

Impact of Social Media Marketing on Online Impulse Buying Behaviour

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Abstract:

In recent years, social media has profoundly reshaped the landscape of consumer-business interactions. With the proliferation of digital platforms such as Instagram, Facebook and Twitter which collectively host billions of active users, social media has evolved into a powerful medium for marketing communication. Social Media Marketing (SMM) now plays a pivotal role in influencing consumer behavior by enhancing brand visibility, nurturing brand loyalty, and, importantly, triggering impulse purchases. Impulse buying refers to the spontaneous and immediate decision to purchase a product, often occurring without prior planning or consideration. This behavior is increasingly facilitated by the dynamic and persuasive nature of content shared on social media platforms. The visual appeal of products, influencer endorsements, targeted advertisements, and real-time promotional campaigns all contribute to a psychological environment conducive to unplanned purchasing behavior. The primary objective of this research is to investigate the extent to which social media marketing influences impulse buying decisions among consumers. This study explores various SMM elements—such as content quality, frequency of exposure, emotional engagement, and platform interactivity—and their collective impact on consumer decision-making processes. By conducting a comprehensive analysis of user behavior across different social media platforms, the research reveals a significant correlation between SMM and impulse purchasing. The findings suggest that marketing strategies implemented on social media platforms have the capability to shape consumer attitudes and prompt unplanned spending. Furthermore, the study identifies that the influence of SMM is not only psychological but also behavioral, leading to increased consumption and higher overall expenditure. This research contributes to the broader understanding of digital consumer psychology and offers valuable insights for marketers aiming to optimize their strategies for greater consumer engagement and sales performance in an increasingly digital economy.

Introduction

The proliferation of the Internet, social media, mobile applications, and other digital communication technologies has become integral to the daily lives of billions globally. For instance, Internet usage among adults is now reaching nearly 100% among individuals with higher education and income levels. Businesses have leveraged social media as a strategic tool to enhance customer engagement, relationship management, and communication. By facilitating two-way interactions, social media allows organizations to broaden their customer base and improve content delivery through diverse formats—textual, visual, and verbal.

Consequently, researchers are urged to explore the evolving dynamics of consumer behavior in the digital age. Although significant progress has been made over the past decade, further study is essential, particularly due to the rapidly evolving nature of digital technologies and their impact on consumer-brand interactions. With billions of users globally, platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter offer firms unprecedented access to consumers, enabling real-time communication, brand visibility, and customer relationship development. Given this shift, understanding the psychological and behavioral impact of social media marketing is essential for both scholars and practitioners. This paper explores how social media marketing strategies influence consumer attitudes, trust, loyalty, and purchase intentions. The rise of internet-based marketing, particularly social media marketing (SMM), has transformed how businesses engage with consumers and promote their brands. Social media platforms offer a dynamic space for companies to interact with customers, influence their purchase decisions, and increase brand visibility. Indicating that effective

social media strategies can strongly influence consumer behavior. Social media facilitates brand-consumer interaction through various formats such as reviews, ads, and influencer content, thereby helping companies to build stronger customer relationships and loyalty. As the digital landscape evolves, companies are increasingly investing in online marketing strategies to adapt to changing consumer habits. This research emphasizes the need for businesses to evaluate the effectiveness of their online campaigns and consider factors such as content quality and platform type. Ultimately, the study seeks to explore how SMM shapes the consumer decision-making process, especially among frequent internet users, offering insights into the strategic use of digital platforms in modern marketing.

Why Social Media Marketing:

Social media marketing (SMM) has emerged as a transformative force in shaping consumer behaviour across global markets. Its influence extends beyond traditional advertising channels by leveraging digital interactivity, peer engagement, and algorithm-driven personalization. This section explores the mechanisms through which social media marketing impacts consumer behaviour, grounded in contemporary marketing theory and empirical studies.

1. Social Proof and Peer Influence

Drawing on Bandura's social learning theory and social media platforms facilitate the rapid dissemination of consumer experiences, reviews, and user-generated content. These digital interactions serve as heuristic cues that influence consumer perceptions of trust and impulse buying.

2. Brand Engagement and Relationship Building

Social media allows brands to establish interactive relationships with consumers, fostering a sense of community and co-creation (Hollebeek et al., 2014). This dialogic communication enhances consumer involvement, emotional attachment, and ultimately, brand loyalty, which are key predictors of repeat purchase behavior.

3. Personalized and Targeted Advertising

Through data analytics and machine learning algorithms, social media platforms can deliver hyper-targeted content based on users' demographics, interests, and past behaviours. This personalization increases message relevance and reduces cognitive dissonance, enhancing the likelihood of consumer engagement and conversion (Tucker, 2014).

4. Visual Content and Emotional Appeal

Visual content, including videos and imagery, plays a critical role in capturing attention and evoking emotional responses. According to dual-process theories, emotional appeals can activate peripheral processing routes that expedite decision-making, especially in impulse purchases (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986).

5. Scarcity and FOMO (Fear of Missing Out)

Social media platforms often utilize scarcity-based tactics, such as limited-time offers or exclusive product drops. These strategies exploit FOMO, a psychological phenomenon prevalent in digital environments, thereby increasing urgency and influencing immediate purchasing behaviour (Przybylski et al., 2013).

