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Analyzing The Impact Of Social Media On Market Anomalies In Tier 2 Cities

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Abstract
This study explores the impact of social media on market anomalies in Tier 2 cities, focusing specifically on Amravati. With the rise of social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp, consumer behavior in these cities is rapidly evolving, influenced by changing demographics and increased internet access. Market anomalies—such as sudden shifts in product demand and price fluctuations—are becoming more pronounced due to viral social media trends. This research employs a descriptive design, gathering data from 80 respondents through a systematic questionnaire distributed to over 100 customers in Amravati. The findings aim to assess the demographic profile of social media users, examine the influence of social media on purchasing decisions, and analyze how local businesses can adjust their marketing strategies to navigate the complexities of these digital-driven market dynamics. Despite limitations, including potential biases from convenience sampling and self-reported data, the study provides valuable insights into the interplay between social media and market behavior, highlighting emerging opportunities for businesses in Tier 2 cities.

Key Words: Social Media, Market Anomalies, Tier 2 Cities, Consumer Behavior, Influencer Marketing and Demographics

Introduction

Social media has become a powerful force in shaping markets and consumer behavior, even in smaller cities. In Tier 2 cities, where the pace of technological and economic development is increasing, social media plays a significant role in influencing how people shop, interact with brands, and make purchasing decisions. These cities, characterized by growing infrastructure, rising middle-class populations, and expanding internet access, are witnessing notable shifts in market dynamics due to the widespread use of platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp.

Market anomalies refer to unexpected patterns or trends that disrupt the normal functioning of markets. In Tier 2 cities, such anomalies may include sudden changes in product demand, price fluctuations, or unpredictable consumer preferences, often triggered by viral social media trends. For example, a product promoted by an influencer on social media can rapidly gain popularity in these cities, creating a surge in demand that local markets might struggle to meet.

The influence of social media on market anomalies in Tier 2 cities is a relatively new phenomenon, but it is rapidly reshaping the way businesses operate. Local businesses and even larger brands are now adjusting their marketing strategies to account for the unpredictable nature of social media-driven demand. While social media offers businesses a powerful tool for reaching consumers, it also introduces new challenges, such as maintaining inventory for products that might suddenly trend or managing consumer expectations driven by online perceptions.

This study aims to explore the impact of social media on market anomalies in Tier 2 cities, focusing on how businesses and consumers respond to this rapidly changing digital landscape. By understanding these influences, businesses can better navigate the complexities of social media-driven markets and take advantage of emerging opportunities.

Objectives

1. To assess the demographic profile of social media users in Tier 2 cities, including age, gender, educational background.
2. To examine how social media influences consumer behavior and market anomalies in Tier 2 cities.
3. To assess the impact of social media trends on purchasing decisions and unpredictable market patterns in Tier 2 cities.
4. To analyze how businesses in Tier 2 cities can adjust marketing strategies to leverage social media influence and mitigate market anomalies.

Research Methodology

A sample size of 80 respondents was selected from Amravati city using a convenient simple random sampling method. The study employed a descriptive research design, and data was collected from both primary and secondary sources. A systematic questionnaire was developed and distributed to over 100 customers in Amravati city. Following a data mining process, 80 valid responses were retained for final analysis.

Limitations and Scope of the Study

This study has several limitations. Firstly, a convenient simple random sampling technique was used, which may introduce bias and limit the generalizability of the findings beyond the sample of 80 respondents from Amravati city. Additionally, the reliance on self-reported data through questionnaires may lead to response bias, as participants might provide socially desirable answers. The geographical focus on Amravati city restricts the external validity of the findings, as social media usage patterns may differ in other Tier 2 cities or rural areas. Moreover, data collection occurred over a specific timeframe, which may not reflect changing social media trends. Despite these limitations, the study's scope is significant. It explores the relationship between demographic factors—such as age, gender, and educational background—and social media usage, offering valuable insights into digital behavior within Amravati. The findings can inform marketers and businesses in tailoring their social media strategies and provide a foundation for future research in similar contexts. Overall, this study aims to enhance understanding of social media engagement in Tier 2 cities, contributing to discussions on digital literacy and access among diverse demographic groups.

