MATA SUNDRI COLLEGE FOR WOMEN
UNIVERSITY OF DELHI
&
ASIAN SCHOOL OF BUSINESS, NOIDA

Presents

PROCEEDINGS OF ASBIC 2024 INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON JAN 2026

SAMIKHIYA

A MULTIDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH JOURNAL

ISSN:2583-827X (ONLINE)
VOLUME 5
(SPECIAL ISSUE)
JANUARY - 2026

https://journal.mscw.ac.in/mscw_Journal.aspx
Double-Blind Peer Reviewed Journal

SAMIKHIYA: A Multidisciplinary Research Journal
ISSN: 2583-827X (Online)
Volume 5, Special Issue, January 2026
Available at: https://journal.mscw.ac.in/mscw_Journal.aspx

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ISSN:2583-827X (ONLINE) OPEN ACCESS

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The Journal is indexed with ISSN, Mendeley, Google Scholar, DRJI, SJIF and ICI (Index Copernicus International).

SAMIKHIYA: A Multidisciplinary Research Journal
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Volume 5, Special Issue, January 2026
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Cultural Narratives in the Digital Age: Social Media's Influence on Sustaining and Shaping Cultural Identity

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ABSTRACT

In a world that is becoming increasingly interconnected, the self-formation of cultural identities and their sustenance across generations has emerged as an important issue, especially for societies seeking to stay true to their roots while being part of the digital modern civilization. This paper aims to qualitatively investigate the impact of social media on culture by examining the intricate relationship between cultural production, which in this case is mediated by social technologies that are central to the twenty-first century and social media's role as an instrument of modern culture communication and production. Cultural exchange has been altered by social media through the creation and implementation of methods that allow for the sharing, reinvention, and continuity of unique communities' cultural narratives in the presence of the entire world. Storytelling through visuals, collaborative content-building, and participation allow individuals and societies to assert their cultural identity, respond to stereotypes, and build unity among differing communities. This research focuses on the ways social networking sites enhances preservation and transmission of traditions and how contemporaneity has affected them. It also explores social media as a contradictory phenomenon, the two-sidedness of which is expressed in the fact that this source both preserves and transforms cultural identity.

Keywords- *Cultural Identity, Social Media, Cultural Narratives, Digital Age, Cultural Sustainability*

INTRODUCTION

Social media marked a significant turning point in the way people and communities communicate by offering new, untapped instruments to share and interact across geographical as well as cultural lines. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, and YouTube-from their origins as pure social networking sites through all these different developments-have come to constitute dynamic spaces where tradition meets modernity, local cultures meet global influences, and new cultural identities are manufactured. This evolution goes far in the depth of how societies think of, conserve, and transform their cultural narratives about an increasingly digital world. Cultural identity, rooted in shared values, traditions, and collective memories, has been conventionally tied to physical locations, oral histories, and communitarian practices. Nowadays, though, the term takes on a different connotation, one that refers to virtual spaces where cultures are preserved, re-imagined, and disseminated. Social media represents an exciting space where individuals and communities can tell their stories, celebrate their heritage, and assert their identities in front of a global audience (Osborne, 2001). From traditional recipes on social media to the call for endangered languages, or indigenous art forms, social media has become a necessary tool in the fight against cultural erosion (Dyson et al., 2016). These platforms become a means of rediscovery for marginalized and diasporic communities so that they may reconnect to their heritage, find representation, and amplify the sounds of voice in the global cultural discourse.

Social media has emerged as a digital archive of cultural practices and heritage. Platforms such as social media are accessible and enabling users to document and disseminate traditional knowledge, ensuring its survival in this rapidly globalising world. For example, Instagram accounts dedicated to cultural crafts or YouTube channels teaching traditional cooking techniques are used to preserve skills and stories that would otherwise be lost. Virtual spaces also support the survival of endangered languages by allowing people to share tutorials, songs, and daily conversations in their native tongues for kids to participate and get involved with audiences around the world. This also democratized cultural expression to the point where even the most repressed groups could develop and share their sense of identity. The excluded communities from mainstream media can now afford to produce authentic presentations of their heritage and demystify their stereotypes. Such democratization can become a more inclusive global cultural space where different voices are heard and celebrated. Beyond its preservation aspect, social media transforms the cultural identity profoundly. Participatory nature and interactivity features on these sites make users want to remix and reinterpret their traditions with contemporary trends to come up with cultural expressions that have a hybrid form (Sutrisno, 2023). This phenomenon, by the way, generally happens in the middle class, as they are good at digital utility for reimagining what is perceived to be cultural heritage so that it can be expressed locally and globally. For instance, traditional dance styles gained a new audience when set to modern music and spread as viral videos on TikTok with millions of hits. Again, indigenous art styles are easily incorporated into digital design projects or become part of joint fashion ventures between global brands and emerging designers, so that the channels for cultural expression expand constantly. These adaptations ensure the relevance of cultural practices in modern contexts, making them accessible to a wider audience while fostering a sense of pride and ownership among younger generations. At the same time, however, the interplay between social media and cultural identity presents numerous challenges. The global nature of such platforms can drive widespread cultural homogenization, with the dominant narratives and trends pulling above local traditions. Algorithms that focus on virality frequently amplify content that adheres to dominant aesthetics or uncomplicated narratives while further cementing the silencing of nuanced and multifaceted aspects of cultural heritage. Misinformation and misrepresentation add another layer of messiness to the digital negotiation of culture. When cultural practices are again taken out of context or misrepresented in this pursuit of likes and shares, stereotypes are recycled and a rich heritage is reduced to superficial trends. For instance, traditional attire might be showcased as fashion statements without acknowledging their historical or ceremonial significance.

The issue of cultural commodification is also a major concern (Bai & Weng, 2023). Social media's monetarizing thrust has commercialised cultural icons and trademarks, rendering them meaningless symbols that sell the underlying cultural values. In such a process, creators outside the primary culture stand to gain; thus, ownership and appropriation become issues. The challenges are worsened by the digital divide, as uneven distribution of technology and lack of digital literacy hampers underrepresented groups' ability to participate. Without equal access, these groups' cultural contributions are then liable to be surpassed or even altogether absent in the digital record.

In the conceptualization of globalization, which is now erasing the porous nature of cultures, the problem of struggling to keep vital cultural identities intact while being engaged in global conversations arises. The possibility exists for the use of social media, which acts as a preserver and transformer of culture, to strike this balance for communities to interact with the global audience while protecting the authentic content of their heritage. For this reason, digital literacy and cultural awareness should be given precedence. Users need the tools to critically engage with online content, meaning representations have to be accurate and respectful. Content creators, influencers, and platforms share responsibility in contextualizing the cultural elements they showcase, so significance is preserved but pushed into modern formats. Influencers and user-generated content are key factors in developing cultural narratives on social media. Digital leaders, who often combine elements of the old with the new, can bridge the generation gap and introduce local cultures to global audiences. Millions of followers who look at and like or dislike their posts make these influencers powerful advocates for preserving and re-innovating cultures with responsibility to authentically represent the cultures they are supposed to portray.

Participatory culture, of course, is a characteristic of social media. Platforms can amplify the potential for engagement by enabling the user to co-create and share content, meaning that there is a collective approach toward storytelling. This democratization of cultural production ensures that heritage is living and evolving rather than being inanimate and static. As this paper explores, the influence of social media on cultural identity is multifaceted. This medium provides immense opportunities in all matters of preserving culture, innovation, and representation while posing significant risks that need to be addressed. The challenge lies in fostering a digital environment to celebrate diversity, empower marginalized voices, and balance tradition with modernity. Based on theoretical insights and case studies, this research gives social media a better perspective regarding how it contributes to the formation of cultural identity. At the core of the issue is that digital heritage representations must be inclusive and ethical. Communities, content creators, and platforms have a common interest in cooperation with each other. Social media is more than just a communication tool-it's actually a space for transformative construction or deconstruction of cultural narratives. Its potential would then mean the potential for society to ensure that their traditions and identities flourish in the digital age and be part of a richer, more interconnected global cultural landscape.

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Available at: https://journal.mscw.ac.in/mscw_Journal.aspx

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Social Media as a Catalyst for Cultural Preservation

Social media has emerged as one of the most powerful mediums for the preservation of cultural heritage in a rapidly globalising and digitising world (Bibi & Hanif, 2024). Since these platforms enable the documentation, dissemination, and celebration of cultural practices, they create digital repositories for traditions that would otherwise fade with time. The participatory nature of social media allows individuals and communities to take active roles in showcasing their heritage; it fosters global appreciation while reinforcing local identity.

2.1.1 Documenting Intangible Heritage: One of the contributions of social media is that it can record intangible cultural heritage, like traditional arts, crafts, rituals, and languages (Bai & Tirakoat, 2023). Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok are especially effective in this regard, capturing and disseminating these cultural elements through the visual appeal of photographs and videos. For instance:

- **Traditional Arts and Crafts**: The artisans use Instagram to put out images and videos showing the techniques of making the pottery, weaving, or painting. In this regard, they not only help in preserving the methods but also reach wider audiences that may support their work economically.
- **Rituals and Ceremonies**: YouTube channels have begun to document religious and community rituals, creating a kind of digital archive for something that might otherwise be held at specific locations or events.
- **Endangered Languages:** TikTok and YouTube have increasingly become mediums of teaching and promotion of endangered languages. Here, creators produce short, accessible lessons that work well for younger audiences.

This form of documentation ensures that even as physical practices wane, a digital record remains, accessible for future generations and scholars.

2.1.2 Community Building: Social media also plays an important role in creating communities that honour and revitalize cultural practices. This is particularly vital to diasporic communities using these platforms to reconnect to their cultural heritage and others who share the same roots. Examples include:

- **Diaspora Engagement**: Social media groups on Facebook or hashtags on Instagram create areas for diasporic people to share stories, recipes, and cultural knowledge. In doing so, it maintains the feeling of belonging within these communities and ensures a cultural continuity despite geographical distance (Longo & Scott, 2023).
- **Collaborative Storytelling**: Platforms like Reddit and Discord support collaborative storytelling, where people contribute stories, historical narratives, or folklore associated with their cultural background. The participatory nature of the approach not only preserves the cultural memory but also aligns it with the context of the time.
- **Virtual Celebrations**: It has become very common that with the pandemic of COVID-19, many communities engage in social media to hold online celebrations of cultural festivals (Shipman & Vogel, 2024). There were live-streamed performances, digital workshops, and online marketplaces of traditional goods, thus assuring the continuation of the culture even in its confinement.

2.1.3 Amplifying Indigenous Voices: The indigenous communities, which have long been marginalized in mainstream media, have now found a strong voice on social media. They can challenge dominant cultural narratives, assert their identities, and advocate for their rights through these platforms. Some examples include:

- **Cultural Reclamation**: Indigenous creators are utilizing platforms such as TikTok and Instagram to reclaim and showcase their traditions, be it storytelling and music to attire and cuisine. Such posts often go viral, and the indigenous cultures get publicity worldwide (Huttayavilaiphan, 2024).
- **Activism and Advocacy**: The #IndigenousPeoplesDay and #LandBack social media campaigns have helped to amplify Indigenous voices on historical injustices and struggles for rights and recognition.
- **Education and Outreach**: Through their education and activism, indigenous writers and teachers are making content that spreads their history, customs, and the plight for cross-cultural understanding and solidarity.

By documenting intangible heritage, fostering community connections, and amplifying marginalized voices, social media has become a vital tool for cultural preservation. Its ability to bridge generational gaps, connect diasporas, and spotlight underrepresented cultures ensures that traditions remain vibrant and adaptable in an ever-changing world. However, this potential

SAMIKHIYA: A Multidisciplinary Research Journal
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Volume 5, Special Issue, January 2026 pp. 1-18
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must be harnessed responsibly, ensuring that digital representations of culture are authentic, respectful, and inclusive.

2.2 Shaping Cultural Identity in a Digital Landscape

The digital world has completely changed how cultural identity is defined, expressed, and perceived. Social media has become a dynamic space for negotiating cultural norms, redefining traditional practices, and creating identities. Hybrid identities are developed through a diversity of factors, including leading influencers, participatory culture, the fusion of local customs with global trends, and others.

2.2.1 Influencers and New Cultural Norms

Social media influencers have drastically altered cultural narratives by combining old elements with modern tastes for presentation to the world. Influencers automatically present their cultural heritage but blend it into contemporary aesthetics and trends for its diverse followers (Abidin, 2016).

- **Cultural Bridging**: From traditional to modern wardrobes, fashion bloggers influence incorporate old attires into their everyday wardrobes; in addition, chefs change recipes from the past into lifestyles that suit the younger generation and the globalised generation (Sedeke, 2012).
- **Global Reach**: Using social media, such as Instagram and YouTube, influencers help amplify the cultural narratives into wider communities than their local communities (Leaver et al., 2020). For instance, traditional Indian sarees are now a global phenomenon with the use of modern styles by influencers
- **Redefining Norms**: Mostly, influencers challenge the stereotypes people have about their cultures; they present a more progressive and more inclusive interpretation (Christoffersen, 2021). For example, they may be on an individual's platform pushing for the equality of gender in traditionally cultural frameworks or advocating marginalized voices within the community.

Though they play a role in the preservation and adaptation of culture, in representing culture, influencers sometimes end up commodifying complex traditions, reducing them to trends for mass consumption.

2.2.2 Participatory Culture

Contemporary cultural discourses are highly influenced by participatory culture, which is characterized by active involvement of users in the production and sharing of content. Social media allows people to participate in the creation of cultural narratives, democratizing both the creation and the circulation (Giaccardi, 2012).

- **User-Generated Content**: Platforms such as TikTok, YouTube, and Instagram depend on user-generated content in which people can share their understanding of cultural practices (Dijck, 2009). Viral challenges, like dancing to traditional dances or uploading regional recipes, represent participatory engagement.
- **Crowdsourced Storytelling**: With the digital platforms, there's an opportunity for collaborative storytelling in which users participate in developing collective cultural narratives. For example, there is the hashtag movement #MyCulture, #IndigenousPride, or cooperative digital archives.
- **Engagement and Feedback**: Unlike traditional media, social media allows for instant interaction in which users can interact with content through likes, comments, and shares. It is in this way that interactivity shapes the presentation, negotiation, and perception of cultural identity.

Participatory culture empowers people to express their identities and hence fosters inclusivity and allows diverse voices to talk about cultural conversations. Meanwhile, it raises concerns against the authenticity and accuracy in cultural representations in user-generated content.

2.2.3 Hybrid Identities

The digital landscape has led to the rise of hybrid cultural identities that are influenced by both local traditions and global influences. Social media is a space where users find themselves balancing their cultural heritage with the more general, globalized world.

- **Cultural Fusion**: Examples of hybrid identities are the modernization of traditional festivals with some modern features, such as live streaming of Diwali, or regional music blended with international genres, such as hip-hop or EDM.
- **Diasporic Experiences**: In the case of diaspora communities, social media becomes that link between the past and present, helping in the development of an identity that can neither be exclusively traditional nor completely modern but a bit of both.

- **Negotiating Authenticity**: Hybrid identities blur the lines of authenticity that exist in traditional thinking; they represent the fluid and changeable nature of culture in the world of connection. In this regard, they represent an ability of individuals and groups to adapt and innovate with their cultural essence intact.

Such hybrid identities resonate with younger generations looking to honor their heritage yet embracing global citizenship. On the other hand, they generate debate in communities about what constitutes "authentic" cultural expression, reflecting an ongoing negotiation of identity in a digital world.

The shaping of cultural identity through the digital landscape is inherently dynamic, hence dependent on elements such as influencers, participatory culture, and hybridisation. Social media channels offer opportunities for people to explore, negotiate, and redefine their identities in ways respectful of their heritage but still innovative. Yet, the process is further enriched by critical awareness of how the resulting cultural narratives should remain more authentic, inclusive, and representative of the communities concerned.

2.3 Challenges in the Digital Age

While social media opens unprecedented avenues for cultural preservation and identity, it comes with its fair share of challenges. The digital age has reshaped the way cultures are shared and consumed in a manner that creates risks such as cultural homogenization, the spread of misinformation, and unequal access to digital resources. These risks remind one of the complexity involved in using social media for cultural narratives in an increasingly interconnected world. Because there are only a handful of major social media leaders dominating the globe, specifically Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok, cultural homogenization becomes a pressing concern due to the algorithms that shape their platforms often favour content deemed popular or universally entertaining while further marginalizing unique, diverse cultural expressions in favour of globalized trends.

- **Loss of Local Context**: In this effort to seek content that goes viral and is liked and shared, cultural elements are reduced or watered down in an attempt to make it more accessible to the international crowd. This often results in a dilution of cultural nuance and tradition that have deep roots in local context.
- **Standardization of Aesthetics**: Due to the visual nature of services like Instagram, uniform aspects impose cultural practices. For instance, conventional clothing or festivals are dressed

SAMIKHIYA: A Multidisciplinary Research Journal
ISSN: 2583-827X (Online)
Volume 5, Special Issue, January 2026 pp. 1-18
Available at: https://journal.mscw.ac.in/mscw_Journal.aspx

with a certain aesthetic that coincides with the Western ideal and notions of consumerism, dislocating the original concept and value of the very custom.

- **Cultural Appropriation**: Global accessibility has increased the chances of cultural appropriation where elements of one culture are taken and commodified by others without understanding and respect. Often, it reduces them to being trends.
- **Stereotyping**: Cultural practices and identities tend to be oversimplified or misrepresented in digital content, reinforcing harmful stereotypes. For example, indigenous cultures may be romanticized or exoticized, representing them as static and primitive rather than dynamic and evolutionary.
- **Spread of Fake Narratives**: Misinformation regarding historical issues, traditional practices, and cultural norms is very influential on social media and thus allows misconceptions about certain communities to dominate.
- **Overrepresentation of Dominant Narratives**: The voices of dominant groups or cultures are always heard before those of the marginalized, indigenous communities. This kind of thing gives imbalances in cultural representation, including ignoring traditional practices of those cultures that are not being recognized or valued in equal terms with the mainstreaming ones.
- **Limited Access**: Effective use of digital platforms by communities in rural or economically disadvantaged regions is usually impossible due to the lack of infrastructure, resources, or education. This means their cultural practices cannot be documented and shared, meaning their stories are under-represented in the digital space.
- **Exclusion of Marginalized Groups**: Other factors that limit access include gender inequality, linguistic barriers, and disabilities, which further marginalize the cultural contributions of marginalized groups.
- **Urban Bias**: The digital platforms often target the urban users, with features and content that may not be relevant or accessible to the rural or indigenous populations. Therefore, the digital landscape is at risk of perpetuating existing inequalities.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative methodology to conduct an in-depth investigation into the complex relationships between social media platforms and cultural narratives. It focused on how these digital platforms impact and influence cultural identity across diverse contexts while being

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sensitive to the nuanced complexities of the relationships between users, content, and cultural representation in the digital space. The research examined the multifaceted ways in which social media promotes cultural preservation, change, and identity formation in a globalized, interconnected world.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The study adopted an exploratory research approach to investigate the multifaceted role of social media in maintaining and reforming cultural identity. By integrating diverse qualitative methods, it provided a comprehensive understanding of the impact of digital platforms on cultural narratives. The core methods included case studies, content analysis, and secondary literature review.

The case studies examined specific instances where social media played a significant role in sustaining cultural practices or creating new cultural identities, such as supporting indigenous art, recording endangered languages, and reviving traditional dance forms. Content analysis was utilized to systematically examine social media posts, videos, and comments, identifying recurring themes, patterns, and trends related to cultural representation. The study placed particular emphasis on user-generated content and the influence of social media influencers in shaping cultural discourse. Secondary literature reviews contextualized the findings by drawing on existing research, reports, and theoretical frameworks, connecting the study to broader cultural and communication theories. Together, these methodologies offered a thorough exploration of the dynamic relationship between social media and cultural identity in the digital age.

CASE STUDIES

Social media has now become the cornerstone in the preservation of culture and building identity, with real-life examples showing the impact of this phenomenon. From language revitalization to virtual celebrations of cultural festivals and youth-led cultural movements, these examples showcase the transformative role of digital tools in sustaining and reshaping cultural narratives (Irawan, 2023).

a. Reviving Endangered Languages

Communities around the world are taking advantage of social media to conserve and promote endangered languages so they can survive in the digital age (Nzeaka & Ehondor, 2025). Such efforts are tapping into the interactive, far-reaching nature of platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and

TikTok to attract new audiences. Example: Native American Languages Indigenous peoples in North America use the platforms of Twitter and YouTube to teach and revitalize their languages. For instance, the Navajo language is promoted with short TikTok videos for daily phrases, cultural proverbs, and storytelling. Some campaigns like #SpeakNavajo or YouTube tutorials by tribal educators have inspired young generations to learn and use their native languages, giving them more pride in their culture and heritage (Reitcheck, 2024).

Another example of endangered language revival is the Gaelic Revival in Scotland. Digital resurrection for Scottish Gaelic language happens on Instagram and YouTube where creators post about traditional songs, folklore, and language tutorials. Social media rallying behind hashtags such as #LearnGaelic is how people can promote engagement and collective learning. It has become an essential tool for language preservation through accessible resources and creating global awareness, especially among the youth and diasporic communities (Willis, 2024).

b. Cultural Festivals and Virtual Celebrations

The COVID-19 pandemic made it very apparent that social media plays a big role in maintaining cultural activities when physical congregations were prohibited. Communities around the world took their celebrations and rituals online to participate in virtual celebrations. India's Durga Puja is one of them. Cultural institutions live-streamed Durga Puja on YouTube and Facebook when public congregations were not allowed. Elaborate temple decorations, or pandals, were showcased through virtual tours and online prayer sessions that allowed participation by devotees across the world (Banerjee & Mondal, 2024). Instagram hashtags like #VirtualDurgaPuja connected people who shared personal celebrations, recipes, and artwork inspired by the festival.

