

A Study Investigating the Role of Social Media Marketing in Shaping Brand Awareness, Consumer Preferences, and Purchase Intentions, Targeting Young Consumers.

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Abstract: This research examines the impact of social media marketing (SMM) on brand recognition, consumer preferences, and buying intentions among young adults in Bengaluru, India. The study explores how SMM tactics affect millennials' interactions with durable goods in the context of increasing digitization and evolving marketing strategies. The investigation employed a mixed-methods approach, gathering primary data from 400 social media-active young consumers (18-45 years old) via structured surveys, complemented by secondary data from scholarly sources. The relationships between SMM and key consumer behavior variables were analysed using statistical techniques, including correlation analysis, regression models, and hypothesis testing. The results indicate a Strong Positive Correlation between SMM and purchasing decisions ($r = 0.804$, $p < 0.05$), suggesting that targeted advertisements, influencer promotions, and interactive content significantly influence buying behavior. However, the link between SMM and brand awareness was found to be considerably weaker ($*r = 0.048*$), implying a limited direct effect on brand recall. Brand preference showed a moderate positive relationship with SMM ($r = 0.292$, $p < 0.05$), emphasizing the importance of tailored marketing and customer experience. Regression analysis confirmed that SMM, brand awareness, and brand preference together account for 73% of the variance in purchase decisions ($R^2 = 0.730$), highlighting SMM's crucial role in consumer decision-making processes.

The research concludes that while SMM is an effective tool for influencing purchase intentions, its capacity to build brand awareness may require additional strategies. Practical suggestions include utilizing visual content, collaborating with micro-influencers, and striking a balance between digital campaigns and traditional media. The study's limitations, such as its focus on Bengaluru and age-specific sampling, point to opportunities for future research across diverse demographics and regions. These findings provide actionable insights for marketers seeking to optimize SMM strategies in the dynamic digital marketplace.

Keywords: Brand Awareness, Consumer Durables, Digital Marketing, Purchase Intention, Millennials, Social Media Marketing

I. Introduction

The rapid increase in internet users, the technology-driven nature of business operations, and the rise of online shopping platforms have collectively fostered the emergence of a digital culture. Notably, the influence of social media on the lives of the Y-Generation is so significant that it has led to a form of social media addiction. Remarkably, the widespread adoption of social media has encouraged marketers to leverage these platforms for brand promotion, aiming to attract their target audience. Consequently, there has been a significant shift from traditional marketing methods to those driven by technology. It is clear that social media marketing has transformed the marketing landscape, providing numerous advantages such as enhanced customer interaction and a rise in website traffic, greater preference for and recognition of the product. The following statistics provide insight into the current situation in India.

Social Media Marketing (SMM): The field of social media marketing is experiencing rapid growth as a contemporary trend. It can be succinctly described as the utilization of social media platforms to promote businesses and their offerings. This marketing approach falls under the umbrella of online marketing activities and has led to the development of novel tools. With the introduction of analytic applications by official social network platforms, social media marketers are gaining more effective and improved insights.

Various social media sites exist, each with unique features and forms. However, platforms like Twitter, Google Plus, and LinkedIn, despite their differences, operate on similar fundamental principles. SMM is a subset of Internet marketing that leverages social networking websites as promotional tools. The primary objective of SMM is to generate shareable content that users will distribute within their social networks, thereby increasing a company's brand visibility and expanding its customer base. This process aims to drive website traffic or garner attention through social media platforms. SMM initiatives typically create engaging content that encourages readers to share it within their social circles. This approach allows companies to receive direct customer feedback while presenting a more personable image. Some social media features enable customers to ask questions or express concerns.

The many benefits that social media marketing (SMM) offers make it a vital tool in the toolbox of today's marketer. One of its main advantages is improved brand recognition because social media platforms let companies use consistent messaging to reach a wide range of audiences. Being more visible allows businesses to interact directly with customers, answer their questions quickly, and build individualized relationships—all of which frequently result in higher customer satisfaction. SMM is also well-known for

being economical, providing high-impact outreach at a comparatively low cost when compared to conventional advertising methods. Additionally, by utilizing user-generated content and organic reach, it helps lower marketing costs. Marketers may better understand consumer behavior and improve their strategy by using the analytics capabilities that social media platforms give. Additionally, SMM enables accurate audience targeting based on demographics, hobbies, and online habits while promoting successful brand engagement through interactive content.