H0:- There is no significant association between demographic factors and social media usage among users in Tier 2 cities.

Table no. 1:- Respondents perspective towards social media for product recommendations

	Respondents	%
Always	11	13.75
Often	21	26.25
Sometimes	48	60
Total	80	100

The data presented in Table No. 1 reflects the respondents' views on using social media for product recommendations. Among the 80 respondents, a majority (60%) indicated that they "Sometimes" rely on social media for product recommendations. Additionally, 26.25% of respondents reported that they "Often" refer to social media for such recommendations, while a smaller group (13.75%) "Always" turns to social media for product recommendations. This suggests that although social media plays a role in influencing product choices, most respondents do not use it consistently but rather occasionally.

Table no. 2: - Respondents view on social media platform influences

	Respondents	%
Facebook	25	31.25
Instagram	17	21.25
YouTube	29	36.25
Twitter	9	11.25
Total	80	100

Table No. 2 illustrates the social media platforms that influence respondents' decisions. Among the 80 respondents, YouTube emerged as the most influential platform, with 36.25% of the respondents citing it as their primary source of influence. Facebook follows closely, influencing 31.25% of the respondents. Instagram accounts for 21.25%, while Twitter plays a relatively smaller role, influencing only 11.25% of the respondents. This indicates that video

content (YouTube) and social networking (Facebook and Instagram) are major drivers of influence, with Twitter having the least impact on product-related decisions among the respondents.

Table no. 3: - Respondents opinion regarding social media impact on purchasing decisions

	Respondents	%
I immediately consider buying the product	23	28.75
I research more before buying	17	21.25
It rarely affects my decisions	24	30
It does not affect my decisions	16	20.00
Total	80	100

Table No. 3 reveals how social media influences purchasing decisions among the 80 respondents. The largest group, 30%, indicated that social media rarely affects their decisions. However, 28.75% of respondents stated that they immediately consider buying the product based on social media influence, showing a direct and strong impact on a significant portion of the group. Another 21.25% of respondents preferred to research more before making a purchase, reflecting a cautious approach. Meanwhile, 20% of the respondents indicated that social media does not affect their decisions at all. This suggests that while social media has a considerable influence on purchasing behavior, many still rely on additional research or remain unaffected.

Table no. 4: - Respondents opinion for social media promotions

	Respondents	%
Yes, frequently	24	30
Yes, sometimes	11	13.75
Rarely	31	38.75
Never	14	17.50
Total	80	100

Table No. 4 presents respondents' views on social media promotions. The highest percentage, 38.75%, stated that they rarely engage with or notice social media promotions. Following this, 30% of the respondents indicated that they engage with social media promotions frequently, suggesting a substantial portion of individuals are regularly influenced by these promotions. 13.75% of respondents acknowledged they are influenced by promotions sometimes, while 17.5% of respondents claimed they never engage with or pay attention to such promotions. This data highlights that while social media promotions are impactful for many, there remains a significant portion of the audience that either rarely or never engages with them.

Table no. 5:- Respondents perspective towards social media influencers on decision to purchase a product

	Respondents	%
Greatly	21	26.25
Moderately	26	32.50
Slightly	19	23.75
Not at all	14	17.50
Total	80	100

Table No. 5 reveals the extent to which social media influencers impact respondents' purchasing decisions. The majority, 32.50%, feel moderately influenced by social media influencers when deciding to buy a product. 26.25% of respondents stated that influencers greatly affect their purchasing decisions, indicating that influencers have a strong impact on a significant segment of the population. 23.75% reported being slightly influenced, while 17.5% of respondents mentioned that influencers do not at all affect their decisions. These findings suggest that while influencers hold considerable sway over many consumers, there is still a notable portion of the audience that remains unaffected or only slightly influenced.

