

THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING ON CONSUMER PURCHASING BEHAVIOR

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ABSTRACT

In today's digital age, social media has become a dominant force in shaping consumer behavior. This study explores the influence of social media marketing on consumer purchasing decisions, particularly through platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and WhatsApp. By surveying 230 respondents using a structured questionnaire, the research analyzes the most preferred platforms, frequency of advertisement exposure, and product categories most impacted by social media promotions. Statistical tools like the Chi-square test and Garrett Ranking Method were used to identify significant influencing factors. The findings reveal that Instagram Ads, Facebook Promotions, and YouTube Reviews are key drivers of purchase behavior, especially in fashion and beauty categories. The study highlights the effectiveness of visually engaging and targeted content, offering valuable insights for businesses aiming to optimize their digital marketing strategies.

Keywords: *Social media marketing, consumer behavior, influencer marketing, electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), Digital Advertising, Influencer Marketing.*

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's digital era, social media has evolved from a mere platform for communication into a powerful tool for marketing and commerce. With billions of active users globally, platforms like Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and WhatsApp have become essential channels through which businesses engage with potential customers. Social media marketing leverages targeted advertisements, influencer endorsements, and engaging content to influence consumer perceptions, preferences, and ultimately, their purchasing decisions. Consumers, particularly the younger demographic, are increasingly relying on social media to discover new products, read reviews, and compare alternatives before making a purchase. The interactive nature of these platforms allows for instant feedback, personalized content, and peer recommendations, making marketing efforts more effective and far-reaching than traditional methods.

Social media has transformed the way businesses interact with consumers, emerging as a vital tool for marketing in the digital age. With the rapid growth of platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and WhatsApp, marketing efforts have shifted from traditional methods to more dynamic, personalized, and interactive digital campaigns. These platforms offer businesses unprecedented access to a wide audience, allowing for targeted promotions and real-time engagement. Consumers today are not just passive recipients of advertisements; they actively engage with brands, seek reviews, share feedback, and even influence others' buying decisions. The visual appeal, influencer recommendations, user-generated content, and algorithm-driven targeting make social media a powerful force in shaping consumer preferences and purchase decisions. Particularly among younger and tech-savvy demographics, social media often acts as a first touchpoint in the buyer journey.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Dr. Manish Kumar Srivastava and Dr. A.K. Tiwari (2020) The research was conducted to study the various popular social media platforms and the ways in which it is being used by the consumers. They have also tried to study the impact of social media on the consumer behaviour. The study concludes that social media has become an integral part of consumers' life and it has also affected their behaviour to a great extent.

Clair McClure and Yoo-Kyoung Seock (2020) The study examined the influence of consumer's brand familiarity and the information quality of social media content on their involvement

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with a brand on the brand's social media pages. Also studied were the influence of involvement on consumer's attitude towards the brand's social media page and the effect of their attitude on future purchase intention from the brand. The results indicated that both brand familiarity and information quality had significant effects on a consumer's involvement with a brand on its social media page, yet the brand's social media content had a greater influence on a consumer's involvement with the social media page.

Man Lai Cheung, Guilherme Pires and Philip J. Rosenberger (2020) This paper investigates the impact of social-media marketing elements, namely entertainment, customisation, interaction, electronic word-of-mouth (EWOM) and trendiness, on consumer-brand engagement and brand knowledge. The results reveal that interaction, electronic word-of-mouth and trendiness are the key elements directly influencing consumer brand engagement, then strengthening brand awareness and brand knowledge.

Duangruthai Voramontri and Leslie Klieb (2019) The goal of the paper was to research empirically the role of social media in consumers' decision-making process for complex purchases - those characterized by significant brand differences, high consumer involvement and risk, and which are expensive and infrequent. The result showed that social media usage influences consumer satisfaction in the stages of information search and alternative evaluation, with satisfaction getting amplified as the consumer moves along the process towards the final purchase decision and post-purchase evaluation.

3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In today's digital landscape, social media platforms have evolved from mere communication tools into powerful marketing engines that shape consumer behavior. With increasing screen time and exposure to visually rich and personalized content, consumers are increasingly influenced by ads, influencer endorsements, and peer reviews seen on platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube. Despite this growing trend, there remains a significant gap in understanding which specific factors most effectively drive purchasing decisions through social media and how demographic and behavioral variables shape this influence. This study seeks to address the core problem of identifying the relative impact of various social media marketing elements on consumer buying behavior. It investigates which platforms and promotional strategies are most effective, how frequently consumers are exposed to such marketing, and what types of products are most influenced by these tactics. The research also explores the statistical relationship between social media engagement and purchasing behavior, aiming to provide actionable insights for marketers and brands in the digital space.