SMM has drawbacks in spite of these advantages. One of the biggest disadvantages is that it takes a lot of time; it takes constant work and content creation to maintain a consistent and significant presence across several platforms. There is also the possibility of unfavorable reviews, which can rapidly damage a brand's public image if they are not handled properly. The increasing sophistication of cyberattacks and account breaches has raised concerns about the security risks posed by hackers. Additionally, the accessibility of sharing content can lead to problems with copyright and trademark breaches. Lastly, as the collection, storage, and use of user data inside social media ecosystems come under increasing scrutiny, trust, privacy, and data security remain top issues for both consumers and enterprises.

Social Media: Social media is structured to facilitate dissemination through social interactions, employing accessible and scalable publishing methods. It leverages internet and web-based technologies to convert traditional broadcast media monologues (one-to-many communication) into interactive dialogues (many-to-many communication) (Arya, 2011, p. 1). As noted by Andreas Kaplan and Michael Haelein, social media encompasses a range of internet-based applications that are built upon the ideological and technological principles of Web 2.0, enabling the creation and sharing of user-generated content. This domain includes a diverse array of online and mobile platforms, such as social networking sites, blogs, company-sponsored discussion boards, chat rooms, consumer-to-consumer email exchanges, product or service rating websites, internet forums, and platforms featuring digital audio, images, videos, or photographs, among others (Hollensen, 2011).

Brand Awareness (BA): The extent to which customers can remember or identify a brand is known as brand awareness. It shows how likely it is that customers are aware of the goods or services that a business offers. In essence, BA measures how well-informed customers are about a product's existence and accessibility. Additionally, it gauges how well customers can associate a brand with a particular product. In order to increase brand recognition and awareness, consumers must become more familiar with the brand through repeated exposure, which works better for marketing strategy. In other words, a consumer is more likely to ingrain a brand into their memory the more often they come into contact with it, whether it be through sight, sound, or thought.

Brand Preference: Consumers' propensity to favor one brand over another is known as brand preference. Brand loyalty is a psychological phenomenon in which consumers continue to purchase from and recommend a brand to others.

Elements that influence brand preference

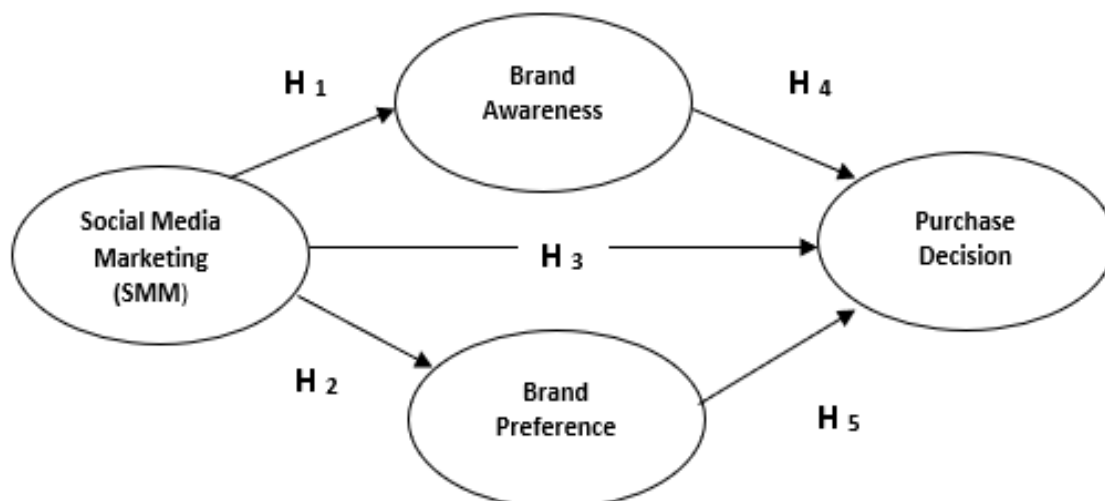
Brand identity: The ideals, image, and perception that the brand wishes to project

Marketing: The messaging, ads, and social media activity of the brand

Customer experience: The degree to which a brand satisfies the needs of its customers

Competitive environment: How the company stacks up against the competition

Purchase Decision: The cognitive process that leads a customer from identifying a need, weighing their options, and finally deciding on a specific product or brand is included in the purchase decision. It stands for the desire to purchase a particular brand. A customer's choice to buy is also influenced by the opinions and comments left by other brand users.



