

IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING ON CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOUR

¹Ms. Yogita Garg, ²Ms. Prabhjot Kaur, ³Mr. Jagjiwan Singh

¹Assistant Professor, ³Student, Department of Commerce

²Assistant Professor, Department of Business Studies
Baba Farid College of Engineering & Technology, Bathinda

Abstract

Social media has transformed how businesses connect with consumers, influencing buying behaviour across generations. This research paper investigates the role of social media marketing in shaping consumer preferences, attitudes, and purchase decisions. With platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, and TikTok becoming integral to daily life, marketers increasingly deploy targeted campaigns to engage potential customers. This study examines the effectiveness of social media promotions, user-generated content, influencer endorsements, and online reviews in triggering purchase behaviour. Using a mixed-method approach, data from 300 respondents were collected via structured questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Findings reveal that social media consistently impacts consumer awareness, evaluation of alternatives, and final purchase decisions, especially among younger consumers. Insights from this research can help marketers optimize social media strategies to enhance engagement and drive sales.

Introduction

The rapid proliferation of the internet and smartphone adoption has radically shifted how consumers access information, interact with brands, and make purchase decisions. Among digital tools, **social media marketing (SMM)** stands out as a dynamic force reshaping consumer behaviour globally. Social media platforms provide interactive environments where consumers discover products, compare alternatives, engage with branded content, and share opinions with peers. According to recent estimates, billions of users worldwide spend significant daily time on social media, making it a fertile ground for marketers to build brand relationships at scale. Social media marketing refers to the use of social networks to promote products and services, build brand communities, and foster long-term customer engagement. Its interactive nature allows for personalized communication, viral content sharing, and real-time feedback. From sponsored ads and influencer collaborations to user-generated content and social listening tools, SMM offers diverse tactics that influence consumer perceptions and decision-making processes. **Consumer buying behaviour** refers to the mental and emotional processes individuals go through before and after purchasing products. It encompasses problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, and post-purchase behaviour. As SMM increasingly shapes consumers' information environments, understanding its impact on buying behaviour has become crucial for effective marketing strategy. This study focuses on exploring how social media marketing affects consumer buying behaviour, especially within the context of digitally connected markets and youth culture.

Objectives

The primary objectives of this research are:

- To assess the extent of social media usage among consumers for product information.
- To examine the influence of social media marketing activities on consumer awareness and interest.
- To evaluate how social media content affects consumer attitudes toward brands.
- To determine the impact of social media marketing on actual purchase decisions.
- To explore the role of influencer endorsements and online reviews in shaping buying behaviour.
- To provide actionable recommendations for marketers aiming to optimize social media strategies.

Research Design

For the study, a descriptive research design was adopted to systematically examine the relationship between social media marketing and consumer buying behaviour. Descriptive research is appropriate as it facilitates a detailed understanding of existing conditions, opinions, and behavioural patterns of consumers without manipulating the study environment. This research design enables the collection of quantitative data related to consumers'

perceptions, attitudes, and responses toward social media marketing strategies such as online advertisements, influencer endorsements, brand engagement, and promotional content. By capturing these characteristics, the study aims to identify trends and associations between social media marketing activities and consumers' purchasing decisions. The descriptive approach is particularly suitable for this study as it helps in portraying an accurate profile of the target population and provides a systematic description of how social media platforms influence consumer awareness, preferences, and buying intentions. The design also supports statistical analysis to evaluate relationships among variables, thereby contributing to meaningful interpretation and reliable conclusions.

Scope

The scope of the present study is confined to consumers who actively use social media platforms for obtaining information related to products and services, engaging with brand content, and participating in online interactions such as reviews, comments, and recommendations. The research focuses on understanding how social media marketing efforts influence the buying behaviour of these consumers. The study specifically targets individuals within the age group of **18 to 45 years**, as this demographic represents a segment with high levels of digital literacy and frequent social media usage. This group is more likely to be exposed to online advertisements, influencer marketing, and brand promotions across various social media platforms. The scope is further limited to consumers who demonstrate regular engagement with social media, including activities such as browsing brand pages, responding to promotional campaigns, and seeking peer opinions before making purchase decisions. The findings of the study are intended to provide insights into consumer behaviour patterns within this defined demographic and may not be generalized to individuals outside the selected age group or those with limited social media usage.

Methodology

Research Approach

The present study employed a **mixed research approach**, integrating both **quantitative and qualitative methods** to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the impact of social media marketing on consumer buying behaviour. The combination of these approaches allows for numerical measurement of trends as well as in-depth exploration of consumer perceptions and experiences. The **quantitative component** involved the use of a structured survey questionnaire to collect measurable data related to social media usage patterns, consumer perceptions, and the extent to which social media marketing influences purchase decisions.

