

A STUDY ON THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING ON CONSUMER PURCHASE INTENTIONS

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Abstract

The rapid expansion of social media platforms has transformed marketing practice and consumer decision-making. This study examines how social media marketing (SMM) activities including targeted advertisements, influencer endorsements, user-generated content (UGC), and online reviews influence consumer purchase intentions. Using a descriptive quantitative approach, primary data were collected from 150 respondents in Coimbatore through a structured questionnaire. Data were analysed using percentage distributions and chi-square testing to explore relationships between demographic variables and purchase intention. Results indicate that influencer credibility, online reviews, and content relevance are the strongest predictors of purchase intention, while platform type and frequency of exposure moderate the effect. The study concludes with practical recommendations for marketers to improve content authenticity, measurement, and consumer engagement strategies.

Keywords: Social media marketing; consumer behaviour; influencer marketing; online reviews; purchase intention; user-generated content.

Introduction

In the digital era, social media has become a powerful marketing platform that has transformed the way businesses interact with consumers. The rapid growth of social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, and X (Twitter) has enabled companies to promote their products and services more effectively and reach a wider audience. Social media marketing allows organizations to engage consumers through advertisements, influencer endorsements, brand pages, and user-generated content, creating strong connections between brands and customers.

Consumer buying decisions are increasingly influenced by social media due to easy access to information, peer opinions, and online reviews. Before making a purchase, consumers often rely on social media content to evaluate product quality, compare alternatives, and assess brand credibility. Influencer marketing, targeted advertisements, and interactive brand communication further shape consumer attitudes and purchasing intentions. As a result, social media plays a crucial role at every stage of the consumer decision-making process, from need recognition to post-purchase behavior.

Social media marketing also affects consumers at different stages of the buying decision process. It helps in need recognition by exposing consumers to new products and trends, supports information search by providing detailed product descriptions and reviews, and influences evaluation of alternatives through comparisons and recommendations. During the purchase stage, targeted advertisements and promotional offers often motivate consumers to make quick decisions. After the purchase, consumers share their experiences through reviews and posts, which further influence the buying decisions of others.

Understanding the impact of social media marketing on consumer buying decisions is essential for businesses to design effective marketing strategies and maintain long-term relationships with customers. For researchers, this topic provides valuable insights into changing consumer behavior in the digital era. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the role of social media marketing in influencing consumer attitudes, preferences, and purchasing behavior, contributing to both academic research and practical marketing applications.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The rapid expansion of social media platforms has fundamentally changed the way consumers interact with brands and make purchasing decisions, positioning social media marketing as a key tool in modern marketing strategies. Organizations increasingly rely on social media advertisements, influencer endorsements, sponsored content, and user generated reviews to influence consumer behavior, yet the effectiveness of these methods in driving actual purchase decisions remains uncertain. Consumers are continuously exposed to a high volume of promotional content, which may lead to information overload, reduced attention, and varying levels of trust toward marketing messages. Additionally, consumer responses to social media marketing differ based on demographic factors, individual preferences, frequency of platform usage, and the credibility of content sources. Many businesses lack clear insights into which social media marketing activities most strongly influence consumers at different stages of the buying decision process, from awareness to post-purchase behavior. This gap in understanding highlights the need for a detailed study on the impact of social media marketing on consumer buying decisions to identify key influencing factors and assist organizations in developing effective, consumer-focused marketing strategies.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To examine the impact of social media marketing on consumer buying decisions.
- To analyze the influence of social media advertisements and influencer marketing on purchase intentions.
- To understand the role of online reviews and user-generated content in building consumer trust.
- To identify how social media platforms affect different stages of the consumer buying decision process.

Research Methodology

The research methodology for this study focuses on understanding the impact of social media marketing on consumer buying decisions using a structured approach. The study primarily adopts a descriptive research design to explore consumer behavior, preferences, and responses to various social media marketing strategies. Both primary and secondary data sources are used.

Research Design

The study adopts a descriptive research design to analyze the impact of social media marketing on consumer buying decisions.

