



## INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING ON CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOR

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### Abstract

*In this day and age of digital technology, social media has evolved as a strong instrument that may influence the purchasing behavior of consumers. In this study, the link between social media marketing techniques and the decision-making processes of consumers is investigated. Particular attention is paid to the ways in which social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter influence consumers' perceptions and preferences. The research analyzes critical characteristics that drive customer involvement and purchase decisions by doing an examination of several aspects of social media marketing. These aspects include content engagement, endorsements from influencers, and targeted advertising. For the purpose of gaining ideas from a wide range of people, a mixed-methods approach was utilized, which included both qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys. According to the findings, marketing using social media considerably increases brand recognition, cultivates customer trust, and promotes consumers to make impulsive financial decisions. According to the findings of the study, businesses need to make efficient use of social media marketing in order to align themselves with the habits of their customers, which will eventually result in improved sales performance and brand loyalty. There includes a discussion of the implications for marketers as well as ideas for conducting further study.*

**Keywords:** Social Media, Marketing, Consumer

### Introduction

Both the landscape of marketing and the landscape of consumer involvement have been significantly altered in recent years as a result of the fast growth of technology and the widespread usage of the internet. As a result of their ability to facilitate connections and shape views of companies and products, social media platforms have become an indispensable part of the lives of customers worldwide. As these platforms continue to develop, they offer marketers with a singular set of possibilities and problems that they must overcome in order to get the attention of customers who are becoming more discriminating. Social media marketing, often known as SMM, is the implementation of social media channels in a systematic manner for the purpose of promoting products, engaging with customers, and establishing brand loyalty. In contrast to more conventional techniques of marketing, social media marketing (SMM) enables direct connection between businesses and customers, resulting in an experience that is both more customized and participatory. The behavior of consumers has been fundamentally altered as a result of this transformation, which has influenced how individuals conduct research, assess, and make judgments regarding their purchases. Research reveals that marketing through social media has a major influence on

both the awareness of a brand and the confidence that consumers have in that brand, which frequently results in higher sales and customer loyalty. Furthermore, the growth of influencer marketing has brought a new dynamic, which is that consumers are more inclined to accept recommendations from persons they follow than they are to trust recommendations from traditional advertising. The occurrence of this phenomena has caused firms to reevaluate their marketing methods, with the primary emphasis being placed on developing genuine connections with their target users. In spite of the expanding volume of scholarship on the topic, there are still gaps in our understanding of the exact processes via which social media marketing influences the purchasing behavior of consumers. In the context of social media marketing, the purpose of this study is to analyze these dynamics by investigating the fundamental components that drive customer involvement and decision-making processes. The research endeavors to give a complete examination of the ways in which social media impacts the perceptions, preferences, and ultimately the purchasing behavior of consumers by adopting a mixed-methods approach.

### **Social media marketing**

As a result of the transformation in business dynamics brought about by the sharing of information in real time, businesses have been compelled to incorporate social media marketing elements into their overall marketing strategies. According to Dave Chaffey, the content director at Smart Insight, social media marketing is becoming an essential component of modern digital marketing. Chaffey defines social media marketing as the process of achieving marketing goals through the utilization of digital technology and traditional media. Websites, smartphone applications, and social media pages are all examples of the various online presences that fall under this category (Chaffey 2020). Social media marketing is tailored to specific platforms, corresponds with the aims of businesses, and makes use of a variety of strategies to promote products and services. Over 3.96 billion users and a 10% rise in the past year, which indicates that more than half of the world's population is engaging with social media, according to recent study conducted by Simon Kemp and Datareportal (2020) (Gilliand 2020). This indicates that social media is seeing significant development on a worldwide scale. It is clear that this piques the attention of marketers, since according to Angles (2017), 31% of customers use social media for pre-sale queries. On the other hand, the rise in the use of social media also brings about difficulties. As a result of intense material saturation and increased rivalry for exposure, it is difficult for businesses to differentiate themselves from their competitors (Mangles 2017).

