**The Impact of Social Media on Consumer Purchasing Behaviour**

***For the partial fulfilment of the requirement***

***For the award of***

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**Under the guidance of**

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**Certificate**

This is to certify that the master’s thesis “**ANALYSIS OF THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOR**” has been prepared by **Prashant Gangwar**. Under my supervision and guidance. The project report is submitted towards the partial fulfilment of 2-year, full time master of business administration.

Name & signature of faculty

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**Declaration**

I, **Prashant Gangwar** roll no. **22042010185**, student of school of business, galgotias university, greater Noida, hereby declare that the master’s thesis on “**ANALYSIS OF THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOR”** is an original and authenticated work done by me. I further declare that it has not been submitted elsewhere by any other person in any of the institutes for the award of any degree or diploma.

Name and signature of the student

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Date: -

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**Executive Summary**

The analysis of the impact of social media on consumer behaviour reveals a profound influence on purchasing decisions and consumer preferences. Social media platforms have become integral to the consumer journey, shaping perceptions, facilitating information exchange, and driving purchasing decisions. Consumers increasingly rely on social media for product research, seeking reviews, recommendations, and feedback from peers and influencers. The accessibility and immediacy of social media enable consumers to gather information swiftly, compare products, and make informed choices. Moreover, social media's interactive nature fosters engagement and brand interaction, leading to increased brand loyalty and advocacy among consumers. Brands leveraging social media effectively can cultivate strong relationships with their audience, delivering personalized content and targeted advertisements to enhance consumer experiences. However, challenges such as privacy concerns and information overload underscore the need for brands to navigate social media responsibly and ethically. Overall, the analysis underscores the pivotal role of social media in shaping consumer behaviour and highlights the importance of strategic social media marketing initiatives in driving business growth and fostering meaningful connections with consumers.

**Abstract**

The abstract provides a concise overview of the analysis conducted on the impact of social media on consumer behaviour. It highlights the significant influence that social media platforms exert on purchasing decisions and consumer preferences, emphasizing their integral role in the consumer journey. Consumers increasingly rely on social media for product research, seeking reviews, recommendations, and feedback, facilitated by the accessibility and immediacy of these platforms. Social media's interactive nature fosters engagement and brand interaction, leading to increased brand loyalty and advocacy. Effective social media marketing enables brands to cultivate strong relationships with their audience through personalized content and targeted advertisements. However, challenges such as privacy concerns and information overload necessitate responsible and ethical navigation of social media by brands. Ultimately, the abstract underscores the pivotal role of social media in shaping consumer behaviour and emphasizes the importance of strategic social media marketing initiatives for driving business growth and fostering meaningful connections with consumers.

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**Introduction**

This research study aims to explore the intricate relationship between consumer behaviour and social media, particularly focusing on how social media influences purchasing decisions. While consumer behaviour has been extensively studied, much of the existing literature fails to address the evolving landscape of technology and its impact on consumer habits. Therefore, this research endeavours to fill this gap by providing insights into how social media affects consumers' purchasing decisions in various sectors such as hospitality, food and beverage, and retail.

Understanding consumer behaviour on social media is crucial for companies seeking to tailor their marketing strategies effectively. By discerning consumers' expectations and motivations, businesses can better comprehend what drives them to purchase specific products or services. The study delves into different types of buying behaviors and the key factors influencing purchasing decisions, essential for grasping the dynamics of consumer behaviour in the digital age. The thesis also examines the most prevalent social media platforms and recent trends in social media marketing. According to Consultancy’s Future of Marketing report, a significant majority of marketers anticipate social media to become increasingly vital for their marketing strategies in the coming years. However, keeping pace with the rapidly evolving landscape of social media presents a challenge, with frequent updates necessitating continual adjustments to marketing strategies.

The theoretical framework of this research draws upon existing literature and previous studies on consumer behaviour, social media, and social media marketing. The primary research method employed is quantitative, involving an online survey to investigate the factors influencing consumer purchase decisions through social media. Additionally, the research seeks to elucidate how individuals engage with and interpret information on social media before and during the purchasing process.

**1.Literary Review**

**1.1Introduction**

Social media has revolutionized the way individuals communicate, interact, and make decisions, profoundly influencing consumer behaviour. This literature review aims to analyse the impact of social media on consumer behaviour, focusing on key aspects such as purchasing decisions, brand perception, and information seeking. With the widespread adoption of social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, consumers now have access to a vast array of product information, reviews, and recommendations at their fingertips. Scholars have conducted extensive research to understand how social media shapes consumer preferences, influences brand loyalty, and drives purchasing decisions. By examining existing literature, this review seeks to provide insights into the complex interplay between social media and consumer behaviour, highlighting both the opportunities and challenges that arise in today's digital landscape.

**1.2 Social Media and Purchase Decision**

Social media platforms have revolutionized the way consumers make purchasing decisions, playing a pivotal role in influencing their choices. FitzGerald (2019) emphasizes the significance of social media as a primary source of product information, reviews, and recommendations for consumers. With the proliferation of social media channels, consumers have unprecedented access to a wealth of information about products and services, enabling them to make more informed decisions. This trend is further supported by Brennan et al. (2012), who highlight the role of social media in engaging consumers and shaping their preferences through targeted marketing and personalized content. Moreover, social media platforms serve as dynamic marketplaces where consumers can compare prices, read reviews, and seek opinions from peers and influencers (Chaffey, 2020). The interactive nature of social media facilitates real-time interactions between consumers and brands, allowing for personalized recommendations and tailored marketing messages. This enables consumers to navigate the purchasing journey more efficiently and effectively, leading to increased confidence in their decisions.

Overall, social media has become an indispensable tool for consumers seeking information and guidance in their purchasing decisions. By leveraging social media effectively, businesses can influence consumer behaviour, drive engagement, and ultimately, enhance sales and brand loyalty.

**1.3 Brand Perception and Loyalty**

Social media has emerged as a powerful tool for shaping brand perception and fostering loyalty among consumers. Research by Ahmad (2018) highlights the role of social media in enhancing brand recognition and engagement. Brands leverage social media platforms to communicate with their audience, share content, and build relationships, ultimately influencing consumers' perceptions of the brand. Amarosa (2020) emphasizes the importance of social listening in monitoring brand conversations and addressing customer concerns promptly, thereby enhancing brand reputation and loyalty. Furthermore, studies by Brennan et al. (2012) underscore the significance of social media in engaging consumers and strengthening brand loyalty through personalized content and targeted marketing strategies. By maintaining an active presence on social media and fostering meaningful interactions, brands can cultivate a loyal customer base and differentiate themselves in the competitive marketplace.

Overall, the literature reviewed highlights the critical role of social media in shaping brand perception and fostering loyalty among consumers. Brands that effectively leverage social media can enhance their visibility, credibility, and engagement, leading to increased brand loyalty and advocacy among consumers. However, businesses must also navigate challenges such as privacy concerns and content saturation to maintain a positive brand image and effectively engage with their audience on social media platforms.

