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## Impact of Social Media Marketing on Consumer Buying Behaviour

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### ABSTRACT :

In the digital era, social media has transformed the way businesses interact with consumers, significantly influencing purchasing decisions. This research paper explores the impact of social media marketing on consumer buying behavior, examining how platforms like Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, shape consumer preferences, trust, and loyalty. Through a combination of quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews, the study investigates the effectiveness of various social media strategies, including influencer collaborations, sponsored advertisements, and user-generated content.

The findings reveal that social media marketing has a profound effect on consumer behavior, with emotional engagement, peer recommendations, and brand visibility playing crucial roles in shaping purchase intentions. Moreover, the research highlights demographic variations in response to social media marketing efforts. This paper contributes to a deeper understanding of the evolving consumer landscape and provides insights for marketers aiming to develop more impactful social media campaigns.

**Keywords:** Social Media Marketing, Consumer Buying Behavior, Influencer Marketing, Brand Engagement, Purchase Intention, Digital Marketing.

### Introduction

"Social media has revolutionized the way brands connect with consumers, offering a platform for two-way communication that's transforming the marketing landscape. With platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube, businesses can now engage with customers directly, build brand awareness, and drive sales like never before.

The impact of social media on consumer behavior is profound. Constant exposure to online content, influencer endorsements, and peer reviews has changed the way people make purchasing decisions. Unlike traditional marketing, which is often one-way and impersonal, social media marketing allows brands to tell stories, create emotional connections, and build trust with their audience.

But what makes social media marketing so effective? And how do different elements of social media - from brand awareness to purchase decision - influence consumer behavior? Our research aims to answer these questions, exploring the strategies that work best and how factors like age, gender, and social media usage patterns affect consumer responses.

By understanding the psychological mechanisms that drive consumer behavior - including trust, social proof, and emotional appeal - we can unlock the secrets of successful social media marketing. Our study will examine the relationship between social media activities and consumer buying patterns, providing valuable insights for marketers, businesses, and academics interested in the evolving trends of digital consumerism.

Ultimately, our goal is to help marketers craft strategies that not only capture attention but also convert engagement into tangible purchasing actions. In today's digital age, understanding the dynamics of social media marketing is crucial for businesses looking to stay ahead of the curve."

### Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of this research is to investigate and analyze the impact of social media marketing on consumer buying behavior through the collection of primary data.

The specific objectives of the study are:

1. To examine the influence of social media platforms on consumer purchasing decisions.
2. To identify the role of different social media marketing strategies (such as influencer marketing, paid advertisements, and brand content) in shaping consumer preferences.
3. To assess consumer trust and engagement towards brands promoted on social media.

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## Literature Review

Kotler and Keller (2016) in their book *Marketing Management* emphasized that digital and social media channels have become essential components of the marketing mix. They argued that social media not only helps brands reach wider audiences but also allows consumers to participate actively in brand discussions, impacting their buying decisions.

Mangold and Faulds (2009) highlighted that social media has emerged as a powerful hybrid element of the promotion mix, blending traditional marketing strategies with new online communication patterns. Their study suggested that consumer-generated content plays a major role in influencing others' purchasing behavior, especially through recommendations and reviews.

Ashley and Tuten (2015) explored the creative strategies brands employ on social media platforms. Their research found that branded content that encourages consumer engagement — such as storytelling, humor, and user interaction — positively influences consumer attitudes and buying behavior.

Kapoor, Dwivedi, and Piercy (2016) reviewed the effectiveness of pay-per-click (PPC) advertising and found that targeted ads on social media platforms significantly affect user attention and conversions. This aligns with the current trend of personalized marketing messages influencing purchasing behavior. Hudson and Thal (2013) investigated the impact of social media on consumer decision-making, particularly in the tourism sector. They concluded that consumers increasingly rely on peer recommendations, reviews, and brand credibility presented through social media before finalizing their buying choices.

According to Statista Research Department (2024), Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube are among the most popular social media platforms globally. The report further underlines that these platforms are key spaces where brands engage consumers through influencer collaborations, advertisements, and content marketing.

