



Role of Social Media Marketing in Influencing Consumer Purchase Choices

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The Digital Paradigm Shift in Consumer Behavior

In the contemporary marketing landscape, the emergence of social media has not merely added a new channel for communication; it has fundamentally reshaped the architecture of consumer choice. For scholars and marketing professionals alike, the pivot from traditional "push" marketing to the interactive, peer-influenced world of social media represents a paradigm shift. This research investigates the dynamic relationship between digital marketing strategies and the internal psychological mechanisms that drive a consumer to hit the "buy" button.

The evolution of commerce is inextricably linked to the rise of mobile connectivity and data-driven personalization. As electronic commerce matured, it integrated transformative trends such as augmented reality (AR) in online shopping and advanced sustainability metrics to meet shifting customer expectations. However, the true catalyst for growth has been the integration of social platforms into the shopping experience. Today's consumer is no longer a passive recipient of advertisements; they are an active participant in a digital ecosystem where peer reviews, influencer endorsements, and algorithmic recommendations carry more weight than a brand's self-proclamations.

This paper serves as a roadmap for understanding this evolution. It addresses the significant challenges facing the sector—such as cybersecurity threats and logistical complexities—while seizing the opportunities presented by a global, interconnected marketplace. By examining the history of e-commerce and its future prospects, we identify that the "Living Brand" is now defined by its social presence and its ability to foster authentic connections.



CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Foundations of Social Media Influence

Consumer behavior in the digital age is governed by the principles of **Service-Dominant Logic** and **Social Proof**. Traditional marketing models emphasized the product's utility, but current research suggests that value is co-created during the social interaction between the brand and the consumer. The widespread adoption of platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and LinkedIn has created a "Social Commerce" environment where the line between content and commerce is increasingly blurred.

The theoretical framework for this study rests on the **Service-Profit Chain** and **Brand Congruency Theory**. When a consumer perceives that a brand's social media personality matches their own values—whether through a commitment to sustainability or a specific aesthetic—brand loyalty is strengthened. Furthermore, the "Influencer Effect" leverages the psychological concept of **Parasocial Interaction**, where consumers feel a personal connection to a digital creator, making their recommendations feel more like advice from a friend than a corporate advertisement.

Literature suggests that e-commerce is facing a transition toward **Hyper-Personalization**. Using data-driven insights, brands can now deliver advertisements that anticipate a consumer's needs before the consumer is even consciously aware of them. However, this has led to a counter-movement among consumers who value privacy and transparency. Recent studies (Paschina, 2023) highlight the tension between invasive marketing tactics and the consumer's desire for authenticity, underscoring that while technology drives reach, honesty drives conversion.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A Mixed-Methods Approach to Digital Inquiry

To achieve a nuanced understanding of social media's impact, this study employed a **mixed-methods research design**. This approach combines the statistical rigor of quantitative surveys with the contextual depth of qualitative interviews, ensuring a robust validation of the research hypothesis.

- **Participants:** The study involved a diverse sample of **500 participants**, selected through stratified random sampling. To ensure demographic representation, the sample maintained an even gender distribution and spanned a broad age range, acknowledging that digital literacy and receptivity vary across generations.
- **Quantitative Phase:** Structured online surveys were administered to gather data on social media usage frequency, response rates to different ad formats (video vs. static), and the influence of peer recommendations. This data was analyzed using **SPSS**, employing **regression analysis** and **t-tests** to identify significant correlations.
- **Qualitative Phase:** In-depth interviews were conducted with a targeted group of participants chosen for their proficiency in digital trends. These interviews utilized open-ended questions to explore the "Why" behind the data—uncovering themes such as the importance of sponsored ad disclosure and the emotional triggers of viral content.
- **Ethical Considerations:** The research followed strict ethical guidelines, ensuring informed consent, participant anonymity, and data confidentiality.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS & RESULTS

Quantifying the Social Influence

The analysis of the gathered data provides compelling evidence that social media is a decisive factor in purchase choices. The **regression analysis** revealed a high positive correlation between exposure to advertisements and purchase intent. Specifically, **personalized recommendations** and **user-generated content (UGC)** were found to be the most influential variables.



Key Findings:

1. **Algorithmic Trust:** Participants reported that advertisements tailored to their search history felt more helpful than intrusive, provided the brand was perceived as authentic.
2. **Demographic Variance:** Younger participants (Gen Z and Millennials) showed a **40% higher receptivity** to social media marketing compared to older demographics, who prioritized traditional search engine results over social feeds.
3. **Transparency as a Catalyst:** Qualitative results showed that consumers are more likely to trust a brand that clearly labels its "sponsored" content. Authenticity was identified as the "New Currency" of the digital market.
4. **Influence of UGC:** Reviews and videos posted by real customers were rated **3x more trustworthy** than brand-produced commercial videos.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

Strategic Implications for the Modern Marketer

The results of this study conclude that social media marketing is no longer optional; it is the cornerstone of consumer interaction. The study highlights that the most successful marketing plans are those that prioritize **transparency and value-based content**. Consumers have developed a "filter" against deceptive or manipulative tactics, favoring brands that build meaningful connections over those that simply blast advertisements.

Final Conclusion

In summary, social media platforms are powerful instruments for raising brand awareness and enhancing consumer interaction. To succeed, businesses must remain flexible and adapt to the ever-evolving global marketplace. Authenticity, personalization, and ethical transparency are the three pillars that will define the future of social media marketing. Marketers who seize these opportunities while protecting consumer privacy will create a lasting reputation and unbreakable brand loyalty.

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