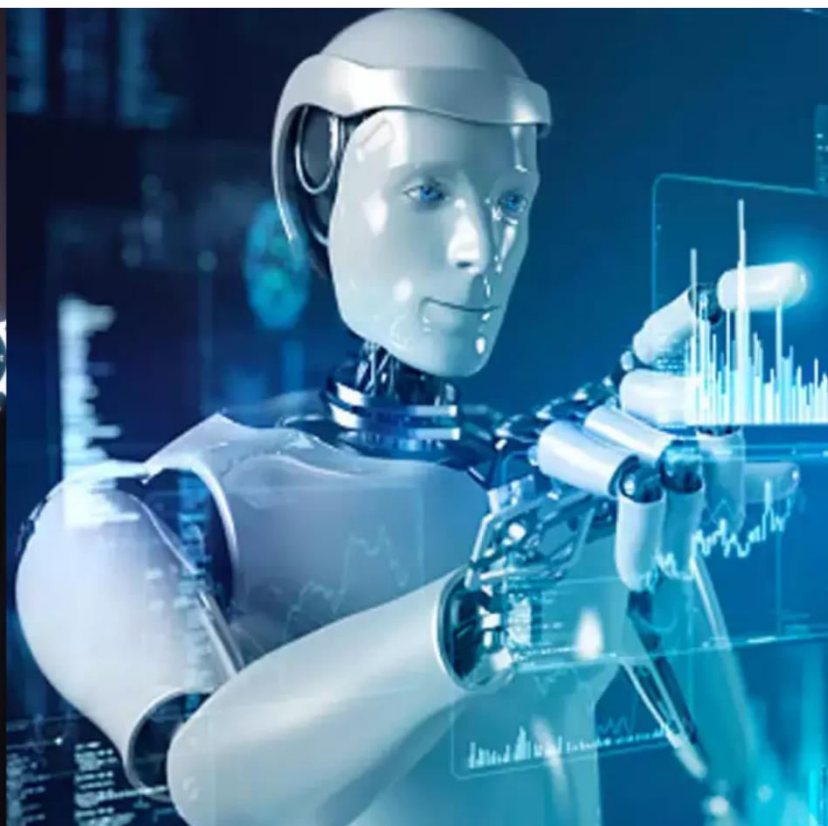




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A Study on Social Media Reviews Shaping Consumer Preference

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ABSTRACT: The rapid growth of social media has fundamentally transformed the way consumers interact with brands and make purchasing decisions. Platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and X (formerly Twitter) have become digital arenas where users share reviews, opinions, and experiences related to products and services. This study examines how social media reviews— particularly user-generated content such as posts, comments, ratings, and video testimonials— influence consumer preferences across different demographic groups and market segments. The research adopts a mixed-method approach, combining a survey of 500 consumers with content analysis of social media reviews across selected product categories, including electronics, fashion, and personal care. The study investigates the psychological and behavioural mechanisms through which social media content affects brand perception, trust, and purchase intent. Key variables examined include source credibility, review valence (positive or negative), emotional tone, and review volume.

KEYWORDS: Social Media Reviews, Consumer Preferences, User-Generated Content, Brand Perception, Purchase Intent

I. INTRODUCTION

In the past decade, the digital revolution has redefined the landscape of consumer engagement, transforming the way individuals seek information and make purchasing decisions. At the heart of this transformation is the proliferation of social media, which has emerged as a primary platform for sharing opinions, experiences, and reviews. Unlike traditional media channels that offered one-way communication from companies to consumers, social media empowers users to disseminate real-time, peer-to-peer insights that can significantly influence the decision-making process. This study investigates the ways in which social media reviews shape consumer preferences—a phenomenon that not only reflects shifting patterns in information consumption but also heralds new challenges and opportunities for marketers, businesses, and consumers alike. The democratization of information via social media has led to an environment where user generated content has become a vital source of digital word-of-mouth. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Yelp, and TripAdvisor have evolved into forums where consumers can share detailed experiences, rate products, and recommend services. The interactive nature of these platforms enables rapid dissemination of opinions, creating a ripple effect that can quickly sway public perception. Reviews posted on social media are not only accessible to a wide audience but are also often perceived as more trustworthy than traditional advertisements. This trust is largely derived from the authenticity and immediacy of user experiences, as consumers are more inclined to value opinions from peers over promotional content. Such dynamics have made social media reviews a central factor in the consumer decision-making process, warranting a closer examination of their influence on consumer behaviour.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Vimaladevi & Dhanabhakaym (2022) The Impact of Online Reviews on Consumers' Purchasing Decisions. *Frontiers in Psychology*. The objective of the study is to examine how online reviews affect consumers' purchasing decisions. The Data Tools Used is survey analysis. The result is 93% of consumers say online reviews affect shopping choices, indicating regular reliance on such reviews for purchasing decisions.

IJFMR (2023) Impact of Social Media on Consumer Behaviour and Preference. International Journal of Future Generation Communication and Networking. The objective of the study analyses how social media affects consumer buying behaviour and preferences. The Data Tools Used are secondary research and literature review. The result shows that social media significantly influences consumer behaviour and preferences through increased exposure, personalization, influencer marketing, engagement, and social proof.

