

A Study on the Impact of Social Media Marketing on Customer Buying Behaviour with Special Reference to Chennai District

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Abstract

This study analyzes the impact of social media marketing on consumer buying behaviour in the digital environment. It examines key determinants such as social media advertisements, influencer marketing and electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) in shaping purchase intention. The research highlights the role of consumer engagement, trust and brand communication in influencing decision-making processes. Findings indicate that social media platforms significantly affect information search, evaluation of alternatives and final purchase decisions. The study also identifies that personalized and interactive content enhances consumer responsiveness and impulse buying behaviour. Overall, social media marketing is found to be a critical factor in influencing modern consumer purchase behaviour.

Keywords: Social Media Marketing, Consumer Behaviour, Purchase Intention, e-WOM, Influencer Marketing

Introduction

The rapid growth of digital technology and widespread internet usage have significantly transformed the way businesses communicate with customers. Among various digital platforms, social media has emerged as one of the most influential tools for marketing, enabling organizations to reach, engage and interact with customers in real time. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and YouTube are no longer limited to social networking but have become powerful channels for advertising, brand promotion, and relationship building. As a result, social media marketing has gained immense importance in shaping customer awareness, preferences, and buying behaviour.

Social media marketing allows companies to present products and services through advertisements, influencer endorsements, interactive content and user-generated reviews. Unlike traditional marketing, social media provides two-way communication, enabling customers to share feedback, opinions and experiences. This interaction has a strong influence on the customer decision-making process, from information search to final purchase. Factors such as electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM), trust, perceived credibility and emotional engagement play a vital role in influencing buying behaviour in the social media environment. In the Indian context, the impact of social media marketing has become more significant due to increased smartphone penetration, affordable internet access and a growing population of digitally active customers. Indian customers, especially youth and working professionals, rely heavily on social media platforms for product information, brand comparisons and recommendations before making purchase decisions. Businesses across sectors such as retail, fashion, electronics and services increasingly use social media marketing strategies to influence customer buying behaviour and build brand loyalty.

Despite the growing use of social media marketing, customer responses to such marketing efforts vary based on demographic factors, platform usage and individual perceptions. Understanding how social media marketing influences buying behaviour is therefore essential for marketers to design effective strategies and for researchers to explore emerging patterns in customer behaviour. This study seeks to analyse the impact of social media marketing on customer buying behaviour by examining key marketing elements, customer perceptions and demographic influences in the Indian context.

Review of Literature

Singh (2022), the author conducted a critical study on the impact of social media marketing on consumer buying behaviour in India. The research aimed to analyze how digital marketing campaigns influence purchasing decisions across different demographic groups. The findings revealed that social media marketing significantly increases product awareness and influences consumer perceptions. The study also highlighted that promotional content, discounts, and influencer endorsements play important roles in attracting consumers. It was observed that consumers often compare products online before making purchase decisions. The author concluded that social media marketing has become a powerful tool for influencing consumer behaviour in the Indian market.

Savita and Mittal I. (2023), the research focused on the growing influence of social media influencers on consumer purchasing decisions. The study found that influencer credibility, expertise, and trustworthiness significantly affect consumers' attitudes toward products. Consumers tend to perceive influencer recommendations as more authentic compared to traditional advertisements. The findings indicated that influencer marketing is particularly effective among young consumers who actively follow social media personalities. The study also revealed that influencers play an important role in creating brand awareness and shaping consumer perceptions. Additionally, the research highlighted that visual storytelling and product demonstrations increase consumers' interest in products. The authors concluded that influencer marketing has become a powerful strategy in digital marketing and significantly influences consumer buying behaviour.

