

Original Article

To Study Influence of Social Media on Consumer Purchasing Patterns

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Abstract

In today's digital era, social media has emerged as a pivotal force shaping modern consumer behaviour, fundamentally altering the landscape of consumption trends and the decision-making processes that accompany purchasing. This study embarks on an in-depth exploration of vital elements, such as peer recommendations, influencer marketing, brand interaction, and user-generated content. Together, these factors illuminate the intricate ways in which various social media platforms influence consumers' buying choices. By meticulously dissecting these components, we strive to uncover the complex dynamics that govern how social media sways purchasing decisions, thereby revealing wider implications for businesses navigating this digital terrain. Our investigation delves into the behavioural and psychological intricacies of online consumer decision making, scrutinizing the powerful effects of digital word-of-mouth, the phenomenon of social proof, and the crucial role of trust in shaping customer choices. Furthermore, this study casts a wide net over diverse demographics engaging with social media content, casting light on how targeted advertising and personalized recommendations reverberate through purchasing behaviours. Utilizing a blend of qualitative and quantitative research methods, we aim to capture the evolving tapestry of consumer buying habits in this fast-paced digital age. The insights gleaned from this research are set to empower businesses with a deeper understanding of the profound effects of social media on consumer psychology. This knowledge will enable them to refine and enhance their marketing strategies, foster greater engagement, and drive improved conversion rates.

Keywords: Social Media, Consumer Behaviour, Purchasing Patterns, Influencer Marketing, Brand Engagement, Digital Marketing, Social Proof, User-Generated Content, Online Advertising, Consumer Decision-Making.

Introduction

Social media is an online communication tool that allows users to connect, share content, and access information. It encompasses various platforms including social networking sites, forums, and social bookmarking. Examples of popular social media platforms include Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Wikipedia, Pinterest, Google Plus, and Twitter. These platforms have undoubtedly become vital parts of our lives. Social media is typically used by businesses to promote brands, raise awareness of goods and services, keep hold of current clients, and locate new ones. Social networking undoubtedly benefits from social media marketing in this way, which raises brand value and recognition while expanding the client base. This study examines how social media influences the purchasing decisions of urban consumers. It is undeniable that, for the first time, businesses and consumers are more connected than ever because of the widespread availability of internet connections. Notably, India has now surpassed China as the country with the highest number of internet users. Understanding the influence of social media on consumer purchasing behaviour is essential, extending beyond concerns regarding its widespread prevalence. Social media platforms offer a unique environment in which individuals can share shopping experiences, product reviews, and purchase recommendations. This dynamic has precipitated a significant trend in which social media opinions increasingly shape consumer buying decisions. Factors such as social media advertising, user-generated product reviews, and recommendations from acquaintances significantly affect purchasing choices.

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Social networks facilitate individualized shopping experiences by analysing user interactions and preferences, thereby enabling platforms to deliver personalized product recommendations. This capability simplifies the process by which consumers identify products that align with their specific needs and preferences.

Although it is challenging to provide this level of customization in traditional retail, the data-driven approach of social media has made it feasible. Therefore, this study's background and importance are in revealing the significant influence of social networks on people's purchasing decisions. Social media will continue to influence purchasing behaviours and consumption patterns as they develop and change. Understanding this trend is not only essential for consumers, but also holds significant implications for businesses.

Objectives of the Study

- To understand social media influence on consumer buying behaviour.
- To know the impact of various social media on the consumer buying decision process.
- To study the change in consumers' perception through content and engagement on social media.
- Analyse how businesses can engage more customers to increase brand value with the help of social media.

Literature review

1. Mr. Sony Varghese1: Ms. Mansi Agrawal:

Saudi Journal of Business and Management Studies Abbreviated Key Title: Saudi J Bus Manag Stud ISSN 2415-6663 (Print) |ISSN 2415-6671 (Online) Scholars Middle East Publishers, Dubai, United Arab Emirates Journal homepage: <https://saudijournals.com>

This article states that commercial organizations have understood the importance of social media in selling and promoting their products and services, and have started implementing marketing methods accordingly. A general understanding of this research is that social media influencers impact customers' buying decisions. These social media platforms influenced buyers to spend four times more than usual consumers. Social media can be considered an effective tool for customer interaction.

2. John Donnellan1, Melanie McDonald1 & Michael Edmondson1

The use of social media in marketing not only contributes to the sale of products but also collects customer feedback efficiently. This study observed that unknown or unused smartphone brands by customers are now in demand, which

is the influence of social media advertising campaigns.

3. Ngu Shan Ying, Rossazana Ab-Rahim, Khairil-Anuar Mohd-Kamal

According to this article, consumers' buying behaviour depends on various personal, social, psychological, and cultural factors. All these factors are continuously affected by social media. The number of customers purchasing social media is increasing. Businesses should understand the benefits of social media and use it to improve their business and modify their strategies.

4. Sanjukta Pookulangara, Kristian Koesler

This study discusses shopping as a social experience, and social networking allows individuals to interact with each other. Social media also provide a platform for shoppers for the products they want to buy. Social media have made the shopping experience even more critical.

5. Elisabeta Ioanas, Ivona Stoica

Their article speaks about youngsters aged 25–29 years, mostly buying online. These youngsters usually work in companies with good salaries. Most were females and had at least one social media account.

Research Methodology

1. Research Design

This study used a quantitative research design to examine the impact of social media on customer buying habits. Analyzing the effects of social media platforms on consumer behaviour, decision making, and frequency of purchases is the main goal. Patterns and correlations between variables were summarized using a descriptive research approach.