**1.4Information Seeking Behaviour**

Social media platforms have transformed the way individuals seek information, offering a plethora of resources and opportunities for information acquisition. Research by Chaffey (2020) highlights social media's pivotal role as a platform for information seeking, enabling users to access product details, read reviews, and solicit recommendations from peers and influencers. This aligns with findings from Cruz et al. (2010), emphasizing social media's significance in providing consumers with timely and relevant information to inform their decision-making process. Moreover, the interactive nature of social media fosters engagement and facilitates information exchange among users. Amarosa (2020) discusses the importance of social listening, allowing businesses to monitor conversations, gather feedback, and address customer inquiries promptly. This enhances the accessibility and availability of information for consumers, empowering them to make informed choices.

However, challenges such as content saturation and misinformation pose obstacles to effective information seeking on social media platforms. Gilliland (2020) highlights the need for businesses to navigate these challenges by providing accurate and trustworthy information, fostering transparency, and actively engaging with users. Overall, social media's impact on information seeking behaviour underscores its role as a valuable resource for consumers in today's digital landscape.

**1.5 Challenges and Limitations**

Social media's pervasive influence on consumer behaviour is undeniable, yet it also presents challenges and limitations for businesses. Privacy concerns loom large in the social media landscape, with users increasingly wary of data breaches and misuse of personal information (Gilliland, 2020). Content saturation poses another hurdle, as the sheer volume of information on social media platforms can overwhelm users and diminish the visibility of marketing efforts (Gilliland, 2017). Moreover, algorithm changes by platforms like Facebook and Instagram can disrupt businesses' marketing strategies and reduce organic reach (Funk, 2013). Additionally, the evolving nature of social media platforms requires businesses to continually adapt their marketing strategies to remain relevant and effective (Gilliland, 2020). With consumers' preferences and behaviors constantly changing, businesses must stay agile and responsive to maintain their competitive edge (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010). Furthermore, the rise of fake news and misinformation on social media can undermine trust in brands and erode their reputation (Kotler & Armstrong, 2011).

In conclusion, while social media offers unprecedented opportunities for businesses to connect with consumers, it also presents challenges that require careful navigation and strategic adaptation. Understanding these challenges is essential for businesses to leverage the full potential of social media marketing while mitigating risks and maximizing effectiveness.

**1.6 Conclusion**

In conclusion, the literature reviewed provides compelling evidence of the significant impact of social media on consumer behaviour. Social media platforms have emerged as powerful tools for influencing purchasing decisions, shaping brand perception, and facilitating information-seeking behaviour among consumers. The studies discussed highlight the role of social media in providing consumers with access to product information, reviews, and recommendations, thereby influencing their decision-making process. Furthermore, social media enables brands to engage with consumers, enhance brand loyalty, and drive sales through targeted marketing strategies and personalized content. However, challenges such as privacy concerns, content saturation, and algorithm changes pose potential obstacles for businesses seeking to leverage social media effectively. Despite these challenges, businesses can capitalize on the opportunities presented by social media marketing by adopting innovative approaches and adapting their strategies to meet the evolving needs and preferences of consumers. Overall, the literature underscores the importance of understanding the dynamic relationship between social media and consumer behaviour in today's digital landscape, paving the way for future research and strategic initiatives in social media marketing.

**2. Social Media**

Social media refers to online platforms or applications that enable users to generate and exchange content while connecting with others (Hudson 2020). It facilitates the rapid and real-time sharing of content through smartphones, tablets, and computers, seamlessly integrated into people's daily routines, especially with the widespread adoption of smartphones, which boasts 3.5 billion users globally (Statista 2020). Accessible to anyone with internet connectivity, social media platforms allow users to create accounts and share various types of content, reaching a broad audience of visitors to their profiles or pages (Hudson 2020). Consequently, social media serves as a dynamic space for individuals and diverse organizations to engage with one another, disseminate information, and reach a wide audience simultaneously.

In the depicted figure below, the total count illustrates the active user base of social media networks and messenger services. The research was conducted in 2020, providing up-to-date insights into global usage trends.



Figure 1. Social media use around the world (Hootsuite 2020)

**2.1 Social Media Platforms**

Before the proliferation of social media on smartphones, platforms like Facebook, YouTube, and Myspace revolutionized communication and interaction. These pioneers laid the groundwork for a new era of online connectivity. Following these breakthroughs, a plethora of new social media platforms emerged, including Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram, and TikTok. A social media platform encompasses any service, application, or platform facilitating social interaction.

In the past decade, extensive research has been conducted to gauge the popularity of various social media platforms. According to Statista's findings in 2019, the top five most-used platforms were Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, and WeChat. Notably, three of these platforms are messaging applications, underlining the increasing significance of instant communication in the social media landscape.



Figure 2. Most popular social media platforms worldwide (Data portal 2020)

* Facebook stands out as the largest and most utilized social media platform, boasting 2.4 billion active monthly users. Moreover, it leads in user engagement, with individuals spending an average of 58 minutes per day on the platform (Ortiz-Ospina 2019). Offering diverse content-sharing options such as pictures, videos, and articles, Facebook also serves as a crucial advertising platform. Notably, a significant portion of global mobile digital advertising revenue, 18.4%, is generated from Facebook ads (Saleh, 2015).
* Facebook Messenger, an offshoot of Facebook, ranks among the most popular messaging applications in 2020. Given Facebook's widespread use, Messenger is extensively utilized for interpersonal communication and customer support.
* YouTube follows closely behind Facebook, boasting 2 billion active monthly users. The platform's immense popularity underscores the power of video content marketing, with 90% of consumers discovering new brands and products through YouTube (Oberto, 2020).
* WhatsApp and WeChat offer similar messaging features, with WhatsApp leading in global usage with approximately 2 billion monthly users. Instagram, the second most downloaded free app in 2018, has witnessed a surge in daily active users of Instagram Stories, from 150 million in January 2017 to 500 million in January 2019 (Statista, 2019). This platform presents ample opportunities for advertising and marketing, including storefronts and shopping with augmented reality features, alongside the utilization of social media influencers by various brands.
* TikTok, ranking seventh in the list of most-used social media platforms, has rapidly gained popularity since its launch in September 2016. Boasting half a billion users by mid-2018, TikTok epitomizes the concept of a "niche social platform," experiencing exponential growth and becoming a global phenomenon (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2020). Renowned for its viral trends, challenges, and dances, TikTok has become a favourite among youth worldwide, with its content often shared across other social media platforms.

**2.2 Social Media Trends 2023**

In 2023, social media continued to shape consumer behaviour in profound ways, with several notable trends emerging in line with the theme of analysing its impact on consumer behaviour. One prominent trend was the increasing integration of social commerce features across platforms. Social media platforms expanded their e-commerce capabilities, allowing users to discover, research, and purchase products directly within the app environment. This seamless integration blurred the lines between social interaction and shopping, influencing consumer decision-making processes. Another key trend was the rise of personalized and interactive content experiences. Brands leveraged data analytics and artificial intelligence to deliver tailored content to individual users, enhancing engagement and fostering deeper connections. Interactive elements such as polls, quizzes, and augmented reality filters became prevalent, providing consumers with immersive experiences and driving brand interaction.

Additionally, the prevalence of influencer marketing evolved, with a shift towards authenticity and transparency. Consumers increasingly gravitated towards influencers who shared genuine experiences and values, seeking relatable content over polished endorsements. Brands partnered with micro-influencers and niche creators to reach specific audience segments, recognizing the power of authenticity in influencing consumer behaviour. Moreover, social media platforms continued to prioritize user privacy and data protection, implementing stricter regulations and transparency measures. This emphasis on trust and transparency bolstered consumer confidence in engaging with brands and sharing personal information online.