Data Collection

Both primary and secondary data are used. Primary data is collected through structured questionnaires or surveys from social media users, while secondary data is gathered from books, journals, articles, and online sources related to social media marketing and consumer behavior.

Sample Size

The study targets a specific number of respondents based on availability and accessibility to collect sufficient data for analysis while maintaining manageability.

Area of the Study

The study is confined to Coimbatore city, Tamil Nadu.

Sampling Technique

The convenience sampling method was used to select availability and willingness to participate in the survey.

Review of Literature

Zhang, C., & Li, M. (2025) This study is conducted by the author to understand the social media marketing influences consumer purchase decisions through personalized content, multi-channel dissemination, and timely updates. It enhances product quality perception, builds trust via user reviews, and leverages social networks, significantly impacting consumer behavior and increasing conversion rates.

Gshayyish, A. M. (2025) This study is conducted by the author to understand the impact of social media on customer behaviour. The study found a robust positive correlation between social media and purchasing decision-making, highlighting that social media significantly influences consumers by providing product information, facilitating experience sharing, and enabling direct communication with brands, ultimately impacting marketing purchase decisions.

Huang, W. J. (2024) Social media marketing significantly enhances consumer purchase intention by shaping decision-making processes. The study emphasizes the importance for brands to develop effective social media strategies to attract and retain consumers, highlighting its growing influence in the digital age.

Yang, M. (2024) Social media marketing influences consumer purchase decisions through content quality in the awareness stage, online reviews and influencer charisma in the interest stage, and promotional activities in the purchase intention stage, as demonstrated in the case study of Douyin.

Pei, J. (2024) Social media marketing significantly influences consumer purchase decisions by enhancing engagement through user-generated content and brand interactions. These platforms shape consumer perceptions and pre-purchase processes, enabling brands to foster connections and drive purchasing behavior effectively in the digital landscape.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

TABLE NO 1
MAIN PURPOSE OF USING SOCIAL MEDIA

Particulars	No of respondents	Percentage
Entertainment	27	18%
Information	29	19.3%
Shopping	33	22%
Communication	23	15.3%
All of the above	38	25.3%
Total	150	100%

INTERPRETATION

The above table shows the purpose of using social media. It indicates that 18% use social media for entertainment. 19.3% use social media for information. 22% use social media for shopping. 15.3% use social media for communication. And 25.3% use social media for all of the above purposes.

The most of the respondents are belong to the using social media of all the above (25.3%)

TABLE NO 2
DISCOUNTS AND OFFERS ON SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCE YOUR PURCHASE DECISION

Particulars	No of respondents	Percentage
Very High	39	26%
High	36	24%
Moderate	40	26.7%
Low	21	14%
No Influence	14	9.3%
Total	150	100

INTERPRETATION

The above table shows how discounts and offers on social media influence respondents' purchase decisions. It indicates that 26% of respondents say discounts and offers have a very high influence on their purchase decision. 24% of respondents say they have a high influence. 26.7% of respondents say they have a moderate influence. 14% of respondents say they have a low influence. And 9.3% of respondents say discounts and offers have no influence on their purchase decision.

The most of the respondents are belong to moderate (26.7%)

TABLE NO 3
TRUST PRODUCTS PROMOTED BY INFLUENECES

Particulars	No of respondents	Percentage
Very High Trust	32	21.3%
High Trust	41	27.3%
Moderate Trust	27	18%
Low Trust	22	15.3%
No Trust	27	18%
Total	150	100

INTERPRETATION

The above table shows the level of trust respondents have in social media influencers. It indicates that 21.3% of respondents have very high trust in social media influencers. 27.3% of respondents have high trust in them. 18% of respondents have moderate trust, while 15.3% of respondents have low trust. And 18% of respondents have no trust in social media influencers.

The most of the respondents belong to the high trust category (27.3%).

