

THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON CONSUMER PURCHASING DECISIONS

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Abstract

This research examines the influence of social media on consumer purchase decisions, focusing on how platforms such as Instagram, Facebook and Twitter shape consumer behaviour and perceptions. Social media provides quick and broad access to product reviews, recommendations and direct interaction with brands, which further influences purchase decisions. The role of influencers and paid content on social media is also an important factor in shaping consumer preferences and loyalty. However, challenges arise in the form of subjective and sometimes misleading information, which can cloud the decision-making process. Therefore, an effective marketing strategy on social media should emphasise openness and honesty, while consumers should be more critical in filtering information.

Keywords: Influence, Social Media, Consumer Purchase Decision.

Introduction

Since the last few decades, the development of the digital era has been taking place at a rapid pace, changing the way humans interact, work, and do business. The digital era is characterised by advances in information and communication technologies, such as the internet, computers, and increasingly sophisticated mobile devices. The internet has become a fundamental infrastructure that enables fast and efficient exchange of data and information around the world (Gupta & Kim, 2025). This infrastructure has brought about various innovations such as social media, e-commerce, and web-based applications that have had a significant impact on various aspects of human life. People now live in a digitally connected world, where access to information and communication has become easier and cheaper (Chan & Goh, 2023).

The development of the digital era has also created new opportunities and challenges for various industries. In the business sector, companies are competing to adapt to digital technology to improve operational efficiency and expand market reach. Digitalisation of business processes allows companies to deliver products and services that are more in line with consumer needs, and accelerate the pace of innovation. However, the digital era also brings challenges, such as data security, privacy, and dependence on technology (Martin & Murphy, 2022). In addition, digital transformation demands significant investment and organisational culture change to compete in an

increasingly competitive global market. Technological developments such as artificial intelligence (AI), Internet of Things (IoT), and big data also continue to push the boundaries of possibility and pave the way for the next industrial revolution (Silva & Simões, 2023).

Ever since humans went digital, social media has become an integral part of everyday life. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok are not only used to communicate and share information, but have also become key tools in marketing and advertising products and services. Companies from various industries are increasingly realising the importance of their presence on social media to reach consumers effectively (Sivakumar, 2014).

One of the main reasons for using social media in marketing strategies is its ability to influence consumer behaviour. Through social media, consumers get product information, reviews from other users, and recommendations from influencers or key opinion leaders (KOLs). This information can significantly influence consumer purchasing decisions. Social media allows consumers to engage in interactions with brands directly, provide feedback, and take part in discussions related to products and services (Hutter et al., 2013).

Social media has revolutionised the way consumers interact with brands, bringing immediacy and openness that was previously not possible through traditional communication channels. On social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn, consumers can easily connect with their favourite brands, provide feedback, and express expectations and complaints directly (Rahman & Mannan, 2020). The presence of social media allows brands to hear the voice of consumers more tangibly and quickly, so that they can respond immediately to improve services or increase customer satisfaction. This interaction not only serves as a communication channel, but also as a tool to build more personalised and emotional relationships with consumers, which in turn can increase brand loyalty (Cheung & Thadani, 2012).

In addition, social media also provides a platform where consumers can engage in discussions related to a brand's products and services. In online communities, users can share their experiences, provide recommendations, and discuss various aspects of the product with fellow consumers. These discussions are often monitored by brands to gain valuable insights into consumer satisfaction and needs (Jalilvand & Samiei, 2020). Through open dialogue, brands can identify trends, potential problems, and opportunities for innovation that may not be apparent in traditional market research. In this digital age, social media has become an essential tool for brands to stay relevant and responsive to changing market dynamics, as well as to build a solid community foundation among their customer base (Zhang & Kuang, 2024).

However, while the influence of social media on purchase decisions appears significant, many studies show mixed results. Some studies find that exposure to

adverts and reviews on social media directly increases purchase intention and purchase decisions, while other studies show that factors such as source credibility, information quality, and consumer engagement also play an important role (Wang & Li, 2022) . Therefore, it is important to conduct a comprehensive literature review to understand the key factors that mediate the relationship between social media and consumer purchase decisions.

Research Methods

The study in this research uses the literature method. The literature research method is an approach used to collect and analyse information available from various written sources, such as books, journal articles, reports, theses, and other related documents, to answer research questions or develop a theoretical framework. In this method, the researcher systematically reviews, assesses, and synthesises the results of previous studies in order to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the topic under study (Green et al., 2006) ; (Galvan & Galvan, 2017) . The steps typically taken include searching for relevant literature, selecting and screening quality sources, analysing content to identify key findings, and structuring information to draw conclusions that support the research objectives. Through literature research, researchers can evaluate the historical development of a particular area of study, identify gaps in existing research, as well as provide a strong theoretical basis for further research (Torraco, 2005) .