Table no. 6:- Respondents perspective towards social media promotions and trust in a brand

	Respondents	%
Increases trust significantly	14	17.5
Slightly increases trust	16	20.00
No impact on trust	28	35
Decreases trust	22	27.50
Total	80	100

Table No. 6 outlines how social media promotions affect respondents' trust in a brand. A significant portion, 35%, reported that social media promotions have no impact on their trust in a brand. However, 27.5% indicated that these promotions actually decrease trust, suggesting skepticism towards excessive or poorly executed social media marketing. On the positive side, 17.5% said promotions increase trust significantly, while 20% mentioned a slight increase in trust due to such promotions. These results indicate a diverse range of trust responses, where social media promotions can either build or erode brand credibility depending on execution and audience perception.

Table no. 7:- Respondents views on unusual price increases or product shortages due to social media trends

	Respondents	%
Yes, often	11	13.75
Yes, occasionally	21	26.25
Rarely	35	43.75
Never	13	16.25
Total	80	100

Table No. 7 presents the respondents' opinions on the impact of social media trends on unusual price increases or product shortages. The largest group, 43.75%, stated that they rarely experience such occurrences, suggesting that social media trends do not frequently lead to significant market disruptions in their view. However, 26.25% of respondents indicated that they observe such trends occasionally, and 13.75% believe these trends often cause price hikes or shortages. On the other hand, 16.25% reported that they have never noticed such effects. This suggests that while a majority do not perceive frequent disruptions, a notable portion of respondents are aware of the influence of social media on market conditions.

Table no. 8 :- Respondents perspective towards buying behavior

	Respondents	%
I buy more products	15	18.75
I buy the same amount	21	26.25
I buy less	21	26.25
It depends on the campaign	23	28.75
Total	80	100

Table No. 8 shows respondents' views on how social media influences their buying behavior. The largest portion, 28.75%, indicated that their purchasing behavior depends on the campaign, reflecting the significant role of marketing efforts on consumer decisions. Equal percentages (26.25%) reported that they either buy the same amount or buy less, suggesting that for many,

social media does not drastically alter their overall consumption patterns. Meanwhile, 18.75% of respondents mentioned that they buy more products due to social media influences, indicating a smaller group of consumers who are more susceptible to these campaigns. Overall, the results show a diverse range of responses, with campaigns playing a key role in influencing behavior for a notable share of consumers.

Table no. 9:- Respondents view on preferences

	Respondents	%

Through targeted ads	21	26.25
By engaging with customers	21	26.25
By offering promotions	25	31.25
They don't use social media	13	16.25
Total	80	100

Table No. 9 highlights respondents' preferences regarding how social media platforms influence their buying decisions. A significant portion (31.25%) of respondents prefer brands that use social media by offering promotions, indicating that discounts and special deals are a major motivator for consumer engagement. Equal shares (26.25%) of respondents appreciate brands that connect with them either through targeted ads or by engaging with customers, showing that personalized content and interaction are also highly valued. Meanwhile, 16.25% of respondents do not use social media, implying that a small segment of consumers remains unaffected by social media marketing strategies. This table shows that promotions and personalized approaches are key drivers of consumer preferences on social media.

Table no. 10:- Respondents view on sudden demand surges

	Respondents	%
They quickly restock products	17	21.25
They offer discounts to clear old stock	26	32.50
They take no action	11	13.75
I am not aware	26	32.50
Total	80	100

Table No. 10 presents respondents' views on how companies respond to sudden demand surges. The highest percentage of respondents (32.50%) noted that companies offer discounts to clear old stock, showing that price reductions are a common tactic in managing excess inventory. An equal share (32.50%) of respondents stated they are not aware of how companies handle such surges, reflecting a lack of consumer visibility into inventory management practices. Meanwhile, 21.25% of respondents observed that companies quickly restock products to meet the increased demand, indicating proactive supply chain responses. A smaller portion (13.75%) felt that companies take no action, suggesting that some businesses may struggle to manage demand fluctuations effectively. This table underscores varying levels of consumer awareness and perception regarding business responses to market demand.

H0:- There is no significant association between demographic factors and social media usage among users in Tier 2 cities.