Aim of the Research: Main aim of the research is to investigate empirically how brand awareness, brand choice, and purchase decisions are influenced by social media marketing (SMM) among Indian Generation Y consumers, particularly in Bengaluru. The study's main goal is to comprehend how young adults (between the ages of 18 and 45) who use social media often perceive and react to consumer durable goods. It examines the efficacy of SMM tactics like targeted ads, interactive content, and influencer promotions. Since 400 respondents' primary data was gathered and analysed through organized surveys, the paper is an empirical study rather than a conceptual discussion or literature review. The nature and degree of correlations between SMM and important consumer behavior factors are ascertained using statistical techniques like regression modelling, correlation analysis, and hypothesis testing.

Problem Statement for the Study

The substantial growth in digital users necessitates marketers to conduct their entire operations through digital channels. The ubiquitous digital culture has transformed the implementation of crucial organizational functions, including HR management, manufacturing, supply chain, financial operations, and marketing strategies. There is a current trend of increased social media usage, especially among younger demographics, whose actions and choices are significantly influenced by these platforms. As noted earlier, social media now serves as a promotional tool for both large and small brands, complementing traditional advertising methods. Statistics show that social media marketing has become the primary activity within the digital marketing sphere. Thus, this study seeks to investigate young consumers' attitudes and perspectives on social media marketing, while also analysing its impact on brand preference, recognition, and purchasing behaviours.

II. Review of Literature

Kim, A. J., & Ko, E. (2012) observed that accessibility significantly influenced brand awareness, which in turn affected consumer purchasing decisions. They also identified five crucial social media characteristics: entertainment, customization, interaction, word of mouth, and trend. Their research showed that entertainment had a positive impact on intimacy, trust, and purchase intentions. Bashar et al. (2012) contended that for social media to be an effective marketing tool, organizations must maintain an active presence and provide timely, relevant information to customers. In their comprehensive study, Farooq and Jan (2012) recommended that companies implement tag-based marketing on Facebook, stressing the importance of social media user feedback. Li, Y., & Mousseaux, S. (2013) determined that social media is an effective information retrieval tool due to its capacity for immediate user-brand interactions. Hajli, M. N. (2014) found that social media significantly impacts trust, which affects perceived usefulness, and that trust fostered by social media greatly influences purchase intentions. Otugo et al. (2015) found that social media users more easily recall brands advertised through other channels compared to those promoted on Facebook, with many participants viewing Facebook advertisements as less visually appealing. Zulqurnain et al. (2016) identified a significant positive correlation between social media marketing and consumer perception. Singh (2016) reported a positive relationship between social media marketing and consumer behavior. Vinerean, S. (2017) asserted that the growth of social media enhances customer engagement and interaction with brands. Through accessibility, shareability, and real-time participation, social media enhances traditional publications and reaches beyond academic audiences into the public and policymaking domains (Brookings, April 2025). The use of SMM during and after COVID-19 is examined by Zewdie Werke & Agazu (2023), who conclude that the pandemic increased the adoption of digital technology. Marketers took advantage of the fact that social media platforms were essential for customer interaction and information exchange.

Hossain et al. (2023) explore the impact of Social Media Marketing Capabilities (SMMC) on Consumer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) in Bangladesh's retail sector, using the resource-based view (RBV) framework. The study highlights content creation, consumer interaction, and analytics as key drivers of brand equity elements like awareness and loyalty. It identifies a strong positive relationship between SMMC and CBBE, while calling for further research in varied geographic and industry contexts. Using eye tracking, Chen et al. (2022) discovered that consumers—especially women—pay more attention to negative internet reviews, which have a big impact on their decisions to buy. The study emphasizes how consumer behavior is influenced by review valence, credibility, and linguistic elements like readability. It also emphasizes how important it is to handle online reviews effectively in order to increase conversions and foster confidence.

