

“SCROLL TO SALE”: A STUDY ON THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOR

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Abstract

A few years ago, social media was just a networking tool. Now in this digital era, social media has transformed from networking tool to influencer of consumers buying behaviour. This research study titled "Scroll to Sale", investigates the influence of social media on consumer buying decisions, with the focus on social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, YouTube and WhatsApp etc. This research study aims at understanding how targeted advertisements, influencer posts, brand interactions and customer reviews affect the way people think when they are making buying decisions. In order to collect the opinions to understand how social media is influencing peoples buying decisions, a questionnaire was prepared and shared with the number of respondents. This study has given a clear picture that people between the age of 18 to 45 are heavily influenced by what they get to see on social media platforms when it is about making buying decisions. And also study clearly depicts that the eye - catching visuals, honest recommendations from people and posts from influencers are few things that gain majority of people's attention on social media while making buying decision.

Key words: Social Media Impact, Buying Behaviour, Consumer Attention Gaining Ads, Digital Marketing, Online Reviews

Introduction

The 21st Century has seen a tremendous increase in digital evolution that has shifted the way individuals can witness the way of communicating, sharing information, knowledge, and buying behavior. Among the varied innovations of this digital era, social media has come up with one of the powerful tools that goes beyond personal network building. Various options such as Facebook, Instagram, X (formerly known as Twitter), and YouTube have evolved into dynamic marketplaces where brands directly engage with customers, unlike traditional media, where communication was largely one-way. Social media offers more interactive, personalized, and live marketing opportunities. This tremendous shift has been defined lately

as consumer–brand relationships and significantly influences customer behavior across different age groups in different places, especially in digitally enthusiastic customers.

Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing means a strategic way of using social networking platforms to establish or market their products and services, to create brand awareness, and encourage customer engagement. Its specialty lies in the characteristics such as interactivity, targeting audience, user friendly content, influence partnership and growing reach. Unlike regular advertising that is group oriented, social media promotion focuses on building relationships, creating communities and promoting 2 ways of communication. Reels or short videos, reviews given by product users, influencer endorsements and sponsored posts play a key role in shaping customer perceptiveness. Thereby it acts as virtual word of mouth advertising.

Buying Behavior of Consumers

Buying behavior of the consumer is the set of actions, decisions and procedures an individual takes up when selecting, purchasing and using goods and services. Earlier these procedures involved a few stages such as problem identification, searching for information, evaluation of other alternatives and post purchase evaluation. In this current era each stage has been influenced by social media exposure. For example, problem identification can arise from looking into a trending product online, while evaluation may completely rely on peer group reviews, influence recommendations and real-time feedback on social media platforms.

The relationship between social media and Consumer Behaviour.

Social media has become an important tool in guiding customer behaviors through psychological and social mechanisms. Few characteristics such as like, comment and share serve as the key indicators of social evidence, creating trust and influencing perceptions of product quality, at the same time, social media platforms enable selected targeting where in algorithm creates the content and advertisements based on customer preference and browsing history. As a result, social media dims the line between requirements-based buying and consumption.

Need and Significance of the Study

The impact of social media on customer behavior is not just the concept of academic interest, it's also a matter of practical prominence for business and marketers. Companies are allocating a significant portion of their marketing budgets to social media campaigns, for consumers, social media providing access to information, convenience and peer review, though it may also lead to overconsumption or misinformed decisions. Hence this research

study holds significance in understanding social media drives consumer psychology and behavior, thereby providing insights into how it can benefit both consumers and influencers or marketers.

Research Gap

Even though earlier research articles have examined the impact of social media or online marketing on consumer decisions, there also remains a gap between direct and indirect influence of social media platforms. With the growing connection of influencer marketing, live commerce, reels or short – term videos and customized advertising, there is a requirement to study their role in creating buying decisions.

This research paper addresses the gap by analyzing the transformation from quick scrolling on social media feeds to actual buying decisions – a phenomenon conceptualized as “Scroll to sale”

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this research are:

- To study the impact of social media promotional activities, especially visuals and targeted ads on young people and their buying intentions.
- To understand the role of few factors such as peer reviews, family recommendations and brand responsiveness in creating consumer buying decisions on social media.
- To examine the effectiveness of influencer marketing with original brand engagement and its creative content in driving consumer interest and their buying behavior.