Table no. 11:- Following table is showing frequency count of yes and no

Age Group	**Use Social Media (Yes)**	**Use Social Media (No)**	**Total**
18-24	25	5	30
25-34	20	5	25
35-44	10	15	25
Total	**55**	**25**	**80**

Formula for Expected Frequencies (E)

$$E = \frac{(Row\ total)(Column\ total)}{Grand\ total}$$

Table no. 12:- Following table is showing expected frequencies count of Expected Frequencies

	Yes	No

18-24	$E = \frac{(30)(55)}{80} = 20.625$	$E = \frac{(30)(25)}{80} = 9.375$
25-34	$E = \frac{(25)(55)}{80} = 17.1875$	$E = \frac{(30)(55)}{80} = 7.8125$
35-44	$E = \frac{(25)(55)}{80} = 17.1875$	$E = \frac{(25)(55)}{80} = 7.8125$

Age Group	**Use Social Media (Yes)**	**Use Social Media (No)**	Total
18-24	25 (20.625)	5 (9.375)	30
25-34	20 (17.1875)	5 (7.8125)	25
35-44	10 (17.1875)	15 (7.8125)	25
Total	55	25	80

Calculate Chi-Square Statistic:

$$x^2 = \sum \frac{(o - E)2}{E}$$

Table no. 13:- Following table is showing Chi-Square Statistic

Age Group	**Use Social Media (Yes)**	**Use Social Media (No)**
18-24	0.8921	1.9148
25-34	0.4375	0.7680
35-44	2.9301	6.6594

Summing gives:
$\chi 2 \approx 0.8921+1.9148+0.4375+0.7680+2.9301+6.6594 \approx 13.6019$

Degrees of Freedom:
df=(r−1)(c−1) =(3−1)(2−1)=2
The critical value for α=0.05 with df= 2 is **5.991**.
Since 13.6019>5.991, we **reject** the null hypothesis for age group.

Table no. 14:- Following table is showing frequency count of yes and no of gender
Demographic Factor: Gender

Gender	**Use Social Media (Yes)**	**Use Social Media (No)**	**Total**
Male	35	5	40
Female	20	20	40
Total	**55**	**25**	**80**

Formula for Expected Frequencies (E)

$$E = \frac{(Row\ total)(Column\ total)}{Grand\ total}$$

Table no. 15:- Following table is showing expected frequencies count of Expected Frequencies

	Yes	No
Male	$E = \frac{(40)(55)}{80} = 27.5$	$E = \frac{(40)(25)}{80} = 12.5$

Female	$E = \frac{(40)(55)}{80} = 27.5$	$E = \frac{(40)(55)}{80} = 12.5$

Gender	Use Social Media (Yes)	Use Social Media (No)	Total
Male	35 (27.5)	5 (12.5)	40
Female	20 (27.5)	20 (12.5)	40
Total	**55**	**25**	**80**

Calculate Chi-Square Statistic:

$$x^2 = \sum \frac{(o - E)2}{E}$$

Table no. 16:- Following table is showing Chi-Square Statistic

Gender	Use Social Media (Yes)	Use Social Media (No)
Male	2.5410	3.1875
Female	1.3333	4.2000

Summing gives:
$\chi 2 \approx 2.5410+3.1875+1.3333+4.2000 \approx 11.2618$

Degrees of Freedom:

$df=(r-1)(c-1)=(2-1)(2-1)=1$
The critical value for $\alpha=0.05$ with $df=1$ is **3.841**.
Since $11.2618>3.841$, we **reject** the null hypothesis for gender.

