

SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING AND CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOUR: A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Social Media Marketing is the method of using social networks as a tool to reach a wide range of customers. This method creates a sudden attention of a particular product to a large group of people. Nowadays, this mode of marketing has captured a bigger space than the traditional marketing means. Now people seek followers and subscribers by providing information on social media about purchasing goods and services online without wasting time.

Through social media, customers can get information about the company and its products, and at the same time, the company can get information about customers for their needs. Marketing through social networks can change the perception and buying behaviour of customers. In this study, the social media marketing and buying behaviour are analysed.

Keywords: *Consumer perception, Buying behaviour, Modern channel and Traditional channel various channels preferred.*

Introduction

Social media marketing has emerged as a vital tool and technique in the field of marketing. One of the key factors contributing to its success is the speed with which it enables businesses to reach their target audience. Unlike traditional marketing methods, social media marketing allows companies to connect with their desired customers in a significantly shorter period of time. Moreover, it offers a cost-effective approach, as advertising through social media platforms is generally more affordable compared to other marketing channels.

The effectiveness of social media marketing lies in its ability to attract customers and influence their purchasing decisions. Advertisements displayed on social media platforms have the potential to captivate users' attention and entice them to engage with the brand or

make a purchase. Companies now recognize the significance of social networks as valuable tools to boost the sales of their products or services.

The ever-evolving nature of technology plays a significant role in shaping consumer buying behaviour. Social networks facilitate the exchange of information and communication between various stakeholders, including businesses and customers. This enables customers to gather insights, read reviews, and interact with others who have already experienced the product or service. Consequently, customers are empowered to modify their purchase decisions based on the information and feedback they find online.

Overall, social media marketing has revolutionized the way businesses approach their target audience and promote their offerings. With its ability to reach customers quickly, cost-effectively, and with impactful content, social media marketing has become an indispensable tool for companies aiming to drive sales and build a strong online presence.

Statement Of The Problem

In today's modern world, characterized by rapid technological advancements, social media marketing has become an integral part of the marketing landscape. Social media platforms and various networking sites continue to evolve and attract a large customer base. As customers' perspectives and attitudes are subject to constant change, social media plays a crucial role in shaping their thinking processes.

The emergence of social media has transformed the traditional concept of marketing and has become a powerful tool for influencing customers' mind-sets. It serves as a dynamic platform that enables businesses to engage with their target audience, share information, and cultivate brand perception. Through targeted marketing campaigns, businesses can leverage social media to shape customers' thoughts, preferences, and buying behaviour.

The present study aims to explore the impact of social media networks on customers' thinking patterns within the Kurnool district. By analyzing the influence of this marketing method, the study seeks to uncover how social media has changed customers' perceptions and decision-making processes. It investigates the extent to which social media marketing has influenced customers' attitudes, preferences, and ultimately, their purchasing behaviour.

By examining the relationship between social media marketing and customers' mind-set, the study endeavours to shed light on the transformative power of social networks in the realm of marketing. Understanding the impact of social media on customers' thinking processes is essential for businesses to effectively tailor their marketing strategies, engage with their target audience, and drive desired consumer behaviours.

Through this research, valuable insights will be gained regarding the role of social media marketing in shaping customers' perceptions and behaviours. These findings will provide

businesses with actionable information to refine their marketing approaches, enhance customer engagement, and ultimately drive business success in the Kurnool district.

Scope Of The Study

The advent of social media has revolutionized communication, providing a convenient and efficient platform for individuals and businesses to interact. This transformation has greatly influenced the medium of communication between buyers and sellers. Particularly, in the context of consumer buying behaviour, social media has emerged as a powerful influencer.

Customers' purchasing decisions are significantly shaped by the influence of social networks and group communication. As individuals engage with various social media platforms, they are exposed to a wealth of information, opinions, and experiences shared by their peers and influencers. This exchange of knowledge and perspectives has a profound impact on customers' perceptions, preferences, and ultimately, their buying behaviour.

Social networks have transformed into dynamic platforms where individuals can gather and exchange information about products and services. They have become virtual marketplaces, facilitating discussions, reviews, and recommendations among consumers. Customers now rely on these online communities to seek advice, conduct research, and make informed decisions about their purchases.

