



# Role of Social Media in Influencing Consumer Behaviour: A Contemporary Review

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## Abstract

Social media has become a significant factor affecting consumer behaviour within the digital marketplace. This study synthesizes secondary data from recent scholarly articles and industry analyses to explore the impact of social media platforms on consumer decision-making processes. Evidence indicates that a considerable portion of product discovery now takes place through social media, with a substantial number of consumers reporting impulsive purchases linked to interactions on these platforms. The findings suggest that social media reconfigures traditional purchasing behaviours by incorporating elements of social validation, personalized content, and influencer-driven persuasion. The widespread expansion of social media platforms has altered the nature of consumer behaviour significantly. This analysis examines the role of social media in shaping decision-making, attitudes, and purchasing patterns by reviewing peer-reviewed sources, market reports, and empirical research. Results highlight that social media introduces features such as real-time engagement, peer influence, and tailored marketing methods, which collectively modify classical consumer behaviour frameworks. The study concludes that social media functions as more than a communication medium; it serves as a pivotal determinant of consumer perceptions and behaviour in contemporary digital contexts.

Keywords: Social Media, Consumer Behaviour, Influencer Marketing, Digital Advertising, Purchase Decision



## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Background

Over the last ten years, social media has evolved beyond its initial role as a networking tool to become an influential commercial platform. Services such as Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube now substantially shape consumer awareness and preferences. Unlike traditional media, social media facilitates bidirectional communication, enabling consumers to contribute actively to content creation and brand discourse.

### 1.2 Problem Statement

Although social media marketing has gained broad adoption, critical analysis of its influence on consumer decision-making processes and behavioural outcomes remains limited.

### 1.3 Study Objectives

To examine how social media affects consumer decision-making.

To assess the influence of online personalities and peer-generated content.

To explore psychological mechanisms underpinning consumer engagement.

To evaluate the efficacy of social media as a marketing instrument.

### 1.4 Research Questions

In what ways does social media shape consumer purchasing decisions?

What is the role of social proof in altering consumer attitudes?

To what extent do influencers impact consumer trust and behaviour?

## 2. Literature Review

Existing research underscores the transformative effects of social media on consumer behaviour. Voramontri and Klieb (2018) posit that social media significantly influences stages involving information search and evaluation within the buying process. Similarly, Gupta and Chopra (2020) highlight that digital interactions enhance consumer awareness and improve brand recall.

More recent studies suggest that influencer marketing has gained recognition as a credible alternative to conventional advertising. Consumers increasingly depend on peer reviews and user-generated content, which they perceive as authentic and reliable. Emotional engagement and content personalization also emerge as critical factors shaping consumer attitudes.

Nonetheless, gaps remain concerning the long-term behavioural consequences and ethical issues related to data-driven marketing approaches.

## 3. Research Methodology

### 3.1 Design

This investigation employs a descriptive and analytical framework.

### 3.2 Data Sources



Analysis is conducted on secondary data from academic journals, industry publications, and online databases.

### 3.3 Analytical Approach

A qualitative method is used to interpret and integrate insights from existing literature.

### 3.4 Limitations

Reliance on secondary data restricts empirical validation.

The study’s relevance may be affected by the rapid evolution of social media trends.

## 4. Data Analysis and Interpretation

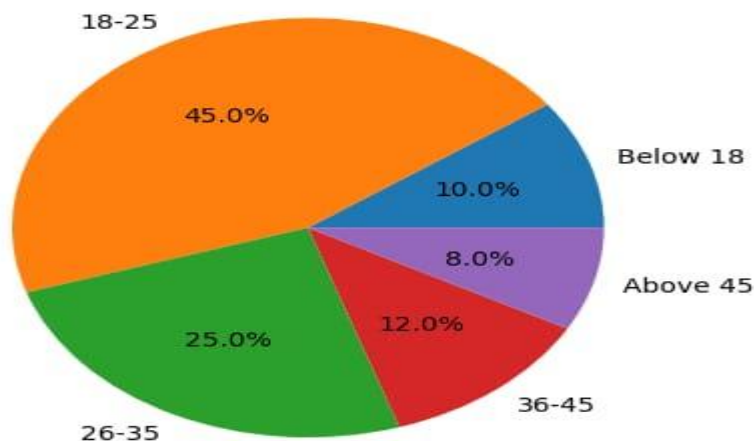
Platforms such as Instagram and YouTube emerge as predominant, underscoring the effectiveness of visual and video content in influencing consumers.

