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AI-Driven Recommendations and Purchase Intentions in Social Media Marketing: The Mediating Role of Perceived Ease of Use

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Abstract

AI-driven recommendations is a robust tool in social media marketing that provides tailored content to consumers based on their data and behaviour. It enhances their online experience and satisfaction. The purpose of the study is to explore the effect of perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use of AI-driven recommendations on consumers' purchase intentions in social media marketing. The study also aims to analyse the mediating role of perceived ease of use in the influence of perceived usefulness of AI-driven recommendations on purchase intention in social media marketing. This research is explanatory in nature and uses quantitative methods. The study is based on primary data. It was collected from 58 consumers in Kanniyakumari District. The primary data were gathered online using a well-structured questionnaire. The study utilises the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) to explain the relationship between perceived usefulness as well as ease of use, and purchase intention in social media marketing. The statistical tools used in this study are percentage, mean score ranking, median, mode, Spearman's rank correlation, multiple linear regression and bootstrapped mediation analysis. The statistical analyses were performed using Jamovi v2.7.24. The findings of the study revealed that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use had a significant positive effect on purchase intentions. Further, perceived ease of use partially mediated the relationship between perceived usefulness and purchase intentions in social media marketing.

Keywords: Perceived Usefulness, Perceived Ease of Use, Purchase Intentions, AI-driven Recommendations, Social Media Marketing, Mediation,

Introduction

Social media platforms have revolutionised the manner of information sharing and consumption and offer opportunities for learning, engagement and democratic participation (Skandali, 2025). It has become a platform for businesses to interact, engage and attract

consumers, using advertisements. Artificial intelligence (AI) has become a transformative tool in advertising, which constantly reshapes consumer experiences and decision-making processes (Dang, 2024). It has the ability to analyse vast amounts of data and learn from shopping patterns. It is not just revolutionising the way businesses interact with consumers but also sets a new benchmark for operational efficiency (Lopes et al., 2024). It is a powerful tool that aids in developing strategic decisions for social media platform developers, marketers and businesses.

AI recommender systems automate product discovery and impact consumers' choice (Razzaq et al., 2025). These systems allow marketers to study consumer preferences and buying behaviour by analysing large volumes of data. It provides recommendations to the consumer based on the data. This increases consumer satisfaction and boosts sales. Tailored content and AI-driven suggestions play a crucial role in shaping consumer buying patterns by providing relevant and personalised experiences (Patil et al., 2024). The impact of AI-driven recommendations on consumers' purchase intention is influenced by factors such as perceived usefulness, ease of use, control, risk and trust.

Consumers' purchase intention is dynamic in nature (Zhang et al., 2022). It is influenced by various internal as well as external factors. The growth of AI in social media marketing has influenced how consumers' purchase intentions. Due to its ever-changing nature, it is important to study the influence of AI-driven recommendations on consumers' purchase intentions in social media marketing. Understanding how AI-driven recommendations influence consumers' purchase intentions is important for social media developers, marketers and businesses. It is also crucial to understand how the major factors such as perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use of AI-driven recommendations influence consumers' purchase intentions in social media marketing. Thus, this study primarily focuses on exploring the effect of perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use of AI-driven recommendations on consumers' purchase intention in social media marketing. It also analyses the mediating effect of perceived ease of use between perceived usefulness of AI-driven recommendations and purchase intentions in social media marketing.

Literature Review

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) is popularly used to examine how likely consumers are to accept or reject new technologies (Davis et al., 1989; Venkatesh & Davis, 1996). This model comprises two factors, namely perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use, that are vital determinants of users' acceptance (Davis et al., 1989). It explains user acceptance of technology based on perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness (Aldraiweesh & Alturki, 2025).

Perceived Usefulness (PU)

Perceived usefulness refers to the degree to which a person believes that the use of technology would enhance job performance and overall effectiveness. (Hoang et al., 2026; Intra et al., 2024; Venkatesh & Davis, 1996). A positive perception of usefulness is likely to foster a stronger intention to use the technology, as individuals tend to adopt systems they believe will benefit their goals (Intra et al., 2024). According to some studies, it strongly influences consumers' purchase intentions (Intra et al., 2024; Mican & Sitar-Taut, 2024; Davis et al., 1989). As per Subrata & Primananda (2026), it positively affects perceived ease of use.