Understanding the impact of social media marketing on consumer buying behaviour in the Kurnool district is of utmost importance. By delving into the dynamics of how social networks influence consumer decisions, businesses can gain valuable insights into the factors that shape customer preferences and drive their purchasing behaviours.

It is imperative to recognize that social media marketing has created a new realm of interaction between buyers and sellers. Businesses must acknowledge the significance of social networks as channels for information exchange and leverage them effectively to connect with their target audience. By understanding the impact of social media marketing on consumer buying behaviour in the Kurnool district, businesses can tailor their marketing strategies to effectively engage customers, build brand loyalty, and drive sales growth.

Objectives Of The Study

The objectives of the study are:

1. To analyze the perception of customers about marketing in social networks.
2. To examine the influence of social media marketing on consumer buying behaviour.
3. To analyze the best social networks preferred by consumers in their purchasing decisions.
4. To give suitable suggestions based on the study

Literature Review

Lempert (2006) emphasizes that modern customers are shifting away from traditional media channels like radio and newspapers, and instead rely on online platforms to gather information about products. These customers actively search for product-related information on various social networks.

Mangold and Faulds (2009) highlight the importance of communication among consumers in their study. While companies may not have direct control over these conversations, they can influence consumer interactions through effective social media marketing strategies.

Hensel and Deis (2010) stress the significance of carefully evaluating the advantages and disadvantages before adopting a social media marketing approach. Their study suggests that organizations should choose strategies that enhance their brand image.

Flannery's (2010) examination of youth's social media usage reveals that the majority of young individuals are active internet users, with social media platforms serving various purposes for them.

Cox's (2010) study uncovers a relationship between age and attitude towards online advertising platforms. Different age groups exhibit distinct attitudes towards these platforms.

Chu's (2011) research reveals that social media marketing and related advertisements attract a significant portion of Facebook users, particularly those who join specific Facebook groups.

Heinonen (2011) argues that consumer behaviour, production, and participation are influenced by diverse motivations rather than a single aspect. Different factors attract consumers to engage with social media content.

Benjamin Ach's (2013) examination of business marketing and communication strategies within an Australian marketing company emphasizes the importance of social networks for companies of all sizes in today's competitive world.

Ramsunder's (2019) study explores how online brands influence shoppers' decisions. The opinions expressed by one consumer can significantly impact the purchasing decisions of others, driving customers to seek more information through online media.

Chowdhury et al. (2020) investigate the impact of Facebook on young people and find that the platform's features effectively engage them, enabling them to expand their social connections.

These studies collectively illustrate the growing influence of social media on customer behaviour and decision-making processes. From searching for product information to engaging with other consumers and broadening social connections, social media platforms

have become essential channels for businesses to connect with their target audience and shape their purchasing decisions.

The cited studies collectively emphasize the growing impact of social media on consumer behaviour and marketing strategies. Customers are increasingly turning to online platforms, such as social networks, to gather product information and engage in conversations with other consumers. Companies can influence these interactions through effective social media marketing, which requires a careful evaluation of its advantages and disadvantages. Different age groups exhibit varying attitudes towards online advertising platforms, underscoring the need for tailored approaches. Social media platforms, especially within specific groups like Facebook, attract a significant user base and provide opportunities for businesses to enhance their brand image. Moreover, online brands significantly influence shoppers' decisions, driving them to seek more information through online media. The studies highlight the importance for businesses of all sizes to leverage social media strategically in order to connect with their target audience and shape their purchasing behaviour.

Study Of Methodology

The study was conducted in the Kurnool district of Andhra Pradesh, employing a talk show as the primary data collection method to obtain precise results. Secondary data was gathered from published books, reports, and journals. The study utilized a convenient sampling technique, with a sample size of 150 participants. The collected data was analysed using tabular and percentage methods. The study spanned duration of one year, specifically from 2021 to 2022.