The Chinese New Year celebrations are another great example through which social media has fostered the preservation and adaptation of cultural tradition in the digital age (Jiang, 2024). Indeed, during the pandemic, Chinese New Year activities, for instance, lion dances, cooking lessons, and family gatherings were held live on video platforms including TikTok and Douyin. These platforms, besides allowing virtual red envelope gifting, sharing of cultural stories, and participation in distant festivity, ensured the celebration carried on despite restrictions that limit the gathering. On further extension, these virtual adjustments promoted global participation and facilitated understanding beyond cultures. This Chinese New Year tradition survived and thrived by embracing digital platforms, connecting people across the world, and retaining the cultural significance of the holiday.

c. Youth-Led Cultural Movements

The younger generations are at the forefront of shaping cultural narratives online through social media, using it to promote heritage, challenge stereotypes, and create new spaces for cultural expression. For instance, the Afrocentric movements on TikTok have become a significant phenomenon where young creators of African descent are showcasing traditional dances, attire, and folklore often mixed with modern music and global trends (Faidi, 2024). This blend of heritage with contemporary culture has gained significant traction worldwide, fostering cultural pride and dispelling long-held stereotypes about African traditions.

In Jammu and Kashmir, for example, young creators are using platforms such as Instagram and YouTube to revive and promote Dogri culture. Through content such as storytelling, poetry recitations, and music videos, they bring to the fore the Dogri language, cuisine, and art and bring these back to younger generations while simultaneously engaging wider audiences. These digital movements portray how young people bind the past and the present into each other's arms while creating hybrid cultural identities that are strongly located in tradition yet reflective of the realities of the modern world.

These case studies underline the various ways social media is used to conserve and transform cultural identities. In promoting endangered languages, adjusting traditional festivals to virtual space, and empowering youth-led movements, digital spaces have become indispensable in ensuring the continuation of culture in this age. However, these examples also point to the necessity of mindful engagement to ensure innovation does not compromise authenticity and integrity in cultural practices.

DISCUSSION

The dual role of social media as both preserver and transformer of culture reveals a rather complicated relationship between technology and cultural identity. While social media furnishes powerful tools for documentation, sharing, and revitalization of cultural practices, languages, and traditions, it brings along challenges that require very delicate navigation to ensure that the authentic and diverse nature of cultures remains intact. This medium lets communities archive and share culture in ways that were untouchable before. Since social media has broken apart boundaries of cultural expression, just about any individual or a community with geographical or other limitations can share their past with the world. Because of this democratization of access, it opens it up to more marginalized areas to take back their telling. Such social media applications as Instagram and

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ISSN: 2583-827X (Online)
Volume 5, Special Issue, January 2026 pp. 1-18
Available at: https://journal.mscw.ac.in/mscw_Journal.aspx

TikTok allow one to share cultural practices such as dances, rituals, or festivals immediately. It gives an opportunity to create a living archive of traditions for the following generations. Social media is an important bridge between diasporic communities and their roots, fostering a sense of belonging and identity. For instance, diaspora populations use social media to celebrate festivals, learn languages, and engage with their heritage in a virtual setting.

While these contributions emphasize social media's potential to conserve culture, the transformative power of such a platform cannot be underestimated. The transformative role that social media plays changes perceptions toward cultural identity and its practices from traditional to contemporary, in efforts to meet the demands of an online audience. Cultural practices typically change when they are transmuted for digital use. Traditional festivals may adopt virtual aspects, or regional music blended with international styles can be used to make them popular among the youth. In this hybridization process, although traditions are maintained alive, they are also changed in their intent and purpose. Social media promotes re-creation and innovation of cultural norms that challenge the traditional sense of authenticity. For example, an older garment designed in modern times can be said to portray a sense of pride towards its culture but might at the same time attract much criticism about losing its meaning. In such circumstances, as more and more cultures engage with one another online, there is increased merging of practices, shared traditions; however, the danger in this is losing distinctness in cultural identities. This discussion highlights that social media has played a multifaceted role in shaping culture in the digital age. As a preserver and a transformer of culture, social media provides unparalleled opportunities for renewal and innovation while requiring vigilance over cultural integrity. Social media can remain a great outlet for cultural expression, fostering heritage and traditions to flourish in the modern world by being mindful and inclusive in the digital environment.

CONCLUSION

The digital age has revolutionized the ways in which culture is preserved, shared, and reshaped, with social media emerging as a central force in these processes. This paper probed into the dual role that social media plays: the preserver and the transformer of cultural identity, with its capacity to sustain heritage while admitting its complexities and challenges. Social media has democratized cultural preservation by documenting and sharing cultural narratives. It gives individuals and communities the ability to share their traditions, languages, and practices with a global audience without boundaries. Social media is a modern repository of intangible heritage through virtual

SAMIKHIYA: A Multidisciplinary Research Journal
ISSN: 2583-827X (Online)
Volume 5, Special Issue, January 2026 pp. 1-18
Available at: https://journal.mscw.ac.in/mscw_Journal.aspx

spaces where cultural festivals are celebrated, endangered languages are taught, and historical narratives are reclaimed. Its potential to engage the community is very important for diasporic populations, allowing them to remain connected with their cultural heritage and develop stronger identities despite geographical distance. In parallel, social media has changed the construction and perception of cultural identity. Hybridization and participatory culture blend the traditional with the modern, creating new, dynamic expressions of heritage. User-generated content enables a person to recreate his or her culture in new, creative ways that are then relevant to modern-day audiences. For instance, younger generations often use platforms like TikTok and Instagram to share versions of traditional dances, clothing, and music that are adapted to modernity while still showing respect for tradition. Such efforts prove that culture is resilient to the changing times.

Social media, despite its transformative quality, poses serious challenges. Its possible dangers include commodification of cultures, especially where traditions and symbols are packaged as trends for consumption without context. Traditionally attired people may look like pieces of fashion displayed online only to lose all the historical significance of traditional dresses. Once again, major stories dominate even the smallest voice through global discourse on algorithm-generated content sharing platforms. This digital homogenization threatens the diversity that makes cultural heritage rich and multifaceted. The other significant issue is the spread of misinformation and misrepresentation. Social media's decentralized nature makes it susceptible to the proliferation of stereotypes and distorted narratives. Misrepresentation of cultures, whether intentional or inadvertent, can perpetuate harmful biases and marginalize communities. This makes matters worse because the access afforded by the digital divide excludes the underrepresented and resource-poor communities from the new space in which their cultural contributions remain unacknowledged. To deal with these challenges, a more mindful and inclusive approach to using social media as a cultural tool is necessary. Digital literacy must be promoted to enable users to engage with cultural content critically and avoid perpetuating inaccuracies or stereotypes. Additionally, access to digital resources and platforms must empower marginalized communities so that their voices can be heard. Content creators and influencers must contextualize the traditions they share to add more depth to the cultural significance of the practices. Social media is a powerful, yet complex, medium for cultural preservation and identity formation in the digital age. It offers unparalleled opportunities for communities to safeguard their heritage and share it with the world while simultaneously reshaping cultural expressions to fit contemporary realities. Inclusivity, authenticity, and critical engagement in such potential can be used to leverage social media to celebrate diversity, ensure that

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traditions survive within the transformative tides of technology, and double their commitment to preservation and innovation for navigating the complex interface of culture and social media within a globalized world.

FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

The research points out that social media will remain essential in cultural preservation and identity creation. As platforms change, cultural institutions and governments can use them for virtual heritage tours, language revival initiatives, and interactive narratives, making heritage more accessible. Cultural commodification and misrepresentation will still be challenges, threatening the dilution of traditions into aesthetic trends. To fight this, ethical content practices and policies that encourage truthful portrayal will be necessary. Digital inclusivity will be crucial, where marginalized communities will have equal opportunities to share their cultural history. The increasing power of immersive technologies such as AR and VR will provide new forms of participation with cultural heritage. Future policy intervention and research will be required to manage the changing influence of social media on culture, ensuring that it continues to be a medium for true representation, preservation, and significant development in the modern age.

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SAMIKHIYA: A Multidisciplinary Research Journal
ISSN: 2583-827X (Online)
Volume 5, Special Issue, January 2026 pp.19-41
Available at: https://journal.mscw.ac.in/mscw_Journal.aspx

Analysing The Influence of Price, Quality and Delivery Time on Consumer Purchase Intentions: Evidence from the Indian Market

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ABSTRACT

In the dynamic and competitive landscape of the Indian consumer market, understanding the key factors that drive purchase decisions is critical for businesses seeking to enhance customer satisfaction and build long-term loyalty. This research explores the combined influence of three major determinants – price sensitivity, perceived product quality, and delivery time – on the consumer's intention to purchase. The study is rooted in the context of evolving consumer expectations in India, where digital transformation and increased market access have significantly altered buying behaviour.

A quantitative research design was adopted, utilizing a structured questionnaire distributed among a sample selected through probability sampling techniques. The responses were statistically analysed to assess the relative impact of each factor on purchase intent. The analysis revealed that product quality has the most substantial effect on consumer decision-making, indicating that buyers prioritize value and reliability over mere cost considerations. Price sensitivity, while still influential, ranked second, suggesting that affordability remains a concern but is often balanced against quality perceptions. Delivery time, although the least impactful among the three, still played a notable role, especially in the context of online retail where convenience and promptness are valued.

The findings offer meaningful insights for marketers, producers, and logistics managers aiming to align their strategies with contemporary consumer expectations. Indian businesses, especially startups and SMEs, can leverage these insights to position their offerings more effectively, optimize pricing strategies, and streamline delivery operations. Moreover, this study contributes to the academic discourse on consumer behaviour in emerging economies and highlights the need for further research that incorporates technological adoption, brand loyalty, and post-purchase experiences as additional variables influencing buying behaviour.

INTRODUCTION

In India's dynamic and competitive retail landscape, understanding consumer behaviour has become increasingly crucial for businesses aiming to stay relevant and customer centric. With growing market diversity, digital transformation, and heightened competition, consumer expectations have evolved rapidly – especially in relation to product pricing, perceived quality, and delivery performance (Singh & Srivastava, 2021). These three factors are no longer independent considerations but often interrelated determinants that significantly influence consumer intention and purchase decisions.

Price sensitivity continues to be a defining characteristic of Indian consumers, particularly in a value-driven market. However, affordability is no longer the sole criterion. As purchasing power rises, many consumers are willing to consider premium pricing if it aligns with perceived product value or superior service (Gupta & Yadav, 2022). Thus, understanding how consumers interpret price – as a cost, a quality cue, or both – is critical for businesses devising pricing strategies.

Alongside price, perceived product quality remains a core factor influencing both initial purchase and long-term brand loyalty. Recent studies indicate that Indian consumers prioritize attributes such as durability, performance, and after-sale service, especially in durable goods and electronics segments (Rana, Dey, & Kalliny, 2020). Quality is increasingly seen not just as a product characteristic but as part of a broader brand experience.

In parallel, the importance of timely delivery has surged with the growth of e-commerce and digital retailing. Consumers now expect quick and reliable delivery, and any deviation from these expectations can negatively affect brand perception and repeat purchase behaviour. Research shows that delivery performance has become a key differentiator in customer satisfaction and retention, particularly among online shoppers in urban India (Kumar & Anjaly, 2021).

While these dimensions – price, quality, and delivery have been studied individually in prior consumer research, there is limited empirical evidence on how they interact to shape consumer purchase intention, particularly in the Indian market. This study addresses that gap by exploring how Indian consumers evaluate trade-offs between price, product quality, and delivery timelines, and how these preferences vary across demographics.

Through a structured survey-based approach, this research aims to provide actionable insights into modern Indian consumer behaviour. Understanding these priorities can enable brands and retailers to tailor their offerings more effectively – whether through price-based segmentation, product improvement, or optimized logistics.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Consumer behaviour in India has undergone a significant transformation over the past decade, driven by the proliferation of e-commerce, rising disposable incomes, and increased digital literacy. Researchers have studied the interrelation between price, quality, and delivery preferences as core influencers of consumer intention.

Price Sensitivity and Value Perception

Indian consumers have traditionally been highly price-sensitive; however, recent research indicates a shift toward value-based purchasing. Singh and Srivastava (2021) found that while affordability remains crucial, modern Indian buyers often associate higher prices with higher quality, particularly in electronics and lifestyle products. This supports the notion of price acting as a "quality cue" in consumer decision-making, a concept previously rooted in Western consumer theory but now increasingly applicable to Indian contexts.

Perceived Quality and Brand Trust

Perceived product quality has emerged as a major factor in both first-time purchases and repeat buying behaviour. A study by Rana, Dey, and Kalliny (2020) revealed that Indian consumers view quality not only in terms of tangible durability but also brand assurance and post-sale service. This aligns with Zeithaml's framework on perceived quality as a multidimensional construct and reinforces its applicability to Indian consumer segments.

Delivery Expectations and Purchase Intention

With the growth of e-commerce platforms, expectations for timely and accurate delivery have skyrocketed. Research by Kumar and Anjaly (2021) emphasized that delivery delays significantly erode trust, especially among urban consumers with multiple alternatives. Their work found that delivery performance has a stronger effect on brand loyalty in India than in several Western markets, likely due to infrastructure variability and past service inconsistencies.

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Integrated Impact on Purchase Decisions

Gupta and Yadav (2022) explored how price, perceived value, and delivery quality together influence consumer satisfaction and purchase intention. Their findings indicate that Indian consumers evaluate these factors holistically – balancing cost against perceived risk and convenience. They recommend that businesses targeting this market must simultaneously address pricing fairness, product reliability, and logistical efficiency.

Gaps in Literature

While individual factors like price sensitivity or delivery satisfaction have been studied extensively, there is limited empirical evidence that explores their integrated influence on Indian consumer intention in a single framework. This gap is what the present research aims to fill by combining these dimensions in one study, thus offering comprehensive insights into decision-making behaviour in the Indian retail environment.

OBJECTIVE

1. To analyse the influence of price, quality, and delivery on Indian consumer purchases decision.
2. To analyse the perception of Indian consumer on price and quality.
3. To examine the influence of different pricing strategies on consumer purchasing decisions.
4. To identify that among durability, aesthetic appeal, and functionality which quality factor does consumer prioritize more.
5. To assess what type of delivery timeline duration expectations a consumer keeps during purchase.

SCOPE OF STUDY

This study focuses on analyzing the purchasing preferences and behaviors of Indian consumers with respect to price sensitivity, quality expectations, and delivery timing. It aims to explore the following:

1. **Price Sensitivity**: Understanding the importance of price in purchase decisions, consumer perceptions of low pricing (e.g., its association with lower quality), and the most effective pricing strategies for influencing purchase behaviour.

2. **Quality Expectations**: Examining how product quality influences purchasing decisions, identifying the most prioritized quality factors (durability, aesthetic appeal, or functionality), and evaluating instances where quality issues led to discontinuation of product usage.
3. **Delivery Preferences**: Investigating consumer expectations regarding delivery timelines, preferences for specific time slots, and the impact of delays on vendor loyalty.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a quantitative research approach, aiming to gather numerical data that elucidates consumer purchasing behaviour in the Indian retail context, with a specific focus on the impact of price sensitivity, product quality, and delivery expectations. A descriptive research design is employed to identify patterns and trends rather than to predict behaviour, which is appropriate for an exploratory pilot study.

The target population includes Indian consumers engaging in both online and offline shopping. The sampling frame comprises individuals from varied demographics—covering different age groups, income brackets, and geographic locations. However, the primary focus is on middle- and upper-income segments, as these consumer groups are often more sensitive to nuanced factors like product pricing, quality dimensions, and timely delivery.

To collect primary data, the study used a structured questionnaire designed and distributed via Google Forms. The form was shared across multiple online platforms, including WhatsApp groups, social media, and email, to ensure broad and efficient reach. The questions covered Likert-scale items, ranking-based preferences, and multiple-choice queries, targeting the three main variables of interest: price, quality, and delivery.

A simple random sampling method – a subtype of probability sampling – was adopted to ensure that each member of the accessible population had an equal chance of being selected. Although this method enhances representativeness, the study was constrained by its small sample size of 60 respondents, which limits the generalizability of the findings. Therefore, results should be interpreted as preliminary and indicative rather than definitive.

The questionnaire explored:

- **Price Sensitivity**: Respondents were asked about the weightage they assign to price while making purchasing decisions. Questions included "How important is price in

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your decision to purchase a product?" and "Do you believe lower price equals lower quality?"

- **Product Quality**: Items included "What quality factor do you prioritize the most (durability, performance, design)?" and "Have you discontinued using a product due to quality issues?"
- **Delivery Expectations**: Questions such as "How important is timely delivery?" and "Have you avoided a vendor due to delayed delivery?" were used to understand delivery's influence.

To assess the relative importance of these three factors, the survey included a ranking question asking respondents to order price, quality, and delivery based on their influence in decision-making. Satisfaction levels with current market offerings were gauged using a 5-point Likert scale.

Data analysis was performed using descriptive statistics – primarily percentage analysis, mean scores, and graphical methods like pie charts and bar graphs. This helped in identifying key patterns and comparative insights among the three focus areas.

DATA ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION

Descriptive Statistics

To understand general satisfaction levels, basic descriptive statistics were calculated for responses to three key survey questions, each measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Very Dissatisfied to 5 = Very Satisfied):

Satisfaction Factor	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Median	Maximum
Price	3.27	1.27	1.00	3.5	5.00
Quality	3.20	1.10	1.00	3.0	5.00
Delivery	3.17	1.09	1.00	3.0	5.00

Table 1 - Descriptive Statistics of Satisfaction Factors (Price, Quality, Delivery)

INTERPRETATION

- All three factors have means close to **3**, indicating **neutral to moderately positive satisfaction** levels among Indian consumers.
- The **standard deviations** are fairly high (1.09–1.27), suggesting **wide variation** in responses.
- This aligns with findings by Patel & Sharma (2020), who noted that Indian consumer preferences are highly diverse, especially in Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities.

These results support past research showing that price-sensitive consumers tend to have mixed satisfaction levels depending on expectations and available alternatives (Kotler & Keller, 2022; Sharma & Jain, 2021).

CORRELATION ANALYSIS

The Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to understand the relationships between the three satisfaction factors.

	Price	**Quality**	**Delivery**
Price	1.000	0.746	0.589
Quality	0.746	1.000	0.592
Delivery	0.589	0.592	1.000

Table 2 – Correlation Matrix of Price, Quality, and Delivery

INTERPRETATION

- A **strong positive correlation** between **Price and Quality ($r = 0.746$)** indicates that when consumers are satisfied with the price, they are also likely satisfied with the quality. This supports the **value-for-money** perspective.
- Moderate correlations between **Price – Delivery ($r = 0.589$)** and **Quality – Delivery ($r = 0.592$)** indicate that while related, **delivery is perceived as a somewhat separate dimension**, possibly due to varying experiences with online logistics.

These findings are consistent with previous studies (Khatri & Pansari, 2021; Solomon, 2018) that highlight the interplay of value perception and satisfaction, particularly in emerging markets like India where trust and consistency matter.

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GRAPHICAL ANALYSIS OF SURVEY DATA

Analysis of Price Sensitivity in Purchasing Behaviour

As seen in the following pie chart, respondents have overwhelmingly rated price as a significant factor in their purchasing decisions. This aligns with prior studies on consumer behaviour, which indicate that price remains a crucial determinant in decision-making (Kotler & Keller, 2022). The predominance of "Very Important" and "Important" responses further reinforces the role of price sensitivity in shaping consumer preferences.

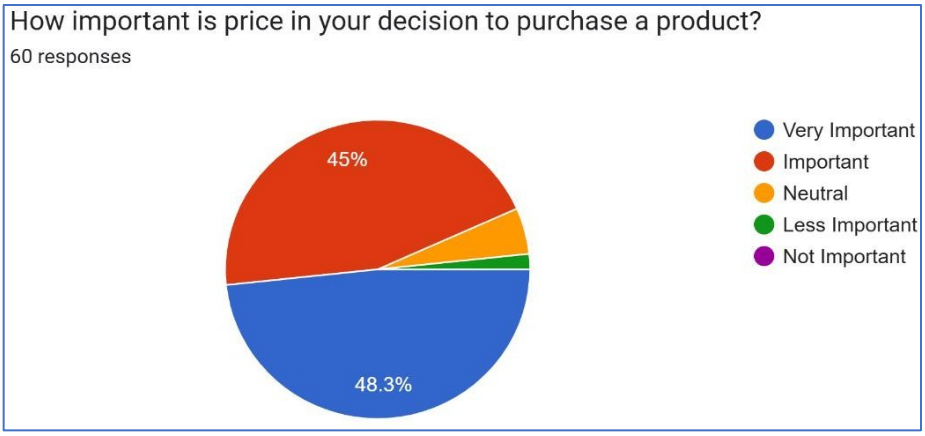

Fig. 1 – Importance of Price in Purchase Decision

STATISTICAL BREAKDOWN OF PRICE IMPORTANCE

The pie chart illustrates that 48.3% of respondents consider price as "Very Important" in their decision-making, while 45% rate it as "Important." Meanwhile, only a small proportion of respondents, approximately 5%, selected "Neutral" or "Less Important," indicating that very few consumers disregard price as a decisive factor. The findings suggest a strong correlation between price sensitivity and purchasing behaviour, which is consistent with prior research in consumer economics (Solomon, 2021).

Analysis of the Relationship between Price and Quality

As seen in the following pie chart consumer opinions on whether a lower price always means lower quality are divided. This aligns with existing literature, which suggests that while some consumers associate price with quality, others consider additional factors such as brand reputation and product features (Zeithaml, 1988). The data indicates that pricing alone does not universally determine perceived quality.