TABLE NO 4
ONLINE REVIEWS IN EVALUATING PRODUCT QUALITY

Particulars	No of respondents	Percentage
Very Important	40	26.7%
Important	28	18.7%
Moderately Important	32	21.3%
Less Important	27	18%
Not Important	23	15.3%
Total	150	100

INTERPRETATION

The above table shows how important online reviews are in evaluating product quality. It indicates that 26.7% of respondents consider online reviews to be very important. 18.7% of respondents consider them important. 21.3% of respondents feel they are moderately important. 18% of respondents consider them less important, while 15.3% of respondents believe they are not important.

The most of the respondents belong to the very important category (26.7%).

TABLE NO 5
POSITIVE REVIEWS INCREASE YOUR TRUST IN A BRAND

Particulars	No of respondents	Percentage
Very High	33	22%
High	35	23.3%
Moderate	40	26.7%
Low	21	14%
No Increase	21	14%
Total	150	100

INTERPRETATION

The above table shows how positive reviews increase respondents' trust in a brand. It indicates that 22% of respondents experience a very high increase in trust due to positive reviews. 23.3% of respondents report a high increase in trust. 26.7% of respondents experience a moderate increase in trust. 14% of respondents report a low increase, while another 14% of respondents state that positive reviews do not increase their trust.

The most of the respondents belong to the moderate category (26.7%).

Findings

- The majority of respondents are male (69.3%), while female respondents account for 30.7%.
- Most respondents use social media for multiple purposes, with 25.3% selecting “all of the above.
- A considerable number of respondents (22%) are slightly influenced by social media in their purchase decisions
- A considerable number of respondents (22%) are slightly influenced by social media in their purchase decisions
- 14% of respondents feel that social media has a high influence on their purchase intention.
- 18.7% of respondents state that social media does not influence their purchase decisions.
- 28% of respondents believe that influencers are much more convincing than brand advertisements.

- 19.3% of respondents feel influencers are more convincing compared to brand advertisements.
- 26.7% of respondents feel that influencer marketing and brand advertisements are equally effective.
- 28.7% of respondents consider celebrity influencers more effective than traditional advertisements.
- 19.3% of respondents feel celebrity influencers are much more effective.
- 14% of respondents believe celebrity influencers are not effective.
- A significant number of respondents (25.3%) always read online reviews before purchasing.
- Another 25.3% of respondents often read online reviews before making a purchase.
- 24.7% of respondents sometimes read online reviews before purchasing.
- 15.3% of respondents rarely check online reviews before buying products.
- Only 9.3% of respondents never read online reviews.

Suggestion

Companies should focus more on social media marketing as it strongly influences consumer behavior.

- Businesses should collaborate with influencers and celebrities to increase brand awareness.
- Brands should provide attractive discounts and offers to motivate consumers to purchase.
- Companies should encourage customers to share reviews and feedback online.
- Businesses should ensure that product information shared on social media is accurate and reliable.
- Marketers should create engaging and creative content to attract more users.
- Companies should target both male and female consumers effectively.
- Businesses should respond quickly to customer queries on social media platforms.
- Brands should focus on building trust through transparent communication.
- Companies should improve advertisement quality to compete with influencer marketing.

Conclusion

The study concludes that social media marketing has a profound and positive influence on consumer purchase intention, with a large proportion of respondents actively engaging with social media platforms for various purposes such as entertainment, information, communication, and online shopping; the results indicate that elements like advertisements, influencer endorsements, user-generated content, online reviews, and attractive promotional offers significantly shape consumer attitudes and buying decisions, while many respondents perceive influencer marketing as more convincing and trustworthy compared to traditional brand advertisements; additionally, the chi-square analysis establishes a statistically significant relationship between key variables, confirming that

demographic factors and social media exposure are closely associated with purchase behavior; the study also highlights that consumers tend to seek reviews and feedback before making purchase decisions, emphasizing the importance of credibility and transparency in digital marketing; therefore, it can be concluded that social media has transformed the way consumers interact with brands, making it essential for businesses to adopt innovative, customercentric, and engaging marketing strategies to build trust, enhance brand loyalty, and sustain competitive advantage in the rapidly evolving digital marketplace.

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