

“Effectiveness of Social Media Marketing in Influencing Consumer Buying Behaviour: A Study in Pune City.”

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the effectiveness of social media marketing in influencing consumer buying behaviour among 108 respondents in Pune city, primarily belonging to the age group of 18–35 years. The research adopts a quantitative approach to analyse how various elements of social media marketing, such as online advertisements, brand-generated content, influencer promotions, and customer reviews, impact consumer awareness, trust, and purchase decisions.

The findings indicate that a majority of respondents actively engage with social media platforms on a daily basis, with platforms like Instagram and YouTube playing a significant role in product discovery and evaluation. More than half of the respondents reported that their purchase decisions are influenced by social media marketing activities, highlighting its strong impact on consumer behaviour. Additionally, a large proportion of consumers consider social media as an important source of information before making a purchase.

The study further reveals that factors such as content quality, credibility, engagement, and peer reviews play a crucial role in shaping consumer perceptions and trust toward brands. Informative, visually appealing, and interactive content is found to be more effective in attracting consumer attention and driving purchase intentions. The research concludes that social media marketing has become a powerful tool for influencing consumer buying behaviour, particularly among the digitally active population in urban areas like Pune. However, its effectiveness largely depends on maintaining authenticity, transparency, and meaningful engagement with consumers.

Introduction

In recent years, the rapid advancement of digital technology has significantly transformed the way businesses communicate with consumers. Traditional marketing methods such as television, newspapers, and print media are gradually being supplemented, and in many cases replaced, by digital marketing strategies. Among these, social media marketing has emerged as one of the most powerful and influential tools for reaching and engaging consumers. Social media platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, and others have become integral parts of everyday life, allowing brands to interact directly with consumers in a more personalized and interactive manner.

Social media marketing refers to the use of social networking platforms to promote products, services, or brands through content creation, advertisements, influencer collaborations, and customer engagement. Unlike traditional marketing, social media marketing allows two-way communication, enabling consumers to interact with brands through likes, comments, shares, and direct messages. This interactive nature enhances customer involvement and builds stronger relationships between brands and consumers. As a result, consumers are no longer passive recipients of marketing messages but active participants in the communication process.

The growing popularity of social media has significantly influenced consumer buying behaviour. Consumers today rely heavily on digital platforms to search for information, compare products, read reviews, and seek recommendations before making purchase decisions. Features such as targeted advertisements, user-generated content, influencer endorsements, and online reviews play a crucial role in shaping consumer perceptions and preferences. Social

media platforms not only help in creating brand awareness but also influence attitudes, intentions, and final purchase decisions.

In the Indian context, the increasing penetration of smartphones and affordable internet access has accelerated the adoption of social media across different demographic groups. A large number of consumers spend a significant amount of time on social media platforms daily, making it a key channel for marketers to reach their target audience. Urban cities like Pune, known for their young, educated, and tech-savvy population, provide an ideal setting to study the impact of social media marketing. Consumers in Pune are highly active on digital platforms and are exposed to a wide range of marketing content, making them more likely to be influenced by online promotions.

One of the key advantages of social media marketing is its ability to deliver personalized and targeted content. Algorithms used by social media platforms analyse user behaviour, interests, and preferences to display relevant advertisements and content. This increases the likelihood of consumer engagement and enhances the effectiveness of marketing campaigns. Additionally, the presence of reviews, ratings, and peer feedback reduces uncertainty and builds trust among consumers, thereby influencing their buying decisions.

Moreover, different forms of social media content such as promotional advertisements, brand posts, product reviews, unboxing videos, and influencer collaborations contribute to shaping consumer perceptions. Visual content, in particular, plays a significant role in attracting attention and creating a lasting impact. Consumers are more likely to trust brands that maintain active social media presence and engage consistently with their audience. The credibility, relevance, and frequency of content further determine its effectiveness in influencing purchase behaviour.

Despite its growing importance, it is essential to analyse how social media marketing actually affects consumer buying behaviour in specific geographic and demographic contexts. Consumers in Pune represent a dynamic group with evolving preferences, increased digital exposure, and higher awareness of brands and trends. Understanding how they respond to different elements of social media marketing can provide valuable insights for businesses and marketers.

