

A Study on the Influence of Social Media Marketing on Purchase Decisions of Consumers in India

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Abstract

Social Media has become an integral part of life, with over 5.6 billion active social media users globally, that represents 70% of the world's population. There has been extensive use of social media platforms, businesses increasingly rely on digital advertisements, influencer promotions and online reviews to influence buying behaviour of customers. The study aims to examine how the social media marketing impacts consumers buying decisions. A descriptive research method is used. Primary data has been collected through a structured questionnaire from the youths. Secondary data was sourced from journals, articles, and online marketing reports. The findings of the study indicate that social media marketing has significantly influenced the buying decision among the consumers. The most influential factors affecting the buying decisions are advertisements, Influencer marketing and recommendations and customer reviews. These factors helps to build brand image, loyalty and awareness among the consumers and for businesses frame strategies to increase sales. The purchase decision has been evolved over the years, earlier consumers significantly relied on the reviews of the product available on the site, now consumer make decisions on the basis of price, discounts and quality offered by the businesses. Overall, social media marketing creates product awareness, and leads to impulse buying patterns. It plays a crucial role in shaping modern consumer behaviour. The study highlights the need for businesses to focus on strengthening customer relationship, creating engaging content, maintaining transparency, designing innovative and ethical marketing practices and adopting personalized marketing strategies to effectively influence consumer and align with their expectations.

Keywords: Social Media Marketing, Youth, Consumer Behaviour, Purchase Decision, Trust

Introduction

In the last decade, social media has transformed the way individuals communicate, gather information, and make purchasing decisions. Social Media Platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat, Facebook, and WhatsApp has become a powerful marketing tools that allow brands to reach large consumers promptly and interactively. It has transformed the traditional marketing practices. With the availability of smartphones and affordable internet access, consumers are constantly exposed to advertisements, influencer marketing, brand collaborations, product reviews, and targeted promotional content. As a result, social media has become an integral part of the modern marketing mix.

Social media marketing refers to use social media platforms through which businesses build social networks and share information about their product, brand, increase sales, engage with existing customers and connect

with new one. Consumers can like, share, comment, review products, and interact directly with brands. This interactive nature provides businesses with real-time feedback and helps them to frame strategies and modify products as per consumer preferences. Whether it is fashion, electronics, cosmetics, food, or travel today consumers often rely on online reviews, recommendations from the influencer before making a buying decision. Hence online reviews, likes and recommendation shapes consumer perception and attitude towards brand. Social media significantly creates awareness, interest, evaluation and comparison with other substitute available and finally make a purchase decision. The visual appeal of advertisements, discount offers, sponsored posts, and short videos further enhances consumer engagement. According to DataReportal and Kepios, there were 5.31 billion social media identities across the world as of April 2025 representing nearly 70% of world population. Around 84% of consumers search for brands before buying whereas 53% of global consumers plan to shop more. Gen Z and Millennials are the impulsive buyer, according to data from Statista and Kepios.

The study highlights the role of social media as a powerful marketing tool and examines its impact on shaping modern consumer behaviour. The findings will help businesses develop effective marketing strategies, enhance customer relationship, create transparency which leads to higher sales and long term brand loyalty.

Objectives of the Study

1. To study the usage pattern of social media among consumers.
2. To analyse the influence of social media marketing on purchase decision.
3. To identify the most influential social media platforms in buying decisions.
4. To examine the role of online reviews, brand awareness and consumer preferences in buying decision.
5. To understand whether social media marketing strategies leads to impulse buying.

Hypothesis of the Study

- H_0 : Social media marketing does not significantly influence consumers purchase decisions.
- H_1 : Social media marketing significantly influences consumers purchase decisions.
- H_0 : Influencer marketing and recommendations have no impact on purchase decision.
- H_1 : Influencer marketing and recommendation have significant impact on purchase decision.

Literature Review

Zhang, C., & Li, M. (2025) has studied the social media personalised content and timely updates affects the buying decisions. It helps to build trust among the customers through reviews and product quality description. His study revealed that social media marketing and influencers recommendation affects buying decision.

S. M., Sai, E. H., Agnes, M., & Vurrinkala, S. K. (2024) has studied the social media influence on purchase decision among young consumers. The study revealed that influencers recommendation increases brand visibility. Influencers that share similar values with the followers helps them to connect and trust the brand recommended and eventually builds customer loyalty.

Huang, W. J. (2024) has studied the social media marketing affects the purchase decision. The consumer see advertisement, online reviews, recommendations by influencers compares the product with substitute and make decision. The study highlighted brands should use effective strategies to attract new and retain existing customers.

Yang, M. (2024) has studied that social media influences buying decision at every stages. In awareness stage, good quality content helps them to become aware about the product. In interest stage, online reviews helps to create interest and trust in the product and at purchase intention stage, goods offers and discount helps to make purchase.

Features of Social Media Marketing

1. **Wide Reach:** Social media platform helps businesses reach a large and diverse audience across the different regions.
2. **Cost Effective:** As compared to traditional marketing techniques, social media marketing require lower investment and leads to better returns.
3. **Influencer Marketing:** Brands collaborate with influencers to promote products to the target audience.
4. **Real Time Marketing:** Businesses can share updates, announcements and offers instantly.

Advantages of Social Media Marketing

1. **Increases Brand Awareness:** It helps to create brand awareness among the consumers. Regular posts and advertisements improve brand image and visibility.
2. **Builds Consumer Trust:** Reviews, ratings and user generated content help to gains consumers trust in product or brand.
3. **Improves Consumer Engagement:** Social media platforms provide interactive features such as likes, comments, shares, polls, and direct messages, which allow consumers to actively interact with brands and build strong relationships.
4. **Enhances Customer Loyalty:** Continuous interaction with consumers helps build strong relationships and enhances loyalty.
5. **Boosts Sales and Conversions:** Effective social media campaigns create awareness, interest and motivate consumers to buy product. Attractive content, promotional offers, and influencer recommendation encourage consumers to buy, thereby increasing sales and conversion rates.

