

Impact of Social Media Marketing on Consumer Buying Behaviour: An Ideal Research Review

Rajni

Visiting Faculty, R.K.D. College & Arcade Business College, Patna

ABSTRACT

The exponential growth of social media platforms has fundamentally transformed the landscape of marketing and consumer behaviour. Social media marketing has emerged as a powerful strategic tool that enables organizations to influence consumer perceptions, attitudes, and purchasing decisions through interactive and personalized communication. Unlike traditional marketing channels, social media platforms facilitate two-way engagement, allowing consumers to actively participate in brand communication through reviews, shares, comments, and content creation. This Ideal Research Review (IRR) aims to critically analyse existing scholarly literature on the impact of social media marketing on consumer buying behaviour. The review synthesizes findings from national and international research studies to examine key determinants such as brand awareness, consumer engagement, trust, electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), influencer marketing, and purchase intention. The paper further identifies major trends, conceptual frameworks, and empirical evidence while highlighting significant research gaps. The study concludes that social media marketing has a substantial and positive influence on consumer buying behaviour and plays a decisive role throughout the consumer decision-making process. The findings provide valuable insights for marketers, academicians, and policymakers in understanding consumer behaviour in the digital era.

Keywords: *Social Media Marketing, Consumer Buying Behaviour, Electronic Word-of-Mouth, Influencer Marketing, Digital Marketing, Ideal Research Review*

1. Introduction:

In recent years, the rapid advancement of digital technology and the widespread adoption of internet-enabled devices have transformed how individuals communicate, interact, and consume information. Among these digital developments, social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter (X), YouTube, LinkedIn, and TikTok have gained immense popularity, becoming an integral part of everyday life. These platforms have not only changed interpersonal communication but have also revolutionized marketing practices across industries.

Social media marketing has emerged as a dominant force in the contemporary marketing environment. It allows organizations to reach a vast

audience at relatively low cost while enabling personalized and interactive communication. Consumers today rely heavily on social media for product discovery, information gathering, price comparison, reviews, and recommendations before making purchase decisions. As a result, social media marketing significantly influences consumer buying behaviour at various stages of the decision-making process. Consumer buying behaviour refers to the actions and decision-making processes of individuals when purchasing goods and services. Traditionally, consumer behaviour was influenced by factors such as culture, social class, personal preferences, and marketing stimuli. However, the

advent of social media has introduced new dimensions, including peer influence, online communities, influencer endorsements, and user-generated content. These elements have reshaped consumer perceptions and attitudes toward brands and products.

Given the growing relevance of social media marketing, it is essential to systematically review existing literature to understand its impact on consumer buying behaviour. This Ideal Research Review consolidates and critically evaluates scholarly studies to provide a comprehensive understanding of how social media marketing affects consumers' purchasing decisions.

2. Research Gaps Identified

Despite extensive research, several gaps remain:

- I. Limited longitudinal studies examining long-term behavioural changes.
- II. Insufficient research on negative impacts such as information overload and digital fatigue.
- III. Lack of comparative studies across different cultural and demographic contexts.
- IV. Limited focus on ethical concerns and data privacy issues.
- V. Need for standardized measurement models for social media marketing effectiveness.

3. Objectives of the Study:

The specific objectives of this Ideal Research Review are:

1. To understand the concept and evolution of social media marketing.
2. To examine consumer buying behaviour in the context of digital and social media environments.
3. To review and synthesize existing literature on the impact of social media marketing on consumer buying behaviour.
4. To identify key factors influencing consumer purchase decisions through social media platforms.

5. To analyse major findings, trends, and theoretical perspectives in existing studies.
- 6) To identify research gaps and propose directions for future research.

4. Research Methodology:

This study adopts a systematic literature review methodology, which is appropriate for an Ideal Research Review paper. The review is based entirely on secondary data collected from scholarly sources such as peer-reviewed journals, books, conference proceedings, and academic research articles.

Relevant literature was identified using keywords such as social media marketing, consumer buying behaviour, purchase intention, eWOM, and influencer marketing. Priority was given to studies published in reputed national and international journals over the past decade to ensure contemporary relevance. The selected studies were critically analysed, categorized, and synthesized to draw meaningful conclusions regarding the relationship between social media marketing and consumer buying behaviour.

5. Conceptual Framework :

I. Concept of Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing refers to the use of social networking platforms to promote products, services, and brands through content creation, advertising, community building, and consumer engagement. It includes activities such as posting promotional content, running paid advertisements, collaborating with influencers, and interacting with consumers through comments and messages.

Unlike traditional marketing, social media marketing emphasizes relationship building, engagement, and trust. It allows organizations to create brand communities and foster long-term relationships with consumers. The interactive nature of social media enables marketers to receive instant feedback and adapt strategies accordingly.

2. Consumer Buying Behaviour:

Consumer buying behaviour encompasses the mental, emotional, and behavioural processes that

consumers undergo before, during, and after purchasing a product or service. The decision-making process typically includes problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, and post-purchase behaviour. Social media has significantly influenced each stage of this process. Consumers increasingly depend on online reviews, peer recommendations, influencer opinions, and brand interactions on social media platforms, making digital influence a critical determinant of buying behaviour.