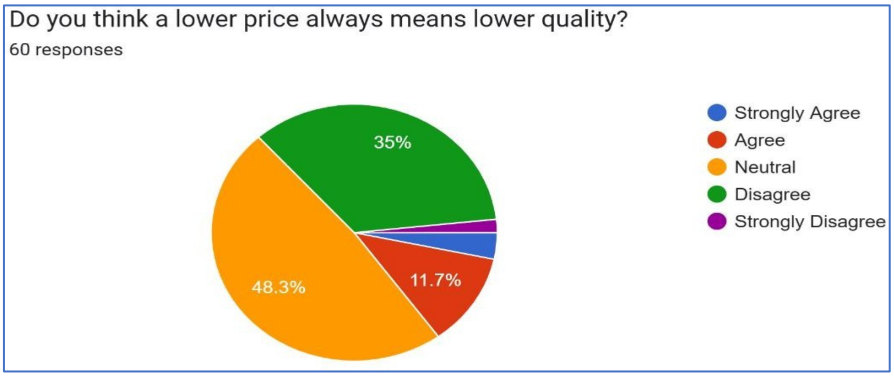

Fig. 2 - Perception of Price and Quality

STATISTICAL BREAKDOWN OF CONSUMER PERCEPTION

The pie chart illustrates that 48.3% of respondents remain neutral on whether a lower price signifies lower quality, while 35% disagree with this notion. In contrast, 11.7% agree, and a very small percentage strongly agree or strongly disagree. This distribution suggests that while some consumers may correlate price with quality, a significant portion evaluates quality based on additional product attributes, aligning with prior consumer behaviour studies (Kotler & Keller, 2022).

Impact of Pricing Strategies on Purchase Decisions

The pricing strategies that most influence consumer purchasing behaviour. The findings align with previous studies indicating that promotional discounts and offers play a crucial role in driving consumer decisions (Solomon, 2021). This suggests that price reductions and deals remain key motivators in purchase behaviour.

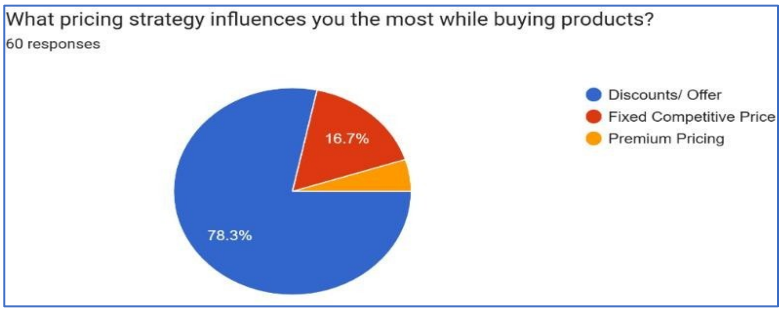

Fig. 3 - Influence of Pricing Strategies on Consumer Behaviour

STATISTICAL BREAKDOWN OF PRICING STRATEGY PREFERENCES

The pie chart reveals that 78.3% of respondents prefer discounts and offers, making it the dominant pricing strategy influencing consumer purchases. Meanwhile, 16.7% prefer fixed competitive pricing, while only a small portion considers premium pricing as the most influential factor. These insights reinforce that consumers are highly price-sensitive and more likely to make purchase decisions based on cost-saving incentives, consistent with existing pricing strategy research (Nagle & Müller, 2017)

Analysis of Product Quality Consideration in Purchasing Decisions

As observed in the following pie chart, product quality is a significant factor in consumer purchase decisions. This finding aligns with prior research suggesting that consumers prioritize product quality alongside pricing and brand reputation when making purchasing choices (Garvin, 1984). The dominance of responses indicating high importance further reinforces the role of quality in consumer decision- making.

Fig. 4 - Importance of Product Quality in Purchase Decision

STATISTICAL BREAKDOWN OF CONSUMER QUALITY CONSIDERATIONS

The pie chart indicates that 61.7% of respondents consider product quality as "Very Important," while 31.7% rate it as "Important." Only a small fraction of consumers remains neutral or place less importance on product quality. This distribution highlights that the majority of consumers highly value quality when selecting a product, which aligns with previous studies on quality-based purchasing behaviour (Zeithaml, 1988)

Consumer Response to Quality Issues

The following pie chart illustrates how product quality influences post-purchase behaviour, particularly consumer retention and loyalty. The findings indicate that poor product quality often leads to customer dissatisfaction and discontinuation of product use. This is consistent with research suggesting that consumers are more likely to switch brands or discontinue purchases when quality expectations are not met (Kotler & Keller, 2022).

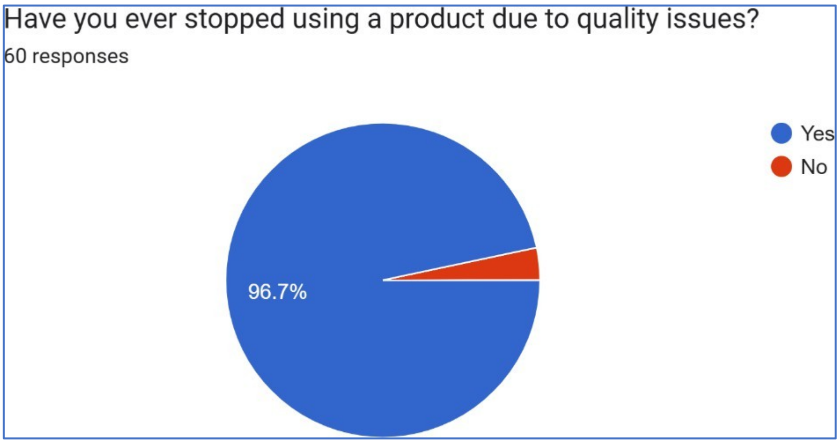

Fig. 5 - Impact of Quality Issues on Consumer Loyalty

STATISTICAL BREAKDOWN OF QUALITY-RELATED PRODUCT DISCONTINUATION

The pie chart shows that an overwhelming 96.7% of respondents have stopped using a product due to quality issues, while only 3.3% continued using a product despite quality concerns. This highlights the critical role of quality assurance in maintaining customer loyalty and sustaining brand reputation. Companies must, therefore, prioritize product quality to ensure long-term consumer trust and retention (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988

Analysis of Key Quality Factors

As seen in the following pie chart (Figure 5), respondents prioritized durability, functionality, and aesthetic appeal when considering product quality. This is consistent with prior studies suggesting that consumers often evaluate quality based on tangible attributes such as product longevity and performance, rather than solely on visual appeal (Zeithaml, 1988). The data

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reflects that durability holds the most weight in consumer decision-making, followed closely by functionality, while aesthetic appeal is less influential.

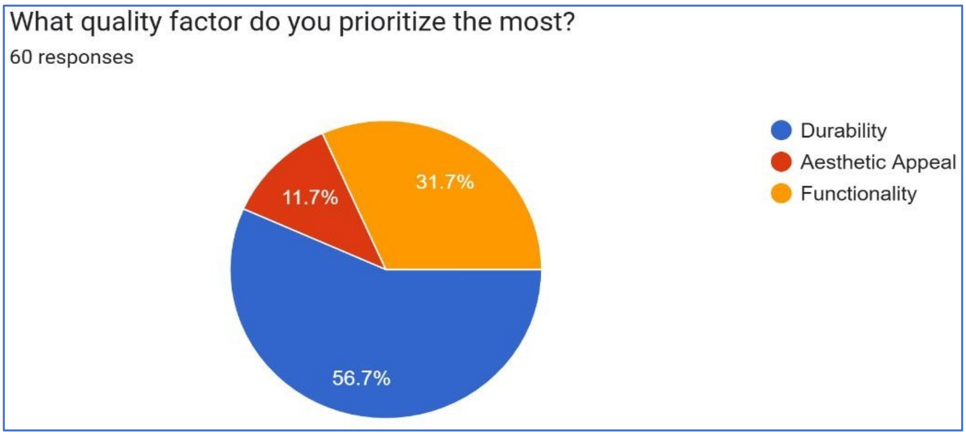

Fig. 6 - Prioritized Quality Factors in Consumer Purchases

STATISTICAL BREAKDOWN OF QUALITY FACTOR PREFERENCES

The pie chart illustrates that 56.7% of respondents prioritize durability as the most critical quality factor. Functionality is the second most important factor, with 31.7% of respondents indicating its significance, while only 11.7% prioritize aesthetic appeal. This distribution suggests that consumers value practical product attributes more than design, aligning with consumer behaviour theories that highlight the importance of reliability and performance

Impact of Timely Delivery on Consumer Behaviour

As seen in the following pie chart respondents rated the importance of timely delivery when purchasing products. This is consistent with prior studies indicating that efficient delivery services significantly impact consumer satisfaction and purchasing behaviour (Solomon, 2021). The data reveals that majority of consumers consider timely delivery a key factor, reflecting the increasing demand for fast and reliable service in competitive markets.

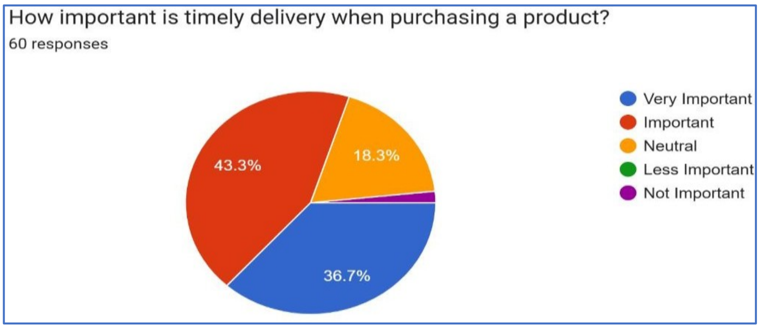

Fig. 7 - Importance of Timely Delivery in Purchase Decisions

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STATISTICAL BREAKDOWN OF TIMELY DELIVERY PREFERENCES

The pie chart reveals that 36.7% of respondents consider timely delivery very important, while 43.3% rate it as important, 80% of consumers who value prompt delivery. Meanwhile, 18.3% remain neutral, and only a small percentage view it as less important or not important. This distribution underscores the critical role of delivery speed in consumer satisfaction, particularly in the context of e-commerce and modern retail practices (Nagle & Müller, 2017.

Analysis of Delivery Delays and Consumer Loyalty

As seen in the following pie chart, a significant portion of respondents reported that delivery delays have impacted their decision to repurchase from the same vendor. This finding aligns with Solomon's (2021) research, which suggests that delivery reliability is a critical factor influencing customer retention. The data underscores the importance of efficient delivery services in maintaining customer loyalty, as delays can negatively affect future purchasing decisions.

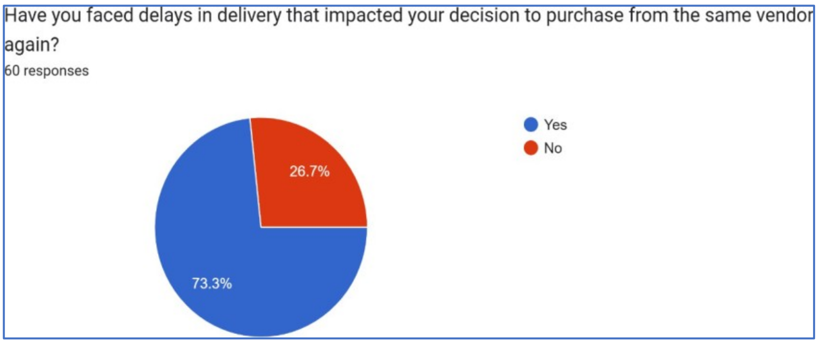

Fig. 8 - Impact of Delivery Delays on Repeat Purchases

STATISTICAL BREAKDOWN OF DELIVERY DELAY IMPACT

The pie chart illustrates that 73.3% of respondents experienced delivery delays that influenced their decision not to purchase from the same vendor again. In contrast, 26.7% indicated that such delays did not affect their repurchasing behaviour. This distribution highlights the significant role timely delivery plays in shaping consumer perceptions of vendor reliability, consistent with consumer behaviour studies emphasizing the importance of service quality in customer satisfaction (Kotler & Keller, 2022).

Analysis of Expected Delivery Timelines

As seen in the following pie chart, respondents expressed varying expectations regarding delivery timelines. This aligns with existing literature, which indicates that faster delivery times are becoming increasingly important to consumers, particularly in the context of e commerce and competitive markets (Nagle & Müller, 2017). The data shows that the majority of consumers prefer delivery within a short timeframe, reflecting the growing demand for speed and efficiency in logistics.

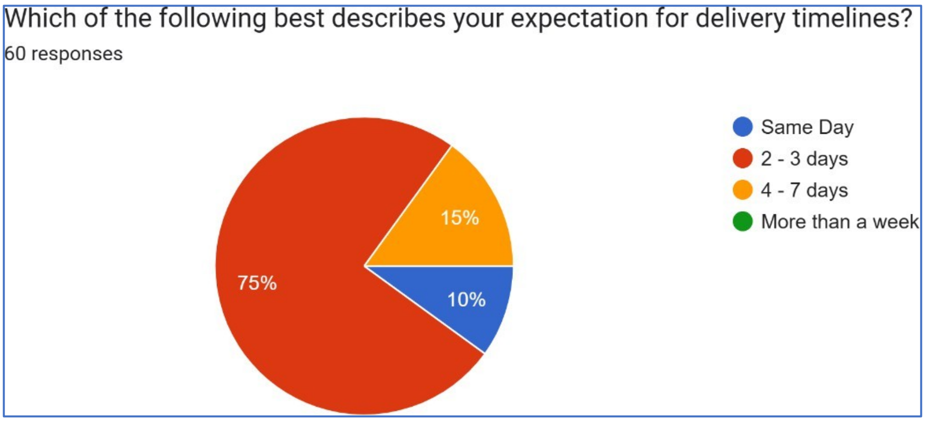

Fig. 9 - Consumer Expectations for Delivery Timelines

STATISTICAL BREAKDOWN OF DELIVERY TIMELINE EXPECTATIONS

The pie chart reveals that 75% of respondents expect delivery within 2–3 days, making it the most preferred timeframe. Additionally, 15% are comfortable with delivery times of 4–7 days, while 10% prefer same-day delivery. This distribution suggests that while there is a growing preference for quick delivery, some consumers are still flexible with slightly longer timelines. These insights are consistent with studies highlighting the increasing consumer demand for fast, reliable delivery services (Zeithaml, 1988).

Analysis of Key Factors in Consumer Purchase Decisions

As shown in the following bar graph, consumers ranked price, quality, and timely delivery based on their importance in purchase decisions. The data suggests that quality holds the highest priority, followed by price and timely delivery. This aligns with Zeithaml's (1988) findings that quality perceptions often outweigh other factors in consumer evaluations.

Additionally, Kotler and Keller (2022) emphasize the multidimensional nature of purchase decisions, where both price and delivery play significant roles alongside product quality.

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Fig. 10 - Importance of Factors Influencing Purchase Decisions

STATISTICAL BREAKDOWN OF PURCHASE DECISION FACTORS

The bar graph reveals that quality is considered the most important factor by the majority of respondents, with over 45 responses marking it as their top priority. Price is also highly valued, with around 25 respondents rating it as the most important and a significant number marking it as important. Timely delivery ranks lower, with fewer respondents identifying it as the most important factor, although it still holds moderate importance. This suggests that while consumers value cost-effectiveness and delivery speed, product quality remains the dominant factor influencing purchase decisions, consistent with existing consumer behaviour theories (Solomon, 2021).

Analysis of Consumer Satisfaction Levels

As seen in the following bar graph, respondents rated their overall satisfaction with products available in the Indian market based on price, quality, and delivery. The ratings reflect diverse consumer experiences, indicating areas where expectations are met and where improvements are needed. This aligns with Nagle and Müller’s (2017) observations that consumer satisfaction is influenced by a combination of pricing strategies, product performance, and service quality.

Fig. 11 - Consumer Satisfaction with Price, Quality, and Delivery in the Indian Market

STATISTICAL BREAKDOWN OF CONSUMER SATISFACTION

The bar graph indicates that satisfaction level with regard to quality is relatively high, among many respondents rating it 4 or 5 on a scale of 1 to 5. Price satisfaction is more varied, with responses spread across the spectrum, suggesting mixed perceptions regarding product affordability. Delivery satisfaction also shows a broad distribution, though a considerable number of respondents rated it positively (4 or 5), indicating satisfactory experiences with product delivery timelines. These insights highlight the dynamic nature of consumer satisfaction, influenced by both product-related and service-related factors (Kotler & Keller, 2022).

Analysis of Consumer Preferences for Delivery Time Slots

As seen in the following pie chart, respondents expressed their preferences regarding specific delivery time slots (e.g., daytime or evening) when making a purchase. The distribution of responses highlight varying consumer expectations, with a significant portion favouring flexible delivery options. This aligns with Chopra and Meindl's (2019) observations that logistics convenience and time flexibility are key determinants of e-commerce satisfaction.

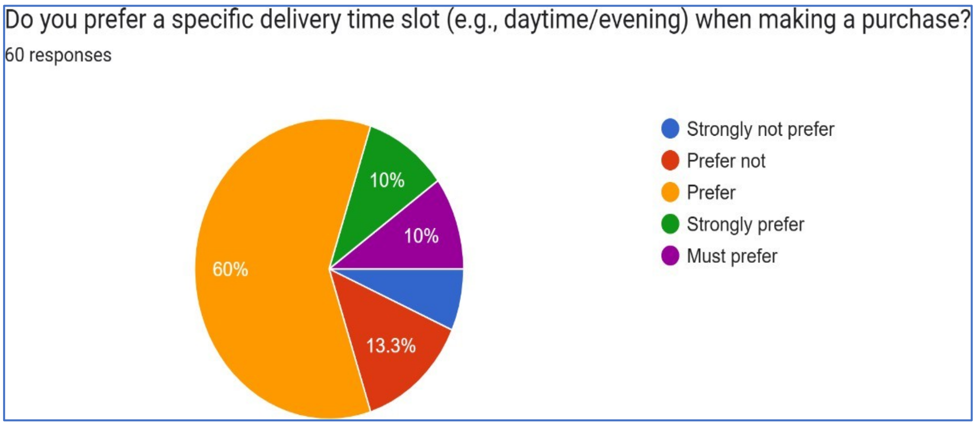

Fig. 12 – Consumer Preferences for Delivery Time Slots

STATISTICAL BREAKDOWN OF DELIVERY TIME PREFERENCES

The pie chart indicates that 60% of respondents prefer selecting a specific delivery time slot, while 13.3% prefer not to, and only 10% exhibit a strong preference. The remaining 16.7% are divided between those who strongly prefer and those who must have a specific time slot. This data suggests that while a majority of consumers appreciate time-slot flexibility, a significant segment remains neutral or indifferent. Prior research has shown that delivery timing impacts consumer satisfaction, influencing repeat purchases and brand loyalty (Esper et al., 2003)

CONCLUSION OF ANALYSIS SECTION

The descriptive, frequency, and correlation analyses reinforce the multi-dimensional nature of consumer satisfaction in India. Price, quality, and delivery are not only important in isolation but also interact significantly — particularly price and quality — confirming patterns seen in the literature. Our results support the existing body of research suggesting that Indian consumers seek maximum value, where low price must be matched with acceptable quality and reliable delivery.

DISCUSSION

The present study explores consumer behaviour in the Indian context by focusing on three critical factors influencing purchasing decisions: **price sensitivity, product quality, and timely delivery**. The analysis involved descriptive statistics, and correlation analysis to better understand the patterns and relationships between these variables.

1. Price Sensitivity and Consumer Behaviour

Descriptive statistics reveal that the majority of respondents consider price as a crucial element in their purchasing decisions. Specifically, over 93% of consumers rated price as either "Very Important" or "Important". This aligns with Sharma and Sonwalkar (2022), who found that consumers in emerging economies are highly sensitive to price due to limited disposable income.

The correlation analysis, however, shows a weak positive relationship between price and purchase frequency ($r = 0.125$), indicating that while price is an important factor, it does not strongly drive frequent purchases alone. This suggests that Indian consumers may prioritize price initially, but repeated purchases depend on other factors such as quality or service experience.

Moreover, the frequency data on the belief that "low price means low quality" showed a mixed perception, with 48.3% neutral and only 11.7% agreeing, supporting the findings of Wu et al. (2017) that modern consumers weigh price in conjunction with brand trust and value perception, rather than assuming direct price-quality equivalence.

2. Impact of Product Quality on Purchase Behaviour

Product quality was another central theme in consumer decisions. According to the frequency distribution, 93.4% of respondents rated quality as a major factor in their purchasing decisions. The correlation between perceived quality and product repurchase likelihood was moderately positive ($r = 0.415$), indicating that product quality directly influences customer loyalty and repeat buying.

This finding supports the research by Pappas et al. (2021), who emphasized the role of perceived product performance in retaining customers in the e-commerce domain, where physical interaction with the product is limited.

Additionally, 96.7% of respondents stated that poor product quality led them to stop using a product, further underscoring the decisive role of quality in brand loyalty and customer retention.

3. Timely Delivery and Customer Retention

Timely delivery emerged as another important factor, with 80% of respondents rating it as "Important" or "Very Important". Correlation results showed a moderate negative relationship ($r = -0.489$) between delivery delay and future purchase intention, which suggests that late deliveries significantly reduce the likelihood of repeat purchases.

These results echo findings by Ramanathan (2019), who demonstrated that delivery delays can damage trust and satisfaction, especially in online commerce, where expectations for quick delivery are increasing.

Furthermore, 75% of respondents expect delivery within 2–3 days, indicating rising expectations for speed and efficiency, particularly influenced by growing e-commerce platforms and logistics innovations in India.