According to Hanaysha (2018), perceived value, shop environment, and corporate social responsibility are the main determinants of consumer choices in Malaysian retail, with perceived value having the biggest influence. The study emphasizes the significance of CSR initiatives and in-store experiences in influencing consumer purchases, even while social media marketing had little effect.

Scope of Research

This study is limited to Bangalore City and two specific geographic locations. As a subset of digital marketing, social media marketing is the main focus of this study. Furthermore, the study is restricted to examining how young consumers view social media marketing and how it affects their brand awareness, preference, and purchase decisions.

Objectives of study

To investigate how young consumers view and feel about social media marketing

To comprehend how social media marketing affects brand preference, brand awareness, and purchase decisions

Research Design

The researcher's empirical investigation is descriptive in character.

Population and Sample Size

Young consumers that use social media and are aware of social media marketing make up the study's population. 400 young Bangalore City consumers who are familiar with social media make up the representative sample units. The convenient sampling method was used to draw the sample.

Types of Data:

This research is based on both primary and secondary data. Published report, statistics, research papers, articles and reference books were referred for secondary data.

Tools used for Data Collection

A two-part standardized questionnaire was used to collect the primary data. Demographic data and basic social media marketing questions are covered in the first section, and particular social media marketing metrics are covered in the second. Young customers were selected, and their opinions and impressions were assessed using a five-point Likert scale that ranged from strongly agree to strongly disapprove. Cronbach's alpha, which was among the acceptable range (0.863 for 14 questionnaire items), was used to evaluate the study instrument's reliability.

Statistical Tools:

Frequency distribution, percent score, and descriptive statistics were used to correctly evaluate and understand the data that was gathered. Likewise, simple linear regression and correlation have been used to test hypotheses.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1: Demographic Details

Gender		
	Frequency	Percent
Female	207	51.8
Male	193	48.3
Total	400	100.0
Age		
	Frequency	Percent
18 - 25	266	66.5
26-30	21	5.3
31-40	106	26.5
41-45	7	1.8
Total	400	100.0
Education		
	Frequency	Percent
Degree	300	75.0
Master Degree	86	21.5
PUC	14	3.5
Total	400	100.0
Marital Status		
	Frequency	Percent
Married	121	30.3

Unmarried	279	69.8
Total	400	100.0
Profession		
	Frequency	Percent
Business	14	3.5
Private Employees	142	35.5
Student	244	61.0
Total	400	100.0

Research Hypothesis

H1: SMM has a major effect on Brand_Awareness.

H2: Brand_Preference is greatly impacted by SMM.

H3: SMM has a major influence on purchasing decisions.

Table 2: One-Sample Test(t-test)