### **The Influence of Social Media Marketing on Consumers' Minds, Behaviors, and Drive**

According to GlobalWebIndex, 54 percent of people who use social media do so in order to do product research, and 71 percent of people are more inclined to make purchases of goods and services based on referrals generated through social media. Consumers' beliefs, psychology, and motivation have undergone significant shifts as a result of the Internet and social media, which has had an impact on consumer behavior.

### **The Effects of Advertising on Consumer Opinions via Social Media**

The epidemic has brought about an acceleration in the process of digitalization among consumers and businesses, as well as an increase in the marketing behavior of consumers on social media platforms. As a consequence of this, consumers are increasingly finding themselves needing to include internet shopping into their everyday routines. In this post-epidemic era, customers are becoming more and more reliant on

internet buying, which makes social media marketing an inevitable decision for businesses. The term "consumption attitude" refers to the assessment, sentiments, and attitudes that individuals have toward something, expressed from their own point of view, whether they are favorable or negative. To be more explicit, consumption attitude refers to the psychological predisposition that consumers have toward a certain brand or service or before engaging in a particular consumption activity. This inclination influences the path that consumer decision-making and consumption behavior take. It is possible for social media marketing to enhance the consumer spending experience at the purchase level by utilizing digital technology. This may be accomplished by making the ordering, purchasing, and payment of items more accessible to customers, therefore saving them both time and money. The customers' impressions are altered as a result of social media marketing, which in turn influences their attitudes. When it comes to social media marketing, consumers arrive to their conclusions based on three primary factors: advertising, the recommendations of others, and their own personal experiences as users. Many different tactics are utilized by businesses in order to ensure that customers comprehend and pay attention to the items or services that they offer. Following the modification of customers' cognitive processes, businesses have the ability to alter consumers' emotional states through the use of emotional marketing in order to win clients' favor. On the other hand, the attitudes and feelings of consumers are what shape their intentions toward consuming. Based on the findings of the research, some activities that take place on the social media platform, such as the engagement of consumers in debates and the sharing of knowledge, have an impact on the consumption attitudes and purchasing behaviors of other customers. Online word-of-mouth is one of the marketing strategies that has a significant influence on the views of consumers. Consumers' sentiments concerning the items will be aggressively marketed through the comments, ratings, and assessments that friends post on social media sites. Online word-of-mouth marketing has been shown to influence consumers' buy intentions as well as their ultimate behavior, according to research.

### **The Post-Epidemic Era's Influence on Consumer Psychology**

Within the context of the current period of global stagnation, the concept of internal circulation has emerged as an important aspect of the consumer market. During this same time period, consumers have also shifted their thinking, shifting their attention to their own internal needs, releasing the pressures of daily life, and bringing virtual reality and spiritual contact together. When customers are exposed to such a social environment, they place a greater emphasis on the satisfaction of their spiritual needs and have higher expectations for comfort. As a result of the increased number of unpredictability, consumers are placing a greater emphasis on the pursuit of a sense of security in their purchasing. In addition, customers are interested in developing deeper ties with companies and moving toward a lifestyle that is both healthier and of higher quality. As a result of satisfying the psychological requirements of customers, social media platforms have emerged as the most suitable option for customers. It is possible for businesses to learn about the attitudes and demand trends of customers with regard to particular brands or items by monitoring their networks and doing thorough data analysis. Carry out activities on social media platforms in accordance with the psychological demands of customers in order to attract the attention and interest of consumers. This stage is associated with the confirmation of customer demand, which is mutually boosted by both internal and external variables together. Examples of external elements include marketing communication. At this point, marketing through social media has an effect on the consumption psychology of consumers, which in turn has an effect on the customers' consuming behavior and the decisions they make regarding their purchases. The consumption psychology of consumers is very different from one

another due to the fact that consumers' gender, age, career, interests, hobbies, and other variables all contribute to these disparities. As a result of this characteristic, social media platforms are required to split consumers in the process of marketing planning, identify their target clients, and then launch focused marketing campaigns.