Research Methodology

This research study adopts a descriptive research design to analyze the impact of social media on consumer buying decisions. Both primary and secondary data have been used for the purpose of this study. Primary data was collected through a planned and structured questionnaire survey in goggle forms, which was shared with respondents of 18 to 45 years of age, as they form a varied segment of social media users. The questionnaire included almost all close- ended and opinion-based questions to capture insights into advertisement perception, buying intentions, influencer role, visual impact and peer reviews. A convenience sampling method was incorporated to collect responses from students, young adults to adults who are active on different social media sites. Secondary data was taken from related journals, articles, websites and research papers to strengthen the findings. The collected data was thoroughly analyzed to understand patterns, preferences and to the extent possible to

which social media could impact consumer buying behavior, thereby fulfilling the objectives of the research.

Scope and Limitations

This research study concentrates on examining the impact of social media platforms on consumer buying behavior with specific influence on digital – native consumers who enthusiastically engage in the online world. While the research explores various platforms, it primarily considers the most prominently used ones such as Instagram, YouTube and Facebook. The scope of this research is limited by geographic boundaries; consumer demographics and the challenges encountered with self – reported data collection. Despite these limitations, the research aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the evolving relationship between social media and buying behavior.

Literature Review

Kumaran & Navin (2022), investigate the impact of social media marketing on consumer behaviour. While scrolling the social media advertisements, blog posts, user reviews influence consumers to try new products and services. Most of the consumers gets attracted by the promotions, discounts and deals on social media which influence their buying behaviour. The social media has the power to motivate the consumers from beginning to final stage of a purchase and beyond as well. It also enhanced the knowledge of consumers regarding the products and services.

Varghes & Agrawal (2021), studied that social media advertisements have ability change customers mindset and their perception. The content quality of an advertisement on social media makes a big impact on consumers buying behaviour. The aim of social media marketing is not just about consumer awareness or selling the product itself, but also includes retaining and built-up relationship between the potential buyers and corporations. Social media influencers make a positive impact on the buying decision process of the customers.

MD Salman et al (2022), analyzed the influence of social media on consumers buying behaviour. The present generation spends most of their time on social media websites and applications, which has significant impact on more than half of their purchases. Social media platforms are the most vital means for carrying out successful digital marketing campaigns. Social media use has an impact on customer happiness during the phases of information gathering and alternative assessment, with satisfaction rising as the consumer moves closer to making a final purchase decision.

Alim (2025), investigates the influence of social media marketing on the purchasing behaviour of university students. There is a significant relationship between social media marketing activities and then buying behaviour students, particularly in terms of their loyalty, trust, and intention to purchase products or services. The social media marketing is very important in shaping modern consumer behaviour and provides valuable insights for brands looking to optimize their social media strategies.

Chowdhury et al (2024), revealed that Social Media Marketing has significant influence on Consumer Behaviour particularly in the fast-paced and competitive environment of the Fashion Retail Industry. It highlights the significance of adaptation, authenticity, and community engagement in guiding businesses in creating meaningful connections with their consumers as the fashion retail industry. The research shows that intertwined nature of consumer decision-making in relation to involvement on social media platforms, advertising, and the impact of influential individuals.

Makudza et al (2020), examines the causal relationship between social media and consumer purchasing behaviour in the mobile telephony industry in Zimbabwe. Consumer purchase behaviour is mainly driven by social media word of mouth, in which firm generated content was found to be inversely related to purchase intention. User generated social media communication resulted in a moderately weak association with purchase behaviour, which is insignificant association was obtained between social media platform and consumer purchase intention. The results imply that social media is an effective tool but needs to be adapted so as to minimize generating content which distorts desirable consumer behaviour.

Murtaza (2022), studied the impact of social media on consumer buying behaviour. The amount of information available in social media to the consumers increases each and every day; as a result, consumers are overwhelmingly exposed and attained to different aspects of information available on the Internet. In today's Digital Age simply starting a Facebook page and posting pictures of the product is not enough to attract customers. To have an impact on consumers in the companies need to make conscious efforts to stay up to date with the latest trends and come up with innovative and engaging content for their social media.