The Influence Marketing Hub (2024) emphasized the growing importance of influencer marketing, noting that consumer trust is significantly boosted when products are endorsed by relatable influencers rather than traditional celebrities. This highlights the evolving dynamics of how trust is built on social media.

Nielsen's *Global Trust in Advertising Report* (2024) indicated that recommendations from people known to the consumer, and online reviews, remain the most trusted forms of advertising. This supports the notion that peer reviews and user-generated content on social media heavily influence purchase decisions.

Kumar and Mirchandani (2012) emphasized that social media marketing provides an opportunity for brands to increase their Return on Investment (ROI) if they strategically manage customer engagement and build authentic relationships through online platforms.

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## Research Methodology

### 1. Research Design

The present study is based on a **descriptive research design**. The objective was to investigate and analyze the impact of social media marketing on consumer buying behavior through the collection and analysis of primary data.

### 2. Data Collection Method

The study primarily relies on **primary data**, which was collected through a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed based on the specific objectives of the study and included both closed-ended and multiple-choice questions related to social media usage, marketing strategies, consumer trust, and buying behavior.

### 3. Sampling Method

A **non-probability convenience sampling** method was used to collect responses from individuals who are active users of social media platforms.

### 4. Sample Size

The sample size for this research was **100 respondents**.

### 5. Data Collection Instrument

- **Structured Questionnaire:** The questionnaire included sections on:
  - Social media platform usage.
  - Influence of social media marketing on purchase decisions.
  - Trust in influencers and peer reviews.
  - Engagement with brand content.

## 6. Tools and Techniques Used

- **Microsoft Excel:** Data collected from the questionnaire was compiled and analyzed using Microsoft Excel.
- **Tables:** Tables were created to organize the data systematically and present responses for each question.
- **Percentage Method:** Percentages were calculated to interpret the number of responses against the total sample size
- **Formula used:**

$$\text{Percentage} = (\text{Number of Respondents for a Particular Option} / \text{Total Respondents}) \times 100$$

## 7. Data Analysis

The responses were analyzed question-wise by using basic statistical tools like frequency distribution and percentage analysis. Interpretation was done after analyzing each table to draw meaningful insights related to the impact of social media marketing on consumer buying behavior.

### Data Analysis & Interpretation

Table 1: Social Media Platforms Used by Respondents

<i>Particular</i>	<i>No. of Respondents</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<b>Instagram</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>80%</b>
<b>Facebook</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>75%</b>
<b>YouTube</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>60%</b>
<b>Twitter</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50%</b>

#### Data Interpretation:

- The most popular social media platform among respondents is *Instagram* (80%), followed closely by *Facebook* (75%).
- *YouTube* (60%) and *Twitter* (50%) are relatively less used, but still significant platforms among the sample.

Table 2: Time Spent on Social Media Daily

<i>Particular</i>	<i>No. of Respondents</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<b>Less than 1 hour</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>1–3 hours</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>45%</b>
<b>3–5 hours</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30%</b>
<b>More than 5 hours</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15%</b>

#### Data Interpretation:

- A majority of respondents (45%) spend *1–3 hours* daily on social media, which suggests that this time range is typical for active users.
- A notable percentage (30%) spend *3–5 hours*, while only *15%* engage for *more than 5 hours*.
- A small minority (10%) spend less than *1 hour* daily on social media.

Table 3: Purchase Decision After Seeing Products on Social Media

<i>Particular</i>	<i>No. of Respondents</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<b>Yes</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>70%</b>
<b>No</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30%</b>

#### Data Interpretation:

- A significant *70%* of respondents have made purchases after seeing products on social media, indicating a strong influence of social media marketing on consumer behavior.
- Only *30%* of respondents have not made a purchase, suggesting room for growth and improvement in marketing strategies.