This study aims to examine the effectiveness of social media marketing in influencing consumer buying behaviour in Pune city using primary data collected from 108 respondents. The research focuses on identifying key factors such as content type, engagement level, credibility, and platform usage that impact consumer decisions. The findings of this study will be useful for marketers, businesses, and researchers in developing effective digital marketing strategies that align with consumer expectations and behaviour. As social media continues to evolve, its role in shaping consumer decisions is expected to grow further, making it an essential area of study in modern marketing.

Literature Review

1. Kaplan & Haenlein (2010) (Social Media Concept)

Kaplan and Haenlein defined social media as a group of internet-based applications that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content. Their study highlighted the growing importance of social media platforms as marketing tools that enable direct interaction between brands and consumers. It emphasized that social media has transformed traditional communication into a more interactive and engaging process.

Research Gap:

The study is conceptual and does not focus on consumer buying behaviour. It also lacks empirical evidence from specific regions such as Indian cities like Pune.

2. Mangold & Faulds (2009) (Social Media as Promotion Mix)

Mangold and Faulds discussed how social media has become a hybrid element of the promotion mix. The study explained that social media enables consumers to communicate directly with brands and with each other, influencing brand perceptions and purchase decisions.

Research Gap:

The study is theoretical and does not provide detailed insights into how social media marketing influences actual purchase behaviour in a specific demographic or geographic context.

3. Hutter et al. (2013) (Brand Engagement on Social Media)

Hutter and colleagues examined how consumer engagement with brand pages on social media platforms affects brand awareness and purchase intention. The study found that higher engagement leads to stronger brand relationships and increased likelihood of purchase.

Research Gap:

The research focuses mainly on brand engagement and does not explore multiple elements of social media marketing such as advertisements and reviews. It also lacks region-specific analysis.

4. Kim & Ko (2012) (Social Media Marketing Activities)

Kim and Ko studied the impact of social media marketing activities on consumer behaviour. They identified entertainment, interaction, trendiness, customization, and word-of-mouth as key factors influencing consumer responses and brand loyalty.

Research Gap:

The study is limited to luxury brands and does not consider general consumer behaviour across different product categories or regions like Pune.

5. Erkan & Evans (2016) (Impact of Online Reviews)

Erkan and Evans explored how electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) on social media influences consumer purchase intention. The study concluded that online reviews and peer opinions significantly affect consumer trust and decision-making.

Research Gap:

The research focuses mainly on online reviews and does not consider other aspects of social media marketing such as advertisements and brand-generated content.

6. De Vries et al. (2012) (Brand Posts and Consumer Response)

De Vries and colleagues analysed how brand posts on social media influence consumer engagement. The study found that vivid and interactive posts generate more likes, shares, and comments, increasing brand visibility and consumer interest.

Research Gap:

The study focuses on engagement metrics rather than actual purchase behaviour and lacks empirical data from Indian consumers.

7. Ashley & Tuten (2015) (Creative Strategies in Social Media Marketing)

Ashley and Tuten examined various content strategies used by brands on social media. The study highlighted that creative, informative, and interactive content is more effective in engaging consumers and influencing their perceptions.

Research Gap:

The study does not directly analyse the impact of these strategies on consumer buying behaviour and lacks geographic specificity.

8. Balakrishnan et al. (2014) (Social Media and Consumer Purchase Decision)

This study explored how social media marketing influences consumer purchase decisions. It found that social media platforms significantly impact brand awareness, information search, and final purchase decisions.

Research Gap:

The study is generalized and does not focus on specific cities like Pune or include detailed primary data analysis.

9. Duffett (2017) (Social Media Advertising and Youth)

Duffett examined the effect of social media advertising on young consumers. The study found that advertisements on social media platforms positively influence attitudes and buying behaviour among youth.

Research Gap:

The research is limited to younger audiences and does not consider a broader age group or different consumer segments.