Table: 1 General Profile Of The Respondnets

Particulars	Classification	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Gender	Male	61	40.66
	Female	89	59.33
Age	Below 18	29	19.33
	18-30	34	22.66
	31-45	46	30.66
	46-60	20	13.33
	Above 60	21	14
Marital status	Single	43	28.66
	Married	65	43.33
	Widow	28	18.66
	Divorced	14	9.33

Source: Primary data

The general profile of the 150 respondents is presented in Table 1. The data reveals several key insights about the sample group. Firstly, the table indicates that the majority, accounting for 59.33% of the respondents, are women. This suggests a significant female representation within the sample population. Secondly, the age distribution of the respondents highlights that the highest proportion, comprising 30.66% of the participants, falls within the age range of 31 to 45 years old. This indicates a significant presence of individuals in their prime working and family-building years. Additionally, the table demonstrates that the largest segment, encompassing 43.33% of the respondents, is married, suggesting a significant proportion of respondents who are in committed relationships or have established households. These findings provide valuable demographic insights into the composition of the respondent pool and offer a foundation for further analysis and interpretation of the study's results.

Table 2: Preference For Social Media

Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Social networking sites	43	28.66
Image-sharing and messaging sites	24	16
Video sharing sites	37	24.66
Social blogging sites	21	14
Social community and discussion sites	25	16.66
total	150	100

Source: Primary data

Table 2 presents an analysis of the responses from the 150 participants, shedding light on their usage of different online platforms before making purchase decisions. Among the respondents, the highest proportion, accounting for 28.66%, reported using social networking sites as their preferred platform for gathering information prior to making a purchase. Following closely behind, 24.66% of the participants indicated a preference for utilizing video sharing sites, while 16.66% mentioned relying on social communities and discussion platforms. In addition, 16% of the respondents reported using image and message sharing platforms, while 14% expressed a preference for social blogging sites. In summary, the data suggests that a considerable number of respondents, specifically 43 individuals, demonstrate a clear interest in utilizing social networking sites as a key resource for gathering information before making their purchase decisions. These findings provide valuable insights into the preferred online platforms that influence consumer behaviour and highlight the importance of social networking sites in shaping purchase decisions.

Table 3: Perception About Social Media Marketing

Particulars	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Source of Information	50	33.33	32	21.33	18	12	21	14	29	19.33
Living standard	56	37.33	38	25.33	16	10.66	21	14	19	12.66
Credible	59	39.33	37	24.66	13	8.66	21	14	20	13.33
Essential	31	20.66	28	18.66	59	39.33	18	12	14	9.33
Updating information	62	41.33	36	24	21	14	14	9.3	17	11.3
Recommend to Others	56	37.33	38	25.3	11	7.33	24	16	21	14

Source: Primary data

Table 3 provides insights into the perception of consumers about marketing in social networks based on responses from 150 participants. The data reveals that a significant proportion, comprising 33.33% of the respondents, strongly agree that social media marketing serves as an important source of information. Additionally, 37.33% of the participants strongly agree that social media marketing contributes to an improved standard of living. Moreover, 39.33% of the respondents agree that social media marketing is credible, while the same percentage neither agrees nor disagrees with the essentials of social media marketing. Furthermore, the data indicates that 41.33% of the participants strongly agree that social media marketing helps in updating their information, and 37.33% of the respondents would recommend it to others. These findings suggest a generally positive perception of social media marketing among the respondents, emphasizing its significance as an information source and its potential to enhance the standard of living. It also underscores the importance of credibility and the role of social media in updating information and garnering recommendations from users.

Table 4: Buying Behaviour

Particulars	Number of respondents (F) and percentage (%)									
	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Purchase preference	36	24	56	37.33	14	9.33	21	14	23	5.33
Fetch information	33	22	48	32	21	14	17	11.33	1	0.66
Seek opinion	45	30	32	21.33	34	22.66	1	0.66	18	12
Rate products	21	14	51	34	29	19.33	8	5.33	21	14
Online review and blog	51	34	21	14	21	14	30	20	27	18

Source: Primary data

Table 4 provides insights into the influence of social media marketing on consumer buying behaviour based on the responses of 150 participants. The data reveals that a considerable proportion, accounting for 37.33% of the respondents, agrees that their initial purchase preference can change after encountering social media marketing. Additionally, 32% of the participants indicate that they rely on social media marketing to gather information about various products and services. Furthermore, 30% of the respondents strongly agree that they actively seek out product reviews, while 34% mentioned that they rate products online. The data also indicates that 34% of the participants strongly agree that they frequently encounter online reviews and blogs related to products and services. These findings highlight the significant impact of social media marketing on consumer buying behaviour, showcasing its ability to influence purchasing preferences, provide information, and shape consumer perceptions through online reviews and blogs. The results underscore the importance of leveraging social media platforms as a means to engage with consumers and influence their purchasing decisions.