Table 4: Most Influential Form of Social Media Marketing

<i>Particular</i>	<i>No. of Respondents</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<b>Influencer recommendations</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50%</b>
<b>Sponsored advertisements</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30%</b>
<b>Brand posts/pages</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>Customer reviews/user-generated content</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10%</b>

*Data Interpretation:*

- *Influencer recommendations* are the most influential form of social media marketing, with 50% of respondents indicating this is the key driver for their purchase decisions.
- *Sponsored advertisements* also play a crucial role, influencing 30% of respondents.
- *Brand posts/pages* and *user-generated content* are less impactful, with only 10% each.

Table 5: Trust in Products Promoted by Influencers

<i>Particular</i>	<i>No. of Respondents</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<b>Always</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Often</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>35%</b>
<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>25%</b>
<b>Rarely</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>Never</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5%</b>

*Data Interpretation:*

- A combined 55% of respondents either *always* or *often* trust products promoted by influencers.
- 25% trust influencers only *sometimes*, indicating that influencer credibility may be a variable factor.
- A small minority (20%) does not trust influencer promotions as much.

Table 6: Importance of Customer Reviews or Peer Recommendations in Buying Decisions

<i>Particular</i>	<i>No. of Respondents</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<b>Extremely Important</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>45%</b>
<b>Important</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40%</b>
<b>Neutral</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>Not Important</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5%</b>

*Data Interpretation:*

- A high proportion (85%) of respondents find customer reviews or peer recommendations to be important in their buying decision.
- Only a small percentage (10%) remain neutral, while 5% do not consider reviews important at all.

Table 7: Likelihood of Purchase Based on Engagement with Brand Posts

<i>Particular</i>	<i>No. of Respondents</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
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Yes	50	50%
No	30	30%
Maybe	20	20%

**Data Interpretation:**

- 50% of respondents are more likely to purchase from a brand after engaging with their posts, indicating that *engagement* is an important factor for consumers.
- 30% are less influenced by engagement, while 20% are unsure, suggesting potential areas for improving engagement strategies.

Table 8: Most Trusted Factor When Purchasing Through Social Media

<i>Particular</i>	<i>No. of Respondents</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<b>Influencer endorsement</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40%</b>
<b>Verified brand pages</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30%</b>
<b>Peer/customer reviews</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Attractive ads and offers</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10%</b>

**Data Interpretation:**

- *Influencer endorsements* are the most trusted factor for 40% of respondents when purchasing through social media.
- *Verified brand pages* also play a significant role in building trust (30%), while *peer reviews* and *ads/offers* are less influential, accounting for 20% and 10%, respectively.

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**Findings**

Based on the data collected through the primary research (survey of 100 respondents), the following key findings were observed:

**1. Social Media Platform Usage**

- The most widely used social media platforms among respondents are *Instagram* (80%) and *Facebook* (75%), highlighting their strong presence in the social media marketing landscape.
- Other platforms like *YouTube* (60%) and *Twitter* (50%) are also significant, though their reach is slightly lower compared to Instagram and Facebook.

**2. Time Spent on Social Media**

- A significant portion of respondents (45%) spend *1–3 hours* daily on social media, indicating that the average user is moderately engaged.
- 30% of users spend *3–5 hours*, showcasing the potential for brands to target highly engaged users.
- A smaller segment (15%) spends *more than 5 hours*, further suggesting a group of heavy social media users who may be highly responsive to marketing efforts.

**3. Impact of Social Media on Purchase Decisions**

- 70% of respondents have made a purchase after seeing a product on social media, indicating a strong impact of social media marketing on buying behavior.
- This finding emphasizes that social media platforms are not just used for engagement but are also key drivers of purchasing decisions.

**4. Influential Forms of Social Media Marketing**

- *Influencer recommendations* are the most influential form of marketing, with 50% of respondents indicating that they are strongly influenced by influencer endorsements.
- *Sponsored advertisements* are also impactful, affecting 30% of consumers.
- Brand posts and user-generated content have a relatively lesser impact on consumer buying behavior, with only 10% indicating that they are the main drivers of purchase decisions.

### 5. Trust in Influencer Promotions

- A significant percentage of respondents (55%) either *always* or *often* trust products promoted by influencers. This suggests that influencer marketing is highly effective in building consumer trust and driving sales.
- However, 25% of respondents trust influencers *only sometimes*, indicating that influencer credibility may vary, and marketers must choose influencers carefully.