Results and Discussion

The Function and Role of Social Media in Marketing

Social media plays a very important role in modern marketing, serving as a bridge between brands and customers. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn open up more personalised and direct channels of communication with target audiences, facilitating more effective interactions and higher engagement. With a consistent online presence, brands can establish and maintain their identity, ensuring that they remain relevant amidst increasingly fierce competition (Evans, 2010) .

One of the main functions of social media in marketing is to build brand awareness. Through engaging and entertaining content, brands can grab consumers' attention and introduce new products or services. Platforms such as Instagram and TikTok, which are highly visual, allow brands to tell stories creatively, inviting users to interact and share content with their networks, which in turn extends the brand's reach at no extra cost (Carvalho & Fernandes, 2021) .

Social media also provides a great opportunity to expand customer networks in a measurable and structured way. Through the analytical tools available, brands can monitor and understand the demographics, behaviour and preferences of their audience. This data allows brands to better tailor their marketing strategies , ensuring

that the messages delivered are on target and relevant to consumers' needs (Tuten & Solomon, 2018).

In this digital age, speed of response is key, and social media provides a quick two-way communication channel between brands and consumers. These platforms allow consumers to ask questions, provide feedback or report issues easily, and brands can respond in real-time. Fast and effective responses can increase customer trust and loyalty, while slow or negative responses can damage brand reputation (Brown & Broderick, 2021).

Additionally, social media serves as a tool to manage a brand's overall reputation. Brands can proactively monitor conversations about them on social media, respond to negative feedback, and celebrate positive reviews. With proper reputation management, brands can turn potential crises into opportunities to demonstrate their commitment to superior customer service (Statista, 2021).

Through social media, brands can also run innovative marketing campaigns at a lower cost compared to traditional marketing channels. Activities such as viral content, use of influencers, and hashtag campaigns can generate significant results with minimal investment. This gives brands the ability to experiment with different marketing strategies without huge financial risks (Mallik & Roy, 2022).

The role of social media in content marketing cannot be ignored. Brands can share articles, videos, infographics and various other forms of content that educate, entertain and build relationships with consumers. Effective content marketing on social media can establish a brand's authority within a particular industry, positioning them as a trusted and authoritative thought leader (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

In addition, social media allows for deeper personalisation in marketing relationships. The use of advanced tools such as targeted advertising allows brands to deliver tailored messages based on users' demographics, interests or online behaviour. This results in a more relevant and engaging experience for consumers, increasing the likelihood of conversion (Hudders & Pandelaere., 2020)

Another important function is to enable collaboration and community engagement. Social media allows brands to join existing communities or build new communities around their products or services. Active engagement in communities can provide brands with valuable insights into market trends and emerging customer needs (Li et al., 2020).

Finally, social media also provides a platform for brands to track and measure the success of their marketing campaigns. With the analytics tools available, brands can track metrics such as reach, engagement, and conversion rates, allowing them to assess the effectiveness of their marketing strategies and make the necessary adjustments to improve performance in the future. These measurements help brands to stay competitive and responsive in the ever-changing market.

Purchase Decision Making Model

The purchase decision-making model is the process that consumers go through in making choices to buy products or services. This process usually consists of several stages that help consumers make the right decision based on the information available (Ahmed & Streimikis ., 2021)

The first stage in this model is need recognition. Consumers realise a need or problem that must be addressed. This need can arise from various factors, such as damage to an old product, changes in life situations, or influences from advertisements and promotions. Need recognition is a crucial step because without a need, there will be no decision-making process (Lee & Yang, 2022) .

Once the need is identified, the next stage is information search. Consumers start looking for information about products or services that can fulfil their needs. This information can be obtained from various sources, such as friends, family, advertisements, online reviews, and personal experience. In today's digital era, the internet is one of the main sources for conducting product research (Baker & Donthu ., 2021)

The third stage is the evaluation of alternatives. In this stage, consumers compare the various products or services they have found during their information search. This evaluation is carried out based on various criteria important to consumers, such as price, quality, features, and product benefits. Each individual may have different criteria in conducting this evaluation, depending on personal preferences and needs (Nielsen, 2019) .

After evaluating alternatives, consumers arrive at the purchase decision stage. The decision to buy or not buy a product is influenced by the results of the evaluation that has been carried out. Sometimes, this decision can also be influenced by external factors such as promotions, availability of goods, or input from others (Wang & Li, 2022).

The next stage is post-purchase behaviour. After a purchase is made, consumers will evaluate the product or service they have purchased. Consumers will assess whether the product meets their expectations and needs. If consumers are satisfied, they are likely to make repeat purchases in the future and recommend the product to others (Chae & Kim, 2020) .

However, if consumers are dissatisfied, they may not buy the product again or even leave a negative review. Unsatisfactory purchase decisions can also result in consumers looking for alternatives in the future . Therefore, it is important for companies to ensure that their products meet or exceed consumer expectations (Murray & Jaravaza ., 2024)

Overall, the purchase decision-making model is a complex process that involves many factors. Understanding these stages can help companies design effective marketing strategies to attract and retain consumers. Companies that are able to

understand and fulfil consumer needs at each decision-making stage are likely to be more successful in building customer loyalty (Ngai & Moon, 2024).