Overall, the landscape of social media in 2023 reflected a dynamic environment where consumer behaviour was shaped by seamless shopping experiences, personalized content, authentic influencer partnerships, and heightened privacy measures. Understanding and adapting to these trends became imperative for businesses seeking to effectively leverage social media to influence consumer behaviour.

In 2023, the landscape of social media witnessed significant shifts that directly influenced consumer behaviour and shaped marketing strategies. Here's a more elaborate discussion on each key trend:

**2.2.1 Ephemeral Content**

 Ephemeral content, epitomized by the Stories feature on platforms like Snapchat, Instagram, and Facebook, became increasingly popular. Users embraced these temporary content formats due to their fleeting nature, which tapped into the desire for spontaneous and engaging content experiences. Brands capitalized on this trend by creating time-sensitive and interactive content, fostering a sense of urgency and fostering deeper engagement with their audiences.

**2.2.2 Social Commerce**

 Social media platforms evolved beyond communication tools into robust retail platforms through the integration of social commerce features. Brands leveraged platforms like Instagram, Pinterest, and Facebook to drive sales directly from social media posts. Shoppable posts and storefronts provided seamless shopping experiences for users, blurring the lines between social interaction and commerce. This trend solidified social commerce as a fundamental aspect of marketing strategies, offering brands new avenues to reach and convert consumers.

**2.2.3. Video Content**

 Video content continued to dominate social media, with brands embracing both short-form and long-form formats across platforms like TikTok, Instagram Stories, and YouTube. The Cisco Annual Internet report's projection that video content would comprise 82% of all social media and advertising content by 2022 underscored its importance. Brands leveraged video content to convey their messages creatively, engage audiences effectively, and drive conversions. The versatility of video content allowed brands to experiment with storytelling and showcase products or services in compelling ways.

**2.2.4. Influencer Marketing**

 While influencer marketing remained a cornerstone of digital marketing strategies, there was a notable shift towards collaborating with macro-influencers over mega-influencers. Brands recognized the value of working with smaller, niche influencers who boasted higher engagement rates and wielded greater influence within specific communities or demographics. Authenticity became paramount, with consumers placing greater trust in influencers who shared genuine experiences and recommendations. Influencer marketing continued to influence consumer purchasing decisions significantly, driving brand awareness and fostering brand loyalty.

**2.2.5. Customer Service Interaction**

Social media platforms evolved into essential channels for customer service interaction, allowing brands to provide timely and personalized support to their audiences. Recognizing the importance of maintaining a positive reputation, brands invested in social media monitoring tools and dedicated customer service teams to address inquiries, resolve issues, and engage with customers in real-time. The visibility of social media necessitated swift responses and proactive engagement, contributing to enhanced customer satisfaction and loyalty.

**2.2.6. Social Listening**

Social media emerged as a rich source of data and insights for businesses through social listening practices. By monitoring brand mentions, sentiment analysis, and consumer conversations, companies gained valuable insights into consumer preferences, perceptions, and behaviors. Social listening informed strategic decision-making, allowing brands to tailor their marketing strategies, improve product offerings, and enhance overall brand reputation. As social media continued to evolve, businesses recognized the importance of leveraging social listening to stay attuned to the needs and preferences of their target audience.

**2.3 Social Media Marketing**

Social media marketing has emerged as a pivotal strategy for businesses seeking to understand and influence consumer behaviour. The analysis of its impact on consumer behaviour reveals a multifaceted relationship between social media platforms and purchasing decisions.

Firstly, social media serves as a powerful tool for brand exposure and awareness. Through targeted advertising and engaging content, businesses can reach vast audiences, fostering brand recognition and recall among consumers. The interactive nature of social media facilitates direct communication between brands and consumers, allowing for personalized engagement and relationship-building. Moreover, social media platforms function as hubs of product discovery and research. Consumers increasingly turn to platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube to explore new products, read reviews, and seek recommendations from peers and influencers. This phenomenon underscores the importance of social proof and user-generated content in shaping consumer perceptions and purchase intentions. Furthermore, social media influences consumer behaviour through social influence and peer pressure. The prevalence of social validation metrics such as likes, shares, and followers creates a sense of social currency, driving individuals to conform to perceived norms and trends. Social media influencers play a significant role in this process, leveraging their credibility and reach to endorse products and sway consumer preferences.

Additionally, social media facilitates seamless transactions and purchasing experiences. With the integration of e-commerce functionalities and features like shoppable posts and checkout options, consumers can easily transition from discovery to purchase within the same platform. This streamlined process enhances convenience and encourages impulse buying behaviors.

Overall, the analysis of social media's impact on consumer behaviour underscores its transformative influence across various stages of the consumer journey. From brand discovery and product research to peer influence and transactional experiences, social media marketing has become indispensable for businesses seeking to understand and leverage the dynamics of contemporary consumer behaviour.

**2.4 Social Media as Influencer**

Social media wields significant influence over consumers' decision-making processes, offering a platform where opinions and reviews about various brands and products abound. FitzGerald (2019) identifies several key factors that contribute to this influence, including reviews from influencers and social media connections, brands' social media presence, and social media advertising. Influencers, individuals with substantial social media followings, play a crucial role in shaping consumer perceptions through influencer marketing initiatives, particularly on platforms like Instagram and TikTok. By endorsing specific brands and products, influencers share their opinions with their followers, influencing purchasing decisions. Originally designed to facilitate connections and information sharing, social media platforms now serve as arenas where users can express opinions about products, services, and brands to a wider audience. This democratization of feedback allows consumers to share their experiences and opinions freely.

In today's digital landscape, simply selling products and services online is no longer sufficient. Brands must differentiate themselves, establish a strong presence on social media platforms, and ensure that relevant information is readily accessible to all users. By actively engaging with consumers on social media and delivering valuable content, brands can enhance their image, build credibility, and attract new followers.

Moreover, the widespread reach of social media enables hyper-focused targeting and retargeting in advertising efforts, allowing brands to make strategic moves that align with their marketing goals while optimizing resources (FitzGerald, 2019). This targeted approach maximizes the effectiveness of advertising campaigns and enhances brand visibility in the competitive digital marketplace.

**2.5 Benefits of Social Media**

*1. Increased Exposure*

The significance of Social Media Marketing has surged in recent times, with both consumers and marketers extensively utilizing social networking platforms. This increased usage has resulted in a notable boost in exposure, with 92% of individuals now being actively engaged.

2*. Increased Traffic*

The advent of web-based marketing has led to a steady rise in user numbers. Research indicates that the extensive use of social networking sites by consumers and marketers alike has substantially increased traffic, with an 80% uptick noted in recent times.

*3. Develops Loyal Fans*

Brand loyalty stands out as a pivotal advantage of social networking sites. For instance, satisfied consumers tend to exhibit unwavering loyalty to a particular product or brand, reducing the likelihood of them seeking alternatives elsewhere.

*4. Provides Marketplace Insight*

Social networking platforms serve as comprehensive repositories of product information, offering details on features, functions, pricing, and more. This availability of comprehensive information directly on websites eliminates the need for consumers to search elsewhere, with 72% acknowledging the role of social networking sites in providing valuable marketing insights.