Perceived Ease of Use (PEU)

AI-enabled ease of use is the perceived simplicity and user-friendliness in interacting with AI-driven systems (Razzaq et al., 2025). Perceived ease of use signifies how easy it is to work with artificial intelligence from the users' perspective (Davis et al., 1989). Studies show that it

has a strong positive effect on perceived usefulness in education (Aldraiweesh & Alturki, 2025). Moreover, it positively influences purchase intention (Subrata & Primananda, 2026; Lopes et al., 2024). Meanwhile, Razzaq et al. (2025) found that it moderately influences purchase intentions in the context of online shopping. Subrata & Primananda (2026) noted that perceived ease of use partially mediates AI utilisation and consumers' purchase intentions in the context of Shopee users.

Purchase Intention (PI)

Consumer purchase intention refers to the likelihood that consumers will act on their intention to purchase based on AI-driven stimuli (Razzaq et al., 2025). It is a person's conscious intention or apparent plan to purchase a particular product or service within a short period, providing a practical indicator of actual purchase intention in the online environment (Huh et al., 2023). It also means intended to purchase and the psychological preparation and assurance of making a purchasing decision (Razzaq et al., 2025).

The TAM has been widely adopted to examine the user adoption of digital technologies. There are many studies relating to AI-driven recommendations in e-commerce platforms. However, there are very limited studies in the context of social media marketing. There is few research on the effect of perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use of AI-driven recommendations on consumers' purchase intention within the context of social media marketing. Additionally, there exists a conceptual gap in analysing the mediating role of perceived ease of use in the effect of perceived usefulness of AI-driven recommendations on purchase intentions in social media marketing. There is also a geographical gap in addressing consumers in the Kanniyakumari District. Hence, the present study bridges the research gap by utilising the TAM to explain the effect of perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use of AI-driven recommendations on consumers' purchase intentions in social media marketing. The study also examines the mediating effect of perceived ease of use between perceived usefulness and purchase intention in social media marketing.

Objectives of jhe Study

1. To study the effect of perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use of AI-driven recommendations on consumers' purchase intentions in social media marketing
2. To analyse the role of perceived ease of use as a mediator in the effect of perceived usefulness on purchase intentions in social media marketing.

Methodology

The present study is explanatory in nature because it analyses the relationships among variables based on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). It examines whether perceived usefulness influences purchase intention directly and indirectly through perceived ease of use, which reflects an attempt to explain how and why the variables are related. This study uses quantitative methods because the variables are measured numerically using a structured questionnaire and the data were analysed statistically. The study is based on primary data. The primary data were gathered from 58 consumers in Kanniyakumari District using judgemental sampling. The respondents were chosen based on the judgement that they are social media users, have made purchases through social media and know about AI-driven recommendations. The questionnaire was distributed online to the respondents, using Google Forms.

All the constructs in the study were measured using five-point Likert scaling techniques. The main constructs of the study are perceived usefulness (Tussyadiah & Miller, 2019), perceived ease of use (Subrata & Primananda, 2026; Razzaq et al., 2025) and consumers' purchase intention (Hoang et al., 2026; Subrata & Primananda, 2026; Razzaq et al., 2025). The items of the constructs were

adopted from the previous literature and modified to suit the context of AI-driven recommendations in social media marketing. The primary data were analysed using percentage, mean score ranking, median, mode, Spearman's rank correlation, multiple linear regression and bootstrapped mediation analysis. The reliability of the questionnaire was analysed using Cronbach's alpha. The statistical analyses were done using Jamovi v2.7.24.

Reliability

Cronbach's alpha is used to measure the reliability of the instrument. Table 1 presents the Cronbach's alpha values of the constructs and the overall value.

Table 1 Cronbach's Alpha

Constructs	Cronbach's Alpha (α)	Composite Value (α)
PU	0.904	0.907
PEU	0.900	
PI	0.895	

Source: Computed Data

Table 1 displays the reliability test results. The reliability analysis demonstrated a strong internal consistency for all constructs. The overall Cronbach's alpha is 0.907, which is greater than 0.7. This depicts strong internal consistency among the items. Thus, the reliability of the questionnaire is excellent.