Review of Literature

Social media marketing involves attracting attention to a brand through online platforms by creating engaging content that encourages user interaction and sharing. It facilitates connections among people with shared interests, enabling the exchange of ideas and the development of online communities. Raacke and Bonds note that social media promotes long-term communication, which nurtures loyalty. K. Burton emphasizes the correlation between user activity and follower count. D. Falls highlights the use of social media for branding and marketing, focusing on content creation and sharing. Akrimi defines social media platforms as tools that promote user interaction and community development. Popular platforms include Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter, and messaging apps like WhatsApp and Telegram.

These networks have revolutionized how information is disseminated and consumed. According to W. Mangold, social media influences consumer behavior, especially post-purchase actions like reviews and feedback. Kaplan describes social media as a product of Web 2.0 technologies, enabling user-generated content. Laroche stresses that social media impacts consumer perception and behavior. D. Mersey adds that it fosters strong consumer relationships, while L. Spiller underlines its role in value creation for organizations.

Shahjehan Asad et al. (2012) found that personality traits influence both impulsive and compulsive buying. Ioanas and Stoica (2014) noted how online brand promotion affects customer decisions. Barger et al. (2016) emphasized the importance of engagement in social media marketing, while Kuo-Lun Hsiao (2017) highlighted how personality traits impact app usage and impulse buying. Godey Bruno et al. (2016) analyzed the effect of social media on

luxury brand perception and consumer behavior. Lastly, Kotler connects consumer behaviour with market formation, emphasizing the importance of understanding consumer actions for effecting marketing.

Objectives of the Study

1. To critically assess the effect of diverse social media marketing techniques—including sponsored advertisements, influencer collaborations, branded content, and time-sensitive promotional campaigns—on consumers' propensity for impulsive purchasing within online platforms.
2. To explore the underlying psychological and emotional mechanisms, such as perceived urgency, social validation, and fear of missing out (FOMO), that are activated by social media marketing efforts and contribute to impulsive buying tendencies.
3. To investigate the role of demographic and behavioral moderators, including but not limited to age, gender, frequency of social media engagement, and online browsing patterns, in shaping the relationship between social media marketing and impulsive purchase behavior.
4. To construct a comprehensive theoretical framework that elucidates the dynamic interactions between various facets of social media marketing and online impulse buying, thereby enriching existing academic discourse and empirical understanding in the field.
5. To formulate evidence-based and ethically grounded strategic recommendations for practitioners, enabling them to leverage social media marketing to positively influence consumer behavior without compromising psychological well-being.

Research Methodology

A comparison was made for the analysis using statistics on the use of social networks, Experts and analytical Publication and other open sources of Information were used as sources of Information. Internet served merely as a supplementary source of information for marketing research. However, advancements in digital tools have enabled more direct and interactive research methods. In addition to traditional surveys, researchers can now employ qualitative techniques such as in-depth interviews and focus groups to gain deeper insights. With the continuous evolution of technology, companies are compelled to remain adaptive and leverage every opportunity to enhance their marketing strategies, drive sales, and strengthen customer loyalty. Digital advancements have empowered consumers by granting them the ability to research products thoroughly, share feedback, and influence public perception. Consequently, many businesses maintain a presence on social media platforms to provide additional product information and foster consumer engagement.

Contemporary consumers are significantly influenced by peer-generated content. They often base their purchase decisions on the reviews and experiences of other users who have already interacted with the product. Through social media, individuals not only access information but also contribute to it, thereby shaping the purchasing decisions of others. In today's marketplace, consumers tend to act as informed investigators. Before committing to a purchase, they frequently consult social networks to understand public opinion on products or services. By accessing content shared by peers, influencers, or online communities, they develop trust in the information provided by people they

know or follow—making social media a powerful tool in shaping consumer behavior.

Conclusion

To conclude, it can be asserted that social media plays a crucial role in influencing consumer behavior within virtual environments. The diversity of consumers and the variability of information presented significantly affect the decision-making process of individuals considering a purchase.

Furthermore, a wide range of websites and platforms populated by diverse user groups intensively engage customers, encouraging active participation and influencing their purchasing behaviors. Majority of consumers engaging in online purchases are young individuals, predominantly between the ages of 25 and 29, and are typically employed within organizations. A significant proportion of these consumers are female and maintain at least one social media account. Prior to purchasing products online, these consumers commonly seek information through company websites, forums, and peer reviews on platforms such as Facebook.

Thus, it can be inferred that social networks play a critical role in shaping consumer behavior within virtual environments. From a corporate perspective, it is essential for companies to strategically integrate mixed marketing policies to enhance sales performance and expand market share. In this study, five key factors were examined to assess their influence on online purchasing behavior: hedonic motivation, trust, variety-seeking tendencies, website quality, and the role of social media marketing. The findings reveal that individuals active on social networks are more likely to engage in online purchasing, driven by increased trust and hedonic motivations. Trust, in particular, significantly

influences customer purchase decisions and fosters impulse buying behavior. The influence of digital and social media environments on consumer behavior is increasingly significant. Research highlights that online forums, customer reviews, and peer feedback on social networks strongly impact purchasing decisions. Consumers tend to spend more money after engaging with these sources.

Future research could further explore how social media environments stimulate a variety of consumer behaviors. Investigations may focus on the psychological and economic constructs involved, offering deeper insight into the underlying drivers of impulse purchasing in digital contexts.

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