



SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING AND ITS INFLUENCE ON CONSUMER PURCHASE BEHAVIOUR: EVIDENCE FROM SELECTED CONSUMERS

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Abstract : This study examines the influence of social media marketing on consumer purchase behaviour, with particular reference to selected consumers. Social media platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, Face book, and WhatsApp have become important channels for businesses to communicate with customers, promote products, and influence purchasing decisions. The study aims to assess the extent to which social media advertisements, product reviews, influencer recommendations, promotional offers, and online engagement affect consumer awareness, preferences, purchase intentions, and brand choices. The study is based on primary data collected from 20 selected respondents through a structured questionnaire. Descriptive analysis is used to understand respondents' perceptions and purchasing behaviour in relation to social media marketing. The findings indicate that social media content can influence product awareness, consumer interest, and purchase decisions, particularly through attractive advertisements, reviews, and recommendations. The study highlights the growing relevance of social media as a marketing tool for influencing contemporary consumer behaviour.

IndexTerms - Social Media Marketing, Consumer Purchase Behaviour, Digital Marketing, Social Media Platforms, Consumer Preferences, Purchase Decisions, Online Advertising.

I. INTRODUCTION

Social media has transformed the way businesses communicate and build relationships with consumers, replacing the predominantly one-directional communication associated with traditional media such as television, radio, and newspapers. Digital platforms including Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and YouTube provide organizations with opportunities to communicate directly with their target audiences through comments, private messages, live sessions, polls, videos, and other interactive features. As a result, consumers have become active participants in brand communication rather than merely passive recipients of promotional messages. Their opinions, reviews, and online interactions can contribute significantly to the development and perception of a brand.

Contemporary consumers, especially Millennials and Generation Z, increasingly seek meaningful and credible communication from brands. Conventional advertising and highly formal corporate messages may be less effective when compared with content that demonstrates authenticity, openness, and personal relevance. Consumers tend to engage more closely with organizations that understand their expectations, acknowledge their opinions, demonstrate shared values, and encourage participation in brand-related activities. In addition, influencer marketing has become an important component of social media promotion. Influencers and digital content creators can establish a sense of familiarity and trust with their followers, thereby affecting attitudes toward brands and potentially influencing purchase-related decisions.

Against this background, the present study examines the role of social media marketing in shaping consumer perceptions and responses. It particularly focuses on how social media strategies influence consumer psychology, contribute to the development of brand loyalty, and affect purchasing behaviour. The study also highlights the changing nature of interactions between businesses and consumers in an increasingly digital marketplace.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The rapid development of digital marketing has created numerous opportunities for organizations to communicate with consumers through social media. However, the extent to which different social media marketing practices influence consumer behaviour is not uniform and requires further investigation. Consumers belonging to different age groups may differ considerably in their patterns of social media usage, levels of engagement, responses to promotional content, and attitudes toward influencers and online advertisements. These variations create challenges for organizations attempting to design effective and targeted digital marketing strategies.

Furthermore, insufficient understanding of platform-specific consumer preferences may make it difficult for businesses to identify the most appropriate channels, content formats, and communication approaches for particular consumer segments. Therefore, there is a need to examine how consumers respond to social media marketing and how such responses differ across demographic groups. A systematic understanding of these behavioural patterns can assist businesses in developing more relevant communication strategies, improving consumer engagement, strengthening brand relationships, and supporting purchase-related outcomes.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To examine the major social media-related factors that affect consumers' purchasing decisions.
2. To evaluate the level of consumer confidence and trust in product or brand recommendations made by social media influencers.

IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

The existing body of research demonstrates that social media marketing has become an important determinant of consumer behaviour, with its influence varying across different generations. Mehta (2022) observed that Generation Z shows a strong preference for visually attractive and dynamic digital content. Short-form videos shared through platforms such as Instagram and TikTok are particularly effective in capturing their attention. The study further indicated that influencers can have a considerable impact on the preferences of young consumers because relatable and authentic creators are often perceived as more trustworthy than conventional advertising sources.

Patel and Rao (2021) reported that Millennials demonstrate substantial interaction with branded content, especially through Instagram and YouTube. Their purchasing decisions are frequently supported by interactive brand posts, customer feedback, peer recommendations, product-related reviews, and behind-the-scenes content. Such forms of digital engagement enable consumers to obtain information and develop perceptions about products before making purchase decisions.

Sharma and Kulkarni (2020) noted that Baby Boomers, despite adopting digital platforms more gradually than younger generations, are increasingly participating in social networking activities. Platforms such as Facebook and WhatsApp provide opportunities for this age group to discover products, communicate with online communities, and exchange recommendations with friends and family. Their online purchasing decisions are influenced considerably by interpersonal relationships, customer reviews, and information shared within social groups.

Khan (2021) identified several important elements that contribute to consumer responses to social media marketing, including social proof, consumer-generated content, authenticity, emotional appeal, and the relevance of information presented online. Marketing communication that is perceived as genuine, personalized, and transparent can strengthen consumer confidence and contribute to the development of lasting brand relationships. In addition, prompt interaction between brands and consumers can improve the overall customer experience and positively influence perceptions of the brand.