Results

Table 2 Socio-economic Profile of the Respondents

	Classification	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	16	27.586
	Female	42	72.414
	TOTAL	58	100
Age	Less than 19 years	5	8.621
	19 – 21 years	10	17.241
	21 – 24 years	20	34.483
	25 – 28 years	23	39.655
	TOTAL	58	100
Area	Rural	17	29.310
	Urban	12	20.690
	Semi-urban	29	50.000
	TOTAL	58	100
Educational Qualification	High School	5	8.621
	UG	18	31.034
	PG	35	60.345
	TOTAL	58	100

Occupation	Professional	3	5.172
	Private Employee	22	37.931
	Self-employed	4	6.897
	Student	20	34.483
	TOTAL	58	100

Source: Primary Data

The socio-economic variables, including gender, age, area, educational qualification and occupation of the respondents, are analysed using percentage. Table 2 shows the percentage analysis results of the socio-economic profile of the respondents. It is evident that most respondents are female (72.414). The majority of the respondents are within the age group of 25 – 28 years (39.655). A significant portion of the respondents are residing in semi-urban areas (50.00). A majority of 60.345 percent of the respondents is post-graduates. Moreover, the majority of the respondents are private employees (37.931).

Table 3 Perceived usefulness of AI-driven Recommendations

S. No.	Particulars	Mean Score	Median	Mode	Rank
1	Makes purchase decisions easier	3.966	4	4	I
2	Shows the products I like	3.845	4	4	II
3	Saves time spent on searching for products	3.741	4	3	III
4	Shows products when needed	3.586	4	4	IV

Source: Primary Data

Table 3 reveals that the top perceived usefulness of AI-driven recommendations is that it makes purchase decisions easier (Mean score = 3.966). The second main perceived usefulness is that it shows the products they like (Mean score = 3.845). The third major perceived usefulness is that it saves time spent on searching for products (Mean score = 3.741). The fourth perceived usefulness is that it shows products when needed (Mean score = 3.586).

Further, Table 3 indicates that most of the respondents agree that AI-driven recommendations make purchase decisions easier, shows the products they like and shows the products when needed (Mode = 4 and Median = 4). It is also clear that the majority of the respondents are neutral, that is, they neither agree nor disagree that AI-driven recommendations save time spent on searching for products (Mode = 3 and Median = 4).

Table 4 Perceived ease of use of AI-driven Recommendations

S. No.	Particulars	Mean Score	Median	Mode	Rank
1	Easy to purchase products	3.983	4	4	I
2	Easy to hide recommendations that I don't like	3.966	4	4	II
3	Makes shopping easier and smoother	3.879	4	4	III

4	Easily access more details about the product	3.828	4	4	IV

Source: Primary Data

This study utilises mean score ranking, median and mode to describe perceived ease of use of AI-driven recommendations in social media marketing. Table 4 presents the descriptive statistics of perceived ease of use of AI-driven recommendations in social media marketing. It is revealed that easy to purchase products is the top perceived ease of use of AI-driven recommendations (Mean score = 3.983). Easy to hide recommendations that they don't like holds the second rank (Mean score = 3.966). Makes shopping easier and smoother holds the third rank (Mean score = 3.879). The last perceived ease of use is that consumers can easily access more details about the product (Mean score = 3.828).

As per Table 4, the majority of the respondents agree that easy to purchase products, easy to hide recommendations that they don't like, makes shopping easier and smoother and easily access more details about the product are the perceived usefulness of AI-driven recommendations in social media marketing (Mode and Median = 4).

Table 5: Consumers' Purchase Intentions

S. No.	Particulars	Mean Score	Median	Mode	Rank
1	Willing to purchase products from AI-driven recommendations	3.466	4	4	I
2	Willing to recommend the product seen in AI-driven recommendations	3.241	4	4	II
3	Increases my intention to purchase more frequently	3.190	3.5	3	III
4	Purchasing from AI-driven recommendations is worth	3.155	3	4	IV

Source: Primary Data

Mean score ranking, median and mode is used to analyse consumers' purchase intentions in social media marketing. Table 5 presents the descriptive statistics of consumers' purchase intentions in social media marketing. The topmost purchase intention of the respondents is that they are willing to purchase products from AI-driven recommendations (Mean score = 3.466). The second vital purchase intention was that they are willing to recommend the product seen in AI-driven recommendations (Mean score = 3.241). The third important purchase intention was that it increases their intention to purchase more frequently (Mean score = 3.190). Lastly, the fourth purchase intention is that purchasing from AI-driven recommendations is worth (Mean score = 3.155).