*5. Generates Leads*

Social networking sites offer various avenues for lead generation, such as through blogs serving as hubs for customer engagement. Platforms like Facebook also serve as significant sources for generating leads, effectively facilitating customer outreach.

*6. Improves Search Rankings*

With consumers increasingly spending significant amounts of time on social networking sites, these platforms effectively function as search engines. The feedback provided by customers online plays a crucial role in determining the ranking of products, further underscoring the importance of social media in influencing search rankings.

7*. Fosters Business Partnerships*

In line with the evolving nature of trading, social media has become instrumental in forging business partnerships. The rise of collaborations, such as Bench Box seeking engagement from beauty enthusiasts on Instagram, highlights the growing importance of partnerships facilitated through social networking sites.

*8. Reduces Marketing Expenditure*

Traditional methods of selling products often entail substantial costs, including hiring salespersons and maintaining physical offices. In contrast, social networking sites offer a cost-effective platform for advertising and promotion, enabling businesses to reach their target audience at minimal expenses.

*9. Improves Sales*

With an exponential increase in online activities, including photo sharing, website creation, and tweeting, social networking sites have become integral to facilitating online purchases. Consequently, revenue generated through online sales has witnessed a significant surge compared to previous years.

*10. Effects of Social Media Marketing on Consumer Behaviour*

The proliferation of social media has transformed the business landscape, with consumers emerging as the focal point of marketing efforts. Numerous studies have explored the influence of social media on consumer behaviour, providing valuable insights for firms seeking to leverage social media effectively to maintain a competitive edge in the market.

**2.5 Advantages of Social Media**

*1. Enhanced Brand Recognition*

Social media serves as a novel platform for brand promotion, enabling companies to reach new customers and engage with existing ones swiftly. When a brand maintains a presence across multiple social media platforms, it enhances its recognition among customers and attracts new ones. Frequent mentions of the brand on social media platforms contribute to bolstering its image, thereby fostering business growth.

*2. Improved Brand Loyalty*

Studies conducted in the United States have shown that increased interaction about a brand on social media correlates with higher levels of customer trust in the brand. Leveraging social media tools to connect with customers can enhance brand loyalty. However, strategic planning is essential to effectively influence customers through social media. Furthermore, a significant portion of the American population follows and exhibits loyalty to their preferred brands on social media.

*3. Opportunities for Conversion*

Every comment, post, share, and like on social media has the potential to translate into a sale and attract customers. While not every interaction may result in a sale, positive feedback about a product increases the likelihood of conversion. Each engagement, such as comments, website links, videos, and tweets, encourages viewers to visit the page and consider making a purchase.

*4. High Conversion Ratio*

The conversion rate of discussions on social media into sales is notably high, making it a crucial aspect for businesses. Brands and product reviews on social media platforms serve as effective salespersons, driving businesses to prioritize engagement with individuals on social media over traditional firms. This shift highlights the importance of leveraging social media to expand and enhance business operations.

*5. Establishment of Brand Authority*

Consistent communication with customers fosters trust in the product or service, as individuals often consult social media comments and reviews when making purchasing decisions. Each new post about a product on social media attracts a larger audience, contributing to the brand's authority and appeal. Increased discussions about a product on social media platforms make it a more attractive brand in the eyes of consumers.

*6. Reduction in Marketing Costs*

The presence of social media has led to a reduction in advertising costs, as companies can advertise through platforms such as Twitter and Facebook at lower expenses. Research indicates that spending six hours per week on social media for advertising purposes can significantly increase the visibility of products. By allocating just one hour per day to social media engagement, sellers can attract more customers, thereby reducing advertisement costs and potentially lowering the prices of goods.

**2.6 limitation of social media**

Indeed, while there are numerous advantages to leveraging social media, it's crucial to acknowledge the limitations it presents. Here are some notable drawbacks:

*1. Lack of Enthusiasm*

Consumers may not always fully embrace online purchasing due to concerns such as delayed shipping, inadequate packaging, or complex cancellation procedures. These factors can undermine consumer confidence and enthusiasm for online shopping.

*2. Security Issues*

Security concerns, particularly regarding privacy and transaction fraud, pose significant challenges for online shoppers. Consumers are wary of potential risks associated with sharing personal information and making financial transactions online.

*3. Preference for Traditional Methods*

Some consumers still prefer traditional shopping methods over online purchasing. They believe that traditional channels offer a sense of reliability and security, with fewer risks of fraud or unauthorized transactions.

*4. Financial Risks*

Online shopping involves inherent financial risks, including uncertainty surrounding transactions and potential losses. Consumers may hesitate to make purchases online due to fears of financial loss or uncertainty about the reliability of online vendors.

*5. Lack of Physical Interaction*

One of the key limitations of online shopping via social media is the absence of physical interaction with products. Without the ability to see or touch items firsthand, consumers may feel hesitant to make purchases online, as they cannot assess the quality or suitability of the products.

While these limitations highlight potential challenges associated with social media-driven online shopping, it's important to recognize that they are not absolute barriers. Instead, they represent partial drawbacks that can be addressed through strategic measures aimed at enhancing consumer trust, security, and satisfaction in the online shopping experience.

 This illustrates the entire process a consumer may undergo when making a purchase decision, with social media playing a significant role. Once a customer decides to buy a product, they typically compile a list of options to determine the most suitable one. Despite the various tools offered by e-commerce websites for browsing and product research, many internet users—approximately eighty percent—still find it challenging to locate the exact product they need. In such cases, individuals often seek reviews, recommendations, and rankings from trusted sources, including friends, family members, colleagues, and other acquaintances.

However, these trusted individuals may not always be readily available for discussion. Social media platforms offer a solution by providing quick access to friends, relatives, and trusted contacts via the web, allowing consumers to easily view and engage with their posts and comments. This approach enables consumers to gather information about products shared and endorsed by others on social media, both online and offline.

Ultimately, consumers are the cornerstone of any organization, be it online or offline. It is the responsibility of businesses to cultivate strong relationships with consumers, as they are essential to the success and value of any firm or business entity.

**3 Consumer Behaviour on Social Media**

Cross-channel shopping represents a significant shift in consumer behaviour, where individuals leverage both online and offline channels to fulfil their purchasing needs. As highlighted by Brennan et al. (2012), a growing number of online consumers engage in the process of browsing products, comparing prices, and making purchasing decisions online, only to finalize their transactions in physical brick-and-mortar stores rather than completing the purchase online. This trend underscores the evolving nature of consumer preferences and the importance of integrating multiple channels into retail strategies.

For businesses, cross-channel shopping presents a host of opportunities to enhance the overall customer experience and drive brand loyalty. By providing comprehensive information across online and offline channels, companies can cater to the diverse preferences and needs of consumers. Gilliland (2017) emphasizes that this approach fosters stronger connections between customers and brands, as consumers feel supported and valued throughout their shopping journey. To capitalize on the benefits of cross-channel shopping, many larger companies have implemented innovative practices aimed at seamlessly integrating online and offline channels. For example, enabling customers to shop online and pick up their purchases in-store offers added convenience and flexibility. Likewise, offering same-day in-town delivery services and allowing customers to return items in-store, regardless of whether they were originally purchased online, further enhances the customer experience and builds trust in the brand. These initiatives not only enhance customer satisfaction but also drive engagement and loyalty. By providing customers with a range of options for payment methods and returns, businesses streamline the decision-making process and reduce friction points in the shopping journey. This, in turn, fosters a positive perception of the brand and encourages repeat purchases.