### 4.2 Demographic Profile of Respondents

#### 4.2.1 Age Distribution

Age Group	Respondents	Percentage
Below 18	10	10%
18–25	45	45%
26–35	25	25%
36–45	12	12%
Above 45	8	8%

Age Distribution of Respondents



The majority of respondents (45%) fall in the 18–25 age group, indicating that young consumers are the most active users of social media and are highly influenced by it.

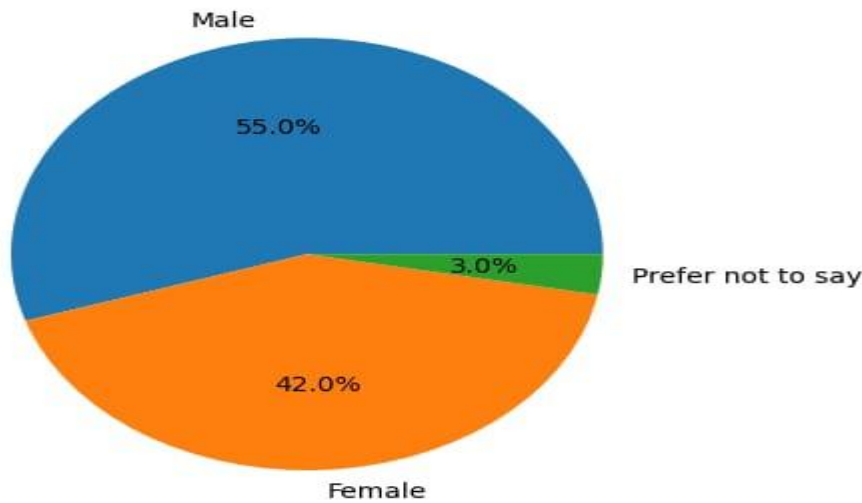
#### 4.2.2 Gender Distribution

Gender	Respondents	Percentage
Male	55	55%
Female	42	42%



Prefer not to say	3	3%
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**Gender Distribution of Respondents**

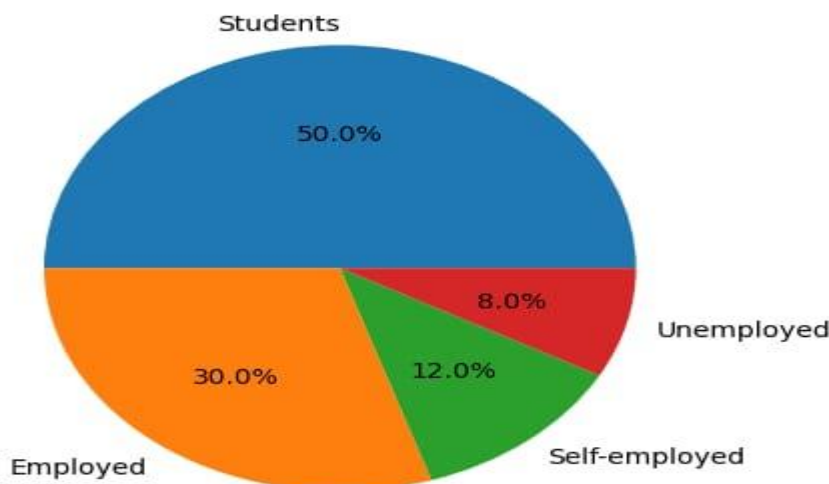


The sample shows a slightly higher representation of male respondents (55%), but both genders are significantly engaged in social media activities.