### **The Impact of Advertising on Consumer Motivation via Social Media**

An individual's intrinsic desire to acquire a certain good or service serves as the foundation for and the source of their purchasing behavior; this is known as consumer buying motivation. The demands of customers and the stimulation they require should form the basis of consumer motivation generation. Consumers can only be motivated to take action if their consumption need is aroused, and both internal and external stimuli can awaken conditions. Customers should be reminded of their needs from time to time. On the other hand, when a product keeps popping up, along with some recommendations from friends, people will start to wonder about it or want to buy it since it's trendy. Thanks to its one-of-a-kind features, social media is able to precisely and efficiently record the buying psychology and motive of customers, allowing for highly targeted advertising campaigns on prominent social media platforms. By combining video with relevant marketing methods, businesses are able to tap into the whole customer journey—from awareness to interest, like, and ultimately purchase—through search engines and social media. Using social media to promote a business, organization, or person is known as social media marketing. The objective is to learn about potential buyers' requirements so that they can comprehend a product and buy it. During this phase, social media has an impact on customers' mindsets, drives, and motivations, which in turn alters their purchasing habits. From these vantage points, we will go on to talk about how social media marketing has altered customer behavior.

### **Key Influences of Social Media Marketing Loyalty to Brands by Consumers**

The increasingly commercialized social media platforms are not only a tool and brand for sharing thoughts, insights, experiences, and perspectives, but they are also a significant means to connect companies and customers. Additionally, these platforms are a brand for sharing. The activities that take place on social media not only influence the likelihood that customers will make a purchase, but they also progressively influence the behavior of consumers, such as their intention to remain loyal and participate. There is a high level of communication efficiency in social media marketing, and interaction is one of the most important elements of this advertising strategy. Because of this feature, customers are able to engage with one another and provide instant feedback on the product information as soon as it is made available by businesses. The level of stickiness that exists between users and businesses is increased through interaction. However, the most crucial benefit is that it may assist businesses in developing their loyal client groups. Stickiness and loyalty to companies among customers have been considerably improved as a result of social media marketing, which is based on providing consumers with more reasonable information. Consumers will continue to retain a high degree of rationality and the frequency of their purchases after they discover a brand that they can trust. There have been a lot of research done in the field of social media marketing that have focused on customer loyalty to one or more businesses. Some of them concentrate on the positive actions and material that companies give on social media, the frequency with which they appear on social platforms, particular apps, and other important variables that influence the consumers' loyalty to the brand. The analysis of online word-of-mouth marketing of products and the participation of community marketing in the formation of brand image is the primary emphasis of Budiman. The findings of the study demonstrate

that e-word-of-mouth (e-WOM), community, and online advertising are the three primary elements that determine the level of brand loyalty exhibited by customers. In this study, Huang and colleagues analyze the impact that community benefits have on brand loyalty, as well as the impact that social media interaction has on community benefits. The findings of the study indicate that businesses may enhance their relationship with customers by developing communities, and that the establishment of interactions that are centered on the customer has a direct influence on the behavior of customers. When businesses engage in a greater number of activities via the use of social media, they have a greater potential to influence the degree to which customers are loyal to the brand of the company. Additionally, the extent to which customers react to the business will be the determining factor in the extent to which customers have access to information about the product, expertise that is pertinent to the situation, and a sense of community identity. On the other hand, the degree to which consumers acquire product information and product expertise, as well as the degree to which they embrace their self-identity within the community, will ultimately have an effect on the purchase behavior of consumers. The research conducted by Fetais and colleagues aims to explore the influence of social media marketing activities on brand loyalty, both directly and indirectly, through the utilization of community participation and love mark as mediating factors. The brand royalty is used as the dependent variable in each of the aforementioned articles, and various independent variables are selected for each of the articles based on the social media environment. In spite of the fact that the independent variables are different, the findings all indicate that the activities that are created on social media platforms have a considerable effect on the loyalty of consumers to product brands. The key to successful company brand growth is learning how to make effective use of social media in order to keep and even raise the level of consumer loyalty to the brand. To summarize, social media is not only a tool and brand for sharing thoughts, insights, experiences, and perspectives, but it is also a meaningful approach to connect companies and customers. This is because social media allows users to share.