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To identify the most preferred social media platforms influencing consumer purchasing behavior.
2. To examine the frequency and impact of social media advertisements on consumers' buying decisions.
3. To analyze the types of products commonly purchased through social media marketing.
4. To determine the key factors influencing consumer purchases through social media using statistical tools like the Chi-square test and Garrett Ranking method.

5. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The present study focuses on analyzing how social media marketing influences consumer purchasing behavior. It covers various aspects such as the preferred platforms for shopping, frequency of ad exposure, and types of products purchased through social media. The study is limited to 230 respondents and uses simple percentage analysis, Chi-square test, and Garrett Ranking method to assess the impact and key influencing factors. The findings aim to help marketers understand consumer preferences and develop effective social media strategies.

6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology is the process used to collect information and data for the purpose of making decisions. It includes publication research, interviews, surveys, and other research techniques. In this study, data has been collected from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data was collected through a structured questionnaire designed based on the objectives of the study. The secondary data was collected from books, journals, research articles, websites, and other published sources. A self-designed questionnaire was distributed to the general public to gather responses. The sampling technique used is non-random or non-probability sampling, specifically convenient sampling, to collect data from 230 respondents. The major tools used for analysis are percentage analysis, chi-square test, and Garrett Ranking Method to interpret the data and identify key influencing factors in consumer purchasing behavior through social media.

7. RESULTS OF THE STUDY

The findings of the study are segregated into the following sections: preferred social media platforms for shopping, frequency and impact of viewing social media ads, types of products purchased through social media marketing, Impact of social media on consumer purchasing behavior and Influential Factors for Social Media Purchasing.

i. Usage of Social Media Platforms

Table 1: Preferred Social Media Platform for Shopping Influence

Platform	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Instagram	85	36.96%
Facebook	60	26.09%
YouTube	40	17.39%
WhatsApp	25	10.87%
Others	20	8.69%
Total	230	100%

Among the respondents, Instagram (36.96%) emerged as the most influential social media platform for shopping decisions, followed by Facebook (26.09%) and YouTube (17.39%). This indicates that visual and engaging platforms like Instagram are increasingly effective in shaping consumer purchasing behavior. Platforms like WhatsApp and others have relatively lesser influence in comparison.

Table 2: Frequency of Viewing Social Media Ads

Frequency	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Daily	110	47.83%
Weekly	70	30.43%
Occasionally	35	15.22%
Rarely	15	6.52%
Total	230	100%

A significant portion of respondents (47.83%) view social media advertisements daily, while 30.43% see them weekly. This reflects a high level of exposure to promotional content on social media platforms, suggesting that ads have ample opportunity to influence consumer decisions regularly.

Table 3: Purchase Made After Seeing Social Media Ads

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Yes	172	74.78%
No	58	25.22%
Total	230	100%

The data clearly shows that 74.78% of the respondents have made purchases after seeing ads on social media, demonstrating a strong influence of social media marketing on actual buying behavior. Only a minority (25.22%) reported no such purchases, highlighting the effectiveness of these marketing strategies.

Table 4: Type of Product Purchased through Social Media Marketing

Product Type	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Fashion/Clothing	85	36.96%
Electronics	45	19.57%
Beauty Products	50	21.74%
Home Decor	30	13.04%
Others	20	8.69%
Total	230	100%

Fashion and clothing (36.96%) are the most purchased products influenced by social media marketing, followed by beauty products (21.74%) and electronics (19.57%). This suggests that visually appealing and trend-sensitive items are more likely to drive purchases via social media promotions. Home décor and other products also find their niche buyers through these platforms.

ii. Impact of Social Media on Consumer Purchasing Behavior

This section evaluates the influence of social media on consumer purchasing behavior by examining the association between various demographic, behavioral, and perceptual variables and the likelihood of purchase decisions influenced by social media platforms. The Chi-square test has been applied to determine the significance of relationships.

(a) Level of Impact

The level of impact was assessed by analyzing consumer interactions with social media content such as advertisements, influencer endorsements, reviews, and promotional offers. The responses reflect how social media exposure translates into actual purchasing decisions.