Kothari et al (2025), revealed the impact of social media on consumer buying behaviour. The companies should identify that consumer trust and engagement are not only by-products of risk but also actively cultivated through strategic advertising efforts. A real-time feedback mechanism, arrangement analysis and consumer engagement can help metric brands assess the effectiveness of their social media ads and make the necessary adjustments to increase the

necessary adjustments to increase the effectiveness of their social media ads and to increase the reliability, authenticity and sustainability of messages.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Personal and Behavioral Information

Age

Age Respondents wise	Number	Percentage
Under 18	0	0
18 to 25 Years	80	76
26 to 35 Years	15	14
35 to 45 Years	11	10
Grand Total	106	100

From the above table it is clear that out of 106 respondents 80 are under 18 to 25 years age group, 26 to 35 are 15 and 35 to 45 are of 11 respondents.

Gender

Gender Respondents wise	Number	Percentage
Male	45	42
Female	61	58
Grand Total	106	100

The table is prepared to classify the total respondents into gender wise. Out of 106 respondents 45 are male and 61 are female.

Occupation

Occupation Respondents wise	Number	Percentage
Student	76	72
Working Professional	24	22
Entrepreneur	2	2
Home Maker	2	2
Other	2	2
Grand Total	106	100

From the above table it is clear that out of 106 respondents 76 response students, 24 respondents are working professionals, entrepreneur 2, home maker 2 and others 2.

How many hours do you spend on social media each day (approx.)?

	Number	Percentage
Less than 1 hour	9	9
1 - 2 hours	47	44
2 - 4 hours	30	28
More than 4 hours	20	19
Grand Total	106	100

From the responses it is observed that, 47 respondents spend 1 to 2 hours each day in social media, 30 respondents responded that they will spend 2 to 4 hours, 20 said it is more than 4 hours a day.

Which platforms do you use most often? (Select all that apply) – Multi Response Data

	Number	Percentage
Instagram	81	40
WhatsApp	61	30
You Tube	39	19
Facebook	11	5
Twitter	6	3
Others	7	3
Total	205	100

From the above table it is observed that Instagram is the most frequently used social media platform with 40% followed by WhatsApp with 30%, YouTube 19%. Overall, the data highlights that Instagram, WhatsApp and YouTube dominate user preferences than Facebook and Twitter.

Targeted Advertisement

How often do you notice ads tailored to your interests on social media?

	Number	Percentage
Always	22	21
Often	41	39
Sometimes	30	28
Rarely	12	11
Never	1	1
Grand Total	106	100

From the above responses it is observed that 39% respondents regularly noticed ads tailored to their interest on social media, 21% respondents responded it is always, 28% said

sometimes. Very small portion of the respondents responded 11% and never only 1%. It is clear that targeted advertisement is highly effective in reaching users across social media platforms.

Targeted ads have helped me discover new products or brands.

	Number	Percentage
Strongly Agree	9	9
Agree	49	46
Neutral	36	34
Disagree	9	8
Strongly Disagree	3	3
Grand Total	106	100

The data clearly shows that 55% of the respondents agreed that targeted adds have helped them to discover new products or brands. 34% of the respondents are neutral in their opinion. Only 11% of the respondents disagree with the statement. So, the data indicates a prominently positive view of targeted adds effectiveness in product.

How likely are you to consider buying something because of a targeted ad?

	Number	Percentage
Very likely	5	5
Likely	28	26
Neutral	40	38
Unlikely	23	22
Very Unlikely	10	9
Grand Total	106	100

It is evident from the above table that 31% of the respondents finding targeted adds effective for driving potential purchase, another 31% of the respondents finding them ineffective, and the largest group remaining neutral with their opinion.

Eye-Catching Visuals

How often do visuals (images/videos) influence your interest in a product on social media?

	Number	Percentage
Always	18	17
Often	31	29
Sometimes	38	36
Rarely	16	15
Never	3	3
Grand Total	106	100

The analysis indicates that 17% of the respondents agree that visuals always influence them, 29% said its often do. 36% said that visuals sometimes influence their interest. 15% said rarely and 3% said never. Larger portion of the audience, visuals on social media are a key factor in influencing their interest in a product.

