

Impact of Social Media on Purchasing Behavior of Customer with Reference to Sathyamangalam Taulk

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Abstract

This research focuses on studying the buying process of consumers in the case of complex purchases, with special emphasis on how this process is influenced by social media. Complex buying behavior refers to purchases that are made infrequently, involve high consumer involvement, and highlight significant differences between brands. In recent years, social media has become a growing trend. Over the last decade, the World Wide Web has witnessed a rapid expansion of user-generated technologies such as blogs, social networks, and various social media platforms. Collectively known as social media, these technologies have enabled the widespread creation and sharing of user-generated content, fostering a global community. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter allow people to connect, share opinions, and exchange content. This revolution has introduced new ways for consumers to gather information about products and services. A single opinion or review on social media—even from a stranger—can strongly influence consumer perceptions, not only online but also in the offline world. Social media has thus shifted the power to consumers, as they themselves generate content and play a crucial role in building or damaging a brand's reputation. Marketers, therefore, seek to understand how consumers use social media and how online content influences their decision-making patterns. This research also explores how the abundance of user-generated information can reshape consumer buying behavior. The study adopts the six phases of the customer decision process, also known as the Engel-Blackwell-Miniard (EBM) model, to examine its relevance in the context of social media usage. A quantitative survey has been conducted to investigate different aspects of the consumer decision-making process in this regard.

Keywords: Social Media, Consumer Behavior, online platforms.

Introduction

Social media is an online communication medium through which people can interact, share content, and access information. Different types of social media include social networking platforms, forums, and social bookmarking sites. Popular platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Wikipedia, Pinterest, Google Plus, and Twitter have now become an integral part of daily life. In the business world, social media is primarily used to create awareness about products and services, promote brands, retain existing customers, and attract new prospects. In this way, social media marketing leverages the power of networking to increase brand awareness, enhance brand value, and expand customer reach. The objective of this research is to examine the impact of social media on consumer buying behavior in urban areas. Today, consumers and businesses are more connected than ever before, mainly due to the rapid growth in internet usage. After China, India ranks as the second-largest user of internet connections globally.

According to data collected from the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI), Mumbai records the highest number of internet users in the country-around 13 million. Delhi ranks second with 11.3 million users, followed by Bangalore, Kolkata, and Chennai. The Associate Vice-President of IAMAI highlighted that one major reason for the growth in Mumbai's internet users is the large number of college-going students. With the rise of social media usage, companies are recognizing its importance in shaping consumer perceptions, building brand value, and influencing purchasing decisions. They also understand that adopting a strategic approach to social media provides a competitive advantage over those who do not utilize it effectively. To assess the impact of social media on consumer buying behavior, both literature review and data analysis can be employed. These insights can help identify the most effective strategies for improving consumer engagement through social media platforms.

Objectives of the study

- To study the impact of social media on consumer buying decision process.
- To measure the change in perception of the consumers through the content and engagement on Social media.
- To understand how businesses can engage more customers to increase the brand value.

Review of Literature

Nasir, S., Vel, P., & Mateen, H. – This article highlights that social media does not always rely on language or words to communicate messages to consumers. When products or services are promoted, the context itself can be understood by potential buyers, who then respond accordingly. Their response may take the form of purchasing, repurchasing, or choosing not to buy. This decision-making process depends on factors such as consumer needs, knowledge, preferences, brand loyalty, brand value, word-of-mouth influence, and market demand.

Nima Barhemmati et al. – The study concludes that one of the most effective and successful advertising approaches is social media marketing. It examines how social networking platforms alter consumer purchasing patterns. The research also explores the connection between corporate sales activities, customer engagement, and purchasing behavior. To investigate this, a survey was conducted among 50 students at the Malaysian National University. Findings revealed a strong positive correlation between consumer buying behavior and social media interaction.