## **CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR ON SOCIAL MEDIA**

For the most part, users log into their social media accounts for the purpose of enjoying themselves, relaxing, connecting with others, gaining knowledge, and having fun. The development of social media as a platform for retail has resulted in a shift in customer behavior that is characterized by convenience. An investigation conducted by the Global Web Index (2018) found that 54 percent of users now utilize social media to conduct product research prior to making a purchase. This finding reflects a movement away from social engagement and toward product discovery.

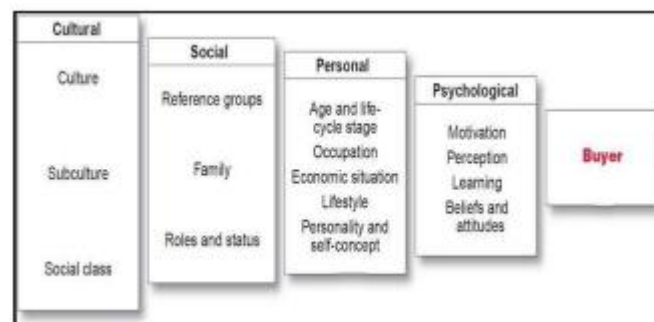
### **What exactly has changed?**

Consumers in the modern day have a heightened knowledge and interest, actively expressing their thoughts through a variety of outlets such as reviews, videos on YouTube, and unboxing sessions on TikTok. According to Brennan, Brenna, Schafer, and Schafer (2012), this paradigm change gives consumers more power. Consumers increasingly use a variety of social networks to express their thoughts on the products and services offered by merchants. This compels retailers to connect with their customers in a thoughtful manner and to adapt to their individualized requirements. The usage of social media is widespread among younger people, but the acceptance of these platforms is rapidly growing among older generations. The results of a study conducted by Pew Research in 2019 indicate that 69% of persons aged 50-64 and 40% of those aged 65 and over use social media. The need for mobile-enabled tools such as Corona apps has expedited the movement of everyday basics, such as bus tickets, banking services, and loyalty programs,

to smartphone applications. This trend is being accelerated by technological advancements. Individuals of all ages are incorporating social media into their daily routines, which is enriching their shopping experiences (Brennan & al. 2012). This is occurring as the possession of smartphones becomes more widespread.

### Gaining insight into how consumers buy

If you want to know what makes people buy things, you need to know what elements affect their decisions. There are three main aspects that impact customers' purchasing behavior, according to FitzGerald (2019): personal, psychological, and social. Not only that, but renowned scholar Philip Kotler adds a fourth dimension that stresses the importance of culture. Cultural factors significantly impact consumer choices, claims Kotler (2018). Because every culture has its own set of norms and expectations when it comes to things like conduct, values, and the preferences that people bring into the world from their families and communities, these aspects can change from one nation to another. Human friendliness, says Clootrack 2020, promotes peer pressure and the demand for social approval. Humans are inherently gregarious. Social factors, such as one's network, group membership, function, and status, have a substantial impact on consumer behavior (Kotler, 2018). Consumers' unique perspectives and actions are influenced by their unique personalities, values, and interests, as stated by Clootrack 2020. Age, income, occupation, personality, and lifestyle are important personal aspects that have a big impact Consumer behavior is heavily influenced by psychological factors, which are both powerful and difficult to measure (Clootrack 2020). These factors pertain to needs, understanding capacities, perceptions, beliefs, and motives (Kotler, 2018). As seen in the accompanying image, the aggregate of these factors has a significant influence on the mosaic of consumer buying behavior.



**Figure 1. Decision-Making Elements in Buying**

In spite of the fact that every consumer has their own unique considerations when contemplating a purchase, there is a standard purchasing procedure that serves as the foundation for their decision-making journey. According to Fitzgerald (2019), the following are the usual steps that customers go through during this process. However, the specifics of this process might vary from person to person:

- **Recognition of Need:** When a consumer becomes aware of a need, they make the decision to acquire the product.
- **Information Search:** For the purpose of evaluating a possible purchase, customers look for information about products and services, and they are frequently influenced by internet reviews and blog postings.