Bhatt H. B., Rokadiya N. H. and Rohada N. G. (2024), the study examined how different aspects of social media marketing affect consumer purchase intentions and buying behaviour. The research found that social media platforms provide consumers with easy access to product information, reviews, and recommendations. Consumers were found to rely on online interactions and brand communications when evaluating products. The findings indicated that social media engagement, such as likes, comments, and shares, significantly influences consumer perceptions and attitudes toward brands. The study also revealed that influencer marketing and promotional content play a key role in shaping purchase intentions. Furthermore, the research emphasized that trust and brand credibility are important factors in converting social media engagement into actual purchases. The authors concluded that social media has become an essential marketing tool influencing consumer behaviour in the digital marketplace.

Peter L., Mathew J. and Joseph C. G. (2025), the research aimed to analyse how social media marketing influences consumer purchase intentions in the cosmetic industry. The study found that beauty brands actively use social media platforms to promote products and interact with customers. Consumers were observed to rely on product reviews, beauty tutorials, and influencer recommendations when choosing cosmetic products. The findings revealed that social media marketing enhances brand awareness and builds consumer trust. The research also highlighted that visual appeal and product demonstrations significantly influence consumer

purchase decisions. The authors concluded that social media marketing has a strong impact on consumer behaviour in the cosmetic industry.

Krishnan K. and Jamunarani N. (2025), the research focused on understanding how social media marketing affects consumer buying behaviour in an urban Indian context. The study found that consumers in Chennai actively use social media platforms to gather information about products and services. The findings indicated that social media advertisements, influencer endorsements, and promotional offers significantly influence purchasing decisions. The study also revealed that consumers often compare products and read online reviews before making purchases. Furthermore, the research highlighted that interactive communication between brands and consumers improves customer satisfaction and trust. The authors concluded that social media marketing plays an important role in shaping consumer buying behaviour in metropolitan cities like Chennai.

Aishwarya T. S. and Bharati S. S. (2025), the research examined how social media marketing activities influence consumer purchasing behaviour across different product categories. The findings revealed that social media platforms provide consumers with easy access to product information, advertisements, and reviews. The study also found that consumers rely heavily on user-generated content and peer recommendations before making purchase decisions. The research highlighted that social media marketing helps businesses build brand awareness and strengthen customer relationships. In addition, promotional campaigns and discounts shared on social media were found to encourage impulse buying behaviour. The authors concluded that social media marketing significantly influences consumer purchasing behaviour in the modern digital environment.

Statement of the Problem

Social media marketing has emerged as a dominant force shaping how customers interact with brands, evaluate products, and make purchase decisions. Many recent studies show that social media marketing activities such as brand posts, user engagement, electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) and influencer content play a significant role in influencing customer awareness and purchase intentions.

Despite these documented effects, the literature still shows important gaps in understanding how and why social media marketing influences behaviour across different stages of the

customer decision process. Much of the existing research tends to focus on broad correlations such as linking social media exposure to purchase intention without clearly explaining the underlying mechanisms or identifying which specific components of social media marketing.

The core research problem for this study can be articulated as, although social media marketing has been shown to influence customer buying behaviour, there is limited understanding of the specific marketing elements that drive this effect, how demographic and contextual variables moderate this relationship and the psychological processes through which social media engagement translates into actual purchasing decisions.

The absence of holistic frameworks that combine strategic, psychological, and contextual factors limits a deeper understanding of how social media marketing shapes consumer decision-making processes. Therefore, there is a strong need for more integrated and theory driven research that explains not only whether social media marketing influences buying behaviour, but also how and under what conditions this influence becomes significant.

Objectives

The objective of the present study are follows:

- To study the customers behaviour of social media marketing activities.
- To understand the impact of social media marketing on customers' buying behaviour.
- To analyse the influencing factors on customers of different social media marketing activities.
- To examine the effect of social media marketing on impulse buying behaviour among customers.

