

Social Media Marketing and Consumer Behaviour

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.51583/IJLTEMAS.2026.150600230>

Received: 10 July 2026; Accepted: 15 July 2026; Published: 27 July 2026

ABSTRACT

The rapid growth of social media platforms has transformed the marketing landscape, enabling businesses to engage directly with consumers through interactive and personalized communication. Social media marketing (SMM) has become a critical strategy for influencing consumer awareness, attitudes, purchasing decisions, and brand loyalty. This research article examines the relationship between social media marketing and consumer behaviour by reviewing existing literature and analyzing the impact of social media platforms on consumer decision-making. The study identifies key factors such as electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), influencer marketing, online reviews, content quality, customer engagement, and personalization that significantly influence consumer behaviour. The findings suggest that effective social media marketing enhances customer trust, satisfaction, and long-term brand relationships. The article concludes with implications for marketers and recommendations for future research.

Keywords: Social Media Marketing, Consumer Behaviour, Digital Marketing, Electronic Word-of-Mouth, Influencer Marketing, Brand Loyalty

INTRODUCTION

The advancement of digital technologies and internet accessibility has revolutionized the way businesses communicate with consumers. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn, X (formerly Twitter), and TikTok have evolved beyond communication tools into influential marketing channels. Organizations increasingly invest in social media marketing because it provides opportunities to reach targeted audiences at relatively low costs while encouraging customer interaction.

Consumer behaviour refers to the processes individuals follow when selecting, purchasing, using, and disposing of products and services. Social media has become a major source of information that shapes these decisions through recommendations, reviews, advertisements, and user-generated content.

This article explores how social media marketing influences consumer behaviour and examines the factors that contribute to successful marketing outcomes.

objectives of the study

1. To understand the concept of social media marketing.
2. To examine factors influencing consumer behaviour through social media.
3. To analyze the relationship between social media marketing and purchasing decisions.
4. To identify challenges and opportunities associated with social media marketing.
5. To provide recommendations for businesses to improve marketing effectiveness.

Research Questions

1. How does social media marketing influence consumer purchasing behaviour?
2. Which social media marketing factors have the greatest impact on consumer decisions?

3. How does customer engagement affect brand loyalty?
4. What challenges do businesses face in social media marketing?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) defined social media as a group of Internet-based applications built on Web 2.0 technology that facilitate the creation and exchange of user-generated content. They argued that social media has transformed marketing by enabling interactive communication between businesses and consumers, thereby improving customer relationships and brand engagement.

Mangold and Faulds (2009) argued that social media has become an essential component of integrated marketing communication because consumers increasingly trust peer recommendations more than traditional advertising.

Research by Cheung and Thadani (2012) demonstrated that electronic word-of-mouth positively influences purchase intentions.

Hajli (2015) examined the influence of social commerce on consumer behaviour and found that social interactions, online communities, and user-generated content significantly increase consumer trust and purchase intentions. The study concluded that trust acts as a mediating factor between social media activities and buying decisions.

Kotler and Keller (2016) emphasized that consumers actively search for product information through social media before making purchase decisions.

Erkan and Evans (2016) investigated the role of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) in online purchasing behaviour. Their findings revealed that information quality, credibility, usefulness, and adoption of online reviews positively influence consumers' purchase intentions, making eWOM one of the strongest determinants of online buying behaviour.

Stephen (2016) highlighted that digital and social media marketing have fundamentally changed consumer decision-making by providing instant access to product information, personalized advertisements, and peer recommendations. The study emphasized that consumer engagement through digital platforms contributes significantly to brand awareness and customer loyalty.

De Veirman, Cauberghe, and Hudders (2017) found that influencer credibility significantly affects consumer trust and buying behaviour.

Appel et al. (2020) reported that social media has reshaped the consumer decision-making process by enabling consumers to participate actively in brand-related discussions. The study emphasized that user-generated content, influencer recommendations, and online communities have become central to modern marketing strategies.

Dwivedi et al. (2021) examined the impact of digital and social media marketing on business performance and consumer engagement. Their research concluded that businesses adopting innovative social media strategies achieve higher customer satisfaction, stronger brand equity, and improved competitive advantage.

Nuseir (2022) investigated the relationship between social media marketing and consumer buying behaviour and found that consumer trust mediates the relationship between social media marketing activities and purchase intention. The study also highlighted that brand credibility significantly enhances customer loyalty.

Disha et al. (2023) conducted a comprehensive literature review on social media marketing and consumer buying behaviour. The authors concluded that social media marketing has become a powerful promotional tool influencing consumers across different demographic groups, particularly through Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. IISTE

Bartoloni and Ancillai (2024) reviewed two decades of social media marketing research and proposed an integrative framework explaining how social media influences consumer engagement, value creation, and business performance. They identified customer engagement, personalization, and data-driven marketing as major future research areas. Wiley Online Library

Vinodh et al. (2024) systematically reviewed 41 studies published between 2019 and 2024 and found that social media marketing activities—including personalized content, influencer marketing, and augmented reality experiences—significantly enhance consumer trust, brand loyalty, and purchase intention. The review also emphasized the importance of addressing privacy concerns and content overload. journals.co.za

Bhardwaj et al. (2024) conducted a PRISMA-based systematic review of 90 studies on influencer marketing. The study concluded that influencer credibility; authenticity, expertise, and trustworthiness have a significant positive impact on consumer attitudes and purchase intentions, making influencer marketing one of the most effective digital marketing strategies. Sage Journals

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework suggests that social media marketing activities influence consumer behaviour through several mediating factors.