Godey, B., Manthiou, A., Pederzoli, D., Rokka, J., Aiello, G., Donvito, R., & Singh, R. – According to this research, the adoption of social media is expanding rapidly. For businesses and marketing professionals, these platforms serve as powerful tools to boost awareness of products and services. The study included a survey to evaluate and interpret the link between social media use, social media marketing, and consumer purchasing decisions. Key aspects also examined were membership in various social platforms and the user-generated content created there. Statistical analysis provided evidence that social media has a substantial effect on consumer buying behavior. It further assessed whether investments in social media marketing deliver significant impact, and if so, which strategies are most effective.

Gupta, S., Agarwal, A. K., & Chauhan, A. K. – This article discusses the historical and future implications of social media, referencing the fifth Social Media Week held in September 2011. Toby Daniels, the founder of Social Media Week, emphasized the growing influence of social media in people's lives. With SMW being present in 21 global cities, the study also highlights the rise of social media use in the Middle East and its transformative effect on traditional business models.

Liu, Q., Zhang, X., Huang, S., Zhang, L., & Zhao, Y. – Social media provides consumers with opportunities to access reviews and feedback on products and services. Evidence from both primary and secondary data suggests that product recommendations can trigger impulse buying behavior. Such impulsive purchases are shaped by the level of trust in the recommender as well as the consumer's emotional attachment to the product. In other words,

buying decisions are influenced by both the credibility of the source and the product itself.

Sampling Plan & Research Instrument

This research paper is based on empirical data collected from respondents who actively participate in online shopping platforms. The primary data was obtained from 200 respondents selected through a convenience sampling technique. A structured questionnaire was used to gather the data.

Analysis

Which social media sites do you have an account on? (Choose as many as apply)

200 responses

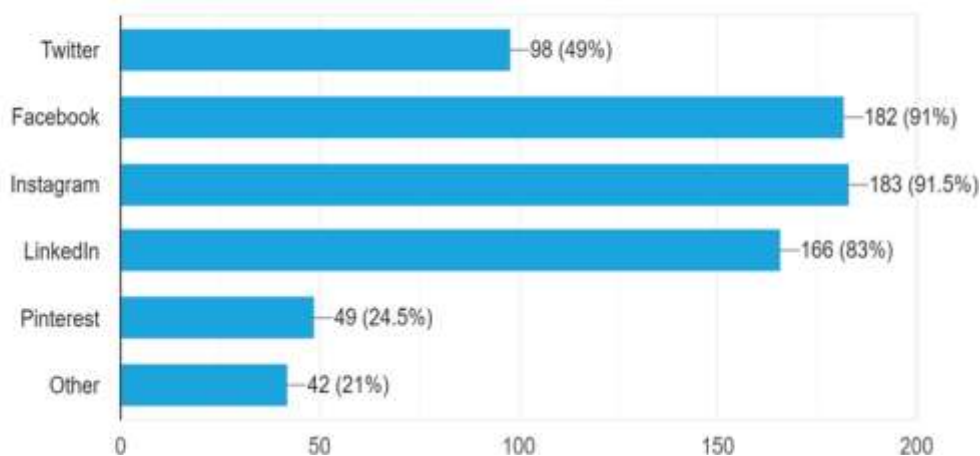


Fig-1: Presence on Social Media

Out of the 200 responses, the lowest proportion—24.5%—of participants reported having an account on Pinterest. In contrast, the majority of respondents have accounts on Instagram (91.5%) and Facebook (91%). Additionally, 83% of respondents reported having an account on LinkedIn, while the remaining 18% use other social media platforms.