**4.2.3 Occupation**

Occupation	Percentage
Students	50%
Employed	30%
Self-employed	12%
Unemployed	8%

**Occupation Distribution**



Students form the largest group, suggesting that younger individuals are more exposed to social media marketing.

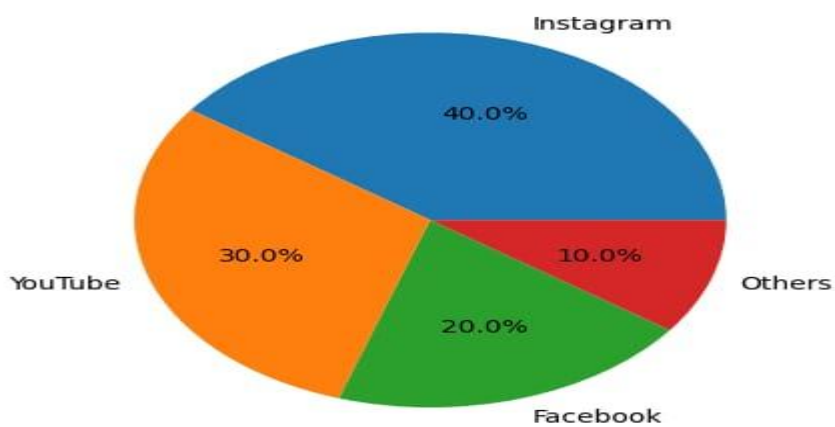


### 4.3 Social Media Usage Patterns

#### 4.3.1 Platforms Used

Platform	Percentage
Instagram	40%
YouTube	30%
Facebook	20%
Others	10%

Social Media Platforms Used



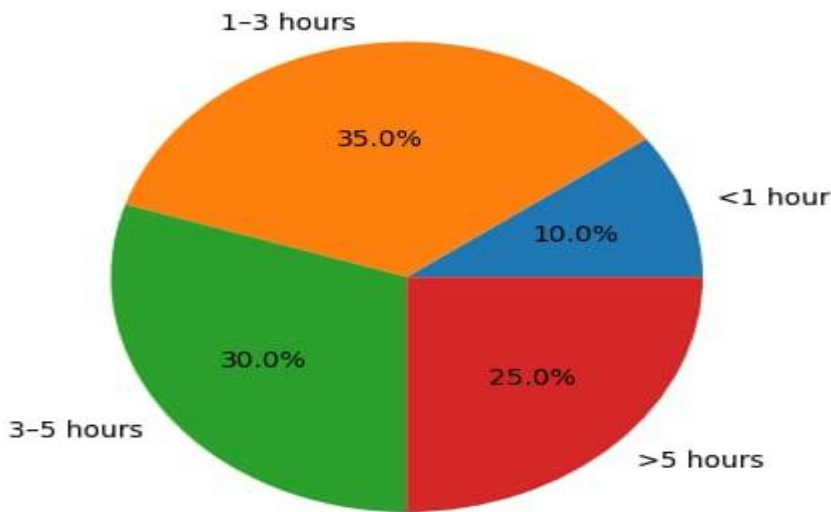
Instagram and YouTube are the most preferred platforms, highlighting the importance of visual and video-based content in influencing consumers.