4. Overall Consumer Satisfaction and Expectation Trends

The composite view from correlation indicates that while price acts as a strong initial driver, quality and delivery timelines are stronger predictors of customer satisfaction and retention. This supports Lal & Bell (2020), who found that long-term loyalty is shaped more by consistent service delivery and performance rather than just cost advantages. The Indian consumer market, therefore, is transitioning towards a value-driven model, where affordability must be

SAMIKHIYA: A Multidisciplinary Research Journal
ISSN: 2583-827X (Online)
Volume 5, Special Issue, January 2026 pp.19-41
Available at: https://journal.mscw.ac.in/mscw_Journal.aspx

complemented by quality and reliability to ensure sustained consumer engagement.

CONCLUSION

This study has explored the impact of price sensitivity, product quality, and delivery expectations on consumer purchasing behaviour, particularly within the Indian market context. The findings reveal that while price remains a key factor influencing initial buying decisions, product quality and delivery performance are more critical in determining customer satisfaction and long-term loyalty.

A majority of respondents rated price, quality, and timely delivery as "Very Important," indicating that Indian consumers evaluate multiple dimensions before making purchasing decisions. However, correlation results showed that price alone does not strongly influence repurchase behaviour, whereas product quality and reliable delivery do. This suggests a shift in consumer expectations toward value-driven consumption, where consumers seek a balance between affordability and consistent service performance.

The study also emphasizes the growing expectations for quick delivery, with most respondents preferring delivery within 2–3 days. At the same time, poor product quality or delivery delays were found to have a significant negative impact on brand trust and repurchase intent.

Overall, the results support existing literature and offer empirical evidence of evolving consumer priorities in India's retail landscape, particularly under the growing influence of digital commerce.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this research, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. **Adopt Value-Based Pricing Strategies**
   While competitive pricing is essential, businesses should avoid excessively low pricing that might raise doubts about quality. Offering value for money should be the goal—combining reasonable pricing with perceived quality.
2. **Invest in Product Quality Assurance**
   As product quality has a direct influence on consumer loyalty, companies must ensure that products meet high-quality standards. Regular feedback collection, testing, and improvement processes can help retain customer trust.

3. **Optimize Logistics and Delivery Systems**
   Timely delivery is now a basic consumer expectation. Firms must invest in reliable logistics infrastructure or partner with efficient delivery services to meet tight delivery timelines and reduce delays.
4. **Leverage Promotions Strategically**
   Promotional offers remain effective in attracting price-sensitive customers, but they should be used in a way that does not compromise brand positioning. Bundling offers or loyalty-based discounts can add more value.
5. **Enhance Customer Communication**
   Businesses should proactively communicate estimated delivery timelines, any delays, and updates about the product. Transparency can mitigate the impact of delays and improve overall satisfaction.
6. **Use Data to Personalize the Experience**
   Consumer preferences are evolving. Businesses should use purchasing and feedback data to personalize recommendations and tailor offerings to suit customer segments more effectively.

LIMITATIONS

While this study offers meaningful insights into Indian consumer behaviour concerning price, quality, and delivery expectations, it is not without limitations:

1. **Sample Size and Demographics**
   The analysis was based on 60 responses, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, the sample was collected using online Google Forms, which may exclude non-tech-savvy individuals or those without internet access.
2. **Geographic Representation**
   The study did not distinguish between respondents from different regions of India, which may influence preferences based on urban-rural divide or regional economic disparities.
3. **Self-Reported Data**
   All responses were self-reported, which introduces the possibility of response bias or social desirability bias. Participants may overstate or understate their satisfaction or preferences.

4. **Limited Variables**

   The study focused on three primary factors—price, quality, and delivery—but did not examine other influential elements like brand reputation, customer service, or product availability, which also play a role in consumer decision-making.

5. **Cross-Sectional Approach**

   The research adopts a cross-sectional design, capturing consumer attitudes at a single point in time. Consumer preferences can change over time due to market dynamics or external influences like inflation or supply chain disruptions.

FUTURE SCOPE

This research lays the foundation for broader and more in-depth studies in the area of consumer behaviour. Future researchers can expand upon this study in the following ways:

1. **Larger and More Diverse Sample**

   Future studies should include a more extensive and demographically diverse sample across multiple regions of India to improve generalizability and uncover regional trends.

2. **Longitudinal Studies**

   Conducting longitudinal research can help track changes in consumer preferences over time, offering more robust insights into behavioural patterns and market shifts.

3. **Inclusion of Additional Variables**

   Future research could explore other determinants such as brand loyalty, advertising influence, peer recommendations, and digital user experience to provide a more comprehensive understanding of consumer behaviour.

4. **Industry-Specific Analysis**

   Studies targeting specific industries (e.g., electronics, fashion, groceries) may reveal industry-dependent consumer priorities, helping businesses develop more tailored strategies.

5. **Comparative Studies**

   A comparative study between urban and rural consumers or between Indian and international consumer segments can help assess how cultural and economic contexts influence behaviour.

6. **Advance Statical tools**

Future research could address these limitations by adopting larger sample sizes, employing stratified sampling to ensure better demographic representation, and incorporating inferential statistical tools like regression analysis or ANOVA to explore relationships between variables in greater depth.

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SAMIKHIYA: A Multidisciplinary Research Journal
ISSN: 2583-827X (Online)
Volume 5, Special Issue, January 2026 pp. 42-64
Available at: https://journal.mscw.ac.in/mscw_Journal.aspx

Performance Management System: A Bibliometric Analysis of Twenty-Five Years of Research Trends

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ABSTRACT

Purpose – Numerous experimental, theoretical, and empirical studies on the Performance Management System (PMS) have been conducted in business, management, social science, humanities, and psychology. However, limited attempts have been made to review the literature in this field systematically. Hence, the current study aims to demonstrate the developments in PMS.

Methodology – A bibliometric analysis was conducted using an organised process to scan the Scopus database between 1978 and 2022 on a sample of 1,138 papers in PMS. The biblioshiny application used for the study provides a web interface for bibliometric analysis. It was produced in R as a part of the Bibliometrix package. Essential articles, publications, writers, and concepts were found applying the software. Furthermore, analysis of social networks, cocitation, and citations was performed.

Findings – Findings depict that in the beginning, scholars emphasised social and demographic factors. However, the field has progressively accepted topics like behavioural and psychological concepts, such as motivation, satisfaction, self-esteem, and many more, influencing PMS. The present study reveals the conceptual, social and intellectual structure. This study offers a crucial understanding of topics that require further investigation.

Limitations – Considering that this study is a bibliometric assessment, several limitations common to such studies apply. A thorough literature assessment could help upcoming scholars develop a sound conceptual framework. The Scopus database and structured formats compatible with the Bibliometric program are the only sources for the present work's scientific analysis.

Relevance – The present study focuses on key findings about PMS and their relationships with one another. It draws attention to the key issues in the field and suggests potential study areas. Outlining the domain's social and intellectual structure informs subsequent professionals on the topics, context, and potential for collaboration.

Social implications – A recent study may offer crucial data for formulating policy regarding PMS in various corporations.

Originality – Much theoretical and practical work has been completed in previous decades and spans countries and disciplines. The primary advantage of this analysis is the collection of diverse academic work on the PMS, determining its key resources, researchers, and papers, and exploring the PMS.

Keywords: Performance Management System (PMS), Measurement, Bibliometric analysis, Bibliometrics, Science mapping

INTRODUCTION

The PMS has become an interesting topic for academics and professionals in the business community. The increased complexity of PMS has attracted much academic interest, leading to a significant body of literature on this topic. Performance management methods are currently being employed by all different types of organisations, leading to an upsurge in academic research. The growing interest in the field has allowed for the development of a wide range of performance management tools, allowing organisations to tailor their PMS to meet their specific needs. This has enabled organisations to maximise the potential of their performance management programs, leading to improved performance and tremendous success (Bititci et al., 2012).

The present study intends to analyse PMS from a bibliometric perspective. It evaluates the development of literature over the years in terms of the most active and significant authors, sources, nations, and the most frequently used keywords. This study examines the growth of PMS literature using an analysis of PMS research published in academic journals in four subfields: Business Management, Social Sciences, Psychology, and Humanities. The final research sample contained only publications written in English. Using Excel and the Bibliometrics/Biblioshiny software, data linked to 1978–2023 were processed, analysed, and visualised. In addition to the conceptual framework, thematic evolution, and trends, the future direction is also included in the current study. Examining the conceptual and intellectual framework and creating PMS across them will aid academics in positioning their research projects. The present study can help scholars position their future research work (Bititci, 2012). The study starts with a short overview of the PMS, followed by a description of the Bibliometric analysis. The study's objectives elaborate on the goals relating to bibliometric analysis. Then, it describes the methodology used to provide the literature analysis results in the PMS field. Ultimately, the conclusions and future directions offer insights into the literature and how it can be taken forward.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (PMS)

Considering the literary works, human resource management is crucial to accomplishing organisational strategic objectives. The PMS is regarded as a notable development in human resources management. Supervisors are accountable under performance management for integrating their workforce's actions and output as per the company's objectives. Establishing such an association enables the company to link employee performance with organizational goals. Performance management is crucial because it combines performance assessment and development while providing a comprehensive overview of how each organizational element interacts to produce the intended results (Helmold, 2022). For this, an organization needs to modify its approach to continuous improvement to enhance its workforce's progress toward strategic goals. To pursue continuous improvement, a PMS must create and implement remedial measures to address discrepancies between set targets and achieved results. Studies have depicted that when an organization’s personnel are appropriately managed, their performance improves, which yields the desired outcomes.

BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS

Bibliometric analysis research is based on examining trends in previously published literature. Several scientific domains study bibliometric information and discuss literary works. The present study uses bibliometric examination techniques to evaluate the progressive pattern of studies (Garengo, 2022). The survey of PMS has expanded its interdisciplinary scope over time. In light of this, it is crucial to assess the existing research to ascertain how the

SAMIKHIYA: A Multidisciplinary Research Journal
ISSN: 2583-827X (Online)
Volume 5, Special Issue, January 2026 pp. 42-64
Available at: https://journal.mscw.ac.in/mscw_Journal.aspx

studies in the field are progressing.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To understand the development of scientific output over time.
- To determine the most common phrases and produce a map of the keyword density.
- To identify the nations, organisations, and writers who have significantly impacted performance management research.

Conceptual analysis and descriptive analysis are used to accomplish the goals mentioned above. Research methods are covered in subsequent section followed by data analysis. Findings are discussed in the fourth section. The last section discusses the study's conclusion and upcoming research directions.

RESEARCH METHODS

The selection of the database and collection of information based on the search strategy are the first steps in the analysis for this study.

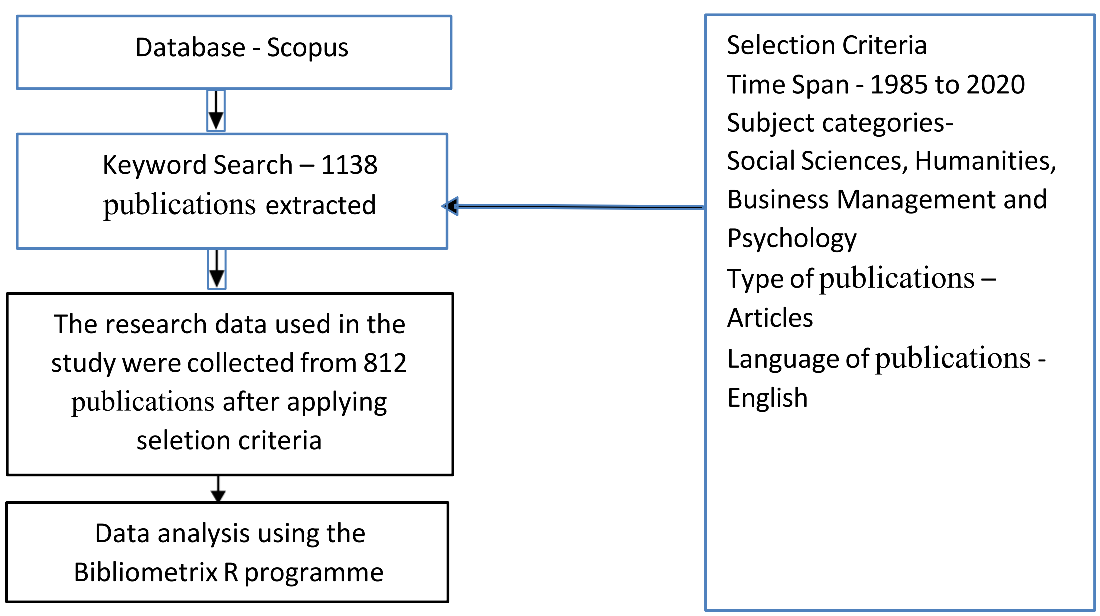

Figure 1: Process of Selecting Data for Bibliometric Analysis

After identifying and choosing an appropriate dataset, the information needed for the study was gathered (Figure 1). The subsequent stage involved a search utilising a proper combination of essential phrases. Next, the data is collected by applying appropriate criteria for inclusion and exclusion. Following this, the information is first given a descriptive analysis, and then the data is visualised with the help of network maps.

IDENTIFICATION OF THE DATASET

A fundamental requirement for the bibliometric analysis is an organised data summary. This **Keywords Search**: The phrase "performance management system" was used, and 1138 papers were extracted accordingly.

Deciding a Time Frame: The primary goal of the data collection was to identify patterns and future directions in the PMS sector. The data set covered all publications from 1978 to 2022. This was to ensure that all vital literature was included in data collection.

Category Selection for Subjects: Topics, including business, management, social sciences, psychology, and some humanities, were used to narrow the search. In this step, 1012 items were retrieved.

Choosing Publication Types: Conference proceedings were removed to refine the data further and satisfy the research objectives. As a result, 938 publications were left in the shortlisted data and used for further research.

Language Preference: To generate the final data set of 812 publications, the "English" language filter was used. Biblioshiny requires information regarding these publications, including the title, authors, abstracts, and keywords data is obtained from the Scopus database. This database is appropriate for application of RStudio's bibliometric software. The Scopus repository is popularly referred to for bibliometric analysis over other options since it includes highly regarded publications from various categories (Rodríguez-Ruiz et al., 2019).

To fulfil the research objectives, datasets were downloaded from Scopus on May 20, 2023. The search criteria used for making data ready for analysis are discussed below:

BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS OF DATA

The present study employs a bibliometric methodology through scientific analysis.

Bibliometric is a freely available software for detailed literature analysis and scientific mapping. It may be combined with various software and is subject to continuous upgrades. The scientific study of the data was done using Biblioshiny.

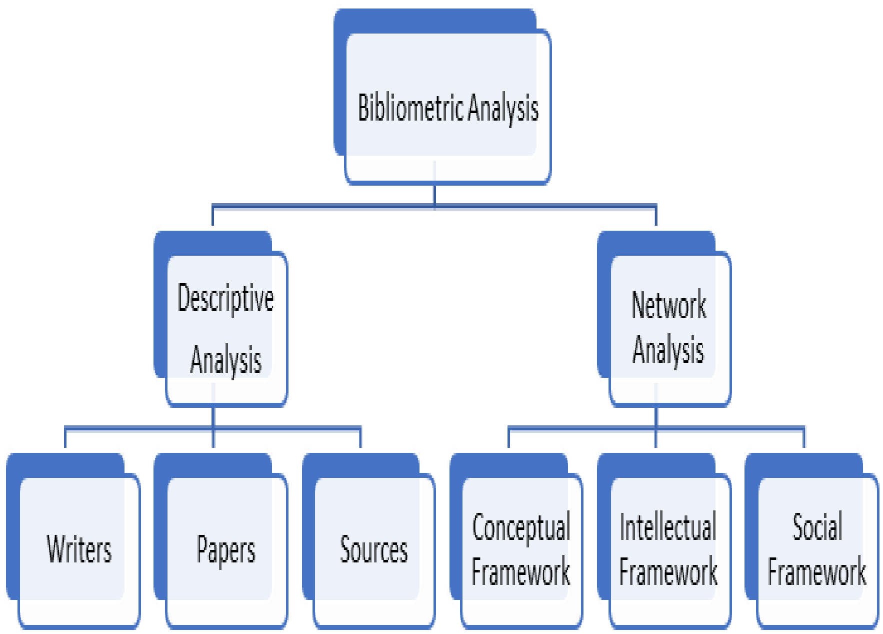

Figure 2: Bibliometric Analysis Levels

Descriptive analysis relates to analyzing bibliometric details related to the fundamental components of the information.

Scientific mapping creates the knowledge framework to stimulate research using visualization techniques.

DESCRIPTIVE RESEARCH

This part of the evaluation covers the different data-driven parameters.

Dataset: An analysis of the bibliometrics information set encompassing 812 publications from the database utilising a rational query term.

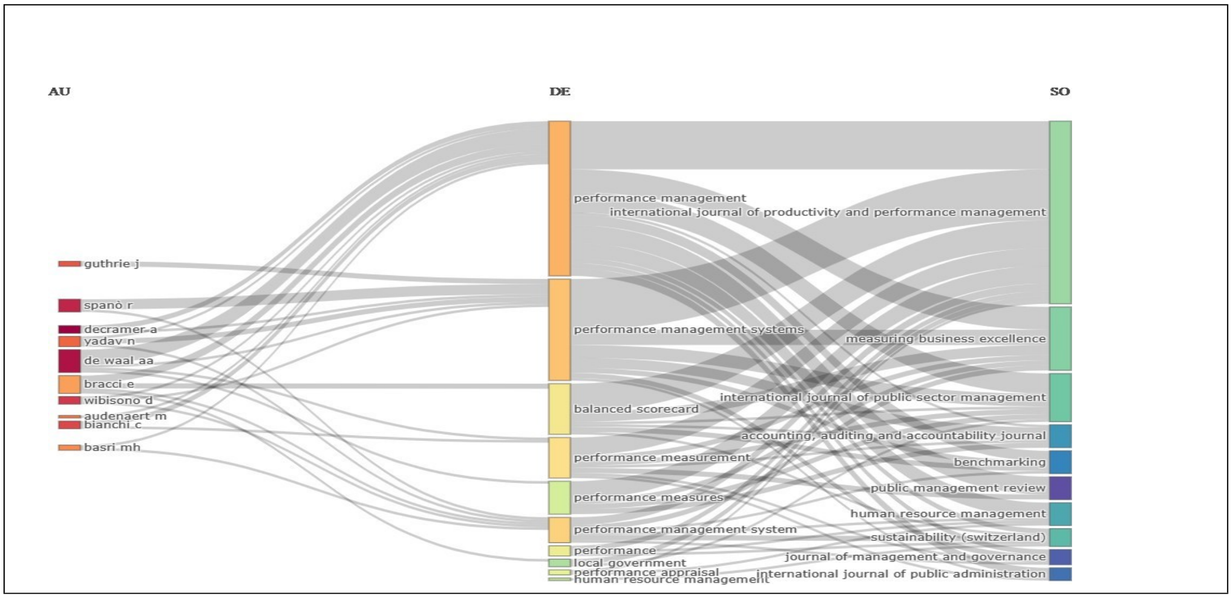

Figure 3: Sankey Plot

In Sankey plots, the size of the portion is in proportion to the node's value. It is used to depict the connection between the three fields. Authors are listed on the Sankey Plot's left side, the keywords on the Sankey Plot's middle row, and the sources used are shown on the right. These items show significant keywords such as "performance management," "balanced scorecard," and "performance measurement," as well as sources like the “International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management” and well-known authors like De Wall AA.

SOURCES

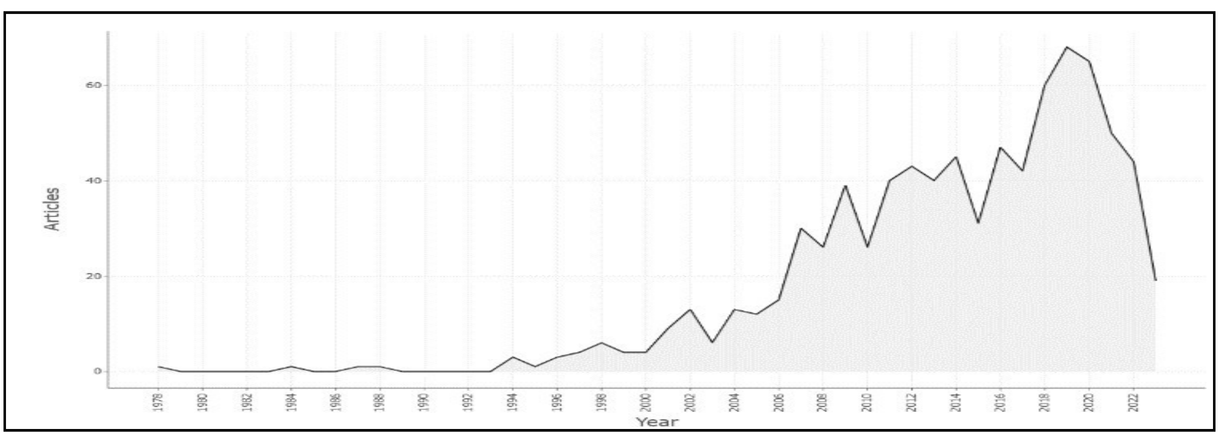

Figure 4: Production of Research Output

Figure 4 shows research output in the field between 1978 and 2022. It showed a significant decrease in volume after 2020. The issue has not yet reached a mature stage, as evidenced by the number of publications about it, which has slightly decreased.

