



Impact of Social Media on Consumer Buying Behavior

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Abstract:

This research focuses on understanding how consumers make complex, infrequent, high-involvement purchases that significantly impact brand choice. The study places a particular emphasis on the influence of social media on this buying process. In recent years, social media has become a prominent trend. Platforms like Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter have enabled people worldwide to connect, share thoughts, and create content. This shift has transformed how consumers gather information about products and services. Social media allows individuals to express their opinions and provide feedback, which can be influential online and offline. Consumer opinions shared on social media platforms can sway the perceptions of others. The power dynamic has shifted to consumers, who now play a crucial role in shaping or damaging a brand. Marketers are keen on understanding how consumers use social media and how the content they encounter influences their decision-making process. The research delves into how the abundance of user-generated content on social media can alter consumer buying patterns.

Keywords: Social Media, Consumer Behavior, Online Platforms.

Introduction:

Social media serves as a virtual space where individuals can connect, communicate, share various types of content, and access information. The platform encompasses diverse forms



like social networking sites, discussion forums, and bookmarking platforms. Prominent social media platforms that have become ingrained in our everyday routines include Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Wikipedia, and Twitter. In the realm of business, social media plays a pivotal role. It is extensively utilized to generate awareness about products and services, foster brand promotion, maintain relationships with existing customers, and explore opportunities with potential clients. Social media marketing is a strategic approach that harnesses the power of social networking to enhance brand awareness, elevate brand value, and expand the reach to a broader audience.

Popular social media platforms have evolved into integral components of our daily lives, offering multifaceted functionalities. With its vast user base, Facebook is a platform for personal and business interactions. Instagram, centered around visual content, is widely used for image and video sharing. LinkedIn caters to professional networking, making it a valuable resource for career development and business connections. Wikipedia is a collaborative encyclopedia; with its concise and real-time updates, Twitter is a microblogging platform that facilitates quick communication. Social media has become an indispensable part of our lives, with its multifunctional platforms contributing to personal connections, information sharing, and business growth. Businesses leverage social media marketing strategies to create awareness and promote their brands, foster lasting relationships with customers, and explore new business opportunities in the digital landscape.

Understanding the dynamics of consumer behavior in this context involves examining how social media platforms impact the decision-making processes related to purchasing goods and services. The increased connectivity facilitated by social media has transformed how consumers gather information and create new avenues for businesses to engage with their target audience. Social media platforms serve as virtual marketplaces where consumers can seek product information, read reviews, and engage in discussions before making informed choices.



Moreover, the research explores the nuances of social media's impact on consumer preferences, brand perception, and the overall buying journey. By unraveling how social media influences consumer behavior, businesses can tailor their approaches to effectively navigate the digital landscape, engage their audience, and foster positive interactions that ultimately impact purchasing decisions. In essence, the study seeks to illuminate the evolving dynamics of consumer behavior in urban areas in the age of pervasive social media and heightened internet connectivity.

The study utilizes secondary data to examine the use of social media in shaping consumer perception, enhancing brand value, and influencing buyer decisions. Companies now recognize the strategic importance of social media, understanding that it can provide an advantage over competitors who don't use it. To assess the impact of social media on consumer buying behavior, the research incorporates a literature review to identify effective strategies for improving consumer engagement through social media.

Objective of the study:

- Examine the impact of social media on the consumer buying decision process.
- Measure changes in consumer perceptions driven by content and engagement on social media platforms.
- Explore strategies for businesses to engage customers effectively, contributing to increased brand value.

Literature review

According to Nasir, Vel, and Mateen, social media can convey messages to consumers without relying on language or explicit words. Consumers interpret the context and respond accordingly when products and services are marketed through social media channels. This response can manifest in various ways, such as purchasing a product, considering repurchasing, or choosing not to purchase altogether. Such decision-making processes are



influenced by customer needs, product knowledge, preferences, brand loyalty, perceived brand value, word-of-mouth recommendations, and demand.

According to Nima Barhemmati et al., Social Media Marketing is identified as the most effective advertising method. Their study emphasizes understanding how consumers' purchasing behaviors shift when engaged with Social Media Marketing through social networks. The research also explores the connection between company sales activities, customer engagement, and purchasing behavior. The study surveyed 50 students at the Malaysian National University and found a positive correlation between consumer buying behavior and engagement with social media.