Thus, the purchase decision-making model is a process consisting of several stages, namely need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decisions, and post-purchase behaviour. Each of these stages is interrelated and affects the final decision of consumers in choosing a product or service. Understanding this process is very important for companies to develop appropriate and effective marketing strategies. By meeting consumer needs and expectations, companies can build strong customer loyalty and increase their long-term success in the market.

The Influence of Social Media on Consumer Behaviour

The influence of social media on consumer behaviour is significant in today's digital age. Social media has become a key platform for consumers to discover, assess and decide what products or services they will buy. The existence of social media allows users to share their experiences and opinions about products or services, which in turn influences the purchasing decisions of others. Experiences and reviews from others are often more trusted than advertisements from companies, so social media has changed the way consumers interact and react to marketing (Khalifa & Limayem., 2025)

One of the influences of social media on consumer behaviour is the ease of access to product information. Consumers can easily find detailed information about products through reviews, posts, and recommendations from friends or influencers. This makes the information search process faster and more efficient than before. In addition, social media also offers direct interaction with brands through commenting or messaging features, so consumers can quickly get answers to their questions (Yang & Wang, 2023).

Social media also influences consumer behaviour through the FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) phenomenon. When consumers see friends or public figures buying or using certain products, they may feel compelled to do the same so as not to feel left behind. This can increase the urge to buy a particular product even if the consumer doesn't really need it. These feelings are often created through marketing tactics that utilise user reviews, hashtags and exclusive promotions on social media (Hajli., 2014)

Influencer marketing is another strategy that leverages the power of social media. Companies often work with influencers or public figures who have a large following to promote their products. Recommendations from trusted influencers can greatly influence consumers' purchasing decisions, especially if the influencer is considered an expert or a lifestyle model that their followers want to follow. The effect of this can be huge, significantly increasing product sales with just one post from an influencer (Gupta & Kim, 2025).

Consumer reviews and opinions published on social media also play an important role in buying decision factors. Prehistoric consumers may not have had much feedback from buyers before them at the time of making a purchase decision. Now, with product reviews on social media and review sites, consumers have access to a wider range of other people's experiences and can use them to evaluate whether the product is worth buying or not. Even negative reviews can be useful for companies to improve the quality of their products or services (Chan & Goh, 2023).

The influence of social media does not end with the initial purchase decision, but also extends to consumers' post-purchase behaviour. After buying and using a product, consumers tend to share their experiences on social media. Positive experiences can strengthen their loyalty to the brand and attract new customers, while negative experiences can be very detrimental and spread quickly, resulting in reputational damage to the brand (Martin & Murphy, 2022).

In addition, social media also provides opportunities for consumers to be directly involved in product promotion or development. Through interactive features such as polls, surveys, or prize competitions, companies can gather valuable feedback from consumers regarding their products. This not only helps companies understand consumers' true needs and wants but also creates a feeling of engagement and community among customers (Silva & Simões, 2023).

Not only that, consumer satisfaction can also increase through more responsive customer service on social media. Consumers who experience problems with products or services can contact the company directly through social media platforms and get a quick response. This efficient interaction can lead to increased consumer trust and loyalty to the brand (Sivakumar, 2014).

Of course, social media also creates its own challenges for companies. They must constantly monitor and manage their online reputation, respond quickly to negative feedback, and understand how changing social media trends can affect consumer behaviour. Brands that do not adapt well to these changes may be left behind by rivals that are more sensitive to social media dynamics (Hutter et al., 2013).

Overall, social media has become an integral element in the marketing process and has fundamentally changed consumer behaviour. By using social media effectively, companies can gain better insights into their consumers, build stronger relationships with customers, and ultimately increase their business success. However, it is also important for consumers to remain critical and thoughtful in using information from social media so that the purchasing decisions they make are truly in line with their needs and wants.

Conclusion

Social media has changed the way consumers seek information and make purchasing decisions. Platforms such as Instagram, Facebook and Twitter allow

consumers to access product reviews, recommendations and other users' experiences quickly and easily. In addition, influencers and paid promotions are increasingly influencing consumers' perceptions and interest in certain brands or products. Direct interaction with brands through social media also gives consumers a sense of engagement and a more personalised relationship, which in turn can strengthen consumer loyalty.

However, the impact of social media on consumer purchasing decisions is not always positive. The abundance and often subjective nature of information can confuse consumers and make the decision process more complicated. In addition, the spread of false information or dishonest reviews can mislead consumers in choosing products. Consumers also need to be more critical in filtering information and distinguishing between legitimate reviews and those that are paid or influenced by certain interests.

Overall, social media plays an important role in consumer purchasing decisions, whether through information dissemination, opinion formation or direct brand engagement. Companies need to devise a good social media strategy to capitalise on this trend, focusing on openness, honesty and authentic interactions with consumers. On the other hand, consumers need to be wiser in using social media as a purchasing decision aid in order to make more informed and appropriate choices.

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