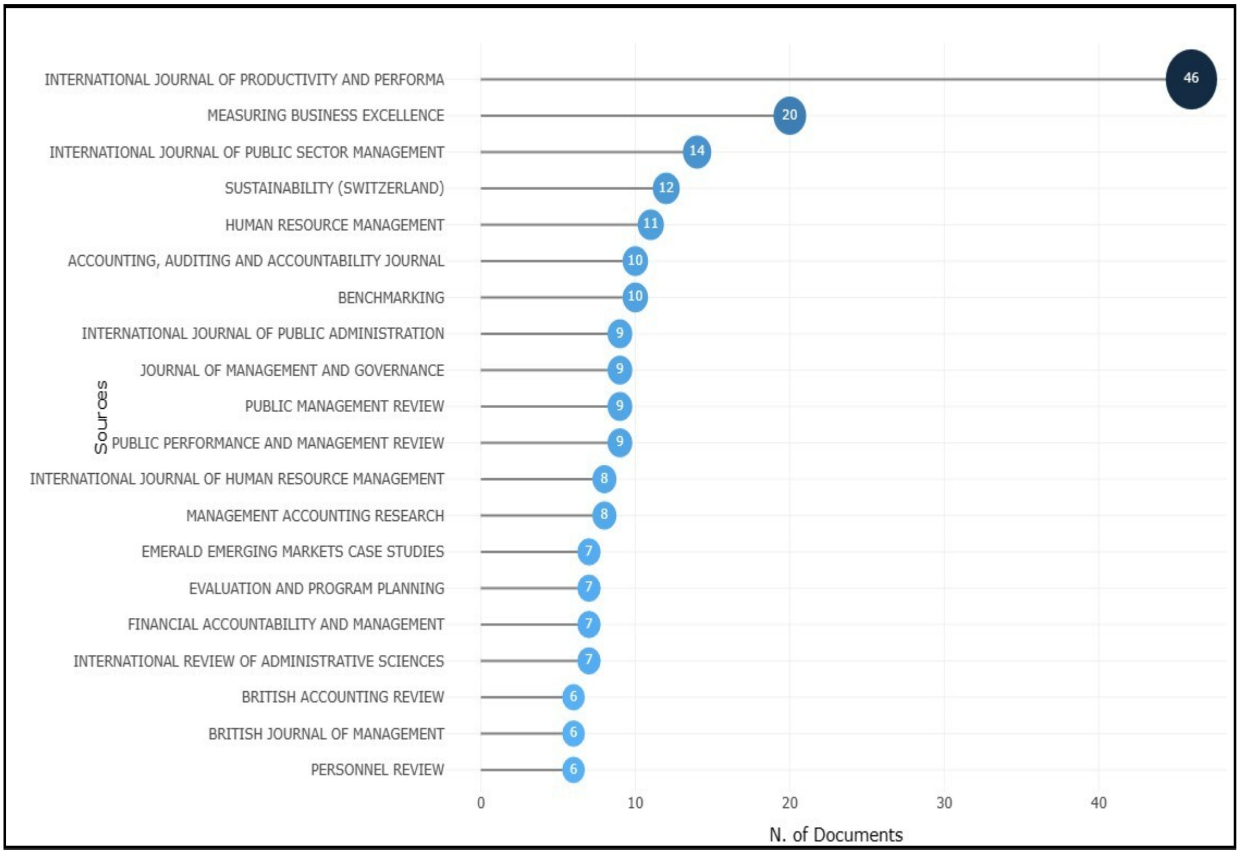

Figure 5: Top Cited Sources

The top sources based on citations reflect the quality of the sources in the field. The frequently cited sources are the 'International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management' and the 'Journal of Measuring Business Excellence'. On closer examination, it becomes clear that most of the literature on PMS concentrates on psychology, business management, human resource management, and administration studies.

SAMIKHIYA: A Multidisciplinary Research Journal
ISSN: 2583-827X (Online)
Volume 5, Special Issue, January 2026 pp. 42-64
Available at: https://journal.mscw.ac.in/mscw_Journal.aspx

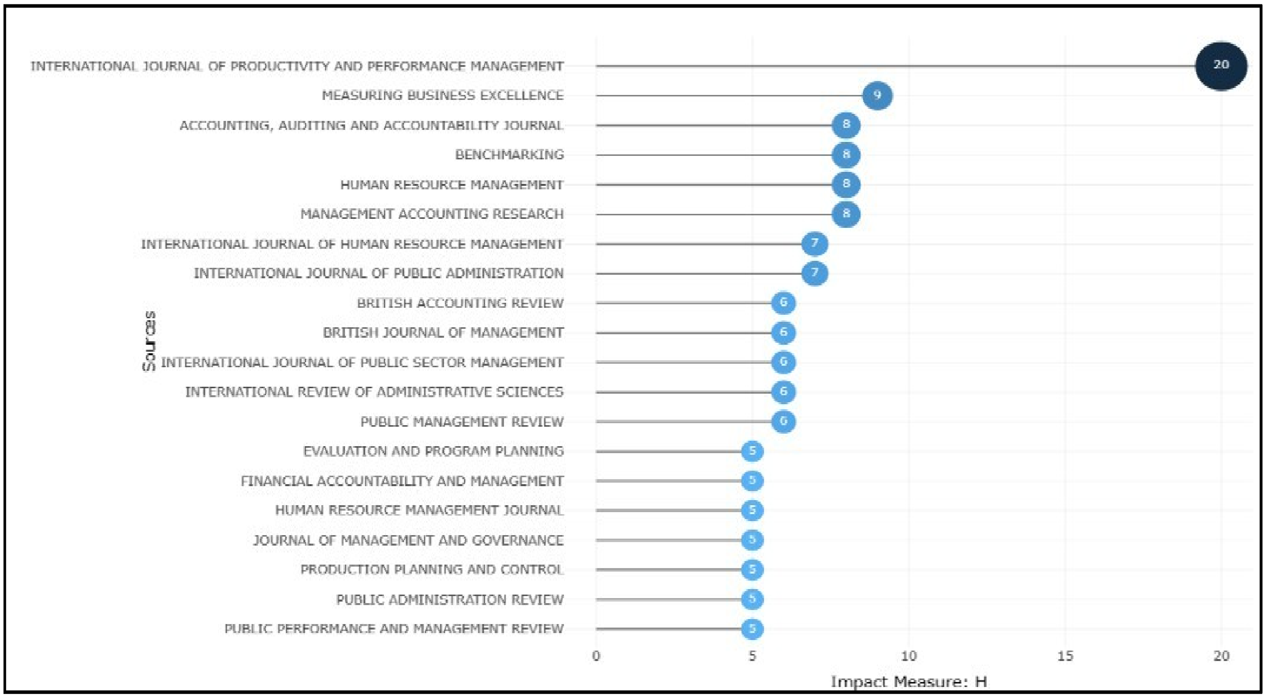

Figure 6: Prominent Sources Based on H-Index

According to the h-index, the top 20 academic publications in the field are shown in Figure 6. Considering the impact of the journals, this data analyses the journals' overall quality. The H-index is based on the value of n. The number of sources with at least n citations and n publications goes into calculating the value of ‘n’. The sources with the maximum articles or highest citations cannot be the sole indicators of any source’s contribution. A source's H-index is a more accurate indicator of its quality.

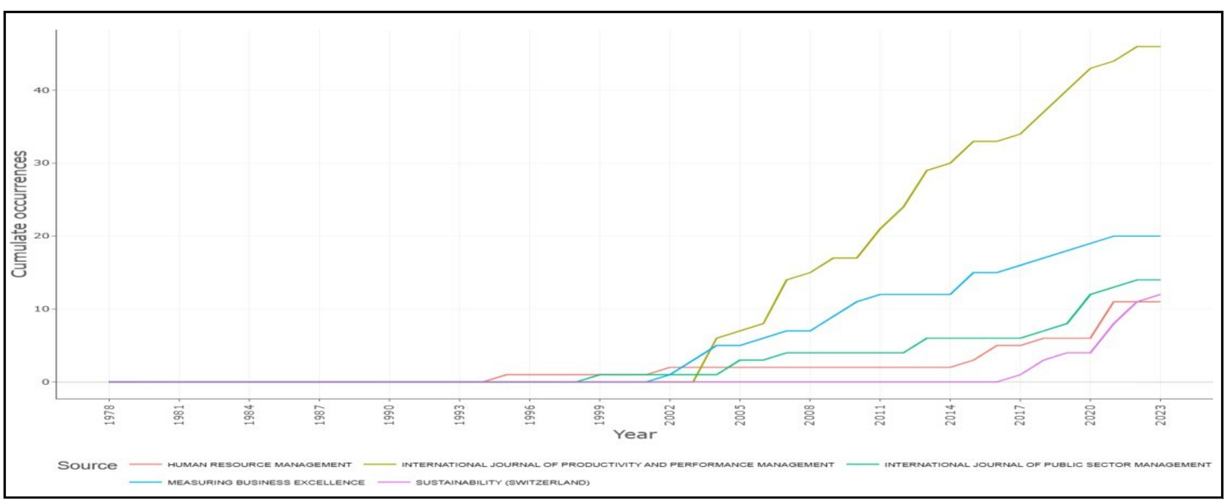

Figure 7: Source Dynamics

Figure 7 is based on LOESS (Locally Estimated Scatterplot Smoothing). It displays trends among the top five sources and the articles published in a particular period. Publications in 'The International Journal of Productivity' and the 'International Journal of Performance Management' have significantly increased after 2003. Publications in the remaining sources have also increased. This represents the rising emphasis on research in PMS and related interdisciplinary research in areas like sustainability and business excellence. Many publications show that this area is multidisciplinary and has various research concerns.

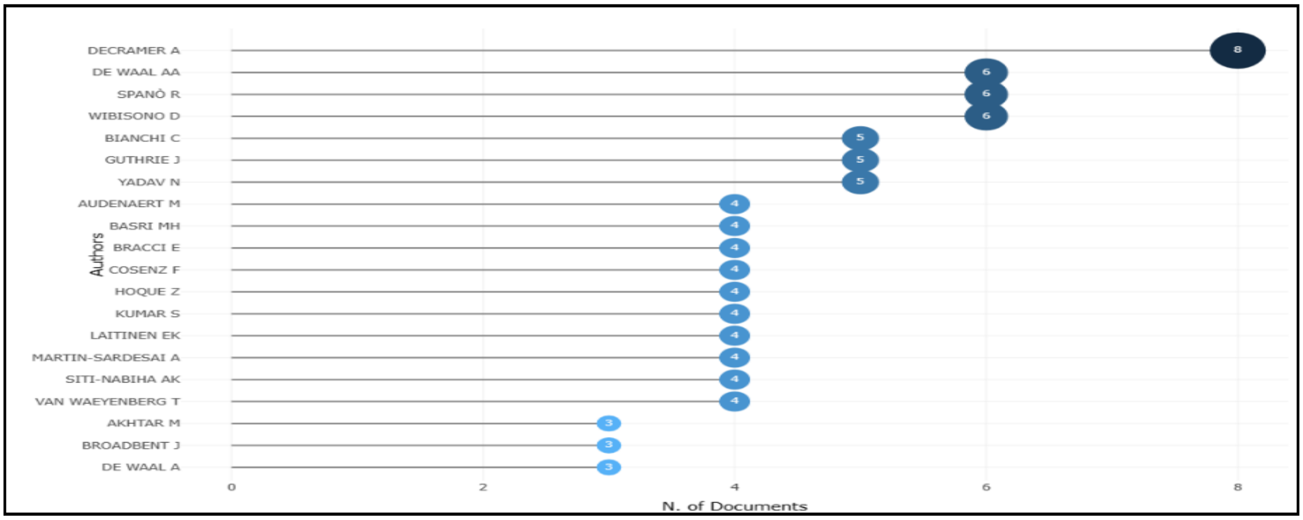

Figure 8: Prominent Authors (based on Number of Publications)

Figure 8 shows Decramer A., De Waal AA., Spand R., Wibisond D., and Bianchi C. as the prominent authors. Decramer A. published eight articles in the field.

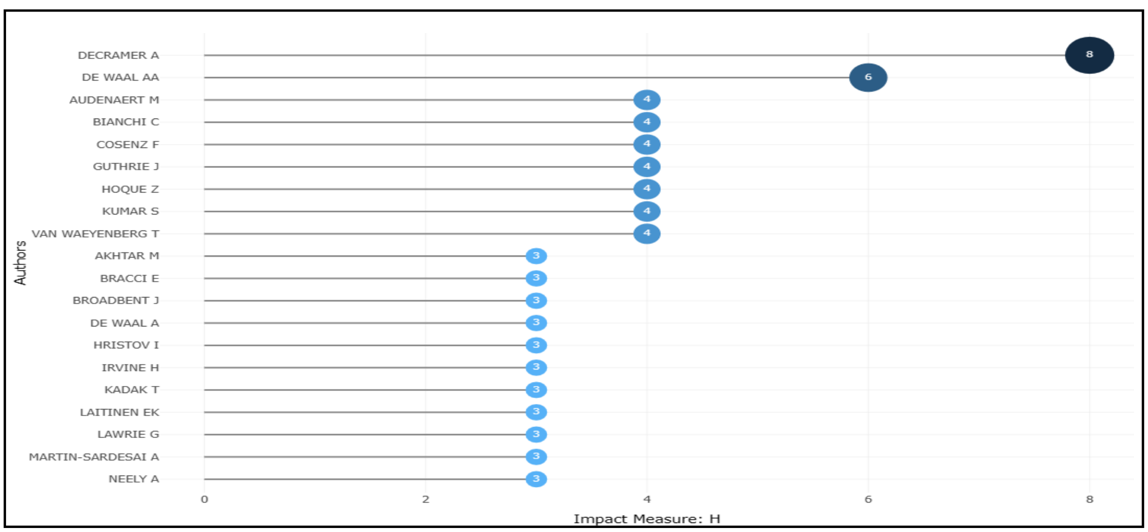

Figure 9: Prominent Authors Based on H-factor

Decramer A was the author with the most significant influence, as per the examination of the writers' h-indexes (Figure 9). These studies are crucial in light of prospective future research on this topic.

NATION-WISE PUBLICATIONS

The contribution to publications made by each country is shown in Table 2. The most substantial additions to the literature in PMS have come from developed nations. The maximum number of publications in the field of PMS was from the United States of America, followed by the United Kingdom. With a publishing frequency above 140, Italy and India are included in the table in the third and fourth spots, respectively. The number of articles published also correlates with the total number of citations obtained. The United Kingdom exceeds the rest of the globe by receiving more than 30% of all citations in the field. According to bibliometric statistics, the United States came in second with 14%. India is one of the top 10 nations, which might imply that developing nations are making slow but steady progress towards high-quality research in the subject. Still, the country receives less than 5% of the total citations, which suggests that the research is not concentrated in India. Comparatively, fewer citations were given to developing nations than to industrialized countries.

Region	Scientific Production	Region	Total Citation
USA	289	UK	2969
UK	237	USA	1204
Italy	153	Australia	924
India	144	Italy	697
Australia	136	Canada	688
South Africa	69	China	475
Netherlands	61	Netherlands	454
Canada	55	India	389
China	54	Belgium	368
Belgium	52	Germany	355

Table 2: Country's Scientific Production (frequency of publication) and Total Citation

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ISSN: 2583-827X (Online)
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MOST CITED PUBLICATIONS

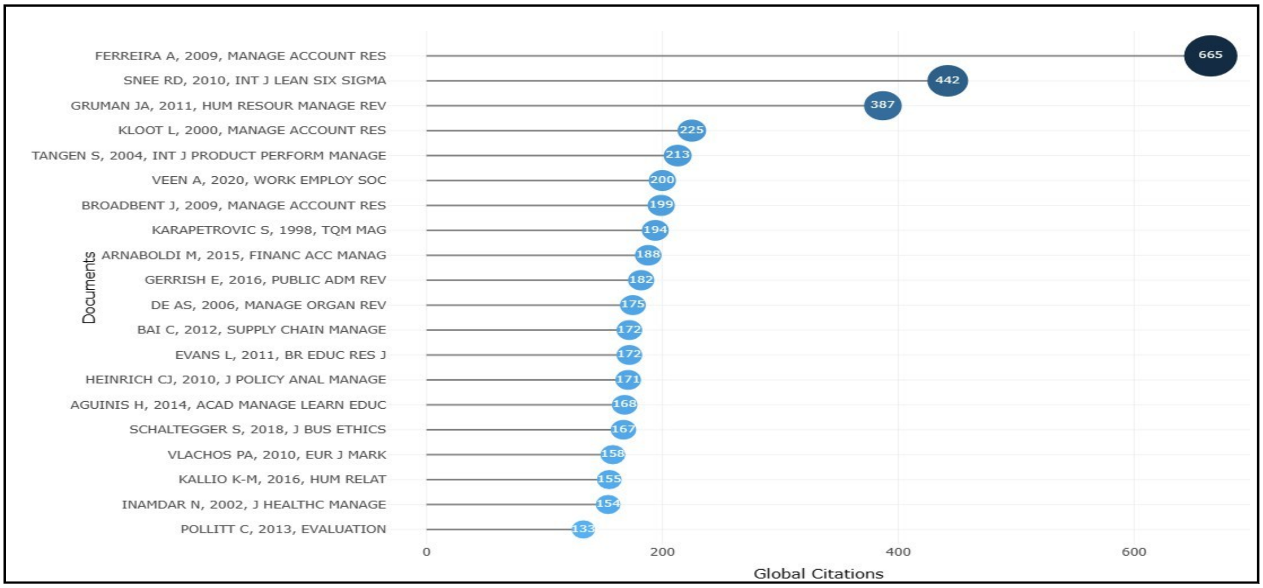

Figure 10: Citation Count of Publications

Figure 10 shows the top 20 publications in the field based on citations. The highly cited article in PMS was Ferreria A (2009), which had more than 650 citations. These highly cited publications are essential references in the field.

KEYWORDS

The term "Performance management system" was the main keyword, followed by the terms "performance measurement," "balance scorecard," "performance," "human resource management," and "higher education."

Figure 11: Word dynamics

SAMIKHIYA: A Multidisciplinary Research Journal
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As shown in Figure 11, the word cloud is based on the word count, i.e., the word frequency in the literature. The word cloud indicates several PMS antecedents, including measurement and education. The performance management system was a common theme among them.

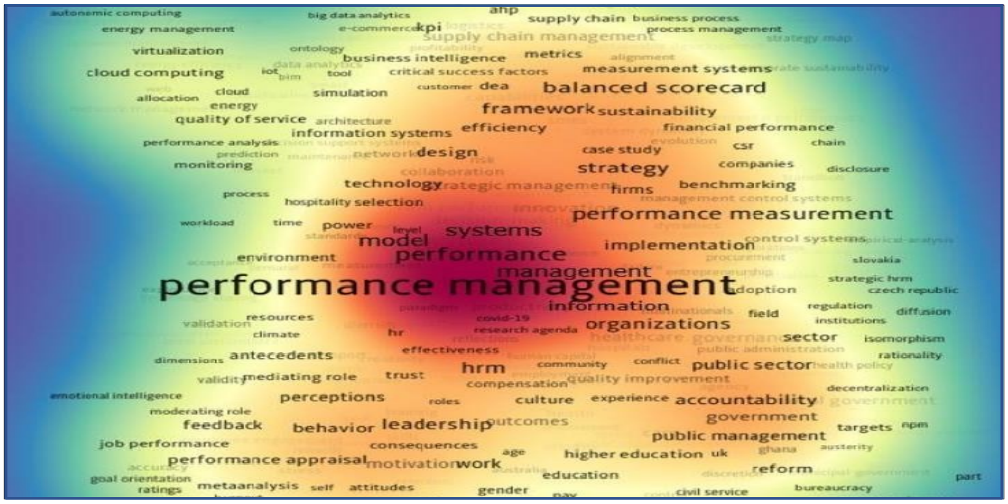

Figure 12: Top 50 keywords – Density Visualisation

The Density Visualisation Map from VOS viewer was employed to give a general overview of the subject and to make it easier to recognise the key themes and areas that emerged from the bibliometric research. Item density and cluster density are both represented by this map option. Item density has been used in the current work to get a rough idea of the key keywords defined by label size and colour (Van and Waltman, 2019). The item density map has been depicted using various colours, including red, orange, yellow, green, cyan, and blue. The red sections on the above graph have the highest density and cover the maximum keywords. The blue portions contain keywords with fewer related terms. The items' frequency (occurrence) impacts the label sizes that can be shown simultaneously. The colour red can be observed in the centre of Figure 12's map, covering both large-sized keywords like "performance management" and "performance measurement" as well as several smaller terms like "decision," "paradigm," "future," etc. Other significant terms are highlighted in orange and yellow and cover various topics, including balanced scorecard, sustainability, efficiency, performance measurement, benchmarking, accountability, government, universities, engagement, appraisal, feedback, etc.

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TRENDING RESEARCH TOPICS

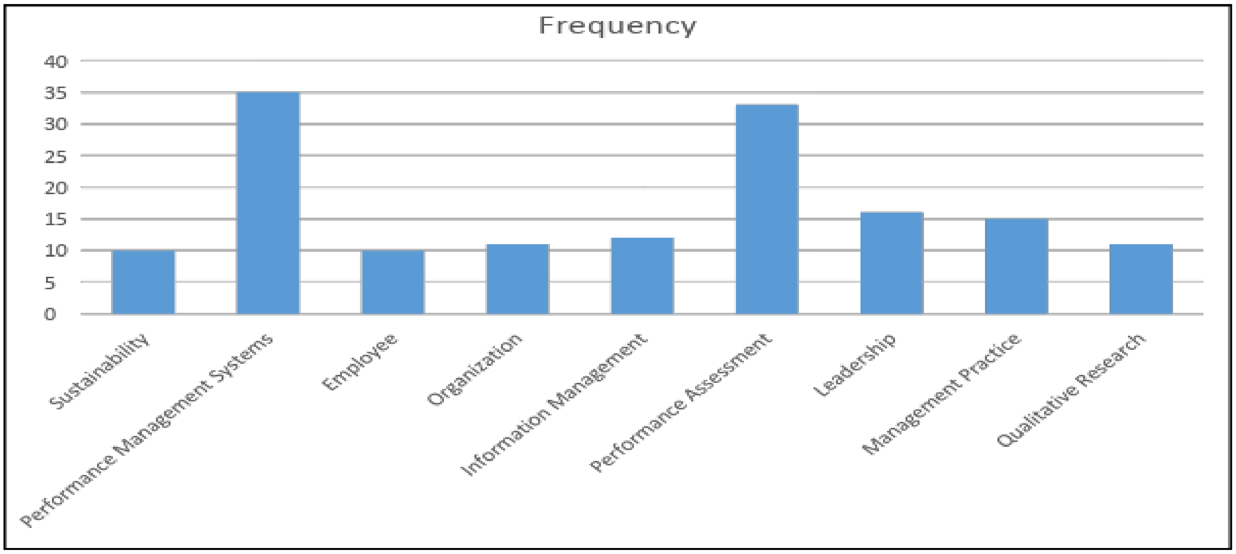

Figure 13: Trend Research Topics

Figure 13 shows the top trending topics on a two-dimensional scale. Logarithmic frequency value is on the vertical axis, and publishing years are on the horizontal axis. A look at the themes over the previous ten years revealed an intriguing pattern. The main issues were PMS, measurement, human resources, and management techniques.