In Table 5, it is clear that a significant portion of the respondents agree that they are their purchase intentions are, they are willing to purchase products from AI-driven recommendations (Mode = 4, Median = 4), willing to recommend the product seen in AI-driven recommendations (Mode = 4, Median = 4) and purchasing from AI-driven recommendations is worth (Mode = 4, Median = 3). The majority of the respondents are neutral, that is, they neither agree nor disagree that AI-driven recommendations increase their intention to purchase more frequently (Mode = 3,

Median = 3.5).

In Table 5, it is clear that a significant portion of the respondents agree that they are their purchase intentions are, they are willing to purchase products from AI-driven recommendations (Mode = 4, Median = 4), willing to recommend the product seen in AI-driven recommendations (Mode = 4, Median = 4) and purchasing from AI-driven recommendations is worth (Mode = 4, Median = 3). The majority of the respondents are neutral, that is, they neither agree nor disagree that AI-driven recommendations increase their intention to purchase more frequently (Mode = 3, Median = 3.5).

Table 8: Spearman's Rank Correlation

	PU	PEU	PI
PU	—		
PEU	0.540***	—	
PI	0.596***	0.607***	—

Note: *** $p < 0.001$

Source: Computed Data

Table 8 presents the Spearman's rank correlation results of consumers' purchase intention and perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use and problems. There is a moderate positive relationship between consumers' purchase intention and perceived usefulness ($r = 0.596$). Moreover, there is a moderate positive relationship between perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use ($r = 0.540$). Further, there is a strong positive relationship between perceived ease of use and consumers' purchase intention in social media marketing ($r = 0.607$).

Table 9: Multiple Linear Regression

Predictor	Estimate	SE	t	p	R	R^2
Intercept	-1.474	0.632	-2.333	0.023	0.716	0.513
PU	0.614	0.165	3.714	<0.001		
PEU	0.616	0.158	3.907	<0.001		

Source: Computed Data

Multiple linear regression analysis was performed to examine how perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use of AI-driven recommendations influence purchase intention in social media marketing. Table 9 reveals that the model explained 51.3% of the variance in consumers' purchase intentions were explained by the two predictors ($R2 = 0.513$). This indicates a moderately strong model fit.

Among the predictors', perceived usefulness has a significant positive effect on purchase intention ($b = 0.614$, $SE = 0.165$, $t = 3.714$, $p < 0.01$). Moreover, perceived ease of use also has a significant positive effect on purchase intention ($b = 0.616$, $SE = 0.158$, $t = 3.907$, $p < 0.001$). Hence, both predictors have a significant effect on consumers' purchase intention in social media marketing.

Table 10: Mediation Analysis

Path	Estimate	SE	95% C.I. (a)		β	z	p
			Lower	Upper			

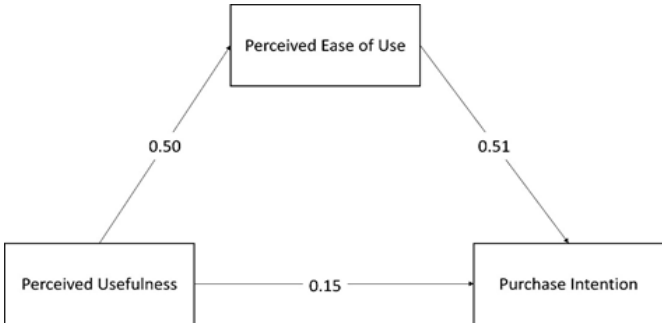
PU □ PEU □ PI	0.322	0.109	0.045	0.519	0.211	2.957	0.003
PU □ PEU	0.522	0.119	0.325	0.679	0.498	4.376	<0.001
PEU □ PI	0.616	0.154	0.086	0.928	0.424	4.012	<0.001
PU □ PI	0.614	0.161	0.326	0.996	0.403	3.814	<0.001
PU□ PI	0.936	0.159	0.730	1.149	0.614	5.880	<0.001

Source: Computed Data

A bootstrapped mediation analysis was performed to test whether perceived ease of use served as a mediator in the relationship between perceived usefulness and purchase intention. The results in Table 10 indicate that perceived usefulness has a significant positive effect on perceived ease of use and perceived ease of use, in turn, has a significant positive effect on purchase intention (b = 0.322, SE = 0.109, p-value = 0.003).