Moreover, studies have consistently shown that consumers who engage in cross-channel shopping tend to spend more than their counterparts who solely shop through a single channel. According to research cited by Cesc Creative, these consumers may spend up to 50 percent more or higher, highlighting the significant revenue potential associated with cross-channel strategies.

In today's omnichannel retail landscape, embracing cross-channel strategies is imperative for businesses seeking to maximize revenue and enhance customer relationships. By seamlessly integrating online and offline channels, companies can meet the evolving needs and preferences of consumers while driving brand loyalty and fostering long-term success in a competitive market environment.

**3.1 What Exactly Has Changed?**

Consumers in today's digital age exhibit a heightened level of awareness and curiosity, actively engaging in various forms of online expression such as writing reviews on blogs, creating purchase-related videos on platforms like YouTube, and sharing their opinions across multiple social media networks. This shift in consumer behaviour has empowered individuals to assert control over their purchasing experiences, utilizing social media platforms as channels to voice their assessments of retailers' services, products, and overall quality. Retailers who seize this opportunity to attentively listen to their customers stand to foster meaningful engagement and effectively address their needs (Brennan, Brenna, Schafer & Schafer, 2012).

Furthermore, while social media usage has traditionally been associated with younger demographics, its adoption among older age groups is rapidly expanding. According to Pew Research's latest social media fact sheet (2019), a substantial 69% of adults aged 50-64 and 40% of those aged 65 and above are now active on social media platforms. Moreover, the integration of everyday necessities into mobile applications, ranging from bus tickets and banking services to loyalty programs and grocery shopping, underscores the increasing reliance on smartphones. Even apps related to COVID-19 protocols require smartphone usage, contributing to the growing ubiquity of these devices across all age groups. As highlighted by Brennan et al. (2012, p. 48), mobile devices serve as essential tools for providing customers with pertinent information to enhance their shopping experiences, irrespective of the chosen retail channel.

**3.2 Understanding Consumer Purchasing Behaviour**

Understanding consumer purchasing behaviour requires insight into several influential factors. FitzGerald (2019) identifies three primary factors: personal, psychological, and social, while other scholars, such as Philip Kotler, emphasize the importance of a fourth factor: cultural.

**Cultural factors** wield significant influence over consumer behaviour, with each country's unique cultural norms shaping purchasing decisions differently. These factors encompass values, behaviors, preferences, and desires learned from one's family and environment (Kotler, 2018, p. 159).

**Social factors**, rooted in humanity's social nature, play a pivotal role in shaping consumer behaviour. Close relationships and societal acceptance drive individuals' purchasing decisions, with social networks, groups, roles, and status exerting profound influence (Kotler, 2018, p. 162).

**Personal factors** reflect individuals' unique interests and opinions, varying from person to person. Factors such as age, income, occupation, personality, and lifestyle significantly impact consumer behaviour, shaping perceptions and preferences (Kotler, 2018, p. 167).

**Human psychology** also emerges as a critical determinant of consumer behaviour, with psychological factors wielding considerable influence despite being challenging to measure. Consumers' perceptions, beliefs, motivations, attitudes, and cognitive abilities shape their decision-making processes, influencing how they perceive needs and interpret information (Kotler, 2018, p. 169).

The figure below will explain the content of the factors that effect on consumers purchasing behaviour



Figure 3. Purchase decision contributing factors (Kotler & Armstrong 2010)

The buying process, as outlined by FitzGerald (2019), is a structured journey that consumers typically navigate when making purchasing decisions. Let's delve deeper into each stage:

1. **Need recognition**-This initial stage is sparked by the consumer's realization of a need or desire for a particular product or service. Whether it's a basic necessity or a desire for a new gadget, this recognition prompts the consumer to consider making a purchase.
2. **Search for product information-**Once the need is identified, consumers embark on a quest for information. They may turn to various sources such as online reviews, blog posts, product descriptions, and recommendations from friends or family to gather relevant details about available options.
3. **Product evaluation**- Armed with information, consumers move on to evaluate different products or services based on their personal criteria and priorities. Factors such as price, quality, features, brand reputation, and suitability to their needs play a crucial role in this evaluation process.
4. **Purchase decision**- After careful consideration, consumers reach a decision on which product or service best aligns with their needs and preferences. At this stage, they weigh the pros and cons of each option and decide whether to proceed with the purchase.
5. **Purchase making**- With the decision made, consumers proceed to the transaction stage, where they complete the purchase process. This involves tasks such as selecting the product, making payment, and arranging for delivery or pickup. Businesses must ensure a smooth and hassle-free purchasing experience to facilitate this stage.
6. **Post-purchase use and evaluation**- Following the acquisition of the product or service, consumers engage in its use and assess their level of satisfaction. They may reflect on whether the purchase met their expectations, exceeded them, or fell short. Companies often seek feedback from customers through surveys or follow-up emails to gauge satisfaction levels and identify areas for improvement.

**3.3 The Four Types of Buying Behaviour**

Consumer behaviour during the purchase decision-making process is influenced by the nature of the products they intend to buy (Coatrack, 2020). For instance, the behaviour of a consumer purchasing food at a grocery store may differ significantly from that of a consumer buying a boat. Kotler (2005) delineates four distinct types of customer purchase decision behaviour, categorized based on the level of brand distinction and customer involvement before and during the purchase process. Understanding these distinct types of consumer purchase decision behaviour is crucial for businesses to tailor their marketing strategies effectively and meet the diverse needs and preferences of their target audience.



Figure 4. Four types of buying behaviors (Coatrack 2020)

Complex buying behaviour, as elucidated by Sham (2012), manifests when customers engage deeply in the purchasing process, investing substantial time and effort into gathering comprehensive information about product features and functionalities. These consumers exhibit a strong commitment to researching their options, seeking to make informed decisions. Notably, brand image assumes significant importance for individuals with complex buying behaviour, particularly when considering expensive or high-value products or services intended for long-term use. The reputation and perceived quality of a brand play a pivotal role in shaping their purchase decisions, as they prioritize factors such as reliability, durability, and prestige.

In contrast, dissonance-reduction buying behaviour also involves high customer involvement in the purchasing process, as noted by Sham (2012). However, unlike complex buying behaviour, dissonance-reduction behaviour places less emphasis on brand differentiation. These consumers prioritize understanding product features and details, seeking assurance in their purchase decisions without extensively comparing brands. This behaviour commonly arises when purchasing readily available products where brand distinction may be less relevant. Instead, consumers focus on alleviating any post-purchase doubts or uncertainties by ensuring that their chosen product meets their expectations in terms of functionality and performance.

Variety-seeking buying behaviour, as described by Sham (2012), occurs when customers display less involvement in the purchase process but meticulously compare different brands. This behaviour typically emerges when buying low-priced products or services where the perceived differences between brands may be more pronounced. These consumers prioritize variety and novelty, seeking to explore different options and experiences. Brands face the challenge of managing this behaviour, as customers may easily switch preferences based on factors such as product quality, price, or perceived value. To effectively cater to variety-seeking consumers, brands must differentiate themselves and offer compelling value propositions that resonate with their target audience.