Research Design

The study is empirical in nature as it focuses on real-time data collected from respondents. The study is based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected from respondents using a structured questionnaire designed to capture opinions regarding social media marketing and buying behaviour. The questionnaire was administered personally for customers in the Chennai District. Secondary data were collected from sources related to social media marketing and customer behaviour like research journals, academic articles, books, published theses, websites and reports. A sample size of 125 respondents was considered for the study. The study uses a convenience sampling technique, as respondents were selected

based on their availability and willingness to participate. The data collected were analysed using appropriate analysis techniques such as percentage analysis, tabulation, bar charts and pie charts, simple comparative analysis. These techniques were used to interpret customer responses and test the relationship between social media marketing and buying behaviour.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The collected data is analysed and tabulated below to explore the study's objectives.

Demographic profile includes gender, age, educational qualification, occupation and monthly income.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Demographic Profile	Categories	Frequency
Gender	Male	42.4
	Female	57.6
	Transgender	-
Age	Below 20	12
	21-30	72.8
	31-40	8
	41 and above	7.2
Educational Qualification	Illiterate	-
	School Education	10.4
	Under Graduate	48
	Postgraduate and Above	41.6
Occupation	Employee	42.4
	Business	8
	Professional	18.4
	Others	31.2
Monthly Income	Below Rs. 10,0000	26.4
	Rs. 10,001- Rs. 25,000	24
	Rs. 25,001 – Rs. 50,000	27.2
	Above Rs. 50,000	22.4

Source: Primary Data

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of respondents, indicating a higher proportion of females (57.6%) compared to males (42.4%). The majority of respondents belong to the 21–30 age group (72.8%), showing that the sample is largely composed of young adults. In terms of education, most respondents are undergraduates (48%) and postgraduates (41.6%), reflecting a well-educated sample. Regarding occupation, employees form the largest group (42.4%), followed by others (31.2%) and professionals (18.4%). The income distribution is relatively balanced, with a slightly higher proportion in the Rs. 25,001–50,000 range (27.2%) and below Rs. 10,000 (26.4%). Overall, the data suggests that the study primarily represents young, educated, and working individuals with moderate income levels.

Customers' Behaviour of Social Media Marketing Activities**Table 2: Social Media Platform Preferences**

Social Media Platforms	No. of Responses	Percentage
Instagram	100	44
Facebook	24	10.6
YouTube	82	36.1
Others	21	9.3
Total	227	100

*Source: Primary Data***Table 3: Daily Social Media Usage**

Response Category	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	111	88.8
No	14	11.2
Total	125	100

*Source: Primary Data***Table 4: Intensity of Social Media Engagement**

Response Category	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Always	26	20.8
Often	64	51.2
Sometimes	31	24.8
Rarely	3	2.4
Never	1	0.8
Total	125	100

*Source: Primary Data***Table 5: Exposure to Social Media Advertising Content**

Response Category	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Always	41	32.8
Often	47	37.6
Sometimes	27	21.6
Rarely	10	8
Never	-	-
Total	125	100

Source: Primary Data

Table 6: Engagement with Brand Pages on Social Media

Response Category	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Always	6	4.8
Often	18	14.4
Sometimes	43	34.4
Rarely	33	26.4
Never	25	20
Total	125	100

Source: Primary Data

Tables 2–6 indicate that social media significantly influences customer behaviour toward marketing activities. Instagram and YouTube emerge as the most preferred platforms, showing their strong reach and engagement potential. A majority of respondents use social media daily and engage with content frequently, highlighting its importance in customers' routine lives. Exposure to social media advertising is also high, with most users encountering ads regularly. However, engagement with brand pages is comparatively moderate, as many respondents interact only occasionally. Overall, customer behaviour is driven by high usage and exposure, but active brand engagement remains selective, aligning with the study's objective.

Impact of Social Media Marketing on Buying Behaviour

Table 7: Influence of Social Media on Purchase Decisions

Response Category	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Extremely likely	22	17.6
Likely	63	50.4
Unlikely	32	25.6
Extremely unlikely	8	6.4
Total	125	100

Source: Primary Data

Table 8: Overall Influence of Social Media Marketing on Consumer Buying Behaviour

Response Category	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	81	64.8
No	44	35.2
Total	125	100

Source: Primary Data

Tables 7 and 8 reveal that social media marketing exerts a considerable influence on customers' buying behaviour, with a majority of respondents indicating that it affects their purchase decisions (50.4% likely and 17.6% extremely likely) and 64.8% acknowledging its overall impact. This suggests that social media platforms play a key role in enhancing product awareness and supporting consumer decision-making through accessible information and promotional content. However, the presence of some unfavourable responses highlights that the effectiveness of social media marketing is influenced by factors such as trust and perceived credibility of the content.