DATA VISUALISATION

PMS as a field of research has attracted attention and interest during the last few years. The field's thematic development is shown in this section. Network analysis is used in data visualisation to quantitatively evaluate the number of emergent clusters, the frequency and linkages between different units of study, the overall link strengths, and the number of citations (Low and Siegel, 2019). Several methodologies must be used to extract the networks based on various analysis units, such as several publications, authors, and keywords. The nodes in these networks are linked together through links. It applies statistical analysis to maps produced to show various network metrics (Ariaa, 2018). Three different types of knowledge structures result from the scientific mapping carried out through network analysis.

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CONCEPTUAL STRUCTURE

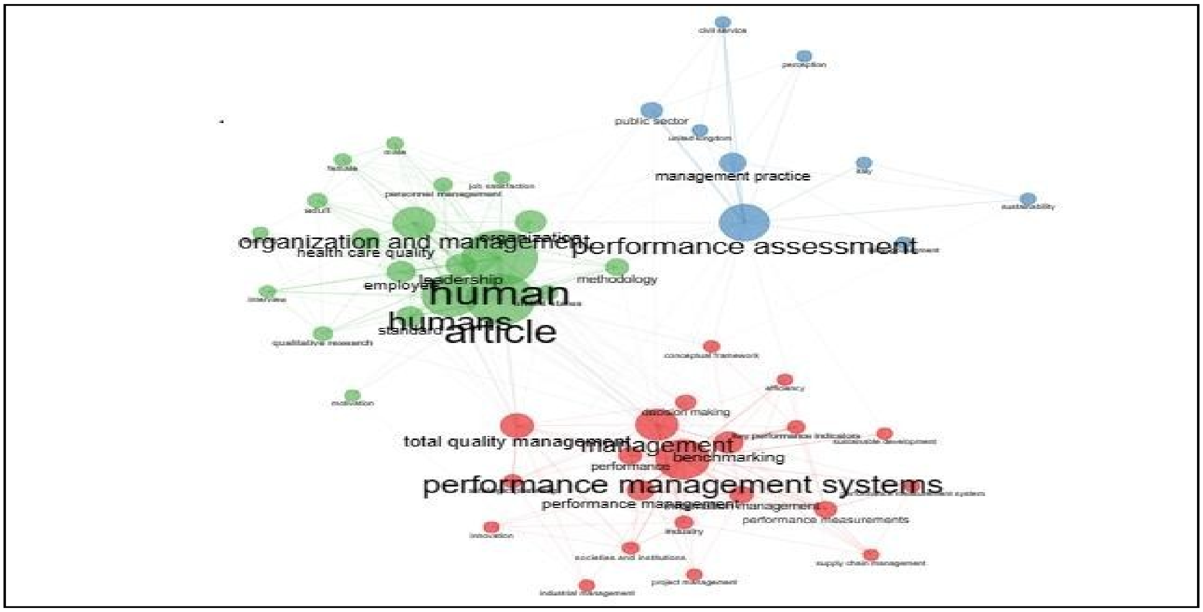

Figure 14: Co-occurrence Network

Co-occurrence network is a part of a conceptual framework that illustrates the relationship between in the academic data content.

The keyword co-occurrence network based on "keyword plus" as the unit of the analysis is displayed in Figure 14. The algorithm extracted the term "Keyword Plus" among words commonly appearing in publication titles and references. They convey the information in publications more precisely (Zhang et al., 2019). The data resulted in three clusters, which are represented in red, blue, and green (as shown in Figure 14). Phrases denote the point of intersection, connections are inferred by their distance, and the dimension of the node is proportional to the number of nodes in the cluster. Colours differentiate clusters. The red cluster emphasises PMS, the blue cluster incorporates performance assessment, and humans dominate the green cluster.

THEMATIC MAP

A thematic map plots the typological themes on a two-dimensional plot. Using the co-word analysis, themes are created in the research area by identifying keyword clusters (Cobo et al., 2011). According to their centrality and density, which act as the two dimensions, these themes can be divided into four quadrants on a two-dimensional graph. On the map, a bubble denotes each theme.

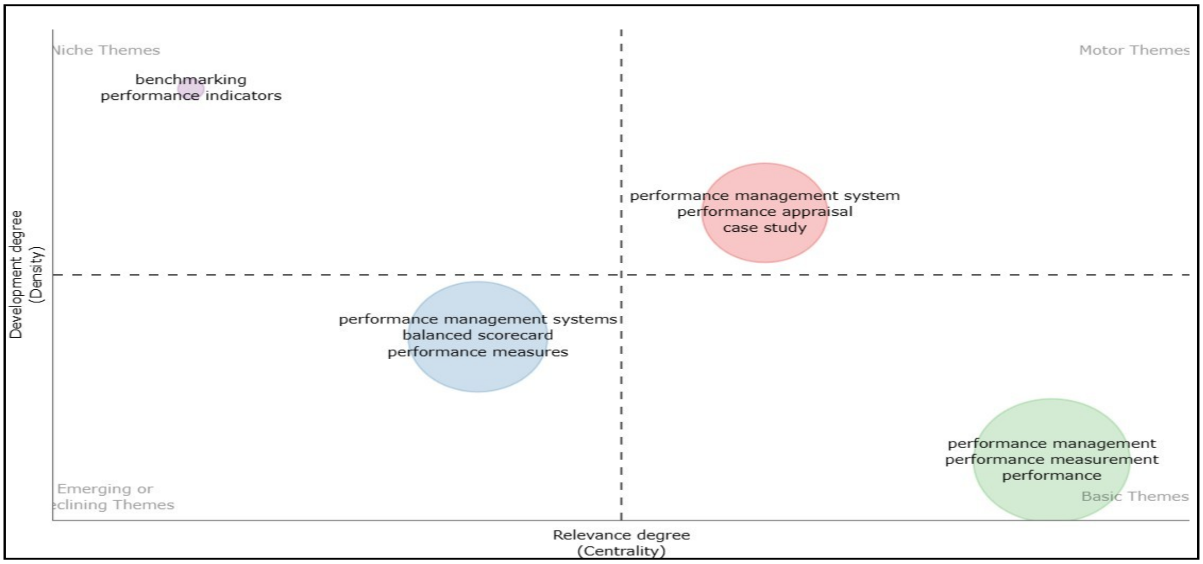

Figure 15: Thematic Map

On the graph (Figure 15), the terms "performance management system," "performance indicators," "performance measurement," and "benchmarking" are represented by bubbles. A motor theme, "performance management system," and "performance appraisal" are the topics most often discussed in the upper right quadrant of the diagram, which has high density and centrality. The core topic of performance management, which is shown in the lower right quadrant, denotes a crucial yet underdeveloped area. The "benchmarking" and "performance indicators" niche subject, which is well-developed with weak external relations but strong internal ties, is indicated in the upper left quadrant. The topic of riches in the lower left quadrant is underdeveloped and given less weight. It represents emerging as well as declining ties (Huang et al., 2020)

1.1.1 Thematic Evolution: Thematic evolution in the region evaluates the big picture of the area's development by cutting the period into multiple sections across time (Chen et al., 2019). Using a minimum cluster frequency of five words per cluster and cut points in 2015 and 2019, theme progression was used in this study throughout three time slices (Figures 16–19).

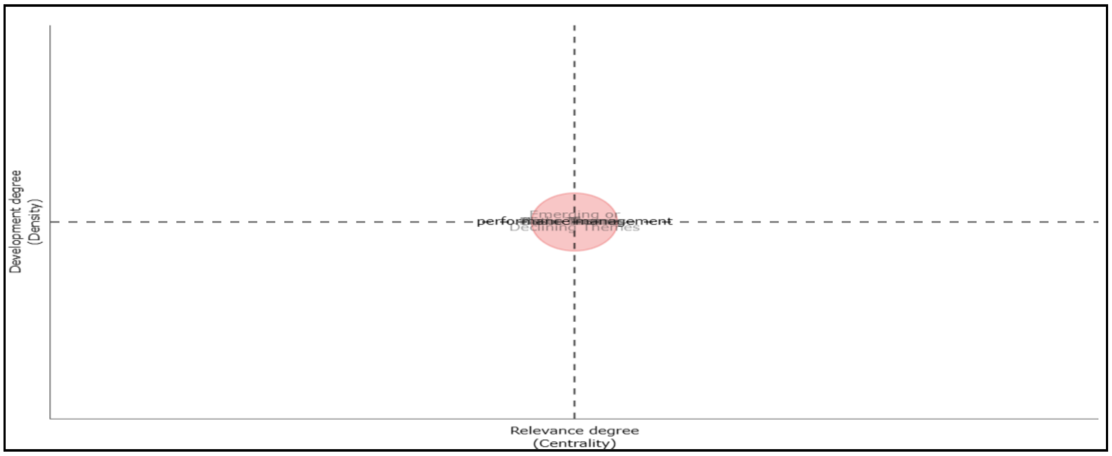

Figure 16: Time slice 1

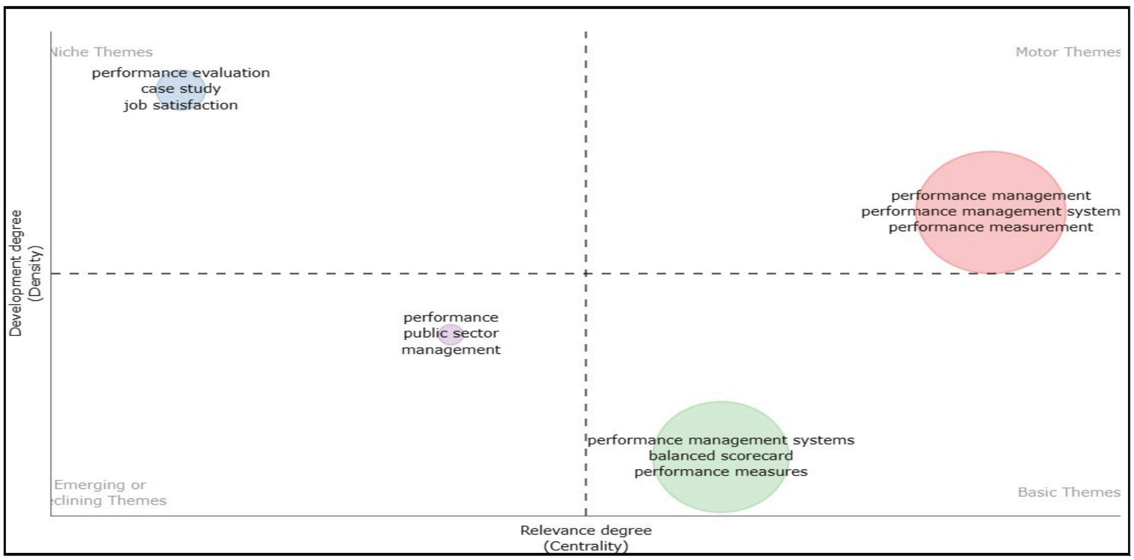

Figure 17: Time slice 2

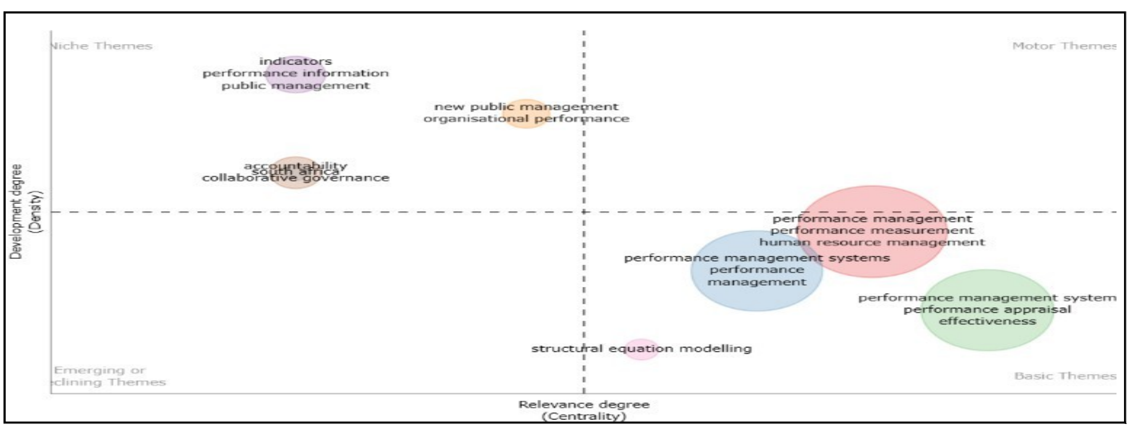

Figure 18: Time slice 3

It has been shown that "performance management" declined between 1989 and 2015. Between 2015 and 2019, as it approached the midpoint of the motor and basic themes, the PMS emerged and began to draw more attention. At this time, the theme of public sector management began to decline, while the specialist topics of performance evaluation and job satisfaction started to gain popularity. PMS emerged as a fundamental theme from 2019 to 2022. The PMS is an essential subject that unites the subthemes of performance measurement, management practice, human resource management, and effectiveness. Third-time slices saw a niche subject emerge under the themes of "public management," "performance information," "organisational performance," and "collaborative governance." The three-field plot (Figure 19) illustrates how broad and basic ideas arise. To examine the relationships between the themes, the period is divided into three chronological periods: 1979 to 2015, 2016 to 2018, and 2019 to 2023, underscoring the evolution of the themes. Performance management becomes one of the first period's four primary themes, along with conduct. Performance management, performance evaluation, and a PMS are among the themes in the second period. This acknowledges the PMS's increasing relevance and importance. In the second period, the key subject, "PMS," highlights its tight ties to performance evaluation and indicators, meaning it is relevant to performance interventions.

Intellectual structure: It analyses the association between authors and nations. It shows how different affect the scientific community. It displays how much research groups communicate with one another and the scientific community and how many other institutions they are affiliated with (Mendes et al., 2017).

Citation analysis: As per usual practice, authors cite only those papers that are relevant and related to their research topic. Citation count is a reflection of a publication's relevance and quality. When a publication appears in the reference list of another publication, the two are related (Egghe & Rousseau, 1990). Co-citation analysis studies the association between the publications that are citing and ones that being cited. The frequency with which a group of publications are cited together shows that they share a common subject. This statistic is known as the frequency of co-citation. The diagram shows three clusters of authors. A distinct colour represents each cluster. The co-citation strength is measured by the degree of relationship between publications as perceived by the citing authors (Hu et al., 2013).

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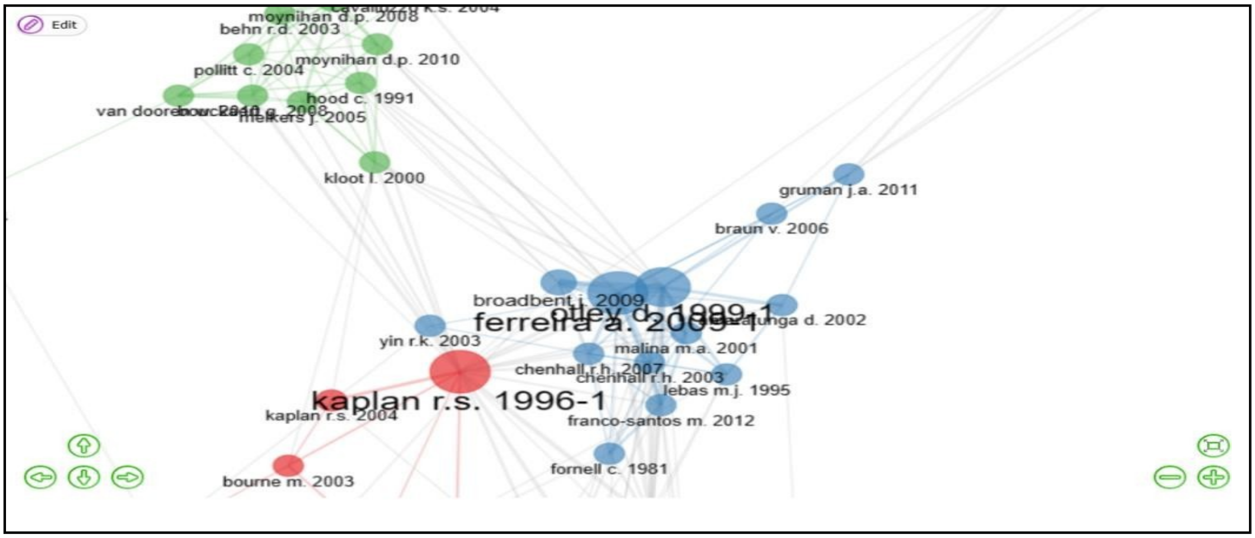

Figure 20: Co-citation Network

Ferrari A. is identified as the author from cluster 1, with the highest betweenness centrality scores as the most significant. Oatley D., who contributed significantly to the research on PMS, came next. The authors in Cluster 2 include leaders in their category of PMS, including Kaplan R. S. and Bourne M. Cluster 3 had names like Behn R D, Moynihan D P, and Hood C. A strong connection is created when multiple publications are mentioned together. This results in an intellectual structure based on historical data. Publications are grouped based on common topics. In this process, gathering historical data over modern data is more probable.

SOCIAL NETWORK ANALYSIS

An investigation into networks of connections uncovers the relationships between variables. Nodes represent social network participants that include authors, institutions, or sources of publications. Collection of nodes show interactions. The dynamics of the network are shown using ties that connect these participants. Collaboration networks are formed in 20 countries. It analyses geographic dispersion and cooperation. Regionally speaking, the United Kingdom and the United States of America dominate scholarly research and collaborate with most European nations and rising economies. Cluster analysis examines the diversity in publications. A publication is assigned to a cluster based on the calculation of texts inside the publications in that cluster. Publications related by shared references form a cluster (Cuccurullo, 2016).

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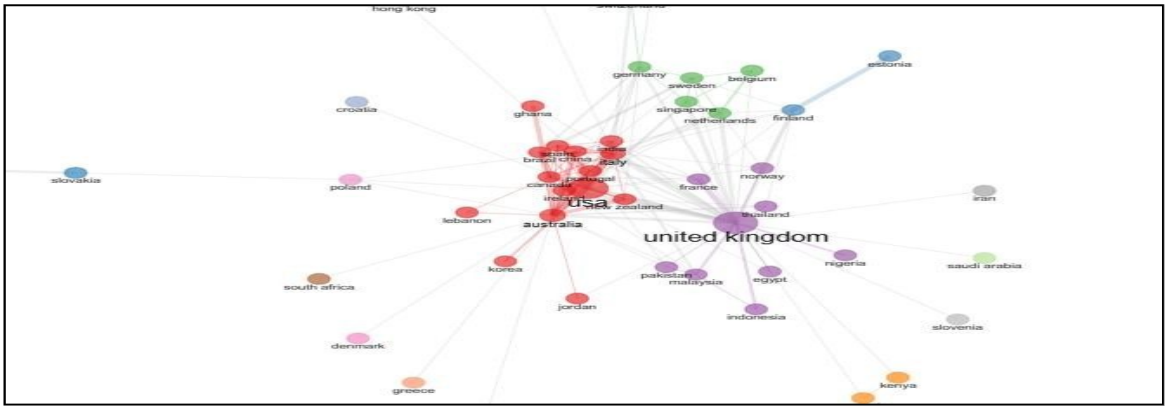

Figure 21: Geographical Distribution

From Figure 21, it was discovered that American researchers collaborate closely with academics in countries like Australia, New Zealand, Korea, Italy, Jordan, etc. In the second cluster, the United Kingdom is the dominant nation, along with Egypt, Nigeria, Indonesia, Thailand, Pakistan, France, and others. Leading the third cluster are Sweden, Belgium, and Singapore.

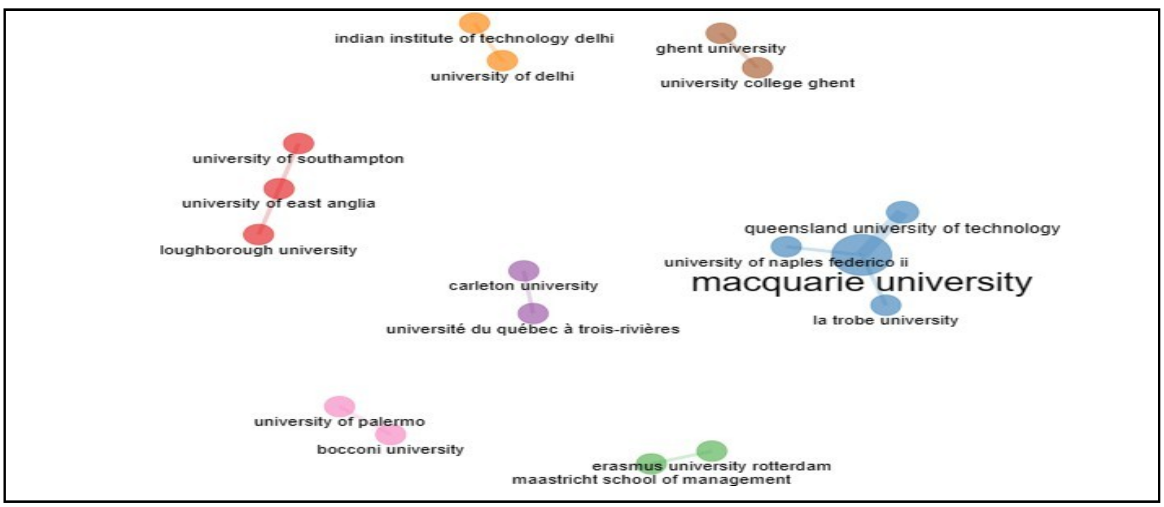

Figure 22: Institutional Collaboration Network

his network depicts the supremacy of the cluster in Figure 22, which is led by 'Macquarie University of Penn' and collaborates with the 'Queensland University of Technology', 'LaTrobe University', and the 'University of Naples Federico'.