Lastly, habitual buying behaviour characterizes customers making routine daily purchases, such as at a grocery store, according to Sham (2012). These individuals exhibit low involvement in the purchasing process and show little concern for brand differences. Instead, they prioritize convenience and familiarity, often opting for familiar brands or products without extensive deliberation. Brands targeting habitual buyers must focus on maintaining visibility and accessibility, ensuring that their products are readily available and meet the needs of this consumer segment. Additionally, strategies such as loyalty programs or promotions may help reinforce brand loyalty and encourage repeat purchases among habitual buyers.

In summary, understanding the various types of consumers buying behaviour outlined by Sham (2012) is crucial for businesses seeking to effectively target and engage with their target audience. By recognizing the distinct preferences and motivations driving each behaviour, brands can tailor their marketing strategies and offerings to better resonate with consumers and enhance overall satisfaction and loyalty.).

**3.5 Cross-Channel Shopping**

Cross-channel shopping, a burgeoning trend, sees a majority of online consumers opting to browse products online but make their purchases offline, as noted by Brennan et al. (2012, p. 49). This entails consumers seeking information, comparing prices and competitors online, and even making purchasing decisions, but ultimately choosing to finalize their transactions in physical stores rather than ordering online. This phenomenon, which involves online channels such as a brand's website and offline channels like physical stores, presents numerous benefits for businesses.

For businesses, cross-channel shopping offers the opportunity to provide comprehensive information to consumers, thereby fostering brand loyalty (Gilliland, 2017). It enhances the overall shopping experience by catering to the diverse preferences of consumers and accommodating their needs through various channels. Several larger companies have adopted innovative practices to capitalize on cross-channel shopping, such as enabling customers to shop online and pick up their purchases in-store, offering same-day in-town delivery services, and allowing customers to return items in-store, even if they were originally ordered online. These initiatives serve to enhance customer engagement and satisfaction, providing them with added convenience and flexibility in their shopping journey.

Furthermore, offering different options regarding payment methods and returns simplifies consumer decision-making processes. Studies have shown that consumers who engage in cross-channel shopping, visiting both a retailer's website and physical stores, tend to spend significantly more than average shoppers, sometimes up to 50 percent more or higher (Cesc Creative). This underscores the importance of embracing cross-channel strategies to maximize revenue and enhance customer relationships in today's omnichannel retail landscape.

 **4 Research Methodology**

When researchers systematically design a study tailored to a specific research project to ensure reliable results, it falls under the domain of research methodology, as noted by Jansen and Warren (2020). The primary aim of this research endeavour is to investigate the impact of social media on consumers' purchasing decisions, or whether it has any influence at all. The overarching goal is to provide both consumers and companies with a clearer understanding of the extent to which social media affects consumers' decision-making processes, including the reasons, timing, and magnitude of its impact. Additionally, the research aims to advise companies on how customers respond to various social media marketing practices and identify the most effective methods to support consumer needs.

To achieve these objectives, the research relies on a comprehensive theoretical framework, which serves as the foundation for the study and utilizes existing secondary data. Building upon this theoretical foundation, primary data collection is employed to directly address the research objectives and provide empirical evidence to support the findings derived from secondary sources. In this study, primary data was gathered through an electronic survey, allowing researchers to gather insights directly from consumers regarding their experiences, perceptions, and behaviors related to social media and purchasing decisions.

By integrating both theoretical and empirical approaches, this research aims to offer valuable insights into the complex relationship between social media and consumer behaviour. Through rigorous methodological design and data collection techniques, the study seeks to generate robust findings that can inform strategic decision-making for companies operating in various industries. Ultimately, the research endeavours to contribute to a deeper understanding of the role of social media in shaping contemporary consumer behaviour and provide practical recommendations for businesses to effectively leverage social media marketing strategies to meet consumer needs and enhance overall business performance.

**4.1 Research Design**

The research design for this study was structured around quantitative research methods, employing an electronic survey facilitated by the Webroot web tool. The decision to utilize quantitative research stemmed from the desire to collect data from a large and diverse population efficiently. Given the overarching aim of the study to investigate the impact of social media on consumer purchasing behaviour, quantitative research was deemed the most effective approach to gather comprehensive insights from a broad spectrum of individuals.

The survey questionnaire, meticulously crafted to align with the research objectives, consisted of 12 questions designed to solicit specific information related to social media usage and its influence on consumer decision-making processes. Recognizing the value of respondents' time, the survey was thoughtfully structured to be succinct, with an estimated completion time of approximately two minutes. This approach was intended to maximize respondent participation and minimize survey fatigue, ensuring a high response rate and robust data collection. To reach a diverse and representative sample, the survey was disseminated across multiple social media platforms, including Facebook groups, Instagram, WhatsApp, and online chats. By leveraging the widespread reach of these platforms, the research aimed to capture responses from individuals spanning different demographics, socioeconomic backgrounds, and geographical locations. This broad approach was essential to ensure the validity and generalizability of the study findings, enabling researchers to draw meaningful conclusions about the broader population's attitudes and behaviors regarding social media and purchasing decisions. The questionnaire was strategically designed to progress from gathering basic demographic information in the initial section to delving deeper into respondents' social media usage patterns and their influence on purchasing decisions in subsequent sections. This sequential approach allowed researchers to establish a comprehensive understanding of respondents' characteristics and behaviors while elucidating the nuanced relationship between social media engagement and consumer decision-making processes. Importantly, the survey questionnaire was carefully aligned with the theoretical framework underpinning the study, ensuring that each question was purposefully crafted to address key research objectives and hypotheses. By closely aligning survey questions with theoretical concepts, researchers aimed to capture nuanced insights into why, when, and how social media impacts consumers' decision-making processes.

Anonymity played a crucial role in encouraging honest and candid responses from participants. By assuring respondents of their anonymity and the confidentiality of their responses, the survey aimed to mitigate potential biases and social desirability effects, allowing participants to provide authentic and uninhibited feedback. Over a period spanning from September 24th to October 15th, 2020, data collection efforts yielded a total of 139 responses. This timeframe was chosen strategically to capture a snapshot of respondents' behaviors and attitudes during a specific period, providing researchers with timely and relevant data for analysis.

In summary, the research design employed in this study reflects a systematic and rigorous approach to investigating the impact of social media on consumer purchasing behaviour. By leveraging quantitative research methods and an electronic survey instrument, researchers were able to gather rich and comprehensive data from a diverse sample of participants, shedding light on the intricate dynamics of social media influence in the realm of consumer decision-making.

**5.Data Analysis and Key Result**

In the initial phase of data analysis, respondents were asked to provide background information, including their gender and age, to discern potential variations in the impact of social media on decision-making processes across different demographic segments. Analysis of the collected data revealed that 37% of respondents identified as male, while 63% identified as female.

This gender distribution suggests a slightly higher representation of female respondents in the survey sample. Such insights into the demographic composition of the respondents enable researchers to assess whether there are any discernible differences in the perceived impact of social media on decision-making processes based on gender. Additionally, understanding the gender distribution of respondents aids in interpreting the findings and drawing meaningful conclusions regarding the broader population's attitudes and behaviors towards social media and its influence on consumer decision-making.