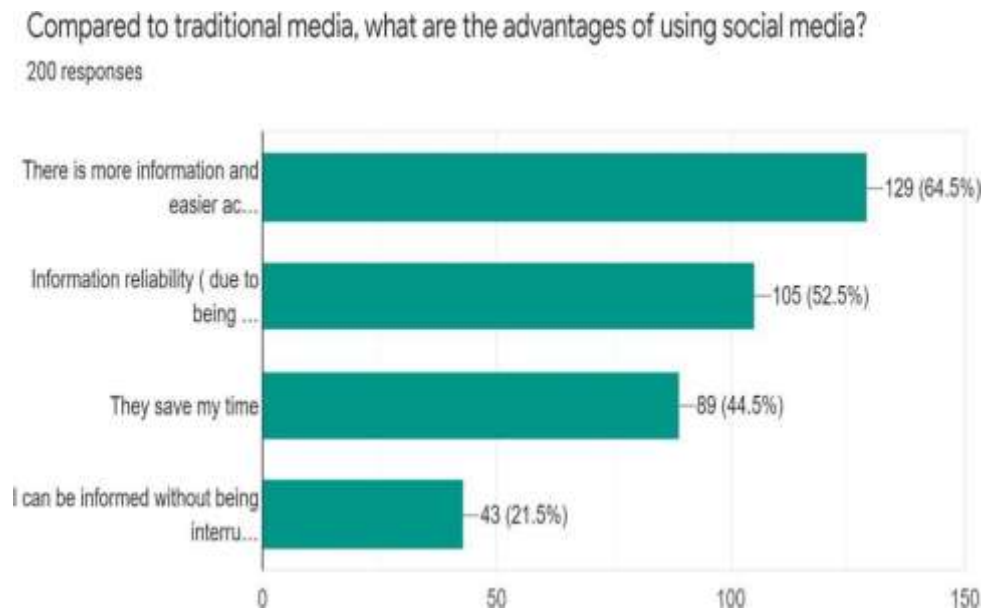


Fig-2

Out of 200 respondents, 64.5% agreed that social media provides more information with easier access. About 52.5% stated that they place greater trust in social media advertisements and reviews. For 44.5% of respondents, social media helps save time, while 21.5% agreed that it allows them to stay informed without being interrupted during other activities. In other words, respondents consider social media to be more beneficial than traditional media.

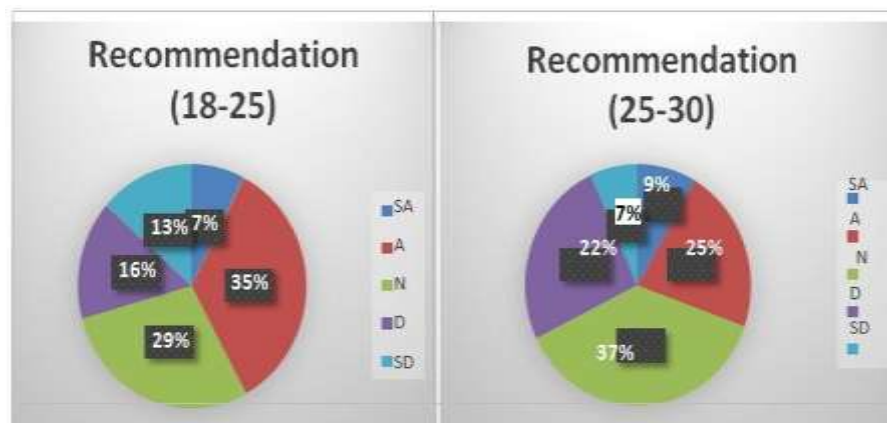


Fig-3: Word of Mouth on Social Media about the Products those are Liked

In the age group of 18–25, only 7% of respondents—the lowest percentage—strongly recommend the products they like, while 35% agreed with this statement. In contrast, within the age group of 25–30, only 9% strongly agreed, and 22% agreed that they recommend products they like.

