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The influence of social media marketing on consumer purchasing patterns - evidence from Belagavi district

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Abstract

Social media now holds a key role in the communication toolkit. People utilize social media to connect with organizations all around the world. People all over the world are starting to share their experiences via social media sites like LinkedIn, Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook. As consumers, people exchange product reviews, details about a few services, dietary or health advice, product warnings, usage advice, and much more. On social media, people have many "Connections", which means that a large number of people absorb information. Customers and their purchasing decisions are influenced by this information. The emergence of social media is the newest trend in marketing. Social media can influence potential customers both during and after the sales process. Social media is a relatively inexpensive channel that allows advertisers to quickly engage with billions of active users. Brands must ensure that their target audience sees, admires, and shares their products on social media to influence consumer behavior. An important finding is that those who use social networking sites more often become more involved in decision-making. Customers who use social media marketing to look for calls are strongly connected with trust.

Keywords: Social-media, marketing, consumers purchase pattern, and impact of social medias

Introduction

Consumer purchase patterns are important because they provide insight into future consumer behavior and inclinations as well as needs, desires, wants, necessities, and lifestyles (Asma & Misbah, 2009) ^[1]. Marketers must understand what their customers want. Understanding consumer behavior is beneficial to marketers because it improves segmentation, targeting, and forecasting. Finding out what kind of things consumers desire is crucial before releasing a product onto the market. Thanks to technological improvements, marketers may now use social media as a platform for selling and advertising their goods and services. Marketers use this to their advantage by formulating a plan to help them draw in more clients.

Consumer purchasing behavior encompasses the actions consumers take before making a purchase of a good or service, as well as the situations in which they decide whether or not to buy anything. The largest concentration is found in customer behavior across all business and service industries. The most important thing that any business should know is how the requirements and tastes of its customers are evolving in the contemporary environment. Because shifts in the economy, culture, and technology have an impact on consumer behavior. These modifications ultimately affect the study venues, protocols, and objectives regarding consumer behavior (Peighambari *et al.*, 2016) ^[11].

Utilizing social media also enables a business to control the dissemination of its information, establish dialogue-based connections with potential clients, and raise client engagement. Public discourse is shaped by it, and companies that operate in it are growing increasingly conscious of its influence on society. The social media presence of a business may affect the decisions that customers make about what to buy. A business can boost website traffic, income, client fulfillment, trust, and decision quality by encouraging better consumer behavior (Nanda, 2022) ^[12].

The aforementioned issues led the researchers to decide to carry out this investigation to evaluate and examine social media marketing's impact on consumer purchasing behavior, with a focus on senior high school students.

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Statement of problem

The statement of the problem for the research has been addressed including the growing concern over social media marketing and their ability to influence the consumer buying decision practically. The components of consumers' online shopping behavior and the impact of social media marketing on their purchasing decisions are the social phenomena examined in the research study that follows. The primary issue that this study attempts to solve is how consumers feel about social media, specifically how social media marketing affects consumers' decision-making process while they are buying different products.

Objectives

1. To study the impact of social media marketing on consumer buying decisions.
2. To suggest some measures for the betterment of consumer decisions

Hypothesis

Null Hypothesis: Social media marketing doesn't have a big impact on consumers' purchasing decisions.

Alternate Hypothesis: Social media marketing has a big impact on consumers' purchasing decisions.

Research Methodology

The current study only uses Google Forms for its questionnaire approach. A total of 384 people provided the data. 384 respondents completed structured questionnaires via Google Forms to provide primary data and secondary data was gathered from websites, reports, and other secondary sources. The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) is used in this research to tabulate and analyze the data. Chi-square test, simple percentage analysis, and graphs are used to scientifically present the data in a meaningful manner.

Literature Review

The literature review is a significant part of any investigation. It provides insight into the prominent views of the investigations already carried out in the relevant field. Today many organizations use social media marketing as their core marketing strategy. It helps in different ways and one of them is to influence customer buying decisions. People can share knowledge and skills in new ways because of technology and the internet (Evans, 2010) ^[13]. According to Stelzner (2010) ^[14], social media is the most popular medium for communication. According to Willan *et al.* (2011) ^[12], social networking sites are a new medium for interpersonal communication that is changing people's expectations and behavior as well as how businesses run. Social media sites provide users with an easy method of inviting and interacting with other people. Millions of consumers now have a voice thanks to this mode of communication, which enables them to exchange ideas and experiences with a large audience for little or no cost (Trusov *et al.*, 2009) ^[16].

As a result, social media marketing offers opportunities for engagement but also calls for creative and unorthodox methods (Kweskin, 2007) ^[17] to ensure that consumers are aware of brands and products (Xiaofen & Yiling, 2009) ^[16]. Thus, social media should be used by marketers to develop brands online and encourage consumers to make purchases (Cuming, 2008 referenced in Astoriano *et al.*, 2022) ^[19, 20]. Social networking, according to Mayfield (2008) ^[21], is a forum for users to express themselves creatively that

focuses on the human aspect. Consequently, social networks give marketers a means of comprehending how individuals engage and communicate with one another, as well as the significance of establishing relationships (The New Media Consortium, 2008).

Consequently, social media has made it easier for customers to communicate with each other and with brands (Mangold & Faulds, 2009) ^[23]. Social media has increased awareness of conditions in a changing environment, which is why social media marketing is becoming more and more important in the marketing industry. This increase in widespread engagement is important (Mayfield, 2011) ^[22].