Disadvantages of Social Media Marketing

1. **Negative Feedback and Reviews:** Unhappy customers post negative comments, harming the brand image and value.
2. **Time-Consuming:** Managing accounts, creating content, and responding to users requires constant effort.
3. **Privacy and Data Security Issues:** Misuse of personal data can lead to trust issues and dissatisfaction. Businesses needs to protect privacy and data shared by the purchaser.
4. **Dependence on Internet and Technology:** Marketing is ineffective if users lack internet access or technical knowledge.
5. **Influencer Credibility Issues:** Influencer credibility issues arise when influencers promote products without genuine experience or honesty. Dishonest endorsements create false expectation, often leading to dissatisfaction and regret.

Research Methodology

The present study follows a descriptive and analytical research design to examine the influence of social media marketing on consumers' purchase decisions in India. The descriptive design helps in understanding consumer awareness, perception, and attitudes toward social media marketing practices. It is quantitative in nature as numerical data is collected through a structured questionnaire. The responses are analysed using statistical tools. Random Sampling Technique has been adopted, where each respondent have equal chance of selection. The target group of the study consist of consumer aged between 18 to 40 years as they are highly active on the social media platforms and greatly influenced by the influencer marketing.

Respondent: Data is collected from 60 respondents, which is considered to be adequate.

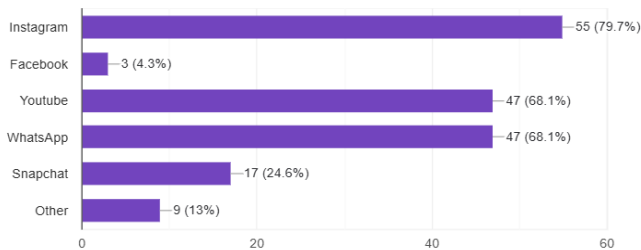
Data Collection Method

Primary Data: It was collected through structured questionnaire designed using Google form to understand their awareness, perception, trust and purchase decision influenced by social media marketing.

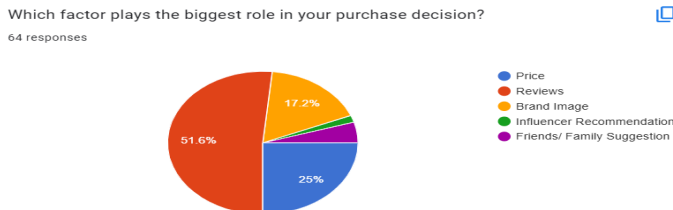
Secondary Data: Journals, websites, books and research articles used to support the study.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

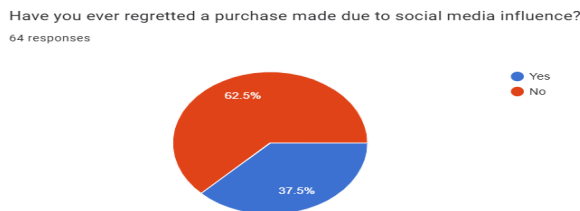
The chart represents that the social media platform used by the respondents. It is observed Instagram is the mostly used platform, with 55 respondents (79.7%) and it has strong potential to influence consumers choice, followed by Whatsapp and Youtube used by 47 respondents (68.1%). While Facebook, Snapchat and other platforms have the lowest usage. Overall, the findings indicate a strong preference for visually engaging and communication-based social media platforms.



The pie chart shown below shows that reviews plays the biggest role in buying decision, influencing nearly 51.6% of the respondents. Price is the second most important factor, influencing 25% of the respondents indicating affordability and value for money remain key considerations while making purchase decisions. Brand image influences 17.2% of respondents, suggesting that brand reputation and recognition also play a role in purchase decision.



The pie chart shown below indicates that over 37.5% respondents have regretted the purchase influenced by the social media, while 62.5% have not experienced any regret. The findings clearly indicate that many respondents are highly influenced by the social media marketing and not regretted their purchase decision. The considerable percentage that experienced regret highlights the risk of impulsive buying, misleading promotions or over expectation created by the marketing.



Findings

Social media marketing plays a crucial role in framing consumers perception and interest towards product. Instagram is one of the social media platform regularly used and influences buying decision. Consumers get attracted to the advertisements, discounts and brand reputation. Influencers video about product like quality, fitting, price and discount helps the consumers to compare with other substitutes or brands available, leading to informed decision making. Factors like reviews, price and brand image plays biggest role in buying decision. Many consumers have regretted post buying decision due to misleading visuals as the actual product differs from images shown online. Misleading product images ultimately reduced consumer trust and lead to dissatisfaction.

Conclusion

The study concludes that social media marketing has a significant influence on consumers purchase decision. Social media platforms like Instagram, Youtube, etc plays a crucial role in framing consumers perception towards product and creates interest to buy product. Advertisements, Price, brand reputation and discounts effectively attract and persuade to purchase. The findings highlight the importance of social media marketing, as influencer videos explaining about the major benefits and drawbacks, leading to informed decision making. It also reveals that many consumers have regretted post buying decision leading to dissatisfaction and reduced consumer trust. Businesses should take efforts to build and maintain consumer trust by accurate product description and visuals and ensuring transparent communication. By improving trust and satisfaction businesses not only influence purchase decision but also flourish long term customer relationship.

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