Godey, B., Mathieu, A., and Pederzoli, D. highlight the rapid increase in the use of social media. Social media is a valuable tool for businesses and marketing professionals to raise awareness about products and services. This research paper surveys to understand and analyze the relationship between social media use, marketing, and consumer buying behavior.

The survey includes critical questions about membership status on social media platforms and user-generated content on these sites. The research analysis provides statistical evidence of the significant impact of social media on consumer buying behavior. Furthermore, the study explores whether investments in social media marketing are impactful and, if so, which strategies yield the most positive results.

Gupta, S., Agarwal, A. K., & Chauhan, A. K delves into the profound influence of social media, both in retrospect and looking ahead. The article's focal point is reflecting on the fifth Social Media Week held in September 2011. Toby Daniels, the founder of Social Media Week, observed a notable escalation in the role of social media in people's lives during this event. This global expansion underscores the pervasive use of social media, particularly in the Middle East, where its impact is transformative, extending beyond individual interactions to reshape entire business models. The recognition of social media as a powerful force during this event implies its increasing importance in shaping societal dynamics,



communication patterns, and even economic structures. As social media continues to evolve, this article serves as a testament to its enduring impact, not only in the past but also as a harbinger of significant changes anticipated in the future.

Liu, Q., Zhang, X., Huang, S., Zhang, L., & Zhao, Y highlight the emerging role of social media in empowering consumers with access to feedback and reviews about products and services. The study draws upon primary and secondary data to reveal a significant insight: product recommendations wield substantial influence, often leading to impulsive buying behavior. The research elucidates that this impulsive buying behavior is intricately tied to consumers' trust in the recommender and their emotional attachment to the specific product. In simpler terms, the decision to make an impulsive purchase is not solely based on the merits of the product but is equally influenced by the trustworthiness of the recommender. This dual influence, where both the recommender and the product contribute to impulsive buying decisions, underscores the complex interplay of social dynamics and individual preferences in consumer behavior influenced by social media.

In their article, Varghese, S., and Nandhini, M delve into the intricate relationship between demographic factors and customers' purchase intentions. The research also sheds light on customer internet usage patterns, presenting a valuable opportunity for companies to enhance their engagement with customers through social media. The article emphasizes how demographic factors, such as age, gender, and location, influence customers' purchase intentions. Businesses can tailor their strategies to align with different customer segments' preferences and needs by exploring the nuanced interplay between these demographic elements and consumer behavior. Furthermore, examining internet usage patterns provides insights into how customers navigate online platforms. This understanding is crucial for leveraging social media to engage with customers actively. The article suggests that companies can capitalize on this opportunity by strategically employing social media channels to connect with diverse customer demographics.



Research Methodology:

This paper analyses secondary data from various books, articles, and journals. The study is primarily analytical, reclassifying pre-published data to align with the paper's objectives. It is essential to note that the paper inherits the strengths and limitations of the selected data sources.

Study Finding:

Organizations increasingly recognize social media's pivotal role in selling and promoting merchandise. This recognition stems from the understanding that social media is a powerful avenue to captivate customers' attention and generate interest in products and services. Here are detailed points that elaborate on the various aspects mentioned and are supported by findings from other articles:

1. Diverse Marketing Methods for Varied Audiences:

Marketing strategies should be thoughtfully designed to appeal to a broad spectrum of customers regarding age and class. Understanding the target audience's demographics and preferences is crucial in effectively tailoring marketing efforts.

2. Positive Impact of Social Media Influencers:

Social media influencers play a significant role in shaping customers' buying decision process. Their endorsements and recommendations can be persuasive, creating a sense of trust and authenticity that resonates with consumers.

3. Attraction to Discounted Content and Influencers:

Consumers exhibit a solid attraction for content that showcases discounts and promotions and involves influencers. This content can influence and reshape customers' mindsets and perceptions, showcasing the impact of compelling marketing strategies.