Discussions

Demographics valuable insights into the demographic characteristics of the respondents. The data reveals that the majority of the participants are women, indicating a significant female representation within the sample population. Furthermore, a substantial proportion of respondents, belonging to the age categories of 31 to 45 years, are observed, suggesting a concentration of individuals in their prime working and family-building years. Additionally, it is noteworthy that a considerable percentage, approximately 43.33%, of the respondents are married, indicating a significant presence of individuals in committed relationships or with established households.

With regard to the preferences of the respondents when it comes to making purchasing decisions. The data indicates that most of the respondents favour utilizing social networking sites as their preferred platform for gathering information before making a purchase. This underscores the influence and significance of social networking platforms in shaping consumer behaviour and decision-making processes.

Moving on to social networks, it provides insights into the respondents' perception of marketing in social networks. The majority of the participants consider social media marketing as an important source of information and believe that it enhances the standard of living. Moreover, a significant percentage of respondents find social media marketing to be credible and rely on it for updating their information. They are also inclined to recommend it to others, emphasizing the positive perception and potential influence of social media marketing on consumer behaviour.

As regards the impact of social media marketing on consumer buying behaviour. The data reveals that a majority of the respondents indicate a change in their initial purchase preference after encountering online advertisements. Additionally, most respondents rely on the internet to obtain information and seek opinions about products. They actively engage with online reviews and blogs, highlighting the role of user-generated content in influencing consumer perceptions and purchase decisions.

These findings collectively demonstrate the significant role of social media marketing in shaping consumer behaviour, decision-making processes, and the acquisition of information and opinions about products and services. The results underscore the importance of leveraging social media platforms as effective tools for reaching and engaging with consumers, ultimately influencing their purchasing preferences and decisions.

Suggestion

To effectively engage consumers through social media marketing, it is crucial to present the content in an appealing and captivating manner. Consumers should perceive that the products and services being promoted have the potential to enhance their standard of living, creating a strong value proposition. Additionally, social media marketing should leverage all available online platforms to reach large and diverse audiences, maximizing the potential impact of the campaigns.

The information shared through social media marketing must be comprehensive and detailed, addressing the needs and expectations of the viewers. By providing in-depth information, organizations can build trust and credibility among consumers, instilling confidence in their offerings. It is important to recognize that online advertising is a dynamic field, constantly evolving. Therefore, businesses need to embrace and adapt to these changes to effectively connect with customers and stay relevant in the digital landscape.

Targeted marketing is also essential in social media marketing. By tailoring the marketing efforts to specific groups, businesses can effectively resonate with their intended audience, ensuring that the content and messaging are aligned with their preferences and needs. This targeted approach enhances the likelihood of capturing the attention and interest of the desired customer segments, optimizing the impact of the marketing campaigns.

In summary, successful social media marketing requires presenting content attractively, demonstrating the potential to improve consumers' standard of living. It involves utilizing various online platforms to reach a wide audience, delivering detailed and comprehensive information that satisfies viewers. Adapting to the evolving nature of online advertising is crucial, and targeted marketing ensures that the message resonates with specific consumer

groups. By following these principles, businesses can harness the power of social media marketing to effectively engage and influence their target customers.

Conclusion

The study conducted in the Kurnool district of Andhra Pradesh reveals that social media serves as a cost-effective platform with a broad reach for brands. The findings indicate that social media marketing has a significant impact on consumer purchasing behaviour. Consumers have a positive perception of social media marketing and view it as a beneficial tool. With the increasing number of internet users, social networks have emerged as a new dimension integrated into business strategies.

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