10. Nafees et al. (2021) (Digital Marketing and Consumer Behaviour)

Nafees and colleagues studied the role of digital marketing, including social media, in influencing consumer buying behaviour. The study concluded that digital platforms play a significant role in shaping consumer preferences and purchase decisions.

Research Gap:

The study is broad and does not focus specifically on social media marketing elements or localized consumer behaviour in Pune.

Objectives

1. To analyse the effectiveness of social media marketing in influencing consumer buying behaviour in Pune city.
2. To examine the impact of social media marketing elements (such as advertisements, brand content, and online reviews) on consumer trust and purchase decisions.
3. To evaluate the relationship between consumer engagement on social media platforms and their likelihood of making a purchase.

Research Methodology

Research methodology refers to the systematic process used to collect, analyse, and interpret data for achieving the research objectives. The present study focuses on analysing the effectiveness of social media marketing in influencing consumer buying behaviour in Pune city. This section explains the research design, sampling, data collection, and analytical techniques used in the study.

1) Research Type

The study is descriptive and analytical in nature.

A descriptive research design is used to understand the behaviour, preferences, and perceptions of consumers regarding social media marketing. It helps in describing how social media platforms influence their buying decisions.

Additionally, the study is analytical as it examines the relationship between variables such as social media content, engagement level, and consumer purchase intention. The research aims to draw meaningful conclusions based on the collected data.

1.1 Respondents

The respondents of the study consist of consumers residing in Pune city. These respondents are selected based on the following criteria:

They actively use social media platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook

They are exposed to social media marketing content

They purchase or have purchased products influenced by online platforms

The respondents represent a group that is digitally active and relevant for analysing the impact of social media marketing.

1.2 Area of Study

The study is conducted in Pune city, Maharashtra. Pune is a rapidly developing urban area with a young, educated, and tech-savvy population. The city provides a suitable environment to study consumer behaviour influenced by social media due to high internet penetration and digital engagement.

1.3 Study Population

The population of the study includes consumers aged between 18 to 40 years in Pune. This group is selected because it represents the most active users of social media and is more likely to engage with online marketing content.

The population includes students, working professionals, self-employed individuals, and homemakers who are exposed to social media marketing.

2) Sample Size

The sample size selected for the study is 108 respondents. This sample size is considered appropriate for conducting primary research within the available time and resources, while allowing for meaningful analysis and interpretation of data.

3) Sampling Method

The study uses a non-probability convenience sampling method.

In this method, respondents are selected based on ease of access and willingness to participate. This method is suitable for the study as it allows quick data collection from respondents who are readily available.

Although it may not represent the entire population, it provides useful insights into consumer behaviour and trends.

4) Data Collection Method

The study is based on primary data collection through a structured questionnaire.

A questionnaire is designed based on the research objectives

It includes both close-ended and Likert scale questions

The questionnaire is distributed online using platforms such as Google Forms

This method ensures:

Easy access to respondents

Faster data collection

Better response rate

The questions are simple, clear, and focused on understanding the impact of social media marketing on consumer buying behaviour.

5) Nature and Type of Data

Nature of Data: Quantitative

Type of Data: Primary Data

The data collected is numerical in nature and is analysed using statistical tools to identify patterns, trends, and relationships.

6) Tools for Data Analysis

The collected data is analysed using:

Percentage analysis

Bar graphs and pie charts

Simple statistical interpretation

These tools help in presenting the data in a clear and understandable manner, making it easier to draw conclusions.

7) Limitations of the Study

The study is limited to Pune city, so results may not be applicable to other regions

The sample size is limited to 108 respondents

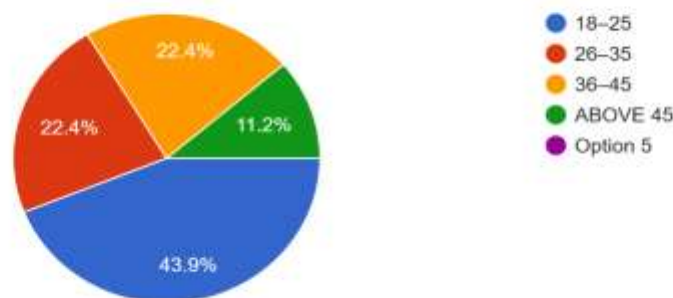
The study is based on primary data, which depends on respondent honesty and accuracy

Convenience sampling may not fully represent the entire population

Data Analysis & Interpretation

Question 1: What is your age group?

