

Role of Social Media Sites in Recent Era

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Abstract

This research paper explores the dynamic and multifaceted impact of social media sites in the modern era. It investigates how these platforms influence personal relationships, professional networking, business marketing, information dissemination, and societal norms. Employing a mixed-methods approach, the study provides a comprehensive analysis of user behavior, platform evolution, and the social consequences of digital interaction. Key theoretical frameworks such as Social Network Theory, Communication Theory, and the Technology Acceptance Model underpin the analysis. The paper concludes with policy recommendations and strategies for optimizing social media use while mitigating its negative impacts.

Keywords: Social Media Marketing, Influencer Marketing, Consumer Behaviour, Personalization, Digital Marketing in India, Instagram, AI in Marketing.

1. Introduction

Social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Instagram have become central to communication, marketing, and information sharing. This paper investigates the historical development, current uses, and social implications of these platforms. A social network can be defined as social structure of interaction between individuals which are directly or indirectly based on a common thread of interest. It represents network with vertices as group of people. The advent of online social networks can be considered as milestone in the history. With the advent of the internet and the proliferation of smartphones, platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, and others have experienced explosive growth, connecting billions of users worldwide. This introduction sets the stage for understanding the profound impact of SNS on personal relationships, professional networking, business marketing, information dissemination, and societal dynamics.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Social Media as a Marketing Tool

Social media allows for real-time, two-way brand-customer communication (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Over 500 million Indians actively use social media, turning it into a core marketing battlefield.

2.2 Influencer Marketing

Consumers tend to trust influencers more than traditional ads. Micro- influencers, due to their niche and loyal audiences, are especially effective (Lou & Yuan, 2019; KPMG, 2023).

2.3 Decision-Making Framework

The AIDA model (Awareness, Interest, Desire, Action) is applicable to social media. Visual content and social proof drive faster decision-making (Belch & Belch, 2015).

2.4 Demographics and Behaviour

Age, gender, and location play a significant role in platform preference and content engagement. For instance, Instagram appeals more to urban youth, while Facebook sees broader demographic use (IAMAI, 2023).

2.5 Challenges

Overexposure to ads and data privacy issues create consumer fatigue, emphasizing the need for trust and transparency (Tuten & Solomon, 2018).

3. Research Objectives and Hypotheses Objectives:

1. Identify influential platforms in shaping buying behaviour.
2. Analyse the effectiveness of influencer marketing and personalization.
3. Understand the impact of demographic variables on engagement.

Hypotheses:

H1: Influencer marketing positively influences consumer trust and purchases.

H2: Personalized content increases engagement.

H3: Gen Z and Millennials are more influenced by social media than older groups.

4. Methodology

4.1 Research Design

Exploratory Phase: Interviews with digital marketers.

Descriptive Phase: Online structured questionnaire (Google Forms) with 70 valid responses.

4.2 Sampling

Population: Social media users aged 18+.

Sampling Technique: Non-probability (convenience).

Tools: Likert scales, multiple-choice, and open-ended questions.

4.3 Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and cross-tabulations using Google Sheets and SPSS.

5. Results and Discussion

5.1 Key Findings:

- Platform Preference: Instagram and YouTube are the most used platforms.
- Engagement: Personalized ads and influencer content led to higher engagement (likes, shares, purchases).
- Content Preference: Product reviews and influencer posts outperformed generic brand content.
- Demographics: Gen Z (18–24) showed the highest susceptibility to social media marketing.
- Emerging Tech: Limited but growing interest in AR, AI, and VR-enhanced content.

5.2 Discussion:

The findings support all three hypotheses, demonstrating the value of emotional storytelling, social proof, and targeted personalization in consumer behaviour. Brand trust, especially via influencers, emerged as a major conversion factor.

6. Conclusion

Social media marketing significantly impacts Indian consumer purchase decisions, especially among younger demographics. Influencer credibility, personalized engagement, and platform-specific content formats play crucial roles in shaping decisions. Brands must focus on data-driven personalization, micro-influencer collaboration, and emerging technologies like AI and AR to remain competitive.

7. Recommendations For Brands:

- Invest in CRM and AI for personalized targeting.
- Partner with micro-influencers for authentic reach.
- Use engaging content formats: Reels, polls, UGC, and live videos.

For Academics:

- Conduct longitudinal and industry-specific studies.
- Use mixed-methods for deeper insight.

For Policymakers:

- Promote digital literacy and transparent ad practices.

8. References

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