Overall, the literature indicates that the effectiveness of social media marketing depends on both the characteristics of the target audience and the nature of the digital platform being used. The continuous development of social networking technologies requires organizations to understand changing consumer expectations, demographic differences, and platform-specific engagement patterns. Therefore, adopting flexible and consumer-oriented social media strategies can assist businesses in strengthening consumer engagement, developing trust, influencing purchase intentions, and improving conversion outcomes.

V. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study employs a descriptive research approach to examine the role of social media marketing in shaping consumer behaviour among consumers in Bangalore. Primary data were gathered from 80 respondents using a structured questionnaire administered through Google Forms. The study focuses on important aspects such as social media platform preferences, factors motivating purchase decisions, consumers' confidence in digital marketing content, and the influence of social media influencers. The collected responses were systematically organized and analyzed using Microsoft Excel. Comparative statistical analysis was applied to identify significant patterns, trends, and insights regarding the relationship between social media marketing activities and consumer purchasing behaviour.

Table 1. data analysis and interpretation

Platform/Factor	Influence on Z Gen	Influence on Millennials	Influence on Gen X	Influence on Baby Boomers
INSTAGRAM	HIGH	HIGH	LOW	LOW
YOUTUBE	HIGH	HIGH	LOW	LOW
VIDEO REVIEWS	VERY HIGH	MODERATE	MODERATE	LOW
TEXT BASED REVIEWS	MODERATE	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH
INFLUENCER MARKETING	HIGH	HIGH	LOW	VERY LOW

The findings reveal that Instagram and YouTube play a significant role in influencing the purchasing decisions of Gen Z and Millennial consumers, as both groups show a strong preference for engaging and visually appealing content. Video-based reviews attract greater attention from younger audiences compared with text-oriented information. Influencer promotions appear to have a greater influence on Gen Z, while Millennials also demonstrate considerable engagement with influencer recommendations. In contrast, Gen X and Baby Boomers exhibit comparatively less interest in influencer-based marketing and tend to depend more on conventional information sources, particularly written reviews. Textual feedback and reviews are important in shaping the purchase decisions of Gen X and Baby Boomers, with older consumers giving greater importance to personal experiences and practical recommendations. These observations emphasize the need for businesses to develop generation-specific marketing approaches by selecting suitable digital platforms and content formats that align with the preferences, expectations, and purchasing habits of different age groups. Such strategies can help improve consumer engagement and strengthen the effectiveness of marketing communication.

VI. FINDINGS

The study demonstrates that Instagram and YouTube play a significant role in influencing the purchasing behaviour of Gen Z and Millennial consumers. These groups appear particularly responsive to visually rich and interactive content, with video-based product reviews generating greater attention and engagement than conventional written reviews. The findings further indicate that Gen X and Baby Boomers are comparatively less influenced by influencer-oriented promotional activities and tend to depend more on reliable product information, personal experience, and direct sources when making purchase decisions. Across the different age categories, peer recommendations, user-generated content, and time-sensitive promotional schemes also contribute considerably to purchase decisions. These observations highlight the importance of social validation and perceived urgency in shaping consumer responses to digital marketing initiatives.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, businesses should develop age-specific social media strategies that correspond with the media preferences and purchasing behaviour of their target consumers. Collaborating with credible and relatable influencers can be useful for reaching Gen Z and Millennials, particularly when promotional messages are presented through engaging video content. For Gen X and Baby Boomers, marketers should place greater emphasis on credibility, clear product information, transparency, and authentic communication to strengthen consumer confidence. Businesses should also design platform-specific promotional campaigns rather than adopting an identical approach across all digital channels. Incorporating customer reviews, user-generated content, limited-period offers, and interactive communication can further encourage consumer participation. A combination of digital engagement and suitable offline experiences may also help organizations establish stronger and more enduring relationships with consumers belonging to different age groups.

VIII. CONCLUSION

Social media marketing has emerged as an important component of contemporary marketing, influencing how consumers discover, evaluate, and purchase products and services. The influence is particularly evident among Gen Z and Millennials, who actively engage with platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok and often value content that is relevant, authentic, interactive, and visually appealing. The continuously changing nature of digital platforms requires businesses to regularly review and adapt their marketing approaches according to changing consumer expectations and online behaviour.

The study also indicates that consumer preferences are not uniform across generations. While younger consumers may respond strongly to videos, influencers, and interactive social media campaigns, older consumer groups may place greater importance on detailed information, product reviews, credibility, and personal experience. Therefore, marketers need to segment their audiences and develop communication strategies that are appropriate for each group.

Furthermore, meaningful interaction with consumers through personalized communication, prompt responses, user participation, and engaging campaigns can contribute to stronger brand relationships. Social media marketing should therefore extend beyond short-term promotional activities and focus on building trust, satisfaction, engagement, and long-term customer relationships. By aligning digital strategies with the distinct preferences of different consumer segments, businesses can strengthen customer engagement and support sustainable growth in an increasingly competitive digital marketplace.

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