What is your age group?
107 responses



Interpretation:

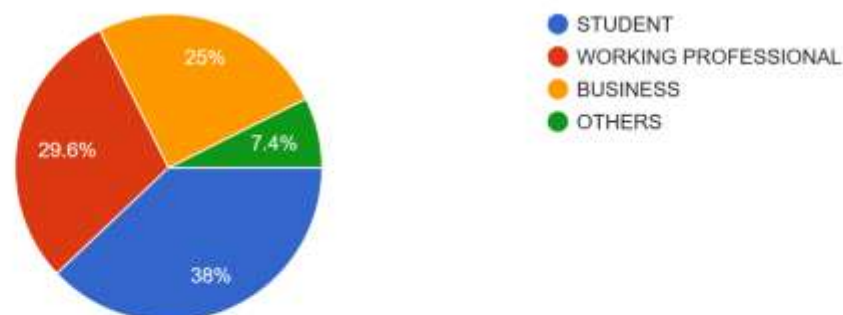
The chart shows the age distribution of the respondents. A majority of the respondents, **43.9%**, belong to the **18-25 age group**, indicating that younger consumers are the most active participants in the survey. **22.4%** of respondents fall within the **26-35 age group**, while another **22.4%** belong to the **36-45 age group**, showing that working professionals and middle-aged individuals also actively use social media platforms. A smaller segment of **11.2%** represents respondents **above 45 years of age**. This indicates that although social media is used

across all age groups, it is particularly popular among younger consumers who are more likely to engage with social media marketing and online promotional content.

Question 2: What is your occupation?

Q2. What is your occupation?

108 responses



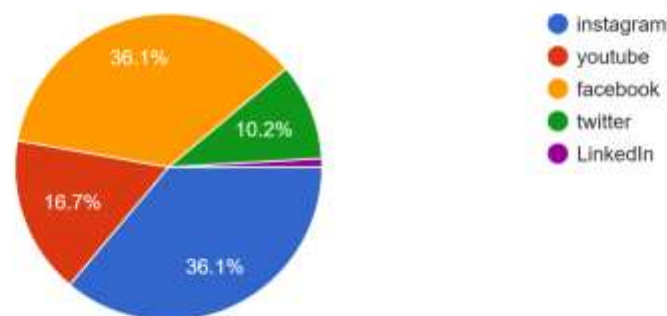
Interpretation:

The chart shows the occupational distribution of the respondents. The majority of respondents, **38%**, are **students**, indicating that a large portion of the sample consists of young individuals who are highly active on social media platforms. **29.6%** of respondents are **working professionals**, suggesting that employed individuals also frequently engage with social media and digital marketing content. **25%** of respondents are involved in **business**, showing that entrepreneurs and business owners also use social media platforms for information and product discovery. A smaller proportion, **7.4%**, falls under **other occupations**. Overall, the data indicates that social media usage and exposure to social media

marketing span across different professional groups, although students form the largest segment of respondents.

Question 3: Which social media platform do you use the most?

Q3. Which social media platform do you use the most?
108 responses



Interpretation:

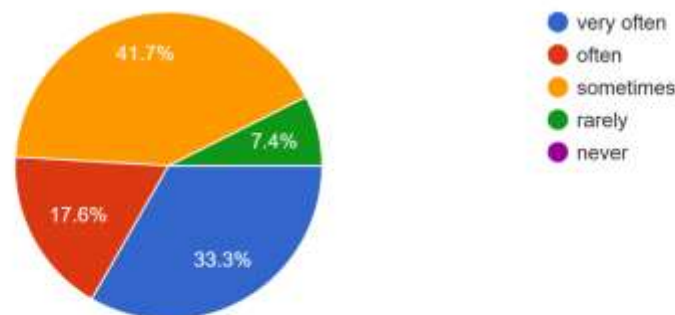
The chart shows the most commonly used social media platforms among the respondents.