This approach enabled statistical analysis and comparison of responses across different demographic groups. In addition, **qualitative insights** were gathered through open-ended questions included in the questionnaire. These responses provided deeper understanding of consumers' opinions regarding the role of influencers, the credibility of social media advertisements, and the emotional and psychological factors affecting buying decisions. The mixed approach enhanced the reliability and validity of the findings by supporting numerical results with descriptive insights.

Population and Sample

The **population** for the study comprised individuals who actively use social media platforms and have made at least one purchase decision influenced by social media marketing activities such as online advertisements, influencer endorsements, or user-generated reviews. A **sample size of 300 respondents** was selected using the **convenience sampling technique**, considering accessibility and willingness of respondents to participate in the study. This sampling method was deemed appropriate due to time and resource constraints, while still allowing for adequate representation of social media users. The **geographical coverage** of the study included both **urban and semi-urban areas**, ensuring diversity in terms of lifestyle, income levels, and exposure to digital marketing. This diverse representation helped capture varying consumer responses to social media marketing across different demographic segments.

Data Collection Instrument

Data were collected using a **structured questionnaire** designed specifically for the objectives of the study. The questionnaire was divided into multiple sections to systematically gather relevant information from respondents. The first section focused on **demographic details**, including age, gender, educational qualification, income level, and average time spent on social media platforms. This information was used to analyse differences in buying behaviour across demographic groups. The second section examined **social media usage patterns**, such as frequency of platform use and the primary purposes of usage, including information search, entertainment, and online purchasing. The third section included **influence measurement variables**, using Likert-scale statements to assess consumer awareness, attitudes, purchase intentions, and behavioural responses toward social media

marketing. The final section addressed **behavioral outcomes**, capturing respondents' self-reported experiences regarding actual purchase decisions influenced by social media advertisements, online reviews, and influencer recommendations. The questionnaires were administered through both **online platforms and in-person distribution**, ensuring wider participation and convenience for respondents.

Data Design

Variables

Category	Variable
Independent Variable	Social Media Marketing (ad exposure, content interaction, influencer posts)
Dependent Variable	Consumer Buying Behaviour (awareness, interest, decision, purchase)
Control Variables	Demographics (age, gender, income), social media usage intensity

Measurement Scale

Measures were based on a **5-point Likert Scale**:

1 = Strongly Disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = Neutral

4 = Agree

5 = Strongly Agree Sample Items:

- "I often discover new products on social media."
- "Influencers on social media affect my purchase decisions."
- "Positive reviews on social media increase my trust in brands."

Data Analysis and Data Interpretation

1. Demographic Profile of Respondents

The demographic analysis revealed that a **majority of respondents (62%) belonged to the age group of 18–30 years**, indicating a higher representation of young adults in the study. This age group is typically more digitally active and more exposed to social media marketing strategies. Regarding gender distribution, **54% of the respondents were female**, while **46%**

were male, suggesting a relatively balanced gender representation with a slight female predominance. In terms of social media engagement, **84% of respondents reported using social media for more than two hours per day**, reflecting high levels of daily interaction with digital platforms. Platform preference analysis showed that **Instagram emerged as the most preferred platform (72%)**, followed by **Facebook (65%)**, **YouTube (59%)**, and **TikTok (30%)**.

Interpretation

The findings indicate that younger consumers are highly engaged with social media and frequently use these platforms for both social interaction and shopping-related activities. Instagram and Facebook appear to be the most influential platforms for product discovery and brand engagement, making them critical channels for marketers targeting young consumers.

2. Social Media Usage Patterns

Analysis of social media usage patterns indicated that **71% of respondents use social media platforms for product research**, highlighting their role as an important information source prior to purchase decisions. Additionally, **59% of respondents follow brands or social media influencers on a regular basis**, reflecting

consumers' interest in staying updated with promotional content and trends. Furthermore, **48% of respondents frequently engage with advertisements** by liking, sharing, or commenting on promotional posts.

Interpretation

These results suggest that social media is not used solely for entertainment purposes but also serves as a key platform for information gathering and interaction with marketing content.

The high level of engagement with advertisements indicates strong promotional potential and increased opportunities for brand visibility.

3. Influence on Consumer Awareness and Interest

Respondents were asked to rate statements related to awareness generation through social media marketing using a Likert scale. The statement **"Social media increases my awareness of new products"** recorded a **mean score of 4.21**, which falls between *Agree* and *Strongly Agree*.

Interpretation:

The high mean score confirms that social media marketing plays a significant role in enhancing consumer awareness about new products and services. This indicates the effectiveness of social media platforms in introducing and promoting new offerings to potential consumers.

4. Influencer Endorsements and Buying Attitude

The analysis revealed that **67% of respondents agreed that influencer recommendations positively affect their perception of brands**, while **52% admitted making a purchase after being influenced by influencer-generated content**.