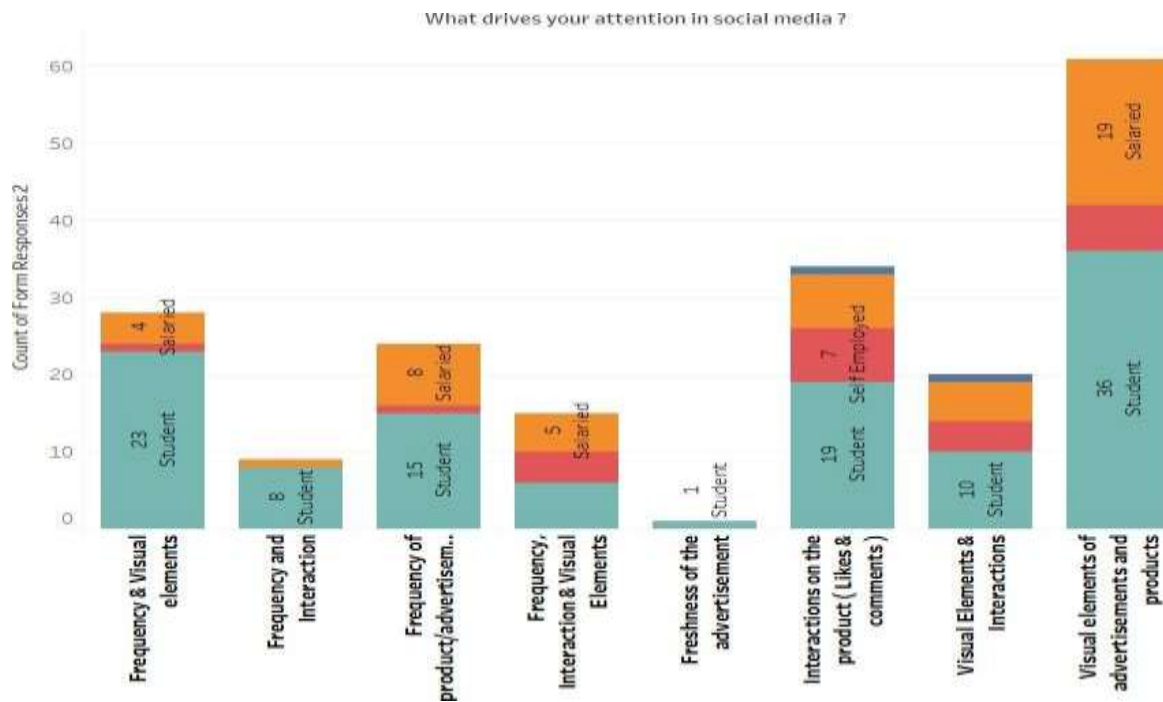


Fig-4: Driving attention factors on social media, according to occupational categories

The student community can be more effectively engaged through the frequency of advertisements on their feed and the use of visual elements in products and advertisements. However, the salaried class is not significantly influenced by the frequency of advertisements; instead, they can be engaged through the attractive visual display of advertisements and products.

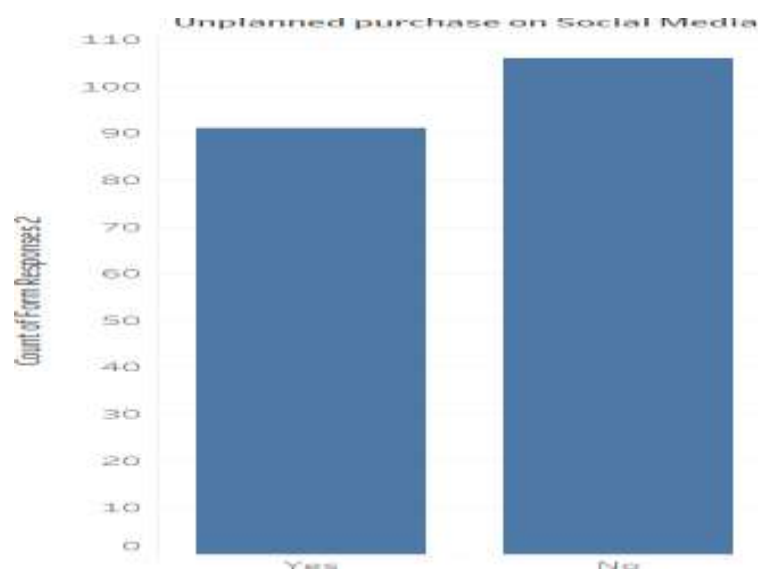


Fig-5:Unplanned Purchase on Social Media

Moreover, it is evident that individuals who prefer discounts and promotions on social media are more likely to make unplanned purchases. Conversely, those who do not engage in unplanned purchases on social media tend not to prefer discounts and promotions.