Profile of the Respondents

Table 1: Showing the Demographic Variables of the respondents

Variables	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	115	30
	Female	269	70
Age	18-25	221	58
	26-33	112	30
	34-41	32	8
	41-48	6	01
	48-55	10	02
	Above 55	3	01
Educational Level	Up to SSLC	23	6
	Diploma/ITI	3	1
	Under Graduation	269	70
	Post-Graduation and Above	77	20
Occupation	Others	13	3
	Agriculture	61	18
	Public Sector	106	27
	Private Sector	80	20
	Self-Employed	16	4
	Student	122	31
Income	Others	16	5
	Upto ₹ 20000	291	75
	₹20001- 40000	51	14
	₹40001-60000	19	5
Above ₹60000	23	6	

Source: Primary Data

Table number 1 above shows the demographic Variables of the respondents selected for the study. The greater majority i.e., 70% are female and 30% are male. 58% of the respondents are of the age of 18- 25, 30% are of 26-33 years of age. 70% have completed graduation and 20% have completed post-graduation. 31% are students, 27% working in the public sector and another 20% are working in the private sector. More than 75% are earning only up to 20 000 per month and 14% are earning between 20 000 to 40 000 per month.

Results and Discussions

Table 2: Showing the most preferred social media sites

Options	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Facebook	32	8
Instagram	131	35
WhatsApp	202	53
Twitter	10	2
Blogs	10	2
Total	384	100

Source: Primary Data

Table no. 2 reveals the most used or active social media channels. Among 384 respondents 202 of them are active on WhatsApp, 131 of them like Instagram, 32 of them are busy on Facebook and 10 of them each are busy on Twitter & blogs. From the above, it is very clear that data, WhatsApp is the most used social media for communication purposes by the respondents.

Table 3: Showing the number of Hours spent on social media

OptionX	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
1 hour	192	50
2-3 hours	159	41
3-5 hours	26	7
More than 5 hours	10	2
Total	384	100

Source: Primary Data

Table 3 indicates the hours spent on social media every day. Out of the 384 respondents, 50% of them spend 1 hour, 41% of them spend 2-3 hours, only 7% of them spend 3-5 hours and 2% spend more than 5 hours on social media. It can be said that the majority of the respondents use a considerable number of hours on social media regularly.

Table 4: Showing the purpose of social media usage

Option	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
Shopping	16	4
Business	13	3
Information	240	63
Networking	13	3
Learning	102	27
Total	384	100

Source: Primary Data

Table 8: Showing the response toward their drive behind the usage of social media

Options	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
How important a product is	159	41
The frequent exposure of Products and advertisements	26	6
Visual elements of Products and advertisements	99	24
How much a product is liked, and shared by others	109	28
Total	384	100

Source: Primary Data

Table 7 describes the statements that drive the respondent's attention in social media. Out of the 384 respondents, 41% of them think about the importance of the product, 28% of them see how much a product is liked, and shared by others, 24% of them look at the visual elements of products and advertisements only 6% of them say that the frequent exposure of products and advertisements will motivate them to pay attention to the social media.

Table 9: Showing the results of Chi-Square tests

Chi-Square Test			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2- sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	18.66	12	0.097
Likelihood Ratio	19.81	12	0.071
N of Valid Cases	384	-	-

As per the Cross-Tabulation (Table No. 13) done on social media influences buying decisions and motivating factors to buy products exposed in social media. It is traced that most of the respondents that is out of 384 respondents 179 of them are influenced by social media marketing and consider

Table 4 shows the purpose of using the social media. 63% of the total respondents seek information on social media. 27% of the respondents use social media for learning purposes. Only 4% & 3% of them use it for shopping, business, and networking sake. Today social media sites are growing as information hubs.

Table 5: Showing response towards attention to advertisements on social media sites

Option	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
Paying Attention to advertisements	106	28
Not Paying Attention to Advertisements	118	30
Maybe	160	42
Total	384	100

Source: Primary Data

Table No. 05 indicates the level of attention towards the advertisement on social media sites. Out of the total 384 respondents, 28% of them paid attention, 30% of them just ignored it and 42% of them are in confusion whether to watch the advertisement or not.

Table 6: Showing respondent's trust towards social media

Option	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
Yes	285	74
No	99	26
Total	384	100

Source: Primary Data

Table No. 6 explores that, out of 384 respondents, 74% of the respondents trust social media. 26% of them do not trust social media.

Testing of Hypothesis

Null Hypothesis: Social media marketing does not affect consumer buying decisions.

Alternate Hypothesis: Social media marketing affects consumer buying decisions.

the positive comments of previous users. Here the P-value of the Chi-Square test is 0.097 which is less than 5. This implies that the Chi-Square is significant and that there is an impact of social media marketing on consumer buying decisions. So, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Findings

1. Out of 384 respondents, the greater majority i.e., 74% of the respondents trust social media for shopping in social media and they were influenced by social media.
2. Out of 384 respondents, 63% use social media to seek useful information and they opined that the information available on social media will be very useful for their buying decisions.
3. Out of 384 respondents, 59% agree that social media has increased their knowledge regarding different products and services which is very useful for their purchase decision.
4. Among 384 respondents, 72% think that more information is available in social media when compared to traditional mass medias.
5. Among 384 respondents 333 respondents think that social media marketing helps substantially in their buying decision.

Conclusion

With the advancement of technology, social media has become a daily habit for all users. Businesses use social media marketing to improve their performance in several ways, including reaching their objectives, raising yearly sales, becoming more visible, building two-way relationships with customers, offering a platform for customer feedback, and raising their brand and awareness. These factors have made social media websites a crucial commercial tool. When businesses concentrate on utilizing social media platforms efficiently, there are a few important considerations to make. Businesses must create a thorough social media communication plan before putting it into action and utilizing best practices.

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