### 6. Importance of Customer Reviews and Peer Recommendations

- 85% of respondents find *customer reviews* and *peer recommendations* on social media to be important in their buying decisions, demonstrating the importance of social proof in influencing purchases.
- Positive reviews and recommendations can strongly encourage consumers to make a purchase, especially when trust is a key factor in decision-making.

### 7. Engagement with Brand Posts

- 50% of respondents are more likely to purchase from a brand after engaging with their posts (liking, sharing, commenting), indicating that *engagement* plays a critical role in driving purchasing decisions.
- 30% of respondents are less likely to make a purchase after engaging with a brand's post, and 20% remain undecided, suggesting that engagement might not always convert into sales for every consumer.

### 8. Factors Building Trust in Social Media Purchases

- *Influencer endorsements* and *verified brand pages* are the most trusted factors when purchasing through social media, with 40% and 30% of respondents trusting these elements, respectively.
- *Peer/customer reviews* (20%) and *attractive ads and offers* (10%) are also trusted, though to a lesser degree, suggesting that credibility and authenticity are key factors in consumer trust on social media.

## Conclusion

The research conducted on the *Impact of social media marketing on consumer buying behavior* provides valuable insights into how various marketing strategies on social media influence consumers' purchasing decisions. Based on the data collected from 100 respondents, it is clear that social media plays a significant role in shaping modern consumer behavior.

### Key Conclusions:

1. **Strong Influence of Social Media Platforms:** Social media platforms like *Instagram* and *Facebook* are the most widely used by consumers, making them crucial platforms for brands looking to engage with their target audience. The frequency of use and the level of engagement on these platforms make them effective channels for marketing campaigns.
2. **Impact on Purchase Decisions:** A significant majority (70%) of respondents indicated that they have purchased products after seeing them on social media. This highlights the strong influence social media has on consumer purchasing behavior and emphasizes the importance of creating engaging and targeted content.
3. **Effectiveness of Influencer Marketing:** *Influencer recommendations* emerged as the most influential form of social media marketing, with 50% of respondents stating that influencer promotions play a crucial role in their buying decisions. This indicates that influencers have a profound impact on consumer trust and brand perception, making them an effective marketing tool.
4. **The Importance of Reviews and Peer Recommendations:** 85% of respondents consider customer reviews and peer recommendations on social media to be important in their purchasing decisions. This highlights the growing importance of *social proof*, as consumers are increasingly relying on reviews and experiences shared by others before making buying decisions.
5. **Engagement Drives Purchase Intentions:** Engaging with a brand's posts, such as liking, sharing, and commenting, increases the likelihood of purchasing from that brand. 50% of respondents confirmed that their purchasing decisions are influenced by engagement with brand content, indicating that active consumer engagement can significantly improve conversion rates.
6. **Factors Building Trust in Social Media Purchases:** Trust is a critical element in online purchases, and consumers are more likely to trust products promoted through *influencer endorsements* and *verified brand pages*. The data reveals that 40% of respondents trust influencer endorsements, while 30% place trust in verified brand pages. This underscores the need for brands to establish credibility and authenticity on social media to foster consumer trust.

### Implications for Marketers:

The findings from this study provide several key takeaways for marketers looking to enhance their social media strategies:

- *Focus on Influencer Collaborations:* Since influencers are a primary source of consumer trust and engagement, brands should invest in building partnerships with influencers who align with their target audience.
- *Leverage Customer Reviews:* Brands should encourage satisfied customers to leave positive reviews and testimonials on social media to enhance their credibility and influence potential buyers.
- *Engagement Is Key:* Marketers should prioritize strategies that foster engagement, such as interactive posts, contests, and community building, to increase the likelihood of converting engagement into sales.
- *Ensure Trustworthiness:* Verified brand pages and transparent marketing practices can go a long way in building consumer trust. Brands should ensure that their presence on social media is authentic and reliable.

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