

**IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR: UNDERSTANDING
THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON CONSUMER
BUYING BEHAVIOUR AND BRAND LOYALTY**

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Abstract

Social media has become a key part of modern consumer lifestyles and has revolutionized the way customers find out about, evaluate and purchase various goods and services. Social media networks like Instagram, YouTube, Facebook and others offer consumers round-the-clock access to information on products, recommendations, advertisements and other content. Contrary to conventional advertising and marketing techniques, social media enables consumers to communicate directly with brands and fellow consumers, thus making the shopping experience more interactive and socially driven. Consumers' shopping practices and decisions are becoming more dependent on social media posts, recommendations by influencers, online ratings and reviews, visual content and custom-made ads. All these elements may affect awareness, evaluation of products, buying intentions and brand loyalty. This paper will examine how social media influences consumer buying habits and brand loyalty. The impact of social media marketing, electronic word-of-mouth, social media influence, customer reviews, brand involvement and custom content on consumer behavior will be discussed in this paper. Both the advantages and disadvantages of social media use for consumers will also be analyzed. Lastly, the article touches on ways for firms to employ social media effectively and develop relationships with their customers in the long run. Social media has revolutionized the way that consumers behave in the marketplace through interaction and connectivity.

Key Words: Social Media, Consumer Behavior, Purchasing, Brand Loyalty, Influencer Marketing, e-WOM

S. No	Author & Year	Area of Study	Major Findings
1	Hajali (2014)	Social Media and Online Consumer Behavior	Social media interactions and online communities can increase consumer trust and influence purchasing intentions.
2	Erkan & Evans (2016)	Social Media Word of-Mouth	Information shared through social media can influence consumers' purchase intentions, particularly when the information is perceived as useful and credible.
3	De Vries, Gensler & Leeflang (2012)	Social Media Brand Engagement	Social media content can influence consumer engagement with brands. The nature and popularity of brand posts affect consumer interaction.
4	Godey et al. (2016)	Social Media Marketing and Brand Equity	Social media marketing activities can positively influence brand awareness, brand image and consumer loyalty.
5	Alalwan (2018)	Social Media Advertising	Social media advertising characteristics such as informativeness, interactivity and credibility can influence purchase intention.

Introduction

The quick pace of development of digital technology has affected communication channels, information seeking and buying decision-making of consumers. Social media has emerged as one of the most powerful digital channels that connects consumers and businesses. Consumers are now able to find products, compare alternatives, read reviews and connect with brands without fully relying on traditional advertisement. Social media gives businesses an opportunity to connect with consumers in real time. Brands can use posts, videos, stories, ads, live events and partnerships with influencers to promote their products. On the other hand, consumers can voice their

opinion and experiences about products in front of a wide audience.

Consumer Behaviour and Social Media

Social media gives consumers many sources of information prior to making their purchase decision. Rather than relying solely on information from firms, consumers have information from other consumers. Being interactive, social media turns consumers into active participants in the process rather than passive recipients of the marketing communication process. They can like, comment, share, review and recommend the products.

Social influence is another vital aspect that may influence the behavior of consumers. In this case, consumers may be motivated by the usage of certain products by their friends, influencers or any other consumer. Thus, this process is electronic word-of mouth that influences the perception of brands.

Social Media Influence on Brand Loyalty

The concept of brand loyalty indicates the consumer inclination to select a certain brand. Social media may be used by organizations to create better relationships with consumers. Consistent communication helps keep the brand in mind of consumers. The organization can provide useful and interesting information to its consumers about the brand and its products.

Consumer engagement is another element that matters. Consumers are likely to feel valued when the company responds to comments, queries, and complaints. Finally, loyal consumers may promote the brand among their friends and followers as well. In such a way, social media enables consumers to act as brand advocates.

Social Media Sites and Consumer Behavior

- **Instagram:** The visual appeal of Instagram is very effective in the fashion, beauty, food, travel, and lifestyle industry. It can affect consumer discovery and buying intentions through images, videos, stories, and influencer content.
- **YouTube:** On YouTube, consumers can watch reviews, tutorials, comparisons, and demos about products. It can be used by consumers to evaluate products before buying them.
- **Facebook:** Facebook gives the business an opportunity to advertise, engage customers and promote products.
- **Short Video Sites:** Short video content is effective in attracting the attention of the consumers. Viral trends and videos related to the products can be effective in raising the awareness about the products.
- **Chatting and Community Sites:** Digital chatting sites give consumers the opportunity to communicate with the brand and other customers.

Influencer Marketing and Consumer Behavior

Influencer marketing has grown to be a significant component of social media marketing. Influencers come up with content about products and services and post it to their followers. Consumers may gain familiarity with influencers because of consistent posting of content. Whereby when an influencer showcases or endorses a

certain product, consumers may show interest in trying it out.

On the contrary, the influence of influence marketing is dependent on credibility and relevancy. Consumers may react adversely when promotions are unrealistic or the influencer product relationships are not clear. This is why businesses should choose relevant and credible influencers.

Benefits of Social Media for Consumers

- Information availability: Consumers have easy access to information related to products and product reviews.
- Comparison of products: With social media, consumers can compare products and brands with each other.
- Better communication: It is easier for consumers to interact with the business.
- Communities of consumers: Users can share their experiences.
- Customized experience: Consumers may be offered information according to their preferences.
- Convenience: Social media can bridge the gap between product discovery and online shopping.

Negative Effects and Challenges

1. Despite being quite helpful for consumers, social media can bring about some challenges for them.
2. Impulse Buying
3. Exciting content, limited time offers, and trends among users may lead consumers to buy things on impulse.
4. Misinformation
5. Misleading statements about products may influence consumers' decisions. 6.False Reviews

Ways to Earn Consumer Loyalty Through Marketing Strategies for Businesses

1. Create genuine content rather than making unrealistic promises.
2. Act on consumer queries and complaints in a timely manner.
3. Promote reviews by customers.
4. Employ influencers in an ethical manner and make disclosure of sponsored posts.
5. Provide valuable content rather than just talking about sales.
6. Create communities online that allow consumers to engage with brands.

Conclusion

Social media has considerably changed consumer behavior and the purchasing process. Nowadays, consumers are not limited to only traditional advertising or information received directly from the company itself. Before making decisions about purchasing a particular product, they can find out information about other people's experiences of using that product in the form of reviews, recommendations, influencer content, and demonstrations. Social media plays a role in various stages of consumer behavior, such as product discovery and information search, purchase decisions, and after-purchase activities. Besides, it can help companies create brand

loyalty through establishing continuous communication with consumers.

However, companies should understand that there are many risks and challenges involved in the use of social media, such as spread of misinformation, false reviews, privacy issues, excessive advertisement, and impulse purchases. Thus, responsible marketing is an obligatory aspect.

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