The majority of respondents, **36.1%**, use **Instagram** the most, indicating that it is one of the most popular platforms for social interaction and product discovery. Similarly, **36.1%** of respondents use **Facebook**, showing that it continues to be a widely used platform for communication and online marketing. **16.7%** of respondents prefer **YouTube**, which suggests that video-based content such as product reviews and demonstrations also plays an important role in influencing consumers. A smaller proportion of respondents, **10.2%**, use **Twitter**, while only a very small percentage use **LinkedIn** as their primary platform. Overall, the results indicate that visually engaging platforms like Instagram and Facebook dominate social media usage and are highly effective channels for social media marketing.

Question 4 : How often do you use social Media ?

Q4. How often do you use social media?

108 responses



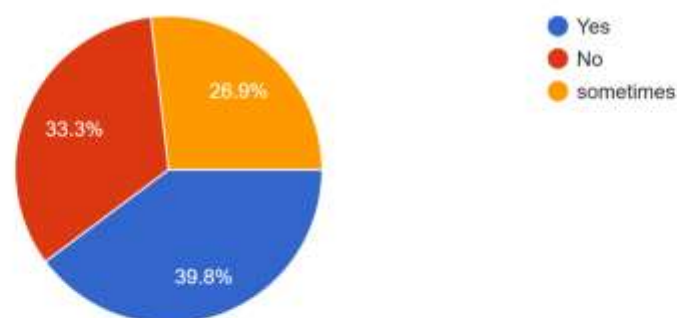
Interpretation:

The chart illustrates how frequently respondents use social media. A significant proportion, **41.7%**, reported using social media sometimes, making it the most common response, which suggests that while users are active, their engagement is moderate rather than constant.

33.3% of respondents use social media very often, indicating a large group of highly active users who are regularly exposed to digital content. Meanwhile, **17.6%** use it often, reflecting consistent but slightly less frequent engagement. A smaller segment, **7.4%**, reported rarely using social media, showing minimal interaction with these platforms. Notably, there are no respondents who selected never, highlighting that social media usage is nearly universal among the sample. Overall, the data indicates that most respondents engage with social media at least occasionally, with a strong presence of both moderate and heavy users.

Question 5 : Do you discover new products through social media ?

Q5. Do you discover new products through social media?
108 responses



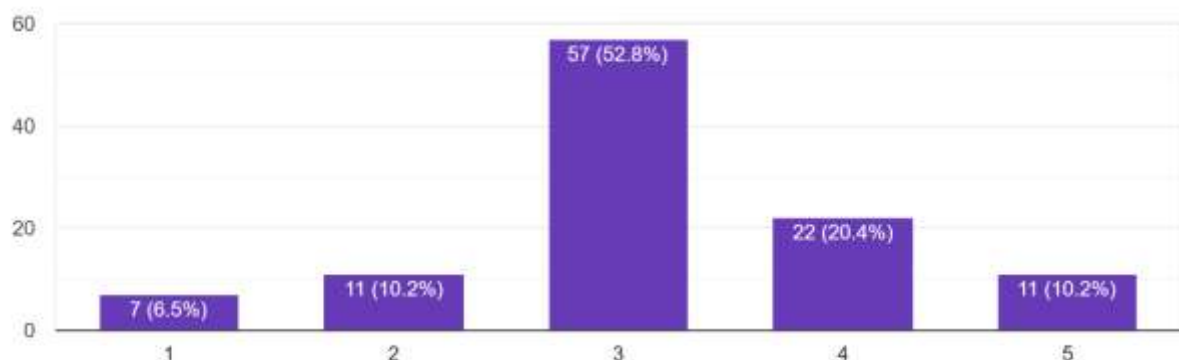
Interpretation:

The chart presents respondents' views on discovering new products through social media. A majority of respondents, **39.8%**, answered yes, indicating that social media plays a significant role in helping users find new products. Meanwhile, **33.3%** of respondents selected no, suggesting that a considerable portion does not rely on social media for product discovery. Additionally, **26.9%** reported sometimes, reflecting occasional influence of social media in introducing new products. Overall, the data suggests that while social media is an important platform for product discovery for many users, its impact varies, with a notable share of respondents either not influenced or only occasionally influenced by it.

