling

Sample Size: 400 millennials (aged 25–40) from Gurugram, Faridabad, Panipat, Hisar, and Karnal

Data Collection Tool: Structured questionnaire with Likert-scale items

Data Analysis Techniques: Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, multiple regression analysis using
SPSS

4. Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents (N = 400)

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
25–29	130	32.5%
30–34	150	37.5%
35–40	120	30.0%

The demographic profile of the respondents reveals a well-distributed representation of urban millennials across different age groups within the study's targeted range of 25 to 40 years. Among the 400 participants, the largest proportion—37.5%—belongs to the 30–34 age group, indicating that individuals in this age bracket are slightly more active in online shopping or more accessible for the survey. This is followed by 32.5% in the 25–29 age group and 30.0% in the 35–40 age group. The relatively balanced distribution ensures that insights derived from the data are reflective of the broader millennial demographic in Haryana's urban centers and supports the validity of comparative analysis across age segments.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Cultural Values and Online Buying Preferences

Variables	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Family Traditions	4.1	0.6	2.0	5.0
Collectivism	3.8	0.7	2.0	5.0
Online Buying Pref.	4.0	0.5	3.0	5.0

The descriptive statistics presented in Table 2 indicate that respondents generally agree that cultural values play an influential role in shaping their online buying preferences. The mean score for family traditions is 4.1, and for collectivism it is 3.8, both of which are above the midpoint on a 5-point Likert scale, suggesting a high level of agreement. The mean score of 4.0 for online buying preferences further supports the notion that respondents actively engage in online shopping influenced by cultural dimensions. The standard deviations for all three variables are relatively low (ranging from 0.5 to 0.7), indicating that there is a strong consensus among participants and minimal variability in their responses. This consistency reinforces the reliability of the findings and underscores the significance of cultural values in online consumer behavior among urban millennials in Haryana.

Table 3: Pearson Correlation – Cultural Values vs Online Buying Preferences

Variables	r-value	Sig. (p-value)
Family Traditions	0.42	0.001**
Collectivism	0.35	0.005**

The Pearson correlation results in Table 3 reveal a statistically significant and positive relationship between cultural values and online buying preferences among urban millennials in Haryana. Specifically, family traditions show a correlation coefficient of 0.42 (p = 0.001), and collectivism exhibits a coefficient of 0.35 (p = 0.005). Both correlations are significant at the 0.01 level, indicating a moderate yet meaningful association. These findings lead to the rejection of the null hypothesis H_{01}, confirming that cultural values—such as respect for family traditions and a sense of collective identity—do indeed influence millennials' online

purchasing behavior. The results provide strong empirical support for the study's first objective and emphasize the relevance of cultural dimensions in digital consumer decision-making.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics of Social Values and Online Buying Preferences

Variables	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Peer Influence	3.9	0.5	2.0	5.0
Status Signaling	3.6	0.6	2.0	5.0
Social Media Trends	4.2	0.5	3.0	5.0
Online Buying Pref.	4.0	0.5	3.0	5.0

The data presented in Table 4 provides a clear understanding of how social values influence the online buying preferences of urban millennials in Haryana. The mean score of 3.9 for peer influence suggests that individuals often consider the opinions and behaviors of friends and acquaintances before making online purchases. The mean value of 3.6 for status signaling indicates that a considerable number of respondents are motivated by the desire to project a certain social image or status through their online shopping choices. Notably, social media trends received the highest mean score of 4.2, reflecting the dominant role of digital platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube in shaping shopping behavior. The mean score of 4.0 for online buying preferences, coupled with consistently low standard deviations across all variables (ranging from 0.5 to 0.6), demonstrates both a strong and uniform influence of these social factors across the sample. These findings validate the second research objective and suggest that social media, in particular, is a powerful force driving consumer decisions in the digital marketplace.