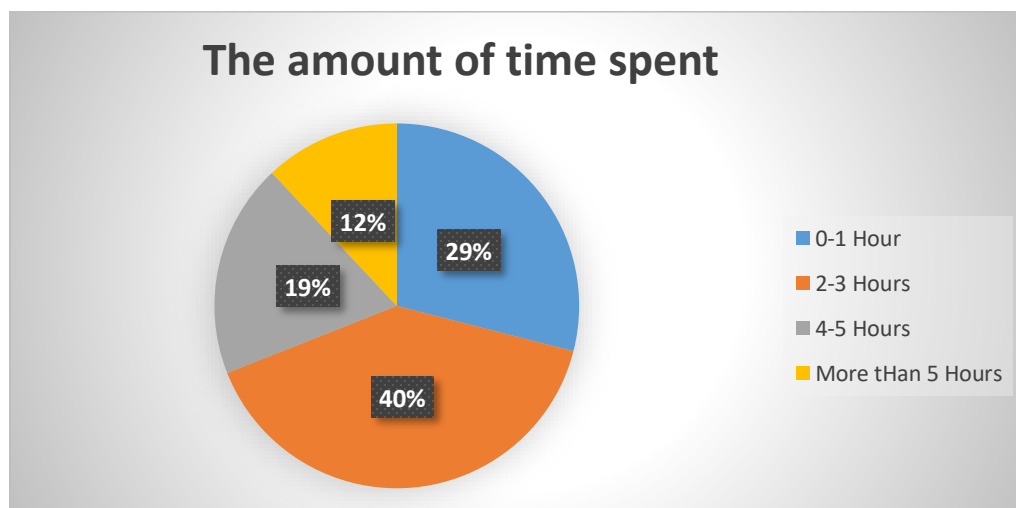
One-Sample Test

	Test Value = 0					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
SMM	147.680	399	.000	16.62250	16.4012	16.8438
BRAND_AWARENESS	85.835	399	.000	10.51250	10.2717	10.7533
BRAND_PREFERENCE	131.994	399	.000	8.52500	8.3980	8.6520
PURCHASE_DECISION	157.322	399	.000	12.49000	12.3339	12.6461

The p-values for each of the variables under investigation (SMM, BRAND_AWARENESS, BRAND_PREFERENCE, and PURCHASE_DECISION) are less than 0.05, meaning that the null hypothesis is always rejected. This implies that the means of these variables are substantially higher than zero, and the confidence intervals corroborate these findings.

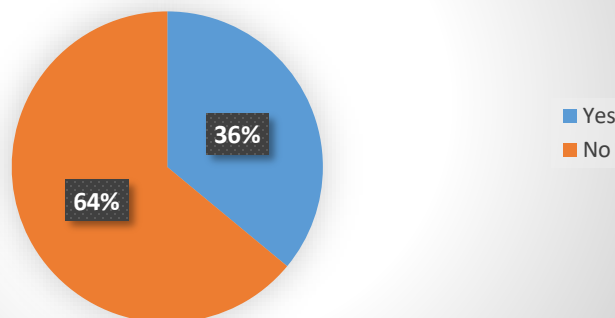
Implication:

According to these findings, SMM, Brand Awareness, Brand Preference, and Purchase Decision are all highly significant and significantly represented in the sample under investigation.



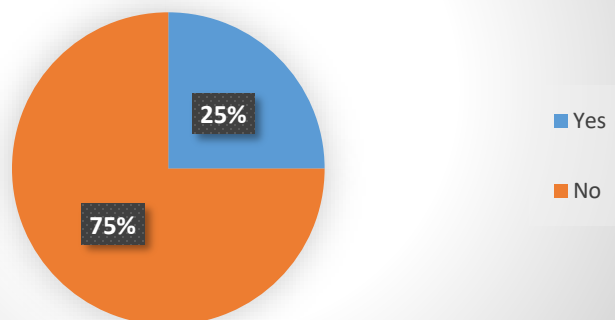
Based on the aforementioned data, 29% of the selected young clients spend 0–1 hours on social media, and 40% spend 2–3 hours on it. Merely 12% of the selected young clients use social media for more than five hours every day.

Do respondents follow Social Media Platforms for Purchase of Products



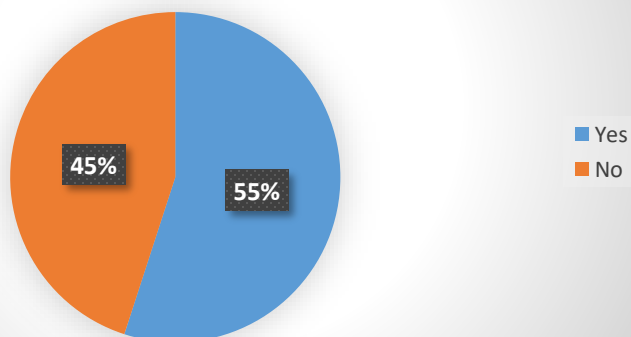
Based on the data provided, it was found that 36% of the young customers selected for the study follow at least one brand on social media, whereas 64% mentioned that they do not follow any brands.