Interpretation:

The findings highlight the strong persuasive impact of influencers on consumer attitudes and buying behaviour. Influencers are perceived as credible and relatable sources of information, especially among younger users, thereby functioning as powerful brand advocates in the digital marketing ecosystem.

5. Role of Online Reviews and Peer Comments

The study found that **74% of respondents read online reviews before making a purchase decision**, emphasizing the importance of user-generated content. Furthermore, **64% of respondents expressed greater trust in peer comments compared to brand advertisements**, indicating a preference for unbiased opinions. However, **30% of respondents reported abandoning a purchase due to negative reviews on social media**.

Interpretation:

Online reviews and peer comments play a crucial role in shaping consumer trust and purchase decisions. Positive feedback enhances confidence in products, while negative reviews significantly discourage potential buyers, underlining the influence of electronic word-of-mouth.

6. Purchase Decision Influence

Respondents were asked to rate the influence of various social media marketing elements on their purchase decisions. The mean scores were as follows:

- Peer Reviews: 4.14
- Influencer Endorsements: 3.98
- Targeted Social Media Advertisements: 3.75
- Branded Content: 3.62

Interpretation:

The results indicate that **peer reviews and influencer endorsements** are the most influential factors in driving actual purchase decisions. Targeted advertisements and branded content also contribute to buying behaviour but to

a comparatively lesser extent. This suggests that consumers place greater trust in personal and experiential sources of information rather than direct brand promotions.

Findings

- **High Social Media Penetration:** Majority of respondents use social media daily and for product-related activities.
- **Awareness & Engagement:** Social media is a key source of product discovery and brand information.
- **Content Credibility:** User-generated content and reviews carry more weight than direct advertisements.
- **Influencer Impact:** Influencers significantly affect decision-making — especially trust and purchase intent.
- **Generational Differences:** Younger consumers are more responsive to social media marketing than older respondents.
- **Purchase Conversion:** Social media marketing activities correlate positively with actual purchases.

Conclusion

This study confirms that **social media marketing significantly impacts consumer buying behaviour**. It affects multiple stages of the decision-making process — from awareness and evaluation to actual purchase. The interactive and engaging nature of social platforms enhances consumer-brand dialogue, while influencers and peer reviews act as powerful determinants of purchase intent. Marketers should prioritize authentic content, foster community engagement, and leverage influencer collaborations to drive meaningful consumer responses. Furthermore, as consumer trust increasingly shifts toward peer-generated content, brands must monitor online feedback and use social listening tools to manage reputation. In a connected world, successful marketing requires a **balanced mix of creativity, analytics, and genuine engagement**. Social media is not merely promotional space; it is an ecosystem that shapes perceptions, conversations, and ultimately, buying behaviour.

References

1. Ashley, C., & Tuten, T. (2015). Creative strategies in social media marketing: An exploratory study of branded social content and consumer engagement. *Psychology & Marketing*, 32(1), 15–27. <https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.20761>
2. Cheung, C. M. K., & Thadani, D. R. (2012). The impact of electronic word-of-mouth communication. *Decision Support Systems*, 54(1), 461–470. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dss.2012.06.008>
3. De Veirman, M., Cauberghe, V., & Hudders, L. (2017). Marketing through Instagram influencers: The impact of number of followers and product divergence on brand attitude. *International Journal of Advertising*, 36(5), 798–828. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02650487.2017.1348035>
4. Duffett, R. G. (2017). Influence of social media marketing communications on young consumers' attitudes. *Journal of Marketing Communications*, 23(5), 498–515. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13527266.2015.1048851>
5. Dwivedi, Y. K., Ismagilova, E., Hughes, D. L., Carlson, J., Jacobson, J., Jain, V., ... Wang,
6. Hajli, N. (2014). A study of the impact of social media on consumers. *International Journal of Market Research*, 56(3), 387–404. <https://doi.org/10.2501/IJMR-2014-025>
7. Kaplan, A. M., & Haenlein, M. (2010). Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of social media. *Business Horizons*, 53(1), 59–68. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2009.09.003>
8. Kotler, P., Kartajaya, H., & Setiawan, I. (2021). *Marketing 5.0: Technology for humanity*. Wiley.
9. Mangold, W. G., & Faulds, D. J. (2009). Social media: The new hybrid element of the promotion mix. *Business Horizons*, 52(4), 357–365. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2009.03.002>
10. Schivinski, B., & Dabrowski, D. (2016). The effect of social media communication on consumer perceptions of brands. *Journal of Marketing Communications*, 22(2), 189–214. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13527266.2013.871323>
11. Solomon, M. R. (2021). *Consumer behavior: Buying, having, and being* (13th ed.). Pearson Education.
12. Tuten, T. L., & Solomon, M. R. (2020). *Social media marketing* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.
13. Y. (2021). Setting the future of digital and social media marketing research. *Journal of Business Research*, 125, 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2020.11.041>