Mesh Agency (2024) The changing truths about social media and consumer behaviours. The Objective of the study is Investigate how user-generated content (UGC) impacts consumer purchasing decisions. The Data Tools Used is Survey analysis. The Result is 79% of people say UGC highly impacts their purchasing decisions and 70% of consumers trust online peer reviews and ratings more than professional content.

Sprinklr Blog (2024) How social media impacts consumer behaviours. The Objective of the study explore the link between social media and consumer behaviour. The Data Tools Used is market analysis. The result shows that social media significantly shapes consumer purchase behaviour and brand attitudes through content distribution, social authentication, and user interaction.

Research Gate Study (2025) The Influence of social media on consumer behaviour and Digital Marketing Strategies a comprehensive review. The Objective of the study examine how social media influences consumer behaviour and digital marketing strategies. The Data Tools Used is Comprehensive literature review. The result Identifying the social media platforms used by a company's target market is crucial for successful online marketing efforts.

Objectives of the Study

- To analyse how social media reviews influence consumer purchase decisions.
- To assess the credibility and trustworthiness of social media reviews. To study the role of influencers in shaping consumer preferences.
- To examine the impact of positive vs. negative reviews on consumer behaviour.
- To explore the differences in consumer trust across various social media platforms.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Primary Research: Surveys and interviews with consumers who actively rely on social media reviews.

Secondary Research: Analysis of existing literature, industry reports, and case studies.

Data Collection Method

Quantitative Analysis: Surveys to gather numerical data on consumer behaviour.

Qualitative Analysis: In-depth interviews and sentiment analysis of online reviews.

Sample Size & Sampling Technique

Target Audience: Active social media users and online shoppers.

Sampling Technique: Random and stratified sampling.

Data Analysis

Tools Statistical tools (SPSS, Excel) for quantitative analysis. Sentiment analysis for qualitative data from social media reviews.

IV. RESULT AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1 Respondents Demographic profile

Particulars	Classification	%
AGE	Below 18	10
	18-24	65
	25-34	15
	Above 35	10
GENDER	Male	48
	Female	52
ANNUAL INCOME	Below 100,000	54
	100,001-500,000	17
	500,001-10,00,000	15
	Above 10,00,000	14
OCCUPATION	Student	50
	Working Professional	22
	Business Owner	15
	Home Maker	13

Result – The sample determined by 65% of the respondents were in the age group of 18-24 and 52% of the female respondents. The sample was dominated by 50% of students and 54% of the respondent's annual income was below 100,000.

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics Summary

Metric	Mean	Standard Deviation	Median
Review Influence on Purchase Decision (1-5)	4.3	1.0	4.0
Trust in Social Media Reviews (1-5)	4.1	0.9	4.0
Preference for Video Reviews (1-5)	4.2	1.1	4.0

Interpretation

Reviews significantly influence purchase decisions (Mean = 4.3). Consumers trust social media reviews highly (Mean = 4.1).

Table 3 Correlation Analysis

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Correlation Coefficient (r)
Influencer Reviews	Purchase Behaviour	0.72
Video Reviews	Trust in Product Quality	0.65
Social Media Credibility	Purchase Intent	0.68

Interpretation

Influencer reviews strongly impact purchasing behaviour ($r = 0.72$). Video-based reviews increase product trust ($r = 0.65$). Consumers rely on credible social media platforms for purchase decisions ($r = 0.68$).

Table 4 ANOVA (Testing Differences Across Review Types and Formats)

Hypothesis Testing

- H_0 : No significant difference in consumer trust across review types.
- H_1 : Review type significantly impacts consumer trust levels.

Independent Variable	Groups Compared	F-value	p-value	Interpretation
Review Type vs. Trust	Influencer, Public, Expert, Peer Reviews	5.45	0.007	Significant
Review Format vs. Impact	Video, Image, Text-Based	4.22	0.014	Significant

Interpretation

Influencer and video reviews significantly shape consumer trust ($p = 0.007$). Different review formats create varied levels of influence ($p = 0.014$).

V. FINDINGS

- The majority of respondents (65%) fall within the 18–24 age group, indicating that younger consumers are the primary audience relying on social media reviews for purchase.
- The gender distribution among respondents is nearly balanced, with 48% male and 52% female, suggesting that both genders equally participate in review-driven purchasing behaviour.
- Correlation analysis revealed a strong positive relationship between influencer reviews and purchase behaviour ($r = 0.72$), video reviews and trust in product quality ($r = 0.65$), and social media credibility and purchase intent ($r = 0.68$).

- ANOVA tests showed statistically significant differences in consumer trust and impact across various types and formats of reviews, confirming that not all review types influence consumers equally.

VI. SUGGESTION

- Brands should collaborate with credible influencers who can deliver honest and in-depth product reviews to build consumer trust and influence purchase decisions.
- Companies are encouraged to invest in high-quality video content, as video reviews are the most preferred format among consumers and significantly enhance product credibility.
- Brands can benefit from integrating interactive elements such as polls, quizzes, and comment sections within their social media review posts to increase user engagement and participation.

VII. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, brands seeking to influence modern consumers must recognize the central role of social media reviews. By investing in high-quality video reviews, engaging with credible influencers, ensuring review authenticity, and focusing on platforms where consumers are most active, businesses can effectively strengthen consumer trust, increase engagement, and drive purchase behaviour. Moving forward, incorporating data-driven insights into marketing strategies will be crucial for staying competitive in an increasingly review-driven marketplace.

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