Question 6: Does social media marketing influence my buying decisions ?

Q6. Social media marketing influences my buying decisions.

108 responses

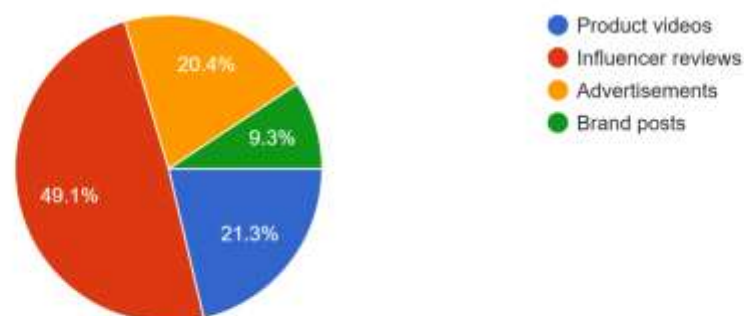


Interpretation:

The chart illustrates respondents' opinions on whether social media marketing influences their buying decisions, measured on a scale of 1 to 5. The majority of respondents, **52.8%**, selected 3, indicating a neutral or moderate level of influence, suggesting that social media marketing has some impact but is not for most users. **20.4%** of respondents chose 4, reflecting a relatively strong influence on their purchasing decisions. Meanwhile, **10.2%** selected 5, showing that a smaller group is highly influenced by social media marketing. On the lower end, **10.2%** of respondents chose 2 and **6.5%** selected 1, indicating that only a minority feel little to no influence. Overall, the data suggests that social media marketing has a moderate impact on consumer buying behavior, with most respondents acknowledging some level of influence rather than extreme dependence.

Question 7: Which type of social media content attracts you the most ?

Q7. Which type of social media content attracts you the most?
108 responses



Interpretation:

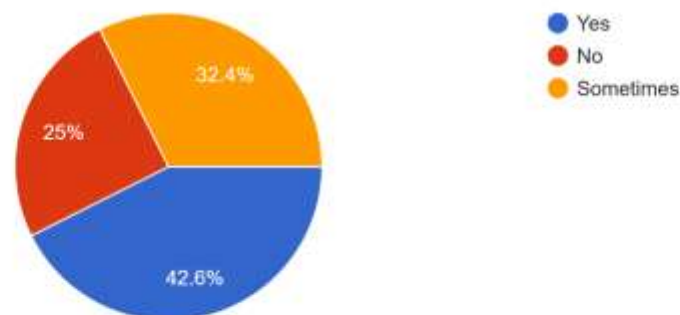
The chart presents respondents' preferences regarding the type of social media content that attracts them the most in Pune city. The majority of respondents, 49.1%, stated that influencer

reviews attract them the most, indicating that influencer-based marketing plays a major role in capturing consumer attention and influencing buying behaviour. Product videos are preferred by 21.3% of respondents, suggesting that visual demonstrations help consumers understand product features more effectively. Advertisements attract 20.4% of respondents, showing that traditional promotional content on social media still has some influence. Meanwhile, only 9.3% of respondents prefer brand posts, indicating that consumers are less attracted to direct promotional content from companies. Overall, the results suggest that authentic and relatable content such as influencer reviews is the most effective form of social media marketing in influencing consumer interest.

Question 8 : Do influencer promotions affect your purchase decisions?

Q8. Do influencer promotions affect your purchase decisions?