2. Data Collection Method

A structured questionnaire disseminated via Google Forms was used to gather data for this investigation. Easy access, broad geographic reach, and effective data collection were guaranteed online. Closed-ended questions were used in the survey to facilitate uniformity and quantitative analysis.

3. Sampling Method

Convenience sampling, which is not probability based, was used. To target frequent users of social media, the link to the questionnaire was posted on a number of social media sites, including Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and WhatsApp. Participation was anonymous and optional.

4. Sample Size and Respondents

We gathered 100 answers. Among the respondents were people in the 18–40 age

group, representing a range of demographic categories such as gender, occupation, educational attainment, and social media usage frequency. The final analysis included only those replies that were legitimate and finished.

5. Data Analysis Techniques

Google Forms data were exported to SPSS/Google Sheets and Microsoft Excel for analysis. Using descriptive statistics, such as

means, frequencies, and percentages, the data were compiled.

6. Ethical Considerations

Being part of the study was optional. In addition to ensuring confidentiality and anonymity of their answers, all respondents were made aware of the objectives of the study. No information was collected. Prior to participation, consent was obtained through an introductory Google Form section.

Data Analysis

<p>Question 1] Which social media platform do you use frequently?</p> <p>Analysis: More than 30% of the population is using all social media platforms, Whereas 40% of people use Facebook.</p>	<p>Question 2] How many hours per day do you spend on social media?</p> <p>Analysis: It is found that 15% of the population uses social media for more than 6 hours. 42% uses less than 1 hour 29% people uses it around 4-5 hrs and 14% 1-3 hours respectively</p>																		
<p>Count of Which social media platform do you use frequently</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Platform</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Facebook</td> <td>40.0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Instagram, You Tube</td> <td>30.0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Facebook, Insta...</td> <td>30.0%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Platform	Percentage	Facebook	40.0%	Instagram, You Tube	30.0%	Facebook, Insta...	30.0%	<p>Count of How many hour per day do you spend on social media?</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Hours</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Less than 1 hour</td> <td>42.0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4-5 hours</td> <td>29.0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1-3 hours</td> <td>14.0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>more than 6 hours</td> <td>15.0%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Hours	Percentage	Less than 1 hour	42.0%	4-5 hours	29.0%	1-3 hours	14.0%	more than 6 hours	15.0%
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<p>Question 3] Do you follow brands, influencers, or businesses on social media?</p> <p>Analysis: 72% of the population follow brands, influencers or businesses on social media.</p>	<p>Question 4] Which type of social media content influences your purchasing decisions the most?</p> <p>Analysis: 34% of the population admits that their purchasing decisions are influenced by social media content.</p>																		
<p>Count of Do you follow brands, influencers, or businesses on social media?</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Response</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td>72.0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No</td> <td>28.0%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Response	Percentage	Yes	72.0%	No	28.0%	<p>Count of Which type of social media content influences your purchasing decisions the most?</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Content Type</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Customer reviews/test...</td> <td>50.0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Influencer recommend...</td> <td>34.0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Discount promotions/c...</td> <td>16.0%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Content Type	Percentage	Customer reviews/test...	50.0%	Influencer recommend...	34.0%	Discount promotions/c...	16.0%				
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<p>Question 5] What factors make you more likely to purchase a product you saw on social media?</p> <p>Analysis: Recommendations from social media influencers influence purchase decisions of 46% of Population.</p>	<p>Question 6] How often do you verify product authenticity before purchasing from social media ads?</p> <p>Analysis: Majority of the population , 37%, is always verifying product authenticity before purchasing</p>																		

	from social media ads. 285 often do the same. 26% of the population is sometimes verifying authenticity whereas 9% of the population is rarely verifying the product authenticity.																				
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<p>Question 7] How often do you purchase products you first discovered on social media?</p> <p>Analysis: 63% of the population is occasionally purchasing the products discovered on social media whereas 24% are rarely purchasing it. Only 13% of the population is frequently purchasing the products discover on social media.</p>	<p>Question 8] Which factors make you distrust a brand on social media?</p> <p>Analysis: Majority of the population said that they distrust a brand on social media because there are no customer reviews. Whereas 21% said there is overuse of influencer. Poor customer service, lack of transparency, too many paid promotions were also some minor reasons</p>																				
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Conclusion

This study underscores the considerable and multifaceted influence of social media on consumer purchasing behaviour in the digital era. Despite the vast amount of information available online, personal attitudes, in conjunction with social, psychological, and cultural factors, continue to be pivotal in shaping purchasing decisions. Social media has transitioned from being merely a marketing instrument to serving as a platform through which brands can establish trust, cultivate relationships, and meaningfully engage with their audiences.

As consumers increasingly rely on peer recommendations, social identity, and personalized content, businesses are required to adapt by generating high-quality and relevant content as well as formulating strategies that resonate with their target demographics. Nevertheless, the emergence of social commerce presents challenges, including risks

of excessive spending, digital addiction, and concerns regarding data privacy. Therefore, marketers must approach social media marketing with ethical and strategic considerations, with a strong emphasis on psychological insights and consumer apprehensions. In conclusion, the future of consumer behaviour in the social media era depends on a balanced approach that leverages the benefits of digital innovation while promoting responsible, value-driven consumption. Businesses that understand and respond to these dynamics are better positioned to thrive in an increasingly connected and consumer-conscious marketplace.

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Once again, we are grateful to all those who contributed immensely to our academic journey.

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Conflicts of interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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