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CONCLUSION

The evolution of the performance management behaviour domain from 1978 to 2022 is highlighted in this article. Also included is a thorough examination of the philosophical and social underpinnings of the study's topic. The study's primary outcome is consolidating the intermittent literature in the field and identifying essential sources of information, researchers, and papers. The Bibliometrics tool was used because of its flexibility and simplicity. The study's data was collected using the Scopus database because of its formal organisation and software compatibility. The data shows a gradual publication growth, followed by a surge in articles from 2010 to 2012. The USA produced most of the literature in this sector, followed by the United Kingdom, Italy, and India. The conceptual framework shows the relationship between performance management variables like total quality management, performance measurement, job performance, human resources, performance appraisal, performance indicators, and benchmarking. Most publications were from humanities, psychology, and social science sources, followed by business management. This simplifies the transition to a multidisciplinary strategy from a domain-focused approach. This study uses bibliometric analysis to examine publication patterns regarding authors, citations, sources, and nations.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR RESEARCH

The research gaps of this study are discussed.

- This bibliometric analysis makes use of the Scopus database. Data collection from further databases could be used.To gain a thorough grasp of the topic, scholars may choose to continue with a meta-analysis and a review of the literature in the future.
- Investigating the relationships between PMS and work performance, employee satisfaction, attrition rate, and turnover intentions is possible.
- Performance indicators, PMS, and benchmarking are emerging themes for additional research.

With the rising influence of PMS, it is essential to understand how these variables relate. It covers a range of human resource management choices, including performance standards, goals, measurements, improvements, and feedback on performance.

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SAMIKHIYA: A Multidisciplinary Research Journal
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Available at: https://journal.mscw.ac.in/mscw_Journal.aspx

Literature Review on Relationship pf Customer Relationship Management with Marketing

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ABSTRACT

The Purpose of the Review is to understand the Relationship of Marketing and Customer Relationship Management, How Customer Relationship Management has made the Marketing Process easy in Business Organisation, emphasizing how CRM strategies and tools contribute to the development and execution of effective marketing practices. The paper aims to explore the ways in which CRM enhances customer understanding, segmentation, targeting, and personalization, all of which are integral to successful marketing campaigns. Also About How CRM Helped in Automation of Marketing Activities.

METHODOLOGY

This review paper employs a systematic and comprehensive approach to synthesize existing literature on the relationship between Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and marketing.

A wide range of academic databases (e.g., Google Scholar, JSTOR, Scopus, and Web of Science) were searched for peer- reviewed articles, books, and industry reports published within the last two decades. Keywords such as "CRM and marketing," "CRM systems and customer experience," "CRM in marketing strategy," and "relationship marketing" were used to ensure a comprehensive search of relevant materials. Only publications that provide substantial insights into the integration of CRM systems with marketing practices were considered. Criteria for inclusion involved the relevance of the study, methodological rigor, and the focus on CRM's impact on marketing performance.

FINDINGS

The analysis of the literature reveals several key findings regarding the relationship between Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and marketing Customer Relationship Management has become a crucial component in the modern business landscape, revolutionizing the way organizations approach and engage with their customers. The Customer Relationship Management has become a critical component of modern marketing strategies, as organizations strive to build strong, lasting relationships with their customers. The Usage of E CRM Software actually Facilitates the Digital Marketing Process. With CRM, companies gather detailed customer information, By knowing where each customer stands, marketers can better craft content and offers that speak to their specific stage in the journey. One of the most powerful uses of CRM data is customer segmentation. Instead of blasting out the same generic email to everyone, CRM allows you to create segments. Despite the benefits, several challenges were identified, including high implementation costs, data privacy concerns, and the complexity of CRM system adoption. Companies often struggle to fully leverage CRM due to insufficient training, integration issues, or resistance to change within the organization.

ORIGINALITY / VALUE

This review paper offers several contributions to the academic and practical understanding of the intersection between Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and marketing. First, it provides a comprehensive synthesis of the current literature, highlighting how CRM systems are no longer just a tool for managing customer data but have become integral to the strategic execution of marketing campaigns. This paper offers a holistic view of CRM's role in modern marketing, linking CRM capabilities directly to key marketing outcomes such as customer segmentation, personalization, retention, and loyalty.

The paper also contributes original insights by examining how CRM systems are evolving in response to technological advancements like artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning, and big data analytics. By identifying the increasing role of these technologies in CRM, the review reflects on how they enhance marketing precision and create more targeted customer interactions.

Keywords: *(AI) Artificial Intelligence, (ML) Machine Learning, Big Data Analytics, CRM, Marketing Automation, Digital Marketing, Segmentation, Targeting, Personalization*

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INTRODUCTION

CRM process at the customer-facing level can be defined as "a systematic process to manage customer relationship initiation, maintenance, and termination; across all customer contact points to maximize the value of the relationship portfolio". There are three CRM processes at the customer-facing level of CRM including relationship initiation, relationship maintenance, and relationship termination. (E. J. Ragins and A. J. Greco 2003) In This review we have also find it out that Analytical CRM builds on operational CRM and analyze customer data to create information about the customer segmentation, customer behavior, and customer value to the organization using statistical analysis tools especially the data mining (Z. Lun, L.Jinlin, and W. Yingying 2008) The organization's customer strategy entails the identification of the existing and potential customer base and recognition of the most appropriate form of customer segmentation (M. Geib, A. Reichold, L. Kolbe, and W. Brenner,2005) In physical businesses and online businesses, customer shopping experience influences future customer behavior, including repurchase intention, store revisit intention, and word of mouth (WOM) (Chang and Wang, 2014). Many organizations have made huge investments to collect, integrate, analyse data, and use it to run business activities. For instance in marketing activities as part of CRM's module; customers are exposed with a lot of marketing messages every day and many people is just ignore those messages unless they find a value from the messages received (S. Orenga-Roglá, R. Chalmeta 2016) Consequently, banks use the relationship marketing concept as a strategy to build loyalty with each customer, which leads to improved financial and market performance, and an increased competitive edge (Ravesteyn, 2005). The new e-technologies which include the Internet, e-mail, mobile telephony and digital television make it even easier and more cost effective to do many of these things (Paul Fairhurst 2006). Through Proper Integration of E CRM in Marketing Helps to access customer Demands & Needs & Wants and helps in customizing all the marketing activities according to customer satisfaction.

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LITERATURE REVIEW

Sriram, V., & Sahu, P. (2014).

Streamlining Marketing Efforts

One of the primary advantages of integrating marketing automation with CRM is the ability to streamline marketing processes. Automation eliminates the need for manual intervention in tasks like sending follow-up emails, scheduling social media posts, or nurturing leads through a predefined workflow.

Personalized Marketing at Scale

Personalization is at the heart of modern marketing, and marketing automation in CRM enables businesses to deliver personalized experiences at scale. By integrating customer data collected through CRM systems,

Improved Customer Journey Mapping

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Mapping the customer journey is essential for understanding how potential customers interact with a brand, from initial awareness to final purchase and beyond. Marketing automation tools integrated with CRM systems can track a customer's interactions across multiple touchpoints, such as website visits, email opens, and social media interactions.

Lead Nurturing and Conversion Optimization

Lead nurturing is one of the most significant benefits of marketing automation in CRM. By automating follow-up emails and communications, businesses can stay in touch with prospects without manual intervention

Data-Driven Insights and Performance Tracking

A significant advantage of marketing automation is its ability to provide real-time data and insights into campaign performance.

When integrated with CRM systems, marketing automation tools allow businesses to track key performance indicators (KPIs) such as open rates, click-through rates, conversion rates, and customer engagement metrics. These analytics provide valuable feedback, enabling businesses to refine and optimize their campaigns for better results.

RATIONALE OF STUDY

The rationale for studying the effects of marketing with CRM focuses on understanding how integrating CRM strategies influences marketing effectiveness, customer satisfaction, loyalty, and business performance

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Challenge: In an era of digital transformation and customer- centric marketing, businesses face increasing pressure to build and sustain long-term relationships with customers. Traditional marketing techniques often fail to address the dynamic and personalized needs of consumers. The challenges also have changed due to the technological developments. This study was conducted to identify the technological challenges influencing CRM adoption in multichannel environment. It mainly identifies the contemporary challenges of multichannel CRM implementation. In–depth case analysis and interviews of implementation experts were used in analysing the implementation of a leading financial services organisation. The study found that the key issues impacting multichannel CRM implementation fall into two categories: classical and contemporary challenges. (Preety Awasthi, Neeraj Dubey 2015)

THEORETICAL / CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Theories: The long-term orientation is often emphasized because it is believed that marketing actors will not engage in opportunistic behavior if they have a long-term orientation and that such relationships will be anchored on mutual gains and cooperation (Ganesan 1994), A narrow perspective of customer relationship management is database marketing emphasizing the promotional aspects of marketing linked to database efforts (Bickert 1992) Another narrow, yet relevant, viewpoint is to consider CRM only as customer retention in which a variety of after marketing tactics is used for customer bonding or staying in touch after the sale is made (Vavra 1992)

PRACTICAL RELEVANCE

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) has been an im- portant ally to companies willing to improve their customer experiences. Lately, Machine Learning (ML) and its techniques have been transforming the way companies interact with their customers through data analysis. This paper reviews the literature on the application of ML techniques to improve CRM processes and provides an overview of used techniques and their application to each CRM dimension and element. In addition, the practical implications are analyzed based on re-cent developments of CRM tools in the field of ML.(Beatriz Nery Rodrigues Chagas 2018)

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Primary Objective: To evaluate how marketing strategies that integrate CRM systems affect customer engagement, satisfaction, retention, and ultimately, business performance.

JUSTIFICATION

This study will add to the body of knowledge on CRM by investigating its direct impact on marketing practices and outcomes, an area that remains underexplored in current research. Customer Relationship Management (CRM) projects often fail. We focus on the project justification process as one way of improving project success rates. We review how the typical combination of an Return On Investment (ROI) calculation and a project plan can have flaws as a project justification approach, and we propose the use of the Benefits Dependency Network (BDN) as an additional tool. The second part of the paper reports on an exploratory study of the BDN's use in five business-to-business CRM projects, inductively deriving propositions regarding its benefits and factors for success in its use. Further research on the tool's efficacy is encouraged. (H Wilson 2007)

METHODOLOGY

While writing this review paper on the effects of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) in marketing, your goal is to synthesize existing research, theories, and insights from multiple sources to provide a comprehensive understanding of the subject. Unlike primary research, a review paper doesn't involve new data collection but rather analyzes and evaluates the available literature on the topic.

DATABASES AND SOURCES

Conducted a thorough search using academic databases such as Google Scholar, JSTOR, Scopus, Web of Science, and PubMed, sources like peer-reviewed journal articles, conference papers, industry reports, books, and theses/dissertations. Select studies that specifically address CRM's effects on marketing outcomes, such as customer engagement, retention, satisfaction, segmentation, or sales performance.

THEMATIC ANALYSIS

Organized the findings into themes or categories. Common themes may include:

- The role of CRM in customer segmentation and targeting. The impact of CRM on customer loyalty and retention.
- Personalization in marketing through CRM data. Effects of CRM on marketing ROI and cost efficiency.
- The influence of CRM on digital marketing strategies (social media, email marketing, etc.).

Qualitative and Quantitative Studies: Included both types of research to provide a holistic view.

Case Studies: Analyzed real-life examples of businesses that have successfully implemented CRM systems to illustrate practical impacts.

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Integration of Insights: Combined insights from various studies to form a coherent narrative about the role of CRM in enhancing marketing effectiveness.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF STUDY

The review paper reveals that CRM systems have a profound impact on marketing outcomes across multiple dimensions. The integration of CRM into marketing strategies enhances customer segmentation, improves customer retention, facilitates personalization, and drives higher marketing ROI. Furthermore, CRM systems provide businesses with the tools to enhance customer satisfaction, optimize service delivery, and maximize Customer Lifetime Value (CLVi) The overall Review is that CRM's effects on marketing are overwhelmingly positive, making it a critical tool for modern businesses striving to create long-term relationships with their customers and enhance overall marketing effectiveness. However, the literature also suggests that the full potential of CRM can only be realized when systems are properly integrated with other marketing technologies and strategies, and when businesses effectively use customer data for decision- making.

CUSTOMER RETENTION

Consumer marketing companies have lavished more resources on attracting new customers than on satisfying old customers. In today's low growth and highly competitive marketplace, however, customer retention increasingly joins customer getting as an important area of analysis and planning. Marketers can better cultivate relationships with existing customers in these ways: designing an optimal customer portfolio, formulating a special marketing mix, and modifying the marketing organization. (Larry J. Rosenberg, John A. Czepiel 1984)

CRM AND CUSTOMER SEGMENTATION & TARGETING

Direct marketers use data mining technique called segmentation based on cluster analysis to target a subset of their customers for improving their profits. As the world is growing more and more competitive, the customer need and experience is becoming more important to the businesses. CRM based on data mining is a comprehensive strategy and a process of acquiring, retaining, and partnering with selective customers to create superior value for the business by using customer knowledge (Gaurav Gupta, Himanshu Aggarwal and Rinkle Rani 2016)

CRM AND MARKETING PERSONALIZATION

Customer expectations have changed since the mid-20th century, when accessibility of product was the key to capturing markets. Today, customers want to stand out while being a part of a crowd. The desire to own a product that carries personal signature is conspicuous. Marketers discovered this latent need and the concept of personalization germinated with the proliferation of technological advancement. The definition of the word "personalization," according to the Oxford dictionary, is "the action of designing or producing something that meets someone's individual requirement." In this regard, personalization is a way to acknowledge the uniqueness of each customer by satisfying them with products that are tailored according to their preference (Suprenant & Solomon, 1987). In practice, personalization is regarded as a process that is designed to curate a relevant, individualized interaction to enhance customer experience (Polk et al., 2020). Specifically, personalization uses insight based on each customer's personal and behavioral data to deliver a superior experience. More often than not, personalization requires customer engagement to cocreate a personalized experience, which can occur through customer reviews, purchase data, and social media interactions, among others (Lim et al., 2022). (Shobhana Chandra, Sanjeev Verma, Weng Marc Lim, Satish Kumar, Naveen Donthu 2022)

CRM AND MARKETING ROI (RETURN ON INVESTMENT)

With focus of enterprise management extending from internal to external areas, its business operation strategy has gradually shifted from concentration on "products" to "customers". Effectively implementing Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system has become the key to the success of enterprises. Much resource has been spent to build the CRM systems. However, presently, there is no systematic and effective method to quantify CRM'S "return on investment (ROI)". It is imperative that enterprise management needs such methods or systems in place to estimate and predict the contribution of CRM to the increase of customers, the expansion of market share, and its rates of return on investment. In this paper, we examine costs of CRM comprising costs for construction and usage. We examine the rate of Return On Investment (ROI) considering both direct and indirect factors. The ROI model is then constructed by availing the non-discount method, and then improved by taking into account factors of depreciation and income tax. (X.G. Li, S.L. Yang, W. Xie, D.X. Gu 2007)

SAMIKHIYA: A Multidisciplinary Research Journal
ISSN: 2583-827X (Online)
Volume 5, Special Issue, January 2026 pp. 65-78
Available at: https://journal.mscw.ac.in/mscw_Journal.aspx

CUSTOMER LIFETIME VALUE (CLV)

Customer lifetime value is an inward-looking view of the consumer and is based on the insight that views customers in terms of on-going long-term relationships and not just short-term transactions. It is a predictive tool that provides forward-looking information on customer relationship performance and resource allocation. Estimating the lifetime value of a customer involves predictions of both revenues and customer retention probabilities. Where retailer efforts are focused on the retention of valuable customers and delivering customized products (Ansari and Mela, 2003), cross-selling (Kamakura et al., 1991, 2003), value for customers increases significantly. (Dimple Kaul 2017)

CRM AND DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGIES

In this research, therefore, we rely on the theoretical framework that identifies the use of the typology of three types of CRMs that can work with AI: analytical CRM (Xu & Walton, 2005), collaborative CRM (Alavi, Ahuja, & Medury, 2012), and operational CRM (Iriana & Buttle, 2007). These CRMs in B2B digital marketing can apply AI to improve data processing and the identification of new patterns by analyzing user data in digital environments (Saura, Palos-Sanchez, & Blanco-González, 2019). The novelty of the present study lies that, despite the exponential development of AI and its emerging application to various production environments, none of the previous studies has addressed the issues in B2B digital marketing.

FUTURE SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The concept of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) has evolved over time, but gaps and under-explored areas remain in both its study and application. Below is an outline of these gaps, supported by references that provide context and further reading**.** There's potential for more advanced AI-driven CRM functionalities, such as real-time decision-making and deeper personalization of customer interactions. AI can be used more comprehensively to predict customer behaviors and preferences, but this is still underdeveloped. (Nguyen, B., Simkin, L., & Canhoto, 2020) Ethical issues surrounding data privacy, transparency, and consent are becoming central to CRM but are not always adequately addressed. This is Missing for this More research and strategies focusing on ethical CRM practices and developing trust through transparency in data collection and use (Martin, K., & Murphy, P. 2017), Most CRM solutions are tailored to large enterprises, leaving SMEs with limited access to effective tools. This makes the scope of study of Development of cost-effective and scalable CRM systems suited to SMEs, focusing on simplicity and ease of use. (Lambert, D. M., & Enz, M. G. (2017)) And Global CRM systems often fail to account for local cultural and contextual differences. More Research is required into adapting CRM to diverse cultural contexts and market conditions. And lastly CRM systems tend to focus on transactional and behavioral metrics, while emotional engagement is often overlooked. (Yim, C. K., Tse, D. K., & Chan, K. W. 2008) Lastly Research is Required into how CRM systems can assess and foster emotional engagement, such as using sentiment analysis to gauge customer feelings and adjusting strategies accordingly. (Ahuja, V., & Thatcher, S. M. B. 2020)

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the relationship between Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and marketing is vital for driving business success in today's competitive landscape. CRM systems enable businesses to collect, analyze, and use customer data to build personalized and meaningful connections, which significantly enhances marketing strategies. By understanding customer preferences, behaviors, and needs, CRM tools help marketers create targeted campaigns, improve customer engagement, and boost customer loyalty. Furthermore, CRM and marketing are interconnected in their goals of customer retention, brand advocacy, and increasing lifetime value. When CRM and marketing efforts are aligned, they lead to better resource allocation, more effective messaging, and higher ROI. In essence, CRM not only supports marketing in its execution but also provides a deeper understanding of customer motivations, enabling businesses to craft more effective marketing strategies. Therefore, businesses should view CRM as an integral part of their marketing efforts, ensuring that both customer relationship management and marketing functions are integrated to deliver superior customer experiences, increase satisfaction, and drive growth.

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SAMIKHIYA: A Multidisciplinary Research Journal
ISSN: 2583-827X (Online)
Volume 5, Special Issue, January 2026 pp. 79-92
Available at: https://journal.mscw.ac.in/mscw_Journal.aspx

Are Buses Socialist?
A case of Delhi Public Transit in Post -Independence Period

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ABSTRACT

Public transport subsidies have historically occupied a pivotal position in urban policy debates, particularly in societies that have viewed mobility as a social right rather than a market commodity. In post-independence India, and especially in Delhi, subsidies came to be embedded within a broader socialist policy framework that prioritised welfare, redistribution, and state responsibility for essential services. Subsidies, understood as direct fiscal support or deliberate fare concessions, were designed to keep public transport affordable for the urban poor and lower-middle classes, even when such policies generated chronic operational deficits for state-run transport undertakings. But historical enquiry indicates half-hearted socialism and loans instead of subsidies as financial support that adversely affected century old public transport system in Delhi.

Keywords: public transport, subsidy, urban mobility, privatization.

INTRODUCTION

The ideological inclination of Indian leadership had huge impact over the policies of the state after independence of country. Republic of India was supposed to be governed with principles of welfare state in order to improve lives of millions of people. As socialist doctrine demanded public ownership of all means of production, public transport in Delhi was nationalized in 1948.[1] The urban mobility was shaped by welfare state model that prioritized necessities of the masses over business principles and insured that public transport remain accessible and affordable for common people. But how this agenda of government was implemented raises questions about its commitment towards socialist objectives. The impact of such policies

[1] Bhagwati, Jagdish N., and Padma B. Desai. "Socialism and Indian Economic Policy." (1975): 213-221.

SAMIKHIYA: A Multidisciplinary Research Journal
ISSN: 2583-827X (Online)
Volume 5, Special Issue, January 2026 pp. 79-92
Available at: https://journal.mscw.ac.in/mscw_Journal.aspx

further suggests historical investigation to understand how socialist agendas resulted into massive privatization of public road transport in the city.

this paper evaluate the socialist character of public transport and role of government intentions through historical scrutiny in second half of 20^{th} century. The paper underlines important policy measures to demonstrate socialist elements in Delhi's public bus service and its impact over state operator, private players and people of this region. I have argued that though state was interested in maintaining public bus system on socialist lines, but it did not provide sufficient support to achieve the same. The welfare programs were imposed upon the state road transport but adequate financial assistance could not be provide. As result of which public transport suffered massive failures and finally destroyed and replaced by privatization of public transit system.