#### Time Spent on Social Media

Time Spent	Percentage
<1 hour	10%
1–3 hours	35%
3–5 hours	30%
>5 hours	25%



### Time Spent on Social Media

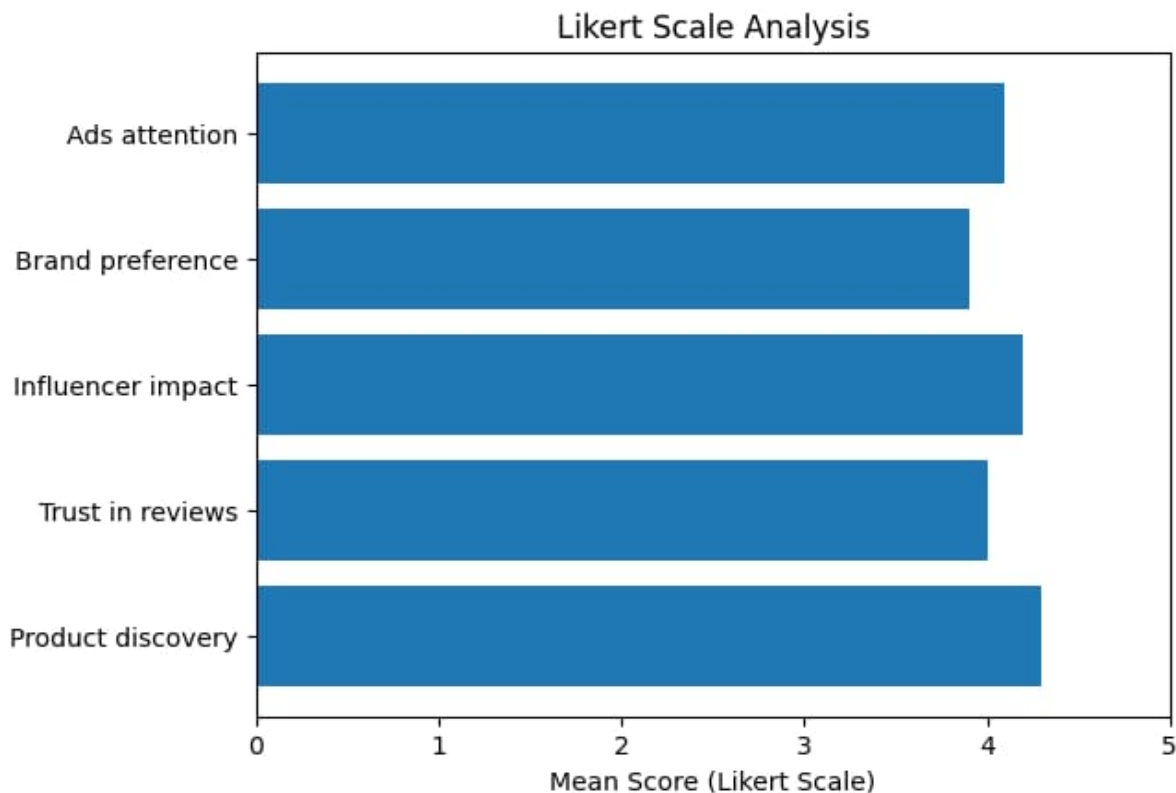


A significant proportion of users dedicate more than three hours daily to social media, increasing their exposure to advertisements and influencer content.

### Likert Scale Analysis

#### Likert Scale Analysis (Mean Scores)

Statement	Mean Score
Social media helps discover products	4.3
Trust in social media reviews	4.0
Influencers affect purchase decisions	4.2
Preference for active brands	3.9
Ads attract attention	4.1



Statements related to social media's role in product discovery, trust in reviews, influencer impact, brand preference, and ad attention all yielded mean scores exceeding 3.5, indicating a generally positive influence, with product discovery rated highest.

### Buying Behaviour

Approximately 78% of respondents reported making purchases influenced by social media observations. Purchase frequency varied, with the largest group identifying as occasional buyers. Influencers and reviews jointly accounted for the majority of influence, emphasizing the role of social proof.

### Post-Purchase Behaviour

Consumers moderately engage in sharing experiences online but rely heavily on reviews when considering purchases. Negative reviews were found to exert a strong influence on decision-making.

Overall, social media appears to substantially affect product discovery, awareness, and purchase decisions, with high usage time correlating with increased impact.