Independent Variables	Brand communication	Dependent Variables
Social media advertising	Mediating Variables	Purchase intention
Influencer marketing	Consumer trust	Buying behaviour
Content quality	Brand awareness	Brand loyalty
Customer engagement	Customer satisfaction	Repeat purchase
Electronic word-of-mouth		
Online reviews		

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design: This study adopts a descriptive research design to understand the influence of social media marketing on consumer behaviour.

Data Collection: The study may use both primary and secondary data.

Primary Data includes online questionnaire, Interviews and Consumer survey.

Secondary Data includes Books, Research journals, Company reports, Government publications, Industry reports and Sampling

Sampling Technique: Convenience Sampling

Sample Size: 200 respondents

Target Population: Active social media users aged 18–45 years

Data Analysis Tools involves Descriptive Statistics, Correlation Analysis, Regression Analysis, Chi-Square Test and SPSS or Excel

Factors Influencing Consumer Behaviour through Social Media

1. Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM)

2. Consumers frequently rely on online reviews, ratings, and recommendations before making purchasing decisions. Positive reviews increase trust, while negative experiences discourage purchases.
3. Influencer Marketing
4. Influencers shape consumer perceptions by recommending products and sharing authentic experiences. Consumers often perceive influencer endorsements as more trustworthy than conventional advertisements.
5. Customer Engagement
6. Interactive communication through comments, live sessions, contests, and polls increases emotional attachment to brands.
7. Personalized Advertising
8. Social media platforms use algorithms to deliver advertisements based on user preferences and browsing history, improving marketing effectiveness.
9. Brand Communities
10. Online communities encourage discussions among customers, strengthening relationships and increasing customer loyalty.

Impact of Social Media Marketing on Consumer Behaviour

1. Social media marketing influences consumer behaviour in multiple ways:
2. Increases product awareness.
3. Improves consumer knowledge.
4. Builds brand trust.
5. Encourages impulse buying.
6. Influences purchase intention.
7. Enhances customer satisfaction.
8. Strengthens brand loyalty.
9. Facilitates post-purchase engagement.
10. Consumers increasingly compare products using social media before making final purchasing decisions.

Advantages of Social Media Marketing

1. Low marketing cost
2. Global customer reach
3. Real-time communication
4. Improved customer engagement
5. Higher brand visibility
6. Better customer relationship management
7. Data-driven marketing decisions
8. Measurable campaign performance

Challenges of Social Media Marketing

1. Negative online reviews
2. Fake news and misinformation
3. Privacy concerns
4. Rapidly changing algorithms
5. High competition
6. Content saturation
7. Difficulty measuring return on investment (ROI)
8. Managing customer complaints publicly

FINDINGS

1. Social media significantly influences consumer purchasing decisions.

2. Customer engagement positively affects brand loyalty.
3. Electronic word-of-mouth is among the strongest predictors of purchase intention.
4. Influencer credibility increases consumer trust.
5. Personalized content improves customer satisfaction.
6. Younger consumers are more responsive to social media campaigns than older age groups.
7. Interactive content receives greater engagement than traditional promotional content.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Businesses should develop engaging and informative content. Businesses should invest in high-quality and engaging social media content to improve customer interaction and brand visibility.
2. Encourage positive customer reviews: Organizations should actively monitor and respond to customer reviews and feedback to strengthen electronic word-of-mouth and maintain a positive online reputation.
3. Collaborate with credible influencers: Companies should collaborate with credible influencers whose values align with the brand to enhance trust and authenticity.
4. Respond promptly to customer feedback.
5. Use data analytics for personalized marketing: Personalized marketing campaigns should be implemented using consumer data and analytics to increase customer satisfaction and purchase intention.
6. Maintain transparency and authenticity: Businesses should ensure transparency and ethical practices in digital advertising to foster long-term consumer trust.
7. Protect customer privacy.
8. Continuously evaluate campaign performance using analytics: Marketers should regularly evaluate campaign performance using metrics such as engagement rate, click-through rate, conversion rate, and return on investment (ROI).
9. Organizations should integrate social media marketing with other digital marketing strategies, including search engine optimization (SEO), email marketing, and content marketing, for greater effectiveness.

CONCLUSION

Social media marketing has fundamentally changed consumer behaviour by providing consumers with easy access to product information, peer reviews, and interactive brand experiences. Effective social media strategies enhance brand awareness, trust, customer engagement, and purchase intention. As digital technologies continue to evolve, businesses must adopt customer-centric marketing approaches that prioritize authenticity, personalization, and meaningful engagement. Future research may examine emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, augmented reality, and social commerce and their influence on consumer decision-making.

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