108 responses

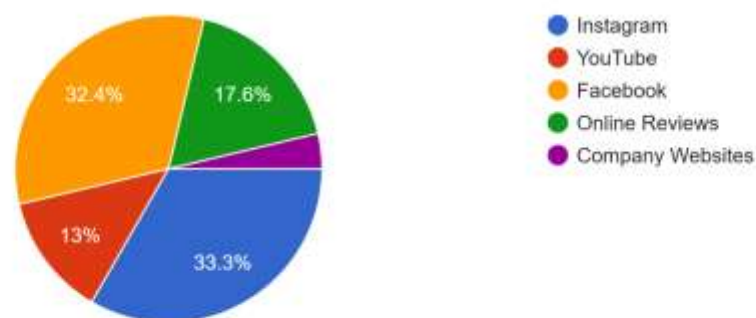


Interpretation:

The chart shows respondents' opinions on whether influencer promotions affect their purchase decisions in Pune city. The largest proportion of respondents, 42.6%, stated Yes, indicating that influencer promotions significantly impact their buying behaviour. 32.4% of respondents selected Sometimes, suggesting that influencer marketing influences their decisions depending on the product, brand, or credibility of the influencer. Meanwhile, 25% of respondents answered No, indicating that a smaller group of consumers does not rely on influencer promotions when making purchases. Overall, the findings suggest that influencer marketing is an effective social media marketing strategy that influences a considerable portion of consumers' buying behaviour.

Question 9: Which platform do you trust most for product information ?

Q9. Which platform do you trust most for product information?
108 responses



Interpretation:

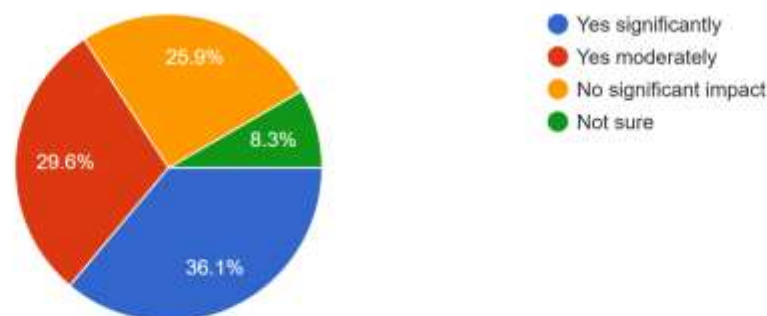
The chart illustrates respondents' trust in different social media platforms for obtaining product information in Pune city. The highest proportion of respondents, 33.3%, trust Instagram the most for product-related information, highlighting its strong influence as a social media marketing platform. This is closely followed by Facebook, trusted by 32.4% of respondents, indicating that social networking platforms play a major role in shaping

consumer perceptions. Online reviews are trusted by 17.6% of respondents, showing that some consumers prefer feedback from other users before making purchasing decisions. YouTube is trusted by 13% of respondents, suggesting that video content also contributes to product awareness but to a lesser extent. Interestingly, none of the respondents selected company websites, indicating that consumers rely more on social media platforms and peer opinions rather than direct brand communication for product information. Overall, the results highlight the importance of social media platforms in influencing consumer buying behaviour.

Question 10: Has social media marketing improved brand awareness ?

Q10. Has social media marketing improved brand awareness?

108 responses



Interpretation:

The chart illustrates respondents' opinions on whether social media marketing has improved brand awareness in Pune city. The largest proportion of respondents, 36.1%, believe that social media marketing has improved brand awareness significantly, indicating that social media platforms play a strong role in increasing brand visibility. 29.6% of respondents

believe it has improved awareness moderately, suggesting that social media contributes positively to brand recognition. However, 25.9% of respondents feel there is no significant impact, indicating that some consumers do not strongly associate social media marketing with brand awareness. Additionally, 8.3% of respondents are not sure, reflecting uncertainty about the effectiveness of social media marketing. Overall, the findings suggest that social media marketing has generally contributed to improving brand awareness among consumers in Pune city.

Findings

Age Group: The majority of respondents belong to the 18–30 age group, indicating that young consumers are more active on social media and are highly influenced by digital marketing.

Occupation: The sample includes students, working professionals, homemakers, and self-employed individuals, with students and working professionals forming a significant portion of the respondents.

Platform Usage: Instagram and YouTube are the most preferred platforms, while other platforms also contribute significantly to consumer exposure to marketing content.

Frequency of Usage: A large percentage of respondents use social media daily, showing high exposure to marketing content and advertisements.