Influencing Factors of Social Media Marketing Activities

Table 9: Determinants of Social Media Marketing Influence

Particulars	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Social media ads increase product awareness	35	59	22	6	3
Sponsored posts influence product interest	19	45	42	13	6
Influencer endorsements affect buying decisions	14	33	45	22	11
Trust in influencer recommended products	13	28	47	24	13
Online reviews influence purchase decisions	32	63	23	4	3
Positive comments build brand trust	30	60	24	9	2
Social media aids product comparison	16	65	35	5	4
Interactive content attracts attention	16	44	43	16	6
Discounts encourage purchases	34	50	34	2	5
Social media motivates product trial	23	50	37	11	4

Source: Primary Data

Table 9 shows that social media marketing significantly influences customer buying behaviour, with varying impact across activities. Informational factors such as online reviews and brand content have the strongest influence, while discounts and offers also play a key role in motivating purchases. Influencer endorsements and sponsored posts have a moderate effect, mainly shaping perceptions rather than directly driving decisions. Social media advertisements contribute more to awareness and product discovery than to immediate purchases. Overall,

customers are more influenced by credible, informative and value-driven content, aligning with the objective of identifying key influencing factors of social media marketing activities.

Effect on Impulse Buying Behaviour

Table 10: Tendency for Impulse Purchases via Social Media Advertising

Response Category	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Extremely likely	15	12
Likely	44	35.2
Unlikely	47	37.6
Extremely unlikely	19	15.2
Total	125	100

Source: Primary Data

Table 10 shows that social media marketing has a moderate influence on impulse buying behaviour among customers, with varying responses across individuals. Approximately 47.2% of respondents are likely to make impulse purchases through social media, indicating a notable impact of marketing stimuli. However, a slightly higher proportion (52.8%) are unlikely to engage in such behaviour, suggesting limited influence overall. Social media advertisements and promotional content can trigger spontaneous buying decisions, but their effect is not consistent across all users. Overall, impulse buying is influenced by social media to some extent, but remains dependent on individual factors, aligning with the objective of examining its effect on customer behaviour.

Findings and Conclusion

The study concludes that social media marketing plays a significant role in influencing customers' buying behaviour. Most respondents actively engage with social media platforms to gather product information, compare alternatives, and make purchase decisions. Factors such as advertisements, reviews, influencer recommendations and promotional offers strongly affect customer preferences and purchasing patterns.

The findings also reveal that social media marketing contributes to impulse buying behaviour, as attractive content and limited-time offers encourage unplanned purchases. Although a majority of respondents show confidence in social media purchases, a considerable number still express concerns regarding product quality and security, indicating the need for improved trust and transparency.

Overall, social media marketing has become an effective tool for businesses to reach and influence customers. Therefore, marketers should focus on creating engaging content, providing accurate product information, and building customer trust to enhance the effectiveness of social media marketing strategies and improve customer satisfaction.

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Author Biographies



M.Hilda is an entry-level M.Com professional with enthusiasm and a growth mindset. She has completed her Bachelor's degree in Commerce (B.Com) with a specialization in Accounting and Finance and currently pursuing a Master's degree in Commerce (M.Com). She has gained internship exposure in accounts department. With a strong passion for the accounting and banking field, she aspires to build her career in the financial accounting and banking sector. She also has a keen interest in research-oriented work and enjoy exploring data, processes and people-related insights. She is hardworking, creative and enthusiastic fresher, eager to learn, contribute and grow as a commerce professional.



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