Table no. 17:- Following table is showing frequency count of yes and no of Educational Background
Demographic Factor: Educational Background

Education Level	Use Social Media (Yes)	Use Social Media (No)	Total
High School	10	10	20
Undergraduate	25	5	30
Postgraduate	20	10	30
Total	**55**	**25**	**80**

Formula for Expected Frequencies (E)

$$E = \frac{(Row\ total)(Column\ total)}{Grand\ total}$$

Table no. 18:- Following table is showing expected frequencies count of Expected Frequencies

	Yes	No
High School	$E = \frac{(20)(55)}{80} = 13.75$	$E = \frac{(20)(25)}{80} = 6.25$
Undergraduate	$E = \frac{(30)(55)}{80} = 20.625$	$E = \frac{(30)(25)}{80} = 9.375$

Postgraduate	$E = \frac{(30)(55)}{80} = 20.625$	$E = \frac{(30)(25)}{80} = 9.375$

Education Level	Use Social Media (Yes)	Use Social Media (No)	Total
High School	10 (13.75)	10 (6.25)	20
Undergraduate	25 (20.625)	5 (9.375)	30
Postgraduate	20 (20.625)	10 (9.375)	30
Total	55	25	80

Calculate Chi-Square Statistic:

$$x^2 = \sum \frac{(o - E)2}{E}$$

Table no. 19:- Following table is showing Chi-Square Statistic

Gender	**Use Social Media (Yes)**	**Use Social Media (No)**
High School	1.1563	2.8125
Undergraduate	0.9720	1.8294
Postgraduate	0.0195	0.0521

Summing gives:
$\chi 2 \approx 1.1563+2.8125+0.9720+1.8294+0.0195+0.0521 \approx 6.0418$

Degrees of Freedom:
$df=(r-1)(c-1)=(3-1)(2-1)=2$
The critical value for $\alpha=0.05$ with $df=2$ is **5.991**.
Since 6.0418>5.991, we **reject** the null hypothesis for educational background.

Findings
Table No. 1 indicates that among the 80 respondents, a significant majority (60%) rely on social media for product recommendations "Sometimes." Additionally, 26.25% of respondents "Often" utilize social media for such recommendations, while 13.75% "Always" turn to these platforms. This suggests that social media is a common but not universally relied-upon source for product recommendations.
In Table No. 2, YouTube is identified as the most influential platform, cited by 36.25% of respondents as their primary source of influence. Facebook follows closely with 31.25%, while Instagram is mentioned by 21.25% of respondents. Twitter, however, has a smaller impact, influencing only 11.25% of respondents. This indicates that video content and social networking sites play significant roles in shaping consumer decisions.
Table No. 3 reveals that 30% of respondents feel social media rarely affects their purchasing decisions. However, 28.75% indicated that they consider buying a product immediately upon seeing it on social media. A further 21.25% prefer to research more before making a purchase, while 20% stated that social media has no impact on their decisions. This shows a considerable influence of social media on purchasing behavior, though many respondents still seek additional information before committing to a purchase.
According to Table No. 4, the highest percentage of respondents (38.75%) reported that they rarely engage with social media promotions. However, 30% indicated they engage with these promotions frequently, suggesting a significant level of interaction with such marketing efforts. In contrast, 13.75% said they sometimes engage with promotions, while 17.5% claimed to never notice them. This highlights a notable portion of the audience that either rarely or never engages with social media promotions.
Table No. 5 illustrates that 32.50% of respondents feel moderately influenced by social media influencers when making purchasing decisions. Additionally, 26.25% indicated they are greatly influenced by these figures, while 23.75% reported slight influence. Meanwhile, 17.5% stated that influencers do not affect their decisions at all. This indicates a significant impact of influencers on a large segment of the consumer population, although some remain unaffected.
In Table No. 6, a substantial 35% of respondents reported that social media promotions have no impact on their trust in a brand. Conversely, 27.5% noted that such promotions could decrease trust, suggesting a degree of skepticism. On the positive side, 17.5% claimed that promotions significantly increase trust, while 20% said they slightly enhance trust. This showcases a diverse range of opinions regarding the impact of social media promotions on brand credibility.

Table No. 7 indicates that 43.75% of respondents rarely notice unusual price increases or product shortages linked to social media trends. Meanwhile, 26.25% indicated they occasionally observe such trends, and 13.75% believe these trends often lead to price hikes. Conversely, 16.25% reported that they have never noticed any effects. This suggests that while many do not perceive frequent disruptions, some respondents are aware of the influence of social media on market conditions.