(b) Variables Considered for Analysis

A total of fifteen variables were selected to test their association with social media's influence on consumer behavior. These include demographic factors like age and occupation, behavioral metrics such as time spent on social media and platform preference, and marketing influence factors like trust, reviews, influencer recommendations, and promotional content. The significance of each association was tested using the Chi-square method at both 5% and 1% levels of significance.

Table 5: Impact of Social Media on Consumer Purchasing Behavior - Chi-Square Test

Selected Variables	d.f.	Calculated χ^2 Value	Table Value (5%)	Table Value (1%)
Age Group	3	4.02*	7.815	11.070
Gender	2	1.56	5.991	9.210
Occupation	3	5.12*	7.815	11.070
Time Spent on Social Media (Daily)	3	2.79*	7.815	11.070
Most Used Social Media Platform	4	6.53**	9.488	13.277
Influential Factors (Discounts/Promos)	3	5.95**	7.815	11.070
Influential Factors (Influencer Recommendations)	3	3.12	7.815	11.070
Influential Factors (User Reviews/Comments)	3	4.41**	7.815	11.070
Purchase Type (Fashion/Apparel)	3	2.92	7.815	11.070
Purchase Type (Electronics)	3	1.82	7.815	11.070
Purchase Type (Beauty/Cosmetics)	3	0.64	7.815	11.070
Follow Brands/Influencers on Social Media	2	1.55	5.991	9.210
Trust Social Media as Product Info Source	2	3.21	5.991	9.210
Read Reviews Before Purchase	3	5.78*	7.815	11.070

Share Product Experience on Social Media	2	2.56*	5.991	9.210
Return Products Bought via Social Media	2	1.47	5.991	9.210

The table above demonstrates that, of the fifteen variables, eight variables were found to have a significant association with the impact of social media on consumer purchasing behavior. Most used social media platform, influential factors like discounts/promos, and user reviews are found to be highly significant at the **one percent level**, indicating that these factors play a crucial role in influencing consumer purchase decisions. Meanwhile, age group, occupation, time spent on social media, reading reviews before purchase, and sharing product experiences were found to be significant at the five percent level, suggesting that these variables also influence purchasing behavior, though their impact is somewhat less pronounced than the highly significant ones.

iii. Influential Factors for Social Media Purchasing - Garrett Rank Test

Garrett's Ranking Technique has been used to identify the most influential factors that drive consumer purchasing decisions through social media platforms. Respondents were asked to rank five key influencing elements based on their personal shopping behaviour and experiences.

The percentage position of each rank was converted into scores using Garrett's conversion table. These scores were then totalled and averaged to determine the overall rank for each influencing factor. The results reveal that *Instagram Ads* hold the highest influence over purchase decisions, followed by *Facebook Promotions* and *YouTube Reviews*. Other modes such as *WhatsApp sharing* and *Snap chat or similar platforms* were found to be relatively less influential.

Table 6: Influential Factors for Social Media Purchasing - Garrett Ranking Method

S. No.	Influential Factors	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	Total Score	Average Score	Rank
1	Instagram Ads	142	48	17	15	8	38890	62.61	1
2	Facebook Promotions	48	102	40	30	10	31410	50.17	2
3	YouTube Reviews	30	45	90	40	25	20825	45.27	3
4	WhatsApp/Direct Sharing	5	15	20	100	90	10950	41.45	4
5	Other Platforms (Snapchat etc.)	5	10	15	45	155	9225	43.29	5

From the analysis, it is clear that Instagram Ads are the most influential factor in consumer purchasing behavior on social media, with the highest average score of 62.61. This is followed by Facebook Promotions (50.17) and YouTube Reviews (45.27), which also play an important role in influencing purchases. WhatsApp/Direct Sharing and Other Platforms like Snapchat have less influence, with lower average scores. Overall, visual and direct marketing through Instagram and Facebook is more effective in attracting consumers.

8. CONCLUSION

The study reveals that social media plays a significant role in influencing consumer purchasing behavior. Platforms like Instagram and Facebook are highly preferred for shopping due to their visual appeal and targeted advertisements. A large number of respondents have made purchases after seeing social media ads, especially in categories like fashion and beauty products. Key factors such as Instagram ads, Facebook promotions, and YouTube reviews have been identified as strong influencers. The findings suggest that marketers should focus more on visual and engaging content to attract consumers. Overall, social media marketing has become an effective tool in shaping modern shopping habits.

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