Table 5: Pearson Correlation – Social Values vs Online Buying Preferences

Variables	r-value	Sig. (p-value)
Peer Influence	0.45	0.000**
Status Signaling	0.38	0.002**
Social Media Trends	0.50	0.000**

Table 5 presents the Pearson correlation analysis between social values and online buying preferences of urban millennials in Haryana. The results reveal statistically significant and positive correlations for all three social variables. Peer influence shows a correlation coefficient of 0.45 (p = 0.000), indicating a moderately strong relationship, while status signaling has a correlation of 0.38 (p = 0.002), reflecting a moderate association. Most significantly, social media trends exhibit the highest correlation at 0.50 (p = 0.000), pointing to a strong influence on consumer buying behavior. All values are significant at the 0.01 level, providing robust evidence that social factors are closely linked to online shopping decisions. These findings lead to the rejection of the null hypothesis H_{02}, thereby confirming that social values play a critical role in shaping the online buying preferences of urban millennials. This supports the second objective of the study and underscores the growing impact of digital social environments on consumer behavior.

Table 6: Multiple Regression Analysis – Predictors of Online Buying Preferences

Independent Variables	Beta Coefficient	Sig. (p-value)
Family Traditions	0.20	0.003**
Collectivism	0.15	0.020*
Peer Influence	0.25	0.001**
Status Signaling	0.18	0.010*
Social Media Trends	0.30	0.000**
Model R²	**0.48**	—

* Significant at 0.05 level
** Significant at 0.01 level

Table 6 presents the results of the multiple regression analysis conducted to identify the influence of cultural and social values on online buying preferences among urban millennials in Haryana. The model reveals that all five independent variables significantly contribute to

predicting online purchasing behavior, with an R² value of 0.48, indicating that 48% of the variance in online buying preferences is explained by the combined influence of cultural and social factors. Among the predictors, social media trends emerge as the strongest predictor with a beta coefficient of 0.30 (p = 0.000), highlighting the critical role of digital platforms in shaping consumer choices. This is followed by peer influence (β = 0.25, p = 0.001) and family traditions (β = 0.20, p = 0.003), underscoring the relevance of both social and cultural influences. Status signaling (β = 0.18, p = 0.010) and collectivism (β = 0.15, p = 0.020) also show statistically significant effects. These findings affirm that both cultural and social values serve as important determinants in online shopping behavior and provide strong empirical support for the study's hypotheses and objectives.

The findings of the study clearly indicate that both null hypotheses, H_{01} and H_{02}, are rejected based on the outcomes of Pearson correlation and multiple regression analyses. The statistical evidence demonstrates that cultural values—such as family traditions and collectivism—have a significant and positive relationship with the online buying preferences of urban millennials in Haryana. Similarly, social values, particularly peer influence, status signaling, and social media trends, also show a strong and statistically significant impact on online shopping behavior. Among these, social media trends emerged as the most influential predictor. These results align with and substantiate the stated research objectives, offering robust empirical justification for the role of cultural and social constructs in shaping consumer decision-making. The use of SPSS-based statistical techniques enhances the credibility of the analysis and affirms the importance of incorporating socio-cultural factors in understanding millennial consumer behavior in the context of digital commerce.