- **Product Assessment:** Through the process of analyzing their own unique criteria and priorities, customers select which product or service best meets their specifications.
- **Purchase Decision:** The consumer will consider whether or not to make the purchase immediately after determining the product or service that is suited for their needs.
- **Transaction Completion:** It is important to have a payment experience that is as smooth as possible because the payment procedure and product reception both take place.
- **Post-Purchase Evaluation:** The amount of pleasure that customers feel after using a product is often evaluated. During this phase, it is usual practice to conduct post-purchase surveys or send thank-you letters to customers in order to collect feedback and verify that they are satisfied.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

According to Jansen and Warren 2020, the term "research methodology" refers to the process by which researchers methodically organize a study that is adapted to a particular research project in order to guarantee accurate results that contribute to addressing research objectives. The primary objective of this research is to investigate the true influence that social media has on the purchase decisions of customers, with the goal of determining whether or not such an impact actually exists. With the goal of improving understanding of the type, timing, and degree of the effect that social media has on the decision-making processes of customers, the purpose is to improve comprehension for both consumers and businesses. In addition, the research endeavors to provide businesses with practical data into how customers react to various social media marketing techniques, with the goal of identifying the most effective ways that are in line with the requirements of consumers. The investigation is supported by a theoretical framework, which functions as the foundation and counts on secondary data as its primary source of information. Primary data collection is targeted at meeting the study objectives and providing substantiating evidence to support secondary data. This is done in order to ensure that the research is successful. A questionnaire administered via the internet was used as the technique of data collection in order to get primary data.

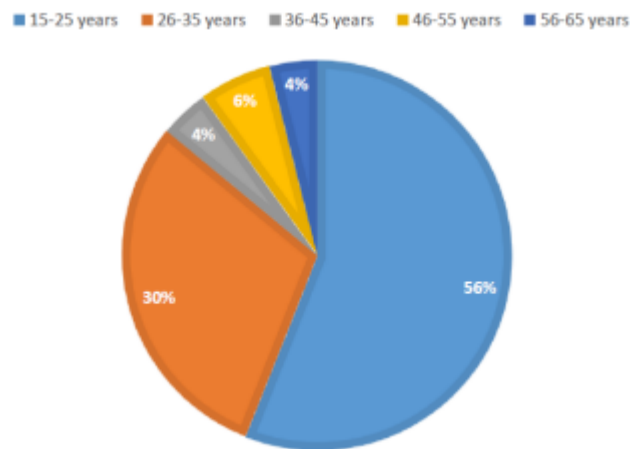
### **Research design**

For the purpose of this investigation, a quantitative research approach was selected, and an electronic survey was conducted through the use of the Webropol online application. Quantitative research was chosen to be the most appropriate form of investigation because of its ability to collect data from a diverse population in an effective manner. The questionnaire, which consisted of twelve questions and had an estimated completion time of two minutes, was disseminated throughout a variety of social media channels, including Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and online conversations. Anonymous replies were guaranteed to be honest. The questionnaire was designed to investigate the influence of social media on purchase decisions, specifically with regard to why, when, and how they are made. It was designed to fit closely with the theoretical framework. The initial queries focused on demographics, while succeeding portions investigated the use of social media and the impact it had on purchase decisions. Between the dates of September 24 and October 15, 2020, the survey was carried out, and it received 139 replies.

## **DATA ANALYSIS AND KEY RESULTS**

After that, the next section provides an overview of the analysis that was performed on the data that was obtained from the online survey. Initial queries included demographic information such as gender, age, and financial situation, among other considerations. The objective of this strategy was to identify any possible

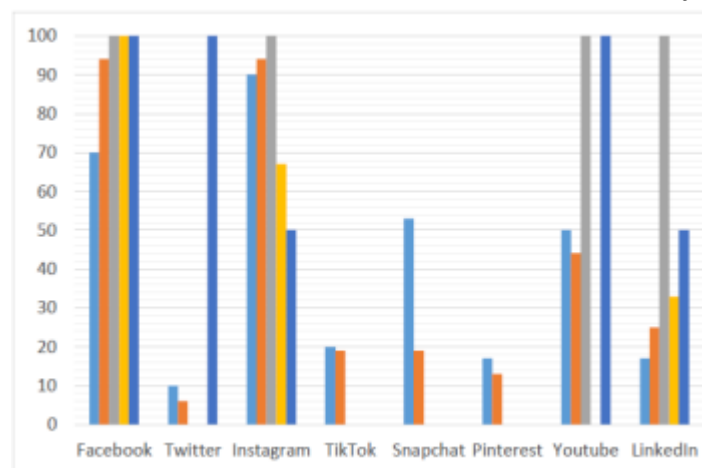
differences in the influence that social media has on decision-making across these different categories. The findings indicate that there were 37% male respondents and 63% female respondents from the sample.