6. Review of Literature:

I. Social Media Marketing and brand awareness:

Numerous studies have established that social media marketing plays a crucial role in enhancing brand awareness. Regular exposure to brand-related content increases brand visibility and recall among consumers. Interactive posts, videos, stories, and advertisements enable brands to maintain a consistent presence in consumers' social media feeds.

Research indicates that consumers are more likely to remember and recognize brands that actively engage with audiences on social media. Brand awareness serves as the foundation for consumer consideration and purchase decisions, making social media marketing a vital tool for building brand equity.

II. Impact on Consumer Attitudes:

Several researchers have examined the influence of social media marketing on consumer attitudes toward brands. Positive brand-related content, engaging storytelling, and transparent communication contribute to favourable consumer attitudes. Social media platforms allow brands to humanize their image, which strengthens emotional connections with consumers. Studies suggest that consumers develop positive perceptions toward brands that provide informative, entertaining, and authentic content. These attitudes significantly influence purchase intention and brand preference.

III. Influence on Purchase Intention:

Purchase intention is a key predictor of actual

buying behaviour. Existing literature consistently demonstrates a positive relationship between social media marketing activities and consumer purchase intention. Promotional offers, targeted advertisements, and influencer endorsements on social media motivate consumers to consider and purchase products. Consumers exposed to persuasive social media content are more likely to develop interest and intent to buy. The immediacy and accessibility of social media platforms further facilitate impulse buying behaviour.

IV. Role of Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM):

Electronic word-of-mouth refers to online reviews, ratings, comments, and recommendations shared by consumers on social media platforms. eWOM is considered more credible than traditional advertising because it reflects real consumer experiences. Research highlights that positive eWOM significantly enhances consumer trust and purchase intention, while negative eWOM can deter consumers from buying. Consumers often rely on peer reviews and feedback before making purchase decisions, making eWOM a powerful influence on buying behaviour.

V. Influencer Marketing and Consumer Trust:

Influencer marketing has gained prominence as a strategic component of social media marketing. Influencers act as opinion leaders whose endorsements influence followers' attitudes and purchasing decisions. Studies suggest that influencer credibility, expertise, and authenticity are crucial factors affecting consumer trust. Consumers tend to trust influencers they perceive as genuine and relatable, making influencer recommendations highly persuasive. This form of marketing is particularly effective among younger consumers who actively engage with social media influencers.

VI. Consumer Engagement and Interaction:

Consumer engagement refers to the level of interaction between consumers and brands on social media platforms. Engagement includes likes, comments, shares, participation in contests, and direct communication with brands.

Research indicates that higher levels of engagement lead to stronger emotional bonds, brand loyalty, and repeat purchases. Engaged consumers are more likely to advocate for brands by sharing positive experiences and recommendations.

VII. Social Media Marketing and Brand Loyalty

Brand loyalty is influenced by consistent and meaningful interactions on social media. Studies reveal that social media marketing fosters loyalty by providing value-added content, personalized communication, and prompt customer service. Consumers who feel connected to a brand through social media are more likely to remain loyal and make repeat purchases. Social media communities further strengthen loyalty by creating a sense of belonging among consumers.

7. Synthesis of Key Findings:

The reviewed literature reveals several consistent findings:

1. Social media marketing has a significant positive impact on consumer buying behaviour.
2. Brand awareness, trust, engagement, and social influence are key mediating factors.
3. User-generated content and eWOM have higher credibility than traditional advertising.
4. Influencer marketing strongly influences purchase intention.
5. Consumer engagement on social media contributes to long-term brand loyalty.
6. These findings highlight the strategic importance of social media marketing in influencing consumer behaviour across different industries.

8. Conclusion :

This Ideal Research Review concludes that social media marketing has fundamentally transformed consumer buying behaviour. It influences consumers at every stage of the decision-making process, from awareness and information search to purchase and post-purchase evaluation. Trust, engagement, and social influence emerge as critical drivers of consumer

behaviour in the digital environment. As social media continues to evolve, marketers and researchers must adapt strategies and frameworks to understand and leverage its influence effectively.

9. Future Research Directions:

Future research may focus on:

1. Platform-specific studies comparing Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube.
2. Rural and semi-urban consumer behaviour.
3. Impact of artificial intelligence and algorithms on social media marketing.
4. Ethical implications and consumer privacy concerns.
5. Cross-cultural comparisons of consumer responses to social media marketing.

References:

1. Ajina, A. S. (2019). The role of social media engagement in influencing consumer behaviour. *International Journal of Information Management*, 46, 1–13.
2. Duffett, R. G. (2017). Influence of social media marketing communications on young consumers' attitudes. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 35(6), 843–861.
3. Erkan, I., & Evans, C. (2016). The influence of eWOM on social media on consumers' purchase intentions. *Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing*, 10(2), 142–161.
4. Kaplan, A. M., & Haenlein, M. (2010). Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of social media. *Business Horizons*, 53(1), 59–68.
5. Kotler, P., Keller, K. L., Koshy, A., & Jha, M. (2021). *Marketing Management* (15th ed.). Pearson Education.
6. Mangold, W. G., & Faulds, D. J. (2009). Social media: The new hybrid element of the promotion mix. *Business Horizons*, 52(4), 357–365.
7. Tuten, T. L., & Solomon, M. R. (2018). *Social Media Marketing*. Sage Publications.