4. Increased Spending and Immediate Purchases:



Consumers influenced by social media tend to exhibit higher spending behavior, up to four times more than their standard purchase patterns. The allure of products is so compelling that they often make immediate purchases on the same day through social media channels.

5. Effectiveness and Cost-Efficiency of Social Media:

Social media emerges as an effective and cost-efficient platform for marketing. Its broad reach and relatively lower costs than traditional advertising make it an attractive option for businesses looking to maximize their marketing budgets.

6. Direct Interaction with Customers:

Social media facilitates direct interaction between businesses and customers. This real-time engagement allows for personalized communication, addressing queries, and building a stronger rapport with the customer base.

7. Lead Generation and Increased Sales:

Social media proves to be an effective tool for lead generation and driving sales. Businesses can attract potential customers through targeted campaigns, converting leads into sales.

Recommendation:

Companies gain significant advantages by prioritizing their presence on social media platforms. This boosts visibility, elevates brand value, fosters customer loyalty, and enhances lifetime value. Here's an in-depth exploration of these points:

1. Enhanced Visibility and Brand Value:

A robust presence on social media increases a company's visibility in the digital landscape. This heightened visibility leads to an elevated brand value when coupled with strategic communication and engagement. Customers are more likely to develop positive perceptions of a brand that actively participates in social media.



2. Improved Customer Connectivity:

Social media provides a unique avenue for companies to establish a direct and continuous connection with their customers. Regular communication through these platforms enables brands to assist and guide customers, influencing their purchase decisions positively. This increased connectivity fosters a sense of trust and engagement.

3. Strategic Use for Attention and Awareness:

Frequent and strategic use of social media helps companies capture consumer attention effectively. It is a dynamic channel for creating brand awareness, especially when utilizing compelling content, visuals, and engaging narratives that resonate with the target audience.

4. Interactive Engagement and Customer Insights:

Social media platforms offer an interactive space where brands can engage with customers in real time. This interaction strengthens the brand-customer relationship and provides valuable insights through customer reviews and feedback. Understanding customer sentiments and preferences contributes to informed decision-making.

5. Sharing Positive Customer Experiences:

Brands can leverage social media to share positive experiences of customers who have used their products. This powerful social proof allows potential and existing customers to relate to the positive outcomes, thereby building trust and confidence in the brand.

6. Building Influence and Virality:

Establishing the brand as influential in its niche is crucial. Companies can strategically create content that resonates with the audience and has the potential to go viral on social media. Viral content significantly expands brand reach and awareness, contributing to a broader customer base.

7. Wisely Choosing Social Media Influencers:



Collaboration with social media influencers requires careful selection. Influencers should align with the brand's values and be able to connect with the target audience authentically. The influencer's ability to understand and cater to customer wants and needs is paramount for a successful partnership.

A comprehensive and thoughtful approach to social media marketing empowers companies to strengthen their brand presence and build lasting customer relationships. By leveraging the unique features of social media platforms, companies can actively shape their brand narrative, foster customer loyalty, and drive sustained business growth.

Conclusion:

Research has highlighted the significant impact of social media on how consumers make decisions in the digital age. Social media has brought about substantial changes for both consumers and businesses. The findings indicate that consumers are cautious when choosing what to buy. Despite the abundance of data and information on social media, the personal attitudes of consumers play a crucial role in their decision-making process. The quality of content on social media is vital and should be relevant to consumers. Marketing on social media goes beyond creating awareness or selling a product; it involves building and maintaining relationships between potential buyers and businesses. Consumers now have the power to gather information about products or services by simply communicating with each other. Companies and marketers need to be cautious about negative comments on social media, as it can harm a company's reputation.

Social media allows them to share their opinions and communicate effectively with other consumers and corporations. Social media has effectively bridged the gap between brands and consumers. Recognizing this, companies try connecting buyers with the brand, allowing them to express their views and opinions. Companies that adopt an integrated strategic approach on social media platforms are more successful in attracting, engaging, influencing, and retaining customers. Factors affecting customer brand perception and the desire to



purchase include strategies that align with consumer perspectives and the opinions of content creators on social media. These strategies require ongoing maintenance, and companies using them should be prepared to address marketing challenges to retain existing customers and increase customer lifetime value.

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