**Figure 2. The respondents' ages were distributed as follows:**

The fourth item in the survey was designed to provide information on the social media sites that were most often used by the respondents. The research conducted by Dataportal had an impact on the obtainable choices (see to figure 2 for further information). It is important to note that messenger programs were not included in this investigation since their major role is communication, and they do not significantly influence purchasing behavior that is tied to social media. The statistics collected from respondents are shown in the following table, which is organized according to age groups and reflects their major preferences for social media platforms.

**Table 1. Platforms of social media that are most often utilized by the responders**



One clear pattern emerges from the data: TikTok, Snapchat, and Pinterest are the most popular social media platforms among respondents between the ages of 15 and 35. On the other hand, individuals between the ages of 46 and 55 exhibit lower levels of participation across a variety of social media platforms. Facebook appears as the most popular option across a variety of age ranges, which is consistent with the information collected by Dataportal (refer to figure 2). Of particular note is the fact that Instagram claims to have the largest usage among those aged 15 to 25.



## Results analysis

The results of the analysis shed light on the substantial impact that social media plays in influencing purchasing behavior, particularly in terms of information searching for consumers. Consumers quickly embrace social media as a source of instant information and demonstrate receptivity to tailored advertisements, which ultimately results in consumers making purchases with confidence. It is remarkable that age and financial stability do not have a significant impact on the amount of time spent on social media or the products that are purchased. Paradoxically, despite the fact that members of Generation Z are conversant with social media, their perspectives on the ways in which it influences purchasing behavior are somewhat different from one another. Due to the fact that social media influencers have a wide range of intergenerational reach, the study supports the idea that using them for marketing purposes is effective. It is important for companies to promote active interaction on social media in order to cultivate consumer trust, provide prompt customer support, and make it easier for consumers to get product information. Even if customers primarily rely on personal relationships and expertise to make selections, there is no denying that social media helps shoppers by facilitating the process of making educated choices more quickly. Despite the fact that the relevance of social media in purchase decisions is already apparent, its influence is expected to become even more profound as technology continues to advance.

## Conclusion

There are many different ways in which social media marketing may have a significant impact on the purchasing decisions of consumers. The findings of this study underline the fact that social media platforms serve not just as conduits for advertising but also as dynamic places providing consumers with opportunities to connect with companies and with one another. Brands that are able to connect directly with their audience are able to cultivate a feeling of community, trust, and loyalty, all of which have a substantial influence on the decisions that consumers make regarding their purchases. The most important findings indicate that targeted advertising, influencer marketing, and user-generated content all play significant roles in the process of altering the views and actions of consumers. By utilizing these components in an efficient manner, companies have the ability to increase their brand recognition, promote engagement, and ultimately impact the decisions that consumers make. Consumers are now at the forefront of the decision-making process as a result of the emergence of social media, which has caused a shift in the power dynamic in marketing. The digital world is always shifting, and in order to keep up with it, marketers need to maintain a flexible and creative approach to their social media campaigns. In order to establish long-lasting connections with customers, it will be necessary to place an emphasis on authenticity, transparency, and participation that is real. The long-term consequences of social media marketing on brand loyalty and customer trust should be investigated in future study. Additionally, the implications of developing technology on consumer behavior should be investigated. In conclusion, it is essential for businesses that want to succeed in today's competitive marketplace to have a solid grasp of the complex link that exists between social media marketing and the decisions that consumers make regarding their purchases. When marketers leverage the power of social media, they not only have the ability to influence purchase decisions, but they also have the ability to develop meaningful relationships that resonate with their audience.

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