Putting a brand's advertisement on your social media page



It is clear from the above figure that 75% of the selected consumers do not share or post any brand commercials on their social media pages, whilst only 25% of the selected young consumers share or post brand advertisements on their social media pages.

Influence of Social Media in purchase of Branded Product



The aforementioned pie chart shows that 55% of the selected young consumers have bought from a brand that has received social media promotion, whilst 45% have never done so.

Tale 3: Correlation Matrix

		BRAND AWARENESS	BRAND PREFERENCE	PURCHASE DECISION	SMM
SMM	Pearson Correlation	.048	.292**	.804**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.335	.000	.000	
	N	400	400	400	400

According to the correlation table above, social media marketing and brand awareness have a very weak positive connection (0.048), and the null hypothesis is accepted ($P > 0.05$). Additionally, there is a weak positive correlation (0.292) between brand preference and social media marketing; as a result, the null hypothesis is rejected ($P < 0.05$). Aside from this, social media marketing and purchase decisions have a strong positive association (0.804). The null hypothesis is thereby disproved ($P < 0.05$).

Tale 4: Regression Analysis

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.854 ^a	.730	.728	.82802
a. Predictors: (Constant), SMM, BRAND_AWARENESS, BRAND_PREFERENCE				

The dependent variable, purchase decision, and the predictors, SMM, brand awareness, and brand preference, have a significant positive association, as indicated by the R value of 0.854 and R Square of 0.730, which implies that 73% of the variance in the dependent variable is explained. Additionally, a high R Square value shows that the model fits the data well. A strong linear association is confirmed by the high R value.

Tale 5: ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	734.459	3	244.820	357.083	.000 ^b
	Residual	271.501	396	.686		
	Total	1005.960	399			
a. Dependent-Variable: PURCHASE_DECISION						
b. Predictor-Variable: (Constant), SMM, BRAND_AWARENESS, BRAND_PREFERENCE						

Since, sig. value p (0.000) related to F statistic (357.083) is less than 0.05, the overall model is statistically significant.

Tale 6: Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.824	.385		2.140	.033
	SMM	.506	.019	.717	26.265	.000
a. Dependent-Variable: PURCHASE_DECISION						

There is a considerable influence of social media marketing on purchase decisions, as indicated by the sig. value p (0.000) associated with the t statistic (26.265) being less than 0.05. Consequently, the null hypothesis is disproved.

Regression Model

$$Y = B_0 + B_1 X + \text{err}$$

$Y = \text{Purchase_Decision}$, $X = \text{SMM}$

$\text{err} = \text{Error}$, $B_0 = \text{Constant (Coefficient of Intercept)}$

$B_1 = \text{Regression Coefficient of}$

Purchase_Decision

$Y = 0.824 + 0.506 X + \text{err}$

Suggestions

The researcher has provided the following suggestions based on the conclusions drawn from the complete study and the obtained replies:

1. Social media can be a valuable tool for businesses, offering benefits such as increased website traffic, consumer engagement, brand recognition, and brand preference. Therefore, it is important to carefully plan social media marketing in order to leverage these advantages.
2. Marketers are advised to thoroughly examine and evaluate the reviews, comments, and opinions left by customers on their social media accounts, as this information can be highly valuable.
3. It is not recommended to completely replace traditional media in brand promotion with social media. Traditional media still holds significance and plays an important role in brand marketing.
4. Utilizing images, videos, pictures, and other visually appealing materials for social media marketing is appropriate and effective.

Limitations and Scope for Future Research

This empirical study is limited to 400 young customers based in Bangalore who are familiar with social media marketing. The findings cannot be generalized as the majority of respondents fall within the 18-24 age range. Additionally, the study's results may be influenced by the bias or prejudice of the respondents. Conducting further research with larger sample sizes and including consumers from different age groups would provide more comprehensive insights. It is also suggested to conduct similar studies that encompass other forms of digital marketing.

Concluding Remarks

In short, this study details how young consumers view social media marketing. Furthermore, there exists positive correlation between social media marketing and brand awareness, brand preference and purchase decision. Social media marketing also significantly affects brand awareness, brand preference, and purchase decisions. Finally, social media marketing has presented numerous opportunities to marketers.

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