Purchase Behaviour: More than half of the respondents have made purchases influenced by social media marketing, indicating its strong impact on buying decisions.

Decision Making: A majority of respondents agree that social media plays an important role in influencing their purchase decisions.

Product Discovery: Consumers are more likely to discover and try new products through social media platforms.

Content Influence: Informative and visually appealing content has a strong impact on attracting consumer attention and increasing purchase intention.

Online Reviews: Customer reviews and ratings significantly influence consumer trust and buying decisions, acting as an important source of information.

Advertisements: Targeted advertisements on social media platforms effectively influence consumer behaviour by providing relevant and personalized content.

Engagement: Higher engagement through likes, comments, and shares strengthens consumer interest and connection with brands.

Trust Factor: Credibility and authenticity of content play a crucial role in shaping consumer perception and trust toward brands.

Pre-purchase Behaviour: A large number of consumers check social media content and reviews before making a final purchase decision.

Recommendations

Businesses should focus on creating high-quality, informative, and visually appealing content to effectively capture consumer attention on social media platforms. Since content plays a major role in influencing buying behaviour, brands must ensure that their posts clearly communicate product benefits and value.

Brands should prioritize authenticity and transparency in their marketing strategies. Consumers tend to trust honest information, reviews, and realistic representations of products rather than overly promotional or misleading content.

It is recommended that companies make effective use of targeted advertising, as personalized ads based on consumer preferences significantly increase engagement and purchase intention. Understanding consumer interests and behaviour can help in delivering more relevant content.

Companies should actively encourage and manage customer reviews and feedback, as online reviews play a crucial role in influencing purchase decisions. Positive reviews can enhance brand image, while addressing negative feedback can build trust.

Businesses must maintain consistent engagement with consumers through likes, comments, replies, and interactive content such as polls and stories. This helps in building stronger relationships and increasing brand loyalty.

Additionally, brands should utilize multiple platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and others to reach a wider audience, as consumers are active across different social media channels.

Conclusion

The study concludes that social media marketing has a significant impact on consumer buying behaviour in Pune city. With the increasing use of digital platforms, consumers are highly exposed to various forms of marketing content such as advertisements, brand posts, and online reviews, which play a crucial role in shaping their purchase decisions.

The findings reveal that social media has become an essential part of the consumer decision-making process, where individuals rely on it for product discovery, information search, comparison, and final purchase evaluation. The interactive nature of social media platforms allows consumers to engage with brands and access real-time feedback, which enhances trust and reduces uncertainty.

Furthermore, factors such as content quality, credibility, engagement, and customer reviews are key determinants influencing consumer behaviour. Consumers are more likely to be influenced by content that is informative, visually appealing, and authentic. Personalized advertisements and consistent brand interaction also contribute to increased consumer interest and purchase intention.

In conclusion, social media marketing has evolved into a powerful and effective tool for influencing consumer buying behaviour, especially among digitally active consumers in urban areas like Pune. However, its success depends on maintaining transparency, building trust, and delivering meaningful and engaging content that aligns with consumer expectations. As digital usage continues to grow, social media marketing will play an increasingly important role in shaping future consumer behaviour.

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Annexure

1. What is your age group?

18–22

23–27

28–32

33–40

2. Occupation:

Student

Working Professional

Self-employed

Homemaker

3. Which social media platform do you use the most?

Instagram

YouTube

Facebook

Others

4. How often do you use social media?

Daily

Weekly

Occasionally

Rarely

5. Have you ever purchased a product influenced by social media marketing?

Yes

No

6. Social media marketing plays a significant role in my buying decisions.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

7. I am more likely to try new products after seeing them on social media.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

8. Advertisements on social media influence my purchase decisions.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

9. I trust brands that have an active presence on social media.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

10. Online reviews and comments on social media affect my buying behaviour.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

11. Influencer promotions on social media impact my purchase decisions.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

12. Visually appealing content (images/videos) attracts me towards a product.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

13. I prefer brands that interact with customers on social media (comments, replies, etc.).

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

14. Before purchasing a product, I check information on social media.

Always

Often

Sometimes

Rarely

Never