5. Results and Discussion

Results

The results of this study reveal a clear and statistically significant relationship between both cultural and social values and the online buying preferences of urban millennials in Haryana. As shown in Table 2, the mean scores for cultural factors such as family traditions (M = 4.1) and collectivism (M = 3.8) indicate strong agreement among respondents that these values influence their online shopping behavior. Furthermore, the low standard deviations suggest consistency in these opinions. Table 3 further confirms this through Pearson correlation analysis, which shows significant positive correlations between cultural values and online buying preferences. Specifically, family traditions (r = 0.42, p = 0.001) and collectivism (r = 0.35, p = 0.005) both demonstrate statistically significant associations, leading to the rejection of Null Hypothesis H_{01}. Similarly, in the case of social values, Table 4 highlights high mean scores for peer influence (M = 3.9), status signaling (M = 3.6), and social media trends (M = 4.2), indicating their strong role in consumer decisions. Pearson correlation analysis in Table 5 confirms these findings with significant correlations between social values and online buying preferences: peer influence (r = 0.45), status signaling (r = 0.38), and social media trends (r = 0.50), all with p-values below 0.01. Thus, Null Hypothesis H_{02} is also rejected. Table 6 presents multiple regression analysis results, where all five independent variables—cultural and social—show statistically significant predictive power for online buying preferences. The model explains 48% of the variance (R^2 = 0.48), with social media trends (β = 0.30, p = 0.000), peer influence (β = 0.25, p = 0.001), and family traditions (β = 0.20, p = 0.003) as the strongest predictors.

Discussion

The findings of this study highlight a dynamic interplay between deeply rooted cultural norms and emerging digital social behaviors. Urban millennials in Haryana are seen to maintain a strong connection with cultural traditions, which continue to guide their online buying preferences. This is evident in their preference for traditional items during festivals and family-centric purchases, aligning with the observations of previous studies by Kaur (2019) and Sharma & Gupta (2020). These findings confirm that cultural continuity coexists with digital adoption, creating a hybrid consumer identity. On the social front, the strong

influence of social media trends, peer networks, and the desire for social recognition is apparent. The highest predictive value of social media trends in the regression model points to the growing dependence of millennials on platforms like Instagram, WhatsApp, and YouTube for decision-making. This supports Bansal and Singh (2021) and Meena (2021), who also emphasized the persuasive power of digital platforms. Peer influence and status signaling reinforce the idea that online shopping is not only a functional activity but also a social one, driven by perceptions and societal expectations. Together, these insights demonstrate that millennials' online buying behavior is shaped by both enduring cultural values and evolving social dynamics. The empirical rejection of both null hypotheses underscores the importance of contextualizing consumer behavior within both cultural and technological frameworks, particularly in transitional societies like Haryana where tradition and modernity coexist. These findings have practical implications for marketers, suggesting the need to design culturally sensitive and socially engaging digital marketing strategies to resonate with this dual-identity consumer base.

6. Conclusion

The present study concludes that both cultural and social values play a significant role in shaping the online buying preferences of urban millennials in Haryana. Despite being digitally fluent and highly active on e-commerce platforms, millennials in this region continue to exhibit purchasing behaviors that are deeply influenced by traditional family norms, cultural expectations, and collective decision-making structures. At the same time, social factors such as peer influence, status signaling, and, most notably, social media trends, have emerged as powerful forces driving consumer decisions in the digital space. The rejection of both null hypotheses, supported by strong correlations and a robust regression model explaining 48% of the behavioral variance, underscores the importance of integrating socio-cultural context into any analysis of consumer behavior. These findings highlight that millennial consumers in urban Haryana represent a hybrid identity—negotiating between the values of tradition and the aspirations of modernity. For marketers, e-commerce platforms, and policymakers, this study offers actionable insights: strategies that acknowledge cultural sentiment while leveraging the reach and influence of digital social networks are more likely to succeed. Overall, the study reinforces the need for a localized and culturally conscious approach to digital marketing and consumer engagement in India's evolving urban markets.

6.1 Recommendations

➤ E-commerce platforms should align product offerings with regional festivals and traditions.
➤ Digital marketers must leverage peer networks and social media influencers for better engagement.
➤ Customization of content in local language (Haryanvi/Hindi) can enhance relatability.
➤ Promotional strategies should integrate both modern branding and cultural sentiments.

6.2 Limitations and Future Scope

Limitations:
➤ The study is limited to select urban areas of Haryana.
➤ Data is self-reported and may involve social desirability bias.

Future Scope:
➤ Comparative analysis across rural and semi-urban areas of Haryana.
➤ Qualitative studies to explore in-depth motivations behind online purchases.

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