In the decades following Independence, Delhi experienced unprecedented urban growth driven by Partition-related migration, administrative centralisation, and later industrial and service-sector expansion. The pressure this growth exerted on urban mobility was immense. Public bus transport became the backbone of everyday commuting for working-class populations, lower-middle-income groups, students, and government employees. Unlike rail-based systems, buses offered flexibility and comparatively lower capital costs, making them the preferred mode for rapid expansion.

Before independence, the entire public transport system remained under the private companies including its streetcars, trollies and motorbuses. In fact, the urban transit services suffered typical colonial arrangements that granted exclusive rights to companies resulting in monopolistic control over routes and mode of transport. The colonial government always refused to take charge of such crucial utility of urban mobility. Soon after partition, the government of India took charge of the transport facility of the capital as previous contracts with European firms terminated and the government planned to nationalize earlier transit operations. The history of transport in Delhi during the second half of the twentieth century is inseparable from the broader trajectory of the city's demographic expansion, administrative reorganisation, and postcolonial developmental priorities. From the Delhi Transport Authority (DTA) in 1947 to the Delhi Transport Service (DTS) in 1948, and later to the Delhi Transport Undertaking (DTU) in 1958 and finally the Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) in 1971 were repeatedly undertaken with the stated objective of placing public transport on "sound business principles." Yet, till late 1980s, socialist objectives and welfare policies determined functioning

SAMIKHIYA: A Multidisciplinary Research Journal
ISSN: 2583-827X (Online)
Volume 5, Special Issue, January 2026 pp. 79-92
Available at: https://journal.mscw.ac.in/mscw_Journal.aspx

of state road transport. Since all of these agencies were controlled by central government under the ministry of shipping and transport and they succeed one after another without significantly changes, they can be collectively called as state road transport.

FAIR FARES: THE POLICY FOR POPULACE

The most initial impact of socialist ideas can be observed in the fares of public buses over the decades. The fare regulation was the first and the most important instrument to insure that motorbuses were for all, every citizen can enjoy this modern mode of mobility, and the state is committed to uphold idea of equality and opportunity. From the 1950s onward, bus transport in Delhi acquired the character of an essential public utility rather than a commercial service. The limited availability of private transport, the absence of a mass rapid transit system, and the spatial expansion of the city made buses the primary mode of daily mobility for the vast majority of its population. Workers commuting from resettlement colonies, clerks employed in government offices, students, and informal-sector labourers depended overwhelmingly on public buses. The travel by buses was necessity not luxury for thousand and thousand of people in the city. the government was concerned that Rationalized fares would deprive large part of population from benefit of modern transport facility which may led to huge losses.

In this context, fare levels became politically charged. Any increase in bus fares was perceived not merely as a technical adjustment but as a direct intervention in the everyday cost of living of urban residents. The hike in the fares could destroy the socialist image of the government who cares for poor and who does not resemble profit mentality of colonial rulers. The government always rejected idea of increasing bus fares even though it became absolutely necessary from financial point of view.

The refusal to allow fare rationalisation must be understood within the peculiar political status of Delhi. As the national capital, the city was under close scrutiny, and governments were particularly sensitive to public discontent. Bus services, visible and ubiquitous, were among the most immediate points of contact between the state and ordinary citizens. A fare hike risked provoking public protest, union mobilisation, and adverse media attention, all of which carried electoral costs. In a city where public transport functioned as a lifeline rather than a supplementary service, fare politics became inseparable from the calculus of governance.

Even such lower fares were not sufficient, as there were other set of people require more support of the state of their mobility needs. Persons with disabilities, elderly and students all required concessional bus passes for daily commute. It was social obligation over governments to look after the vulnerable section of the society and provide assistance to those who required it most. Compelled by its commitment to the welfare of marginalized, weak and helpless, government offered variety of concessional passes to such people for the bus travel. This polished the socialist image of the government and also helped huge number of people over the decades.[2]

The welfare policy must necessarily engage with the politics of fares, for it was fare regulation—more than any single administrative weakness—that structurally undermined the financial autonomy of the state road transport. In contrast to metropolitan transport systems in Madras and Bombay, where fare revisions were both more frequent and more closely aligned with rising operational costs, Delhi's bus transport remained socialist within a popular government policy of welfare state.[3]

THE IDEAL UNDERTAKING

The welfare policy of state were not limited to the passengers, the government was equally benevolent towards workers of public transport operator. The organisational growth of Delhi's public transport system generated a rapidly expanding labour base. As a state-run undertaking, first under the DTU and later the DTC, transport employees were recruited under conditions of central government service. Drivers, conductors, workshop staff, and managerial personnel were entitled to secure employment, regular wage revisions and pensions. This undertaking provided housing facilities for workers, it was insured that transport staff live closer to depots and workshops in comfortable colonies exclusively built for these workers. The proximity between workplace and residence was necessary so workers do not have problem in commute. They were provided entertainment, education and other services in these housing colonies. The state wanted workers to be happy and the labour had special place with in socialist policies. Sports were frequently organized for workers at bigger level and ministers felicitated workers. Drivers, conductors and other were always given medical benefits, education, various types of

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[2] Chief Commissioner, "Report on the activities of Delhi Transport Service & its Policy & Programme for next year, 1953," file no. 21-48, DSA, 33.

[3] Parliament, Committee on Public Undertakings, Twenty-Second Report on Delhi Transport Corporation (Including Comparative Analysis of Transport in Metropolitan Cities), 10th Lok Sabha, 1992–93, 56.

social trainings and other forms of social welfare. These provisions reflected the postcolonial state's commitment to labour protection and social security.[4]

There is no doubt that many benefits were result of collective action of the workers as bus transport workers in Delhi developed a long and politically influential tradition of unionisation. Unions played a central role in securing improved service conditions, resisting workforce rationalisation, and negotiating wage revisions. Periodic strikes and collective action became an established feature of the sector. Though it was difficult for the management to deny labour demands, particularly given the political sensitivity of transport services and the disruption that strikes caused to urban life but, socialist character of governments agreed to labour demands and accept some issues, workers were generally obliged by the state.

It is important to understand that implementation of these socialist policies required massive perpetual financial support to continue the operations and meet future travel requirements of rapidly growing city population and expending landscape. The socialist utility services are always expensive to maintain as at very first level, they reject notion of profitability. So it was obvious that Delhi's public transport cannot survive without financial assistance. Since state road transport was never given autonomy and it was always controlled by the central government through its respective ministry, it is irrelevant to focus upon DTU or DTC for any policy measure or state of affairs of public transport. Well, at this juncture it is worth to examine the socialist commitment of the government as popular policies can confuse and historical investigation can reveal real face of welfare scheme.

SUBSIDY: MYTH OR REALITY

The positive role of subsidy for urban transport has been underlined by the scholars world-wide after examining urban transit services across the regions. From 1970s and 80s, most of the public transport systems of various countries have relied upon the state subsidies.[5] A historical investigation of the finances of public bus operator is necessary to check the true face of socialist commitments of government through examining subsidy availability to Delhi's urban transport. It is difficult to understand that why public transport operator reached up to such a catastrophic level of indebtedness despite the fact it was continuously provided required subsidies to operate. Actually, SRT were never given any subsidy till 1987, and the entire

[4] Chief Commissioner, "Labour Situation in D.T.U., 1965," File no. 25-18, DSA, 10.

[5] Kerin, Paul D. "Why subsidise state transport authorities?." *Australian Quarterly* 59, no. 1 (1987): 60-72.

SAMIKHIYA: A Multidisciplinary Research Journal
ISSN: 2583-827X (Online)
Volume 5, Special Issue, January 2026 pp. 79-92
Available at: https://journal.mscw.ac.in/mscw_Journal.aspx

capital expenditure of the state road transport was met by the central government by granting interest bearing loans. Waze and means assistance was also provided by the central government to the corporation to enable it to meet Its working losses. As of 31 March 1978, the DTC's outstanding loan liability stood at ₹67,51,60,992.[6] This figure reflected not merely routine borrowing for fleet expansion or infrastructure development, but a long history of loans taken to cover recurring operational deficits. The inability of the corporation to generate sufficient revenue—owing to low fares and high fixed costs meant that loans were increasingly used as substitutes for direct budgetary support. Over time, this practice transformed short-term financial assistance into a structural debt crisis.

By the mid-1970s, the mounting indebtedness of corporation had become a matter of serious concern for the central government. Persistent operational losses, rising wage bills, politically regulated fares, and dependence on borrowed capital had pushed DTC into deep financial distress. It was in this broader context of fiscal strain that the planning commission, in 1978, advanced a proposal aimed at resolving the growing loan burden of the DTC, whose accumulated losses had reached unsustainable levels by the end of the decade. The central government's proposal sought to address this crisis through a partial write-off and restructuring of liabilities. A sum of ₹7,841.7 lakhs, representing the accumulated loss of the corporation as on 31 March 1978, was proposed to be written off. This amount comprised two distinct components: ₹4,663.51 lakhs of principal and ₹3,178.19 lakhs in interest accrued on the outstanding loans. The inclusion of the entire interest component in the proposed write-off was particularly significant, as it acknowledged that interest accumulation—rather than productive investment—had become a major driver of the corporation's financial deterioration. The remaining principal amount of ₹2,088.10 lakhs was proposed to be converted into equity.[7]

[6] Planning Commission, "Re-Structuring the Capital of Delhi Transport Corporation, 1978," file no. F.49(4)(1)/78, National Archives of India, 7.

[7] IBID. 8.

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Statement showing the details of the loans given to Delhi transport Corporation.

	Capital loan	Ways & Means	Total	Amount repaid	Balance outstanding	Accumulated outstanding (Rs. in Lakhs)
	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
D.R.T.A. Period						
1.4.50 to 6.4.58	270.00	—	270.00	63.50	206.50	206.50
D.T.U. Period						
7.4.58 to 2.11.71	1126.00	337.00	1463.00	214.60	1248.40	1454.90
D.T.C. Period						
3.11.71 to 31.3.72	197.00	78.00	275.00	—	275.00	1729.90
1972 -73	257.50	231.00	448.50	—	488.50	2218.40
1973-74	585.21	291.00	876.21	—	876.21	3094.61
1974-75	792.00	685.00	1477.00	—	1477.00	4571.61
1975-76	730.00	590.00	1320.00	—	1320.00	5891.61
1976-77	180.00	80.00	260.00	—	260.00	6151.61
1977-78	200.00	400.00	600.00	—	600.00	6751.61

A closer look of capital position reveals that the subsidy was never given to SRT before 1987. Year after year, it was supported with loans by the central government and these loans were never interest free. The corporation hardly managed to pay interests and the principle piled up beyond its financial capabilities. When inquired about the subsidies by parliamentary panel 1992, CMD of DTC replied that subsidy only started from 1987. He quoted, "In 1986-87, I was given Rs. 49.33 crores; In 1987-88, Rs. 64 crores, in 1988-89, Rs. 69 31 crores; m 1989-90 Rs. 70.50 crores; and in 1990-91 Rs. 163 crores."[8] So on the one hand, government forced SRT to run its socialist programmes, and on the other, loans were imposed instead of due subsidies. As demonstrated below, this devastated public transport in city by end of the 20th century.

THE IMPACT OF PSEUDO-SOCIALISM

From its inception, state bus transport in Delhi suffered from half-hearted socialist programmes as appropriate financial arrangements were not put in place by the government. A persistent absence of adequate subsidy, led to the superficial changes, and one after another, SRT in Delhi were declared unviable. The Delhi Transport Authority (DTA), among the earliest bodies entrusted with managing urban bus services, functioned within a framework that prioritised social welfare over fiscal balance. Low fares were maintained to ensure access for industrial labour, lower-income groups, and migrants residing in peripheral settlements. While this approach was consistent with post-independence commitments to equity, it was not supported by a compensatory financial mechanism. Revenues remained insufficient to meet operating costs, capital investment was deferred, and deficits became embedded in the organisation's routine functioning.

The replacement of the DTA by the Delhi Transport Service (DTS) was intended to address these shortcomings through administrative restructuring. However, the transition occurred without a systematic settlement of past liabilities. The DTS inherited an ageing fleet, deteriorating depots, and accumulated financial obligations, all of which constrained its capacity to reform operations. Maintenance backlogs increased, fleet renewal was postponed due to capital shortages, and staff levels—determined under earlier conditions—remained misaligned with operational efficiency. Rather than resolving structural weaknesses, the reorganisation effectively transferred them intact to the new entity.

The creation of the Delhi Transport Undertaking (DTU) in 1958 followed a similar pattern. By this time, Delhi's rapid demographic growth and spatial expansion had significantly altered

8 "Committee on Public Undertakings, 1992–93," 8.

commuting needs. Newly developed peripheral colonies and resettlement areas extended route lengths and increased operational costs. The DTU was presented as a more professional and financially disciplined body, yet its mandate remained internally contradictory. Political constraints continued to restrict fare increases, even as the undertaking was expected to function on commercial principles. Without assured state funding to bridge this gap, the DTU accumulated further losses while struggling to expand and modernise services.

The establishment of the Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) in 1971 represented the most ambitious attempt to place public transport on a business-oriented footing. Nevertheless, the corporation began its operations burdened by the cumulative legacy of earlier arrangements. Deficits, debts, obsolete infrastructure, and an ageing workforce were carried forward into the new institutional framework. Substantial capital investment was required merely to stabilise operations, leaving little scope for genuine financial recovery.[9]

This clearly shows recurring cycle of reform that substituted organisational change for proper subsidy. Each transition passed unresolved financial burdens to the successor body, ensuring continuity of deficits and deterioration of assets. The choice of arrangement of loans over the subsidies, systematically destroyed public transport system in the Delhi. the welfare policies were politically motivated and government had very poor commitment towards providing affordable transport for public.

As more and more popular welfare facilities were extended to the passengers and workers, the revenue of the SRT squeezed. The limited income resulted into accumulated losses year after year. Financial stress increasingly translated into operational decline. Insufficient funds curtailed fleet expansion at precisely the moment when demand was rising most sharply. Maintenance suffered as workshops lacked spare parts, technical upgrades were deferred, and breakdowns became frequent. Older buses remained in service far beyond their optimal lifespan, contributing to inefficiency, passenger discomfort, and safety concerns. Public dissatisfaction grew as overcrowding, long waiting times, and unreliable services became everyday experiences. In such circumstances, it was obvious that government will reimburse the amount to the SRT for all the facilities of concessional passes, lower fares etc. But, government intervened and restructured SRT with new objectives of efficiency and rational operation. These measures rarely addressed the underlying structural contradictions of state-

[9] Bhatia, Tripti, and Mugdha Jain. "Bus Transport in Delhi." *International Economic Review* 11, no. 3 (2009): 399-411.

run urban transport in a rapidly expanding capital city. Instead, each reorganisation transferred inherited liabilities—financial deficits, ageing fleets, overextended staff, and deteriorating infrastructure to the succeeding institution.

Successive governments were acutely aware of this sensitivity. Although DTU officials and later DTC management repeatedly argued that fares were unrealistically low and bore little relation to escalating costs of fuel, spare parts, and wages, government was reluctant to approve revisions. Even when minor increases were sanctioned, they were insufficient to offset inflationary pressures. As a result, fare revenues consistently lagged behind operational expenditure, converting what might have been manageable deficits into chronic structural losses. Government neither provided subsidy nor allowed SRT to rationalized its fares.

This approach stood in marked contrast to the experience of state road transport undertakings in Madras and Bombay. In both cities, although public transport was equally central to urban life, fare levels were comparatively higher, and periodic revisions were institutionalised as part of transport policy. State transport corporations in these regions were granted greater autonomy to adjust fares in response to rising costs. While fare increases were not free from political controversy, they were framed as necessary for maintaining service quality, fleet renewal, and financial stability. The acceptance of fare revisions in Palavan Transport Corporation(PTC) and Bombay Electric Supply and Transport(BEST) reflected a political environment in which public transport users were accustomed to incremental increases and where the linkage between fares and service sustainability was more explicitly articulated.

In Delhi, by contrast, fare policy remained reactive and politicised. Government interference prevented DTU and DTC from restructuring fare slabs, rationalising concessions, or introducing differential pricing that might have cross-subsidised vulnerable users. Concessions for students, government employees, and other categories expanded over time without adequate compensation from the state exchequer. What appeared as social welfare measures in isolation cumulatively eroded the revenue base of the transport system. The burden of these decisions was absorbed by the SRT itself, further deepening their financial dependence on government grants.

The consequences of artificially low fares were far-reaching. Inadequate revenue constrained the capacity of SRT to invest in fleet expansion at a time when Delhi's population and commuting distances were increasing rapidly. Maintenance budgets were squeezed, leading to declining vehicle reliability and rising breakdown rates. Service frequency suffered, overcrowding intensified, and passenger dissatisfaction grew—ironically undermining the very political legitimacy that fare control sought to protect. Low fares did not translate into high-quality service; instead, they produced a system caught between social obligation and financial insolvency. The table below shows the impact of these subsidies over SRT of the city.

Year	Net loss during the year (Rs. in lakhs)	Accumulated losses (Rs. in lakhs)
Pre-corporation Period (upto 2-11-1971)		1,522.45
1971-72	163.16	1,685.61
1972-73	533.32	2,220.93
1973-74	623.10	2,844.03
1974-73	1,007.39	3,941.42
1975-76	1,242.99	5,184.41
1976-77	1,040.04	6,224.45
1977-78	1,617.24	7,841.69
1978-79	1,748.97	9,590.66
1979-80	1,770.61	11,361.27
1980-81	4,463.78	15,827.05
1981-82	4,892.29	20,719.34
1982-83	7,348.20	28,068.17
1983-84	10,111.60	38,179.77
1984-85	14,079.08	52,258.85
1985-86	17,692.02	69,950.87
1986-87	16,399.53	86,350.42
1987-88	7,888.49	22,918.87*
1988-89	9,899.32	32,818.19
1989-90	11,984.36	44,802.75
1990-91	19,748.35	64,551.10

SAMIKHIYA: A Multidisciplinary Research Journal
ISSN: 2583-827X (Online)
Volume 5, Special Issue, January 2026 pp. 79-92
Available at: https://journal.mscw.ac.in/mscw_Journal.aspx

This socialist model became increasingly unsustainable by the late 1980s. The subsidized transport was considered of no good to urban society and economy.[10] India's broader fiscal crisis and the onset of economic liberalisation altered the political and economic environment in which public transport operated. Pressure to reduce public expenditure, combined with growing dissatisfaction over service quality and labour rigidity, reshaped policy priorities. The long-standing tension between transport unions and management intensified, as demands for continued welfare guarantees clashed with shrinking fiscal space. The state's willingness to indefinitely subsidise a loss-making public monopoly began to erode. It was within this altered context that the large-scale privatisation of Delhi's bus transport took place. In 1991, the licensing of more than 3,000 privately operated buses on city routes marked a decisive break with four decades of predominantly state-run bus services. Private operators were expected to function with greater cost discipline, flexible labour arrangements, and reduced dependence on public subsidies. This shift effectively ended the era in which public bus transport in Delhi was conceived primarily as a state-operated welfare service.

CONCLUSION

In 1947, the impact of partition on city was such that we really required welfare policies not only for rehabilitation but to collectively take lakhs of devastated lives on the path of prosperity. In this context, affordable urban mobility was crucial through accessible public transportation. Since independence, government played important role in providing affordable navigation opportunities by regulating fares, provision of passes and controlling the private operators. State tolerated transport labour protest and also offered important welfare schemes to the workers. But all these socialist programmes continued on the cost of the public transport itself. From the mid-twentieth century onward, the financial fragility of Delhi's transport organisations was shaped by two interlinked forces: persistent political interference in fare determination, which distorted revenue generation, and the steady expansion of a state-protected labour force whose costs absorbed the bulk of organisational expenditure. Together, these dynamics produced a structural imbalance that could not be resolved through managerial reform alone and ultimately made government subsidy the only means of sustaining operations.

[10] Sen, Akshaya K., Geetam Tiwari, and V. Upadhyay. "Should bus commuting be subsidized for providing quality transport services?—A case for Delhi." *Sadhana* 32, no. 4 (2007): 329-345.

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But as government chose loans over subsidies, the public transport systematically destroyed and private players were promoted.

As autonomy of state operator was taken away by the central government, neither subsidies were provided nor reimbursements were made to the public operator against the popular schemes and fare control. Instead of subsidy, government granted loans which resulted into massive debts that could not be paid and eventually written-off after decades, leaving the state operator in irrecoverable state. This history shows that government did not consider public transport as a channel of subsidy but coerced the operator to take unviable socialist decisions. Public expectations and electoral politics further pressurized SRT towards socialist measures. This led the privatization of public transportation. So if state subsidies can be offered through health sector, education or industries, why public transport cannot be considered vehicle of subsidy. The present scheme of "Pink Passes" in Delhi proves that subsidy can be useful instrument to improve urban conditions as it can help in reducing dependence over private transport, solve urban problem of congestion and air pollution.[11]

The history of public bus transport in Delhi during the second half of the twentieth century demonstrates that repeated organisational restructuring failed to address the fundamental mismatch between the social function of public transport and the expectation that it operate on strict business principles. The financial fragility of successive transport bodies directly contributed to poor service quality, public discontent, and the inability to expand and modernise fleets in line with population growth.

[11] ā[11] "Pink Power on the Move: Delhi's Free Bus Passes for Women Take Off." *The Economic Times*. URL: https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/pink-power-on-the-move-delhis-free-bus-passes-for-women-take-off/articleshow/114211228.cms

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