Figure 5. Age distribution of the respondents

The data collected encompasses respondents from five distinct age groups: 15-25 years old (56%), 26-35 years old (30%), 36-45 years old (4%), 46-55 years old (6%), and 56-65 years old (4%). Notably, the majority of respondents fall within the 15-25 age bracket, representing Generation Z and Generation Y, born between 1995-2012 and 1980-1994, respectively.

This age distribution offers valuable insights into the generational dynamics shaping the data analysis, particularly in understanding how younger demographics may influence the findings. Given the significant representation of Generation Z and Generation Y respondents, it is crucial to consider their perspectives and behaviors in interpreting the impact of social media on decision-making processes.

Additionally, the survey explored respondents' income levels to investigate potential correlations between financial stability and purchase decision behaviour. Among respondents, only 4% declined to disclose their income, with the remaining 96% distributed across various income brackets. Specifically, respondents reported earning between 0-500€ per month (9%), 600-1500€ per month (27%), 1600-2500€ per month (33%), 2600-3500€ per month (23%), and over 3500€ per month (4%) after taxes.

These findings highlight that the majority of respondents, comprising 83%, earn between 600€ and 3500€ per month after taxes. Notably, respondents aged 36-45 uniformly reported earning 2600-3500€ per month, while those aged 56-65 predominantly earned 1600-2500€ per month. This demographic breakdown provides essential context for understanding the socioeconomic factors that may influence respondents' purchasing behaviors and their engagement with social media platforms.



Figure 6. Income €/month after taxes of the respondents

When comparing respondents across three major income groups, it was observed that those earning between 600-1500€ per month were the sole group to indicate that they never use social media for researching products and services, constituting 13% of this income bracket. Interestingly, this group also reported being frequent purchasers of products or services noticed through social media, with 27% expressing this behaviour. Conversely, among respondents earning 2600-3500€ per month, 21% answered that they rarely notice products or services from social media, with 7% indicating never. Despite this, a significant portion (87%) of those earning 600-1500€ per month still found social media useful for shopping purposes. These findings suggest that income level may not exert a substantial influence on purchasing behaviour via social media platforms.

The survey's fourth question aimed to identify respondents' most-used social media platforms, with options selected based on research conducted by Data portal. Messenger applications were excluded from consideration, as they primarily serve communication purposes and may not directly impact social media purchasing behaviour.

The table below will present data on respondents' primary usage of social media platforms categorized by their age groups.

Table 1. Most used social media platforms used by the respondents



These findings underscore that TikTok, Snapchat, and Pinterest are predominantly utilized by respondents aged between 15 and 35 years old, indicating a strong presence of these platforms within younger demographics. In contrast, respondents aged 46-55 years old demonstrate a lesser degree of engagement with social media platforms compared to other age groups. Consistent with the findings of the Data portal research (figure 2), Facebook emerges as the most widely used social media platform across most age groups, with the exception being Instagram, which holds the top spot among respondents aged 15-25 years old.

The fifth question of the survey explored respondents' habits regarding seeking information about products or services through social media and the frequency of this behaviour. While there were notable differences observed among income groups, the overall analysis revealed that a significant proportion of respondents rely on social media for product or service information. Specifically, 19% of respondents reported always seeking information from social media, while 32% indicated doing so usually, and another 34% stated they do this sometimes. Conversely, only a small percentage of respondents (9%) stated that they do not typically search for product or service information on social media, with a mere 6% indicating never engaging in this behaviour.

These findings highlight the substantial role that social media plays as a tool for consumers to gather information about products and services. For brands, this underscores the importance of ensuring that relevant information is readily available on social media platforms to cater to the needs of potential customers. By recognizing and addressing consumer behaviour patterns on social media, brands can optimize their marketing strategies to effectively engage with their target audience and capitalize on opportunities for customer acquisition and retention.

Question six of the survey delved into the primary factors influencing respondents' purchasing decision-making process. According to Table 4 below, nearly half (45%) of respondents placed their trust in the opinions and recommendations of friends and family members. A smaller percentage (13%) acknowledged the influence of social media influencers on their purchasing decisions, while 11% cited the quality of customer service as the most significant factor. Additionally, 10% of respondents relied on recommendations and opinions shared within Facebook groups, while only 4% attributed their purchasing decisions to the influence of brands' own social media accounts. However, it is worth noting that 17% of respondents either did not provide an opinion on this matter or did not find any of the options suitable for them.



Figure 7. Factors that effect on respondents purchasing decision making

In questions 7 and 8, respondents were queried about their propensity to discover new purchasing ideas on social media and whether they follow through with purchasing these products or services. The data reveals that a substantial majority of respondents, comprising 92% or 128 individuals, reported finding new purchasing ideas from social media at least sometimes or more often. Furthermore, out of the respondents surveyed, 115 individuals indicated that they complete the buying process for these products or services at least sometimes or more often.



The table above illustrates the breakdown of respondents' discovery of new purchasing ideas from social media, categorized by age group, revealing the influence of age on this behaviour. These statistics suggest that various social media platforms consistently present enticing purchasing ideas to users, as evidenced by the absence of respondents indicating "never" to the question.

Similarly, the subsequent table showcases the frequency with which respondents make purchases based on the purchasing ideas they encounter on social media. From the data collected, it is apparent that only a negligible 2% of respondents reported never purchasing products or services discovered through social media.

Table 3. How often respondents purchase the ideas they get from social media



This data underscores that Generation Z exhibits a wider range of opinions compared to other age groups, with Generation Z being the sole group stating that they never make purchases based on products or services they discover through social media.

Questions 9, 10, and 11 focus on respondents' interactions with social media accounts, particularly those of influencers and brands. The author aimed to determine the proportion of respondents who follow influencers and brands on social media, as well as their motivations for doing so. The findings reveal that 57% of respondents follow brands and influencers because they are intrigued by the products and services they promote or endorse. Additionally, a significant majority (79%) of respondents believe that brands should maintain more active profiles and consistently update their content. This proactive engagement on social media is seen as advantageous for accessing information more swiftly, such as details on new products or services, promotional offers, discounts, and expedited customer service, according to respondents' perceptions.

The table below illustrates the distribution of respondents' opinions regarding the most significant reasons for following social media influencers and brand accounts.



Figure 8. Reasons of following social media influencers and brands social media accounts

The data highlights that the majority of consumers seek expedited information from both brands and social media influencers. Additionally, the anticipation of new product and service releases emerges as a significant driver for following brands' social media accounts.

Lastly, respondents were queried about their perception of social media's utility for shopping purposes. An overwhelming 87% of respondents affirmed its usefulness as a shopping tool. Only a small minority, comprising 9% of respondents, expressed disagreement, while 4% remained neutral. This final question underscores the significance of social media as a facilitator of purchasing decisions and information-seeking behaviors among consumers.

**5.1 Results Analysis**

The findings underscore the significant role that social media plays in the purchasing process, particularly in information acquisition. Consumers actively utilize social media as a tool to access a wealth of information swiftly, demonstrating openness to new ideas and targeted advertisements on these platforms.