The indirect effect was statistically significant, confirming partial mediation. Even after the inclusion of the mediator, the direct effect of perceived usefulness on purchase intention remained significant, demonstrating that perceived usefulness exerts both direct and indirect influence on purchase intention (b = 0.614, SE = 0.161, p < 0.001). Further, the total effect was significant. Hence, perceived usefulness has both direct and indirect effects on purchase intentions (b = 0.936, SE = 0.159, p < 0.001).

Figure 1: Mediation Model



Source: Computed Data

The mediation of perceived ease of use can be better understood in Figure 1, which illustrates the mediation model showing the relationships between the variables and the beta values. It clearly shows that perceived usefulness positively predicts perceived ease of use (β = 0.50). In addition, perceived ease of use positively predicts purchase intention (β = 0.51). Moreover, perceived usefulness has a direct effect on purchase intention (β = 0.15).

Discussions

The descriptive statistics indicated that the majority of the respondents are female, within the age group of 25 – 28 years, residing in semi-urban areas, post-graduates and private employees. The mean score ranking disclosed that the top perceived usefulness of AI-driven recommendations is that it makes purchase decisions easier. The main perceived ease of use of AI-driven recommendations is that it is easy to purchase products. The major purchase intention is that the respondents are willing to purchase products from AI-driven recommendations.

The Spearman's rank correlation analysis showed that perceived usefulness had a moderate and positive relationship with perceived ease of use and purchase intention. It was also observed that perceived ease of use has a strong positive relationship with purchase intention. This shows that the respondents value convenience and usefulness while purchasing through social media marketing.

The multiple linear regression analysis revealed that consumers' purchase intentions are influenced more strongly by the ease of use of AI-driven recommendations than by its usefulness. This indicates that the respondents value convenience more than usefulness. Hence, this study confirms the findings of previous literature that perceived usefulness strongly influences purchase intentions (Intra et al., 2024; Mican & sitar-Taut, 2024; Davis et al., 1989). It also proves that perceived ease of use strongly and positively influences purchase intentions (Subrata & Primananda, 2026). However, Razzaq et al. (2025), noticed that perceived ease of use moderately influences purchase intentions.

Overall, the mediation analysis results indicated that perceived usefulness influenced purchase intention both directly and indirectly through perceived ease of use. It was found that perceived ease of use partially mediates the effect of perceived usefulness on purchase intention. Hence, the findings suggest that respondents are more likely to intend to purchase when they find the AI-driven recommendations in social media useful and it becomes more effective when it is easy to use. This confirms the findings of the existing literature that perceived ease

The present study is subject to several limitations. The use of judgemental sampling and a relatively small sample size (n = 58) limits the generalisation and robustness of the findings. Furthermore, the study was confined to Kanniyakumari District, restricting the geographical scope of the results. Moreover, the sample size limits the strength of Spearman's rank correlation, multiple linear regression and mediation analysis results, which should be interpreted with caution. Furthermore, there is a selection bias because judgemental sampling was used in data collection. Therefore, the findings should be considered preliminary. Future research using a larger sample size can analyse the impact of AI-driven recommendations on purchase intentions in social media marketing using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM).

Conclusion

Artificial intelligence has transformed the way marketers make strategic marketing decisions. AI-driven recommendations are a dynamic tool that provides personalised content to users based on their data. This study focused on analysing the effect of perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use of AI-driven recommendations in social media marketing. It also examined the role of perceived ease of use as a mediator in the relationship between perceived usefulness and purchase intentions. It was confirmed that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use have a significant positive effect on purchase intention. In addition to that, it was proved that perceived ease of use is a partial mediator through which perceived usefulness influences purchase intentions. The findings of the present study provide insights that will aid social media platform developers in transforming AI-driven recommendations by improving their algorithms. This, in turn, will help consumers purchase through social media more efficiently. Marketers can focus on making social media content and advertisements that are easy to understand, quick to navigate and useful for purchase decision-making.

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