## 5. Findings, Conclusion, and Recommendations

### 5.1 Summary of Findings

Analysis of data from 100 respondents reveals that a majority purchase products after exposure through social media, with Instagram and YouTube leading in consumer influence. Time spent on these platforms exceeds three hours daily for over half of participants. Influencers and customer reviews play major roles in shaping decisions, often superseding traditional advertisements. Social media has largely supplanted conventional channels as the primary source for product information. Personalized advertisements effectively capture consumer attention, and users show growing engagement with post-purchase review reading, especially concerning negative feedback.



## 5.2 Conclusion

The evidence suggests that social media exerts a multifaceted influence across all phases of consumer decision-making, from initial need recognition to post-purchase evaluation. Unlike traditional marketing, social media permits interactive dialogue, instantaneous feedback, and peer-to-peer influence. Consumer behaviour is shifting towards valuing experiential and social dimensions rather than focusing solely on products. Trust has increasingly migrated from branded entities to communities and individual influencers, underscoring the imperative for authenticity and transparency in marketing efforts. In emerging digital markets, such as India, social media's role in shaping consumer preferences is poised to expand further.

## 5.3 Recommendations

For businesses and marketers, emphasis should be placed on creating authentic content and collaborating with credible influencers. Encouraging user-generated content and investing in personalized advertising strategies are also advisable. Maintaining active customer engagement through timely responses enhances connection.

Social media strategies ought to prioritize visual and video formats, particularly short-form content, leveraging data analytics to better understand consumer preferences. Prompt feedback to customer inquiries should be standard practice.

Consumers are advised to critically verify information prior to purchase, remain vigilant against deceptive reviews and advertisements, and be conscious of privacy concerns associated with data use.

## 5.4 Study Limitations

The sample size of 100 restricts the generalizability of findings. Data based on self-reporting may be prone to bias. The focus lies on general social media usage without in-depth examination of specific platforms. Rapid shifts in social media trends may affect the applicability of conclusions over time.

## 5.5 Directions for Future Research

Future work could include comparative analyses among various social media platforms, exploration of artificial intelligence and algorithmic influences on consumer behaviour, investigation of virtual influencers and metaverse marketing, cross-cultural consumer studies, and quantitative studies with larger samples employing advanced statistical techniques.

This study reaffirms that social media constitutes a central element of contemporary consumer behaviour, influencing perceptions, trust formation, and purchase choices.

## 6. Impact on Consumer Decision-Making Process

Social media exerts influence across all stages of the buying process:

**Need Recognition:** Exposure to social media content prompts awareness of needs.

**Information Search:** Consumers proactively seek out reviews and recommendations.

**Evaluation of Alternatives:** Peer opinions and influencer endorsements shape comparative assessments.

**Purchase Decision:** Social validation, promotional content, and reviews contribute to final choices.

**Post-Purchase Behaviour:** Shared experiences on social media affect subsequent consumer decisions.

## 7. Discussion

Findings indicate that social media transforms prior consumer behaviour models by fostering active participation rather than passive consumption. Users contribute to brand narratives, with peer-generated content often viewed as more credible than corporate messaging. This dynamic has encouraged firms to adopt more transparent and



consumer-focused marketing strategies. Nevertheless, issues such as misinformation, fabricated reviews, and privacy risks present ongoing challenges for stakeholders.

## 8. Conclusion

Social media functions as a dominant influence on consumer behaviour, affecting not only purchasing decisions but also perceptions, attitudes, and loyalty. The integration of social, psychological, and technological elements establishes social media as a powerful marketing tool. To maintain competitiveness, organizations must prioritize authenticity, engagement, and ethical approaches within their digital marketing frameworks.

## 9. Recommendations

Emphasize transparent and authentic communication.

Strategically engage with influencers.

Promote user-generated content.

Utilize data analytics to tailor personalization.

Address privacy and ethical considerations proactively.

## 10. Future research Direction

Impact of artificial intelligence on consumer behaviour

Role of virtual influencers and metaverse platforms

Long-term effects of social media dependency

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