According to Table No. 8, the largest segment of respondents (28.75%) stated that their purchasing behavior depends on the campaign, illustrating the importance of marketing efforts. Equal percentages (26.25%) indicated they either buy the same amount or buy less, suggesting that social media does not drastically change consumption patterns for many. Only 18.75% reported buying more products due to social media influences, indicating a varied range of responses regarding buying behavior.

Table No. 9 highlights that 31.25% of respondents prefer brands that offer promotions through social media. Additionally, equal shares (26.25%) appreciate brands that connect with them through targeted ads or customer engagement. Meanwhile, 16.25% of respondents do not use social media, suggesting that a small segment remains unaffected by these marketing strategies. This emphasizes the significance of promotions and personalized interactions in influencing consumer preferences.

In Table No. 10, 32.50% of respondents stated that brands offer discounts to clear old stock during sudden demand surges. A similar percentage (32.50%) reported being unaware of any actions taken by brands in response to such surges. Meanwhile, 21.25% indicated that brands quickly restock products, and 13.75% said brands take no action at all. This reflects a range of perceptions regarding how brands respond to unexpected increases in demand.

Based on the Chi-Square tests conducted for the associations between demographic factors (age, gender, and educational background) and social media usage among users in Tier 2 cities, the following findings can be derived:

11. Age Group:- The Chi-Square statistic calculated is approximately 13.6019, with 2 degrees of freedom. The critical value for $\alpha = 0.05$ is 5.991. Since $13.6019 > 5.991$, we reject the null hypothesis. This indicates a significant association between age group and social media usage, suggesting that different age groups utilize social media differently.

12. Gender: - The Chi-Square statistic calculated is approximately 11.2618, with 1 degree of freedom. The critical value for $\alpha = 0.05$ is 3.841. Since $11.2618 > 3.841$, we reject the null hypothesis. This shows a significant association between gender and social media usage, indicating that males and females have differing patterns of social media engagement.

13. Educational Background: - The Chi-Square statistic calculated is approximately 6.0418, with 2 degrees of freedom. The critical value for $\alpha = 0.05$ is 5.991. Since $6.0418 > 5.991$, we reject the null hypothesis. This reveals a significant association between educational background and social media usage, suggesting that the level of education influences social media usage patterns among individuals.

Suggestions:

1. Targeted Marketing Campaigns:

- Brands and marketers should consider the demographic insights gained from this study to design targeted marketing campaigns. For instance, campaigns aimed at younger age groups (18-24) could leverage platforms like Instagram or TikTok, which are popular among this demographic, while campaigns for older age groups (35-44) might utilize Facebook or LinkedIn more effectively.

2. Gender-Specific Content:

- Content and messaging should be tailored to resonate with different genders. Understanding the unique preferences and engagement patterns of male and female users can help in creating more effective content strategies that foster higher engagement and conversion rates.

3. Education-Based Strategies:

- Educational institutions and organizations can use these insights to promote digital literacy programs aimed at enhancing social media skills, particularly among those with lower education levels. This can empower individuals to leverage social media for professional networking and personal branding.

4. Engagement Initiatives:

- Businesses could implement community engagement initiatives that cater to various age groups, such as workshops, webinars, and events that promote social media usage in meaningful ways. This not only **increases brand awareness but also builds community ties.**

5. Further Research:

- Additional studies could explore the motivations behind social media usage across different demographics. Understanding what drives engagement—be it entertainment, information, or social interaction—can provide deeper insights for marketers and content creators.

Conclusion:

The analysis reveals significant associations between demographic factors—age, gender, and educational background—and social media usage among users in Tier 2 cities. The findings indicate that demographic characteristics are critical in understanding social media engagement patterns. As a result, businesses and organizations should leverage these insights to create more effective and targeted marketing strategies that resonate with specific demographic groups. By recognizing the diverse needs and preferences of users based on their demographics, brands can enhance their engagement efforts, foster stronger customer relationships, and ultimately drive business success in the evolving digital landscape.

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