Which visual elements catch your attention the most? (Select top 2) – Multi Response

Data

	Number	Percentage
Short Video Reels/Stories	51	31
High Quality Product Images	47	29
Bright and Color Photos	17	10
Creative and Fun Designs	37	23
Before/After Comparisons	12	7
Grand Total	164	100

The above table collected a total of 164 responses, with each respondents selecting their top two choices. The two most attention-grabbing visual elements are short videos/Reels/Stories with 31% and high-quality product images with 29%. The data clearly shows that they are the effective visual elements for capturing audience attention on social media.

Have you ever purchased a product just because the ad/post looked visually appealing?

	Number	Percentage
Yes	35	33
No	45	42
Maybe	26	25
Grand Total	106	100

It is evident from the above table that, 42% of the respondents agreed that they have not purchased the product just because the ad looked visually appealing them. 33% have said yes and 25% answered may be. Visual appeal plays a role in their purchasing decision but that is not the sole factor

Peer Recommendations (Customer Reviews)

Whose recommendation do you trust most on social media?

	Number	Percentage
Friends/family	39	37
Influencers	7	7
Brand pages	16	15
Verified buyer reviews	29	27
I don't trust online reviews	15	14
Grand Total	106	100

From the above table it is evident that 37% said recommendations from friends/family are the most trusted. Verified buyer review are the second most trusted source with 27%. 15% said brand pages, 14% not trust online reviews. Influencers and brand pages hold significantly less trust among the respondents.

How often do you check comments or reviews before making a purchase decision?

	Number	Percentage
Always	68	64
Often	21	20
Sometimes	12	11
Rarely	1	1
Never	4	4
Grand Total	106	100

The results highlight that majority of the respondents regularly check comments or reviews before making purchasing decision.

Do peer reviews (comments/testimonials) make you feel more confident in buying a product?

	Number	Percentage
Strongly Agree	25	24
Agree	31	29
Neutral	39	37
Disagree	8	7
Strongly Disagree	3	3
Grand Total	106	100

The above table indicates that 53% feel more confident in a purchase because of peer reviews. 37% are neutral in their response. 10% of the respondents disagree to the statement.

Have negative customer reviews ever stopped you from buying a product you liked?

	Number	Percentage
Yes	62	58
No	19	18
Maybe	25	24
Grand Total	106	100

The data clearly shows that 58% of the respondents agree that negative customer reviews have stopped them from buying a product they liked. 18% said no, indicating that negative reviews do not stop them from a purchase, and 24% responded with may be.

Relatable Influencers

Do you follow influencers whose lifestyle or personality feels relatable to you?

	Number	Percentage
Yes	37	35
No	55	52
May be	14	13
Grand Total	106	100

From the above table it is clear that 52%, said no, they do not follow influencers based on relatability. 35% respondents said yes, they do follow influencers because they find their lifestyle or personality relatable.

What makes an influencer feel authentic or trustworthy to you? (Select all that apply) -

Multi Response Data

	Number	Percentage
Shares personal experiences	51	28
Shows behind the scenes of real life	56	31
Engages with followers	24	14
Doesn't promote too many brands	26	14
Uses the product regularly	23	13
Grand Total	180	100

From the above table it is clear that influencers who are transparent about their real life with 31% and share personal experiences with 28% are considered the most authentic and trustworthy by the respondents.

Have you purchased a product based on influencers post because it felt genuine?

	Number	Percentage
Yes	35	33
No	52	49
Not Sure	19	18
Grand Total	106	100

From the above table it is clear that 49% of the respondents said no, they have not purchased a product from an influencer post because it felt genuine. 33% said yes, they have made a purchase for this reason and remaining 18% were not sure.

Brand Interactions

How often do you engage with brands on social media (like, comment, share, message)?

	Number	Percentage
Always	10	10
Frequently	24	23
Occasionally	34	32
Rarely	27	25
Never	11	10
Grand Total	106	100

The above table indicates that 32% engages with brand occasionally. 10% of respondents said they engage with brands always, frequently (23%). In contrast, a combined 35% said they engage rarely (25%) or never (10%).