Findings

- It is recommended that organizations recognize the crucial role of social media in selling and promoting their merchandise, as it is one of the most effective ways to attract customers to products and services.
- Marketing strategies should be designed to appeal to customers across different age groups and social classes.
- Social media influencers have a positive impact on customers' buying decisions.
- Consumers are more drawn to content that highlights discounts, promotions, and influencers, as such content has the power to alter customer perceptions and mindsets.
- Consumers influenced by social media tend to spend up to four times more than their usual purchases, with such strong attraction toward products that they often make same-day purchases through social media.
- Social media is both effective and cost-efficient.
- Social media enables direct interaction with customers.
- Social media serves as a highly effective tool for generating leads and increasing sales.

Social media has enabled consumers to communicate more effectively with both other consumers and corporations. It has undoubtedly bridged the gap between brands and their customers. In light of this, companies are now making every possible effort to ensure that buyers feel connected to the brand, while also providing them the opportunity to share their views, opinions, feedback, and reviews. Companies that adopt an integrated strategic approach to social networking platforms are emerging as the most successful in acquiring, engaging, influencing, and retaining customers. The factors that shape consumer brand perception and willingness to purchase include strategies aligned with consumer perspectives, as well as the opinions and content generated by social media creators. Consequently, these strategies require a high degree of continuous refinement, and organizations employing them must be prepared to adjust and optimize their marketing efforts in order to retain existing customers and enhance customer lifetime value.

Recommendations

- Companies should place greater emphasis on social media marketing. A strong presence on social media enhances visibility, strengthens brand value, and ultimately contributes to increased customer loyalty and higher customer lifetime value.
- Through social media, companies can maintain closer connections with customers, enabling regular communication and providing guidance to support better purchase decisions.
- Organizations can utilize social media more frequently to capture consumer attention and build stronger brand awareness.
- Brands can engage in more interactive communication with customers, gaining valuable insights through their reviews and feedback, thereby making consumers feel like an integral part of the brand.
- Sharing positive experiences from existing customers can help potential buyers, as well as those considering a purchase, to relate more closely to the brand and its products.
- Brands should position themselves as influential and strive to make their products viral across social media platforms.
- Social media influencers must be selected carefully—ideally those who can genuinely connect with customers by aligning with their needs and preferences.

Conclusion

The research has demonstrated the powerful impact of social media on consumer buying behavior in the digital age. Undoubtedly, social media has brought significant changes for both consumers and businesses. Findings indicate that consumers are highly selective when making purchase decisions. Although social media provides abundant data and sources of information, consumers' personal attitudes continue to play a decisive role

in shaping their choices. The quality and relevance of content on social media have a substantial influence; therefore, marketing efforts must ensure consumer-oriented content. Social media marketing is not limited to creating awareness or promoting sales—it extends to nurturing and strengthening long-term relationships between consumers and corporations. In today's digital marketplace, the consumer is considered the “king,” with easy access to information about products and services through peer interactions. Consequently, companies and marketers must be particularly cautious of negative word-of-mouth on social media, as it can seriously damage a company's reputation.

Many individuals also acknowledge that social media allows them to share their opinions and communicate more effectively with both other consumers and corporations. This medium has undoubtedly bridged the gap between brands and their audiences. Recognizing this, companies are making continuous efforts to foster stronger consumer connections by encouraging them to share their views, feedback, and experiences. Organizations that adopt an integrated strategic approach to social networking platforms are proving to be the most successful in acquiring, engaging, influencing, and retaining customers. Factors influencing consumers' brand perception and purchase intentions include strategies aligned with consumer perspectives and the opinions of social media content creators. However, such strategies require ongoing attention and refinement. Therefore, companies employing these methods must be prepared to continuously optimize their marketing practices to retain existing customers and enhance customer lifetime value.

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