Interestingly, the research reveals that neither age nor financial status significantly influences social media behaviour or purchase decision-making. Despite being digital natives, Generation Z exhibits varied opinions on social media behaviour and its impact on purchasing decisions. Furthermore, leveraging social media influencers proves to be a valuable aspect of marketing strategies, given their ability to reach users across age groups. Brands should also prioritize maintaining an active social media presence to foster consumer trust, provide efficient customer service, and facilitate easy access to product information.

While consumers primarily trust their social circles and personal knowledge for purchase decisions, the research highlights social media's utility as a shopping tool, aiding in informed decision-making across various purchase scenarios. As technology continues to evolve, the importance of social media in consumer purchasing behaviour is poised to deepen further in the future.

**6 Conclusion**

The exponential growth of information available on social media platforms has revolutionized the way we perceive and engage with content. With a constant influx of data, consumers often find themselves overwhelmed, prompting them to seek various facets of information to make informed decisions. The transparency and immediacy of social media have accelerated the sharing of customer experiences and word of mouth, placing brands under intense pressure to prioritize customer-centric approaches to avoid negative repercussions.

From a marketing standpoint, adapting to meet the evolving needs of consumers requires a shift towards creating high-quality, consumer-relevant content. Traditional methods of marketing on social media may no longer yield desired results due to the ever-changing digital landscape, shifts in consumer behaviour, and evolving attitudes towards social media marketing and content creation. Therefore, this research is grounded in the theoretical framework of the consumer buying model, aiming to explore the transformative impact of social media on marketing strategies.

The primary objective of this research is to ascertain whether social media exerts a significant influence on consumer purchasing behaviour. Through data collected during this study, it becomes evident that various forms of social media marketing can indeed influence consumers' decision-making processes and even spark new consumer needs through targeted advertisements and streamlined access to products and services. However, rather than immediately preceding to purchase, consumers exhibit a tendency to seek additional, accurate information from social media once the idea of a purchase is initiated.

Understanding the "why," "when," and "how" of social media's impact on consumer decision-making processes is essential. Firstly, social media has seamlessly integrated into our daily lives, providing unparalleled access to vast amounts of information. This integration has made social media an integral part of the consumer's buying process, bringing products and services within reach with just a few clicks or taps. Secondly, social media's influence is most pronounced before the actual purchasing process, serving as a vital source of information and a platform for exploring alternative products and services. Additionally, social media plays a crucial role in the early stages of the buying process, where consumers may discover and develop new needs through exposure to relevant content.

The manner in which social media affects consumer purchasing behaviour hinges on its ability to deliver relevant content tailored to individual preferences. Depending on a consumer's attitudes and behaviors on social media, different influencers, brands, and platforms can shape their opinions, desires, and ultimately, their purchasing decisions. Therefore, the impact of social media on consumer behaviour is multifaceted and dynamic, driven by the nuanced interactions between consumers and the content they encounter.

In conclusion, the findings of this research underscore the active role of social media as a tool for validating purchase decisions and seeking relevant information. Throughout the research process, insights into social media marketing and consumer purchasing behaviour were gleaned, shedding light on the intricate communication dynamics inherent in social media platforms. Despite encountering challenges, such as the need to devise strategies for survey outreach across various social media platforms, the research was successfully completed within the intended timeline, yielding up-to-date insights into the research objectives.

**7.Limitation**

The findings and conclusions outlined in the research are applicable solely to the selected population and cannot be extrapolated universally due to variations in environmental factors and individual respondent opinions. Achieving results that accurately reflect the entirety of consumer social media behaviour and the extent of social media's impact on purchasing decisions would necessitate broader, more extensive research on a geographical and quantitative scale.

Given the constraints of time and scope inherent in this study, various theories concerning social media and consumer purchasing behaviour were addressed in a broad manner, aiming to offer a comprehensive overview for readers.

**8.Findings**

* The exponential growth of information on social media platforms has transformed consumer engagement and decision-making processes.
* Consumers often feel overwhelmed by the abundance of data, leading them to seek various sources of information to make informed decisions.
* The transparency and immediacy of social media have accelerated the sharing of customer experiences and word of mouth, compelling brands to prioritize customer-centric approaches.
* Adapting marketing strategies to meet evolving consumer needs requires a shift towards creating high-quality, consumer-relevant content.

* Traditional methods of marketing on social media may no longer yield desired results due to changes in the digital landscape and consumer behaviour.
* This research is grounded in the theoretical framework of the consumer buying model, aiming to explore the transformative impact of social media on marketing strategies.
* The primary objective is to ascertain whether social media significantly influences consumer purchasing behaviour.
* Data collected during the study reveal that various forms of social media marketing can influence consumers' decision-making processes and spark new consumer needs through targeted advertisements and streamlined access to products and services.
* However, consumers tend to seek additional, accurate information from social media once the idea of a purchase is initiated, rather than proceeding immediately.
* Social media has seamlessly integrated into daily life, providing unparalleled access to vast amounts of information and becoming an integral part of the consumer's buying process.
* Its influence is most pronounced before the actual purchasing process, serving as a vital source of information and a platform for exploring alternative products and services.
* Social media also plays a crucial role in the early stages of the buying process, where consumers may discover and develop new needs through exposure to relevant content.
* The impact of social media on consumer behaviour depends on its ability to deliver relevant content tailored to individual preferences.
* Different influencers, brands, and platforms can shape consumer opinions, desires, and purchasing decisions based on their attitudes and behaviors on social media.

**9.Suggestions**

* Conduct further research to explore the nuances of social media's impact on consumer behaviour across different demographics, regions, and industries.
* Implement more targeted and personalized marketing strategies on social media platforms to effectively engage consumers and drive purchasing decisions.
* Stay updated on the latest trends and developments in social media marketing to adapt strategies accordingly and remain competitive in the digital landscape.
* Foster stronger relationships with consumers through active engagement and interaction on social media platforms, addressing their concerns and preferences in real-time.
* Collaborate with social media influencers and brand ambassadors to amplify marketing efforts and reach a wider audience with authentic and relatable content.
* Leverage data analytics tools to gain deeper insights into consumer behaviour on social media platforms and tailor marketing campaigns to better meet their needs and preferences.
* Invest in social media listening tools to monitor conversations, trends, and sentiment surrounding your brand, products, and industry, allowing for proactive response and reputation management.
* Develop compelling and visually appealing content that resonates with target audiences and encourages social sharing and engagement.
* Offer exclusive promotions, discounts, and incentives to social media followers to foster loyalty and incentivize purchasing behaviour.
* Continuously monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of social media marketing campaigns through key performance indicators (KPIs) such as engagement rates, conversion rates, and return on investment (ROI).
* Encourage user-generated content by actively soliciting feedback, reviews, and testimonials from satisfied customers and showcasing them on social media platforms.
* Prioritize authenticity and transparency in social media marketing efforts to build trust and credibility with consumers, fostering long-term relationships and brand loyalty.
* Experiment with emerging social media platforms and features to stay ahead of the curve and reach new audiences with innovative and engaging content.
* Collaborate with other brands and businesses in complementary industries to expand reach and leverage each other's audiences on social media platforms.
* Provide seamless and convenient purchasing experiences on social media platforms by integrating e-commerce functionalities and streamlining the checkout process.

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