A brand's responsiveness to comments or messages makes me trust them more.

	Number	Percentage
Strongly Agree	15	14
Agree	42	40
Neutral	42	40
Disagree	7	6
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Grand Total	106	100

From the above table it indicates that, 54% of the respondents agree that a brand's responsiveness to comments or messages makes them trust them more. 40% remained neutral and 6% disagree that responsiveness builds trust.

Seeing regular and creative content from a brand increases my chances of buying from them.

	Number	Percentage
Strongly Agree	10	9
Agree	42	40
Neutral	40	38
Disagree	10	9
Strongly Disagree	4	4
Grand Total	106	100

The data clearly shows that 49% of the respondents positively influenced by a brand's regular and creative content. 38% remained neutral and 13% of the respondents disagree to the statement.

Do you follow any brands on social media with the intent to buy their products later?

	Number	Percentage
Yes	37	35
No	55	52
Maybe	14	13
Grand Total	106	100

From the above responses it is observed that 52% of the respondents said no, they do not follow any brands on social media with a future purchase intent. 35% said yes, they do follow brands with the intent to buy their products later. 13% responded with may be but they are not certain.

Findings

The survey conducted through a questionnaire reveals that the majority of the respondents belong to the age group of 18 to 25 years. This indicates that young adults form the larger user segment. Most of them are students and it is also observed that these respondents spend time on social media nearly 1 to 2 hours every day. It is observed that Instagram, WhatsApp, YouTube are the platforms that the respondents majorly use. A considerable number of respondents have noticed advertisements tailored to their interest on social media and have agreed that targeted ads have helped them discover new products or brands. However, buying intent seems to be low as the majority of the respondents are mostly neutral and unlikely in relation to considering buying something because of targeted ads.

A large section of respondents agree that interesting visuals, images, or videos influence their interest in a product on social media and also have agreed that they have purchased products just because the ads were visually appealing. It shows how attractive visuals can convince people in digital marketing.

It can be understood from this survey that the majority of the buyers trust the recommendation of their friends and families and also verified buyer reviews than influencers. It seems that the majority of the respondents check comments or reviews before making a buying decision. Most of the respondents have agreed that reviews or comments, especially that of peer reviews make them feel more confident in buying a product and also majority of the respondents have agreed that the negative customer reviews have stopped them from buying a product that they liked.

Few respondents are influenced by influencers lifestyle or personality. Only a portion of respondents make purchases based on influencers' posts . This suggests that authenticity and

relatability are critical for influencer marketing to be effective.

The survey reveals that the most of respondents engage with brands on social media, and the majority of the respondents have agreed that a brand's responsiveness to comments makes them trust them more. The majority of respondents have agreed that creative content from brands increase their chances of buying. Some participants have agreed that they follow brands with the intention of buying their products later, highlighting the importance of online presence.

Suggestions

Based on the findings, the suggestions that can be given to businesses are:

As it is mostly young adults who spend more time on social media, it is very important to tailor the advertisements to their best interest. So that the targeted ads help them discover new products or brands based upon their interest.

Businesses should keep the visuals, images or videos highly visually appealing so that they gain more attention. It is very important for businesses to have very good buyer reviews because the majority of the customers check reviews before making a buying decision and also it is very essential for businesses to address the negative customer reviews as soon as possible, as such negative comments might stop people from buying the products.

In addition, it is necessary to collaborate with those influencers who feel authentic and relatable in the mindset of targeted customers and finally, the brands must try to post creative content, so that the customers engagement with brands on social media improves.

Conclusion

This research study successfully showcases that social media has a high influence on consumer buying behaviour, especially among young adults between the age group of 18 -25. Eye-catching visuals, targeted ads, and peer recommendations are few significant things that have an impact on buying decisions. Customers trust verified buyer reviews and peer recommendations and family reviews, along with influencers' posts when they feel it is relatable and authentic. To conclude, social media has now evolved to be an influencer of consumer buying behaviour. Brands that can create engaging, and interesting content have greater chances to increase sales of their products or services by influencing consumer buying behaviour.

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