

CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR AND SOCIAL COMMERCE: THE GROWING INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

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ABSTRACT

The rapid growth of social media has transformed the way consumers interact with businesses and make purchasing decisions. Social commerce, a combination of social media and electronic commerce, enables consumers to discover, evaluate, and purchase products directly through social networking platforms. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, WhatsApp, and Pinterest have become important channels for marketing and online sales. This study examines consumer buying behaviour in the context of social commerce and analyzes the factors influencing purchasing decisions through social media platforms. The research highlights the role of social influence, online reviews, influencer marketing, trust, and personalized advertising in shaping consumer behaviour. The findings indicate that social commerce significantly affects purchase intentions and has become an important component of modern digital marketing strategies.

Keywords— Social Commerce, Consumer Buying Behaviour, Social Media Marketing, Digital Commerce, Online Shopping, Influencer Marketing, Consumer Decision Making.

I. INTRODUCTION

The increasing popularity of social media platforms has significantly changed the business environment and consumer purchasing behaviour. Social media is no longer limited to communication and entertainment; it has evolved into a powerful business platform that facilitates marketing, customer engagement, and online transactions. Businesses are increasingly utilizing social media platforms to promote

products, interact with customers, and generate sales.

Social commerce refers to the use of social media platforms to facilitate buying and selling activities. Unlike traditional e-commerce, social commerce integrates social interactions, recommendations, user-generated content, and community engagement into the purchasing process. Consumers can discover products through social media feeds, influencer recommendations, advertisements, and peer reviews.

The growth of smartphone usage and internet accessibility has accelerated the adoption of social commerce worldwide. Consumers now spend significant amounts of time on social networking platforms, making these platforms effective channels for product promotion and customer engagement. Businesses are increasingly investing in social commerce strategies to enhance customer experiences and improve sales performance.

This study aims to analyze consumer buying behaviour in social commerce environments and identify key factors influencing purchase decisions. The research also explores the benefits, challenges, and future prospects of social commerce in the digital economy.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Researchers have extensively examined the impact of social media on consumer behaviour and purchasing decisions. Previous studies indicate that social media platforms significantly influence consumer attitudes, preferences, and buying intentions. The availability of product information, reviews, and recommendations contributes to informed purchasing decisions.

Research on social commerce suggests that trust plays a critical role in online purchasing behaviour. Consumers are more likely to purchase products when they perceive social media platforms and sellers as trustworthy. Positive reviews and customer feedback enhance confidence and reduce perceived risks associated with online transactions.

Several studies have highlighted the importance of influencer marketing in social commerce. Influencers often affect consumer opinions and purchasing decisions by sharing product experiences and recommendations. Their credibility and social reach make them effective marketing tools for businesses.

The literature also identifies factors such as convenience, personalization, social interaction, and technological advancements as major drivers of social commerce adoption. However, concerns related to privacy, security, and misinformation remain challenges for consumers and businesses.

III. SOCIAL COMMERCE AND CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOUR

Consumer buying behaviour refers to the process through which individuals select, purchase, use, and evaluate products and services. Social commerce has introduced new dimensions to this process by integrating social interactions into purchasing decisions. Consumers increasingly rely on social media content when evaluating products and brands.

Product discovery is one of the most significant aspects of social commerce. Consumers are exposed to products through advertisements, sponsored posts, influencer content, and recommendations from friends and family. These interactions create awareness and stimulate purchase interest.

Social proof plays a crucial role in influencing buying behaviour. Reviews, ratings, comments, and testimonials provide valuable information about product quality and customer satisfaction. Positive social proof encourages purchase

decisions, while negative feedback may discourage potential buyers.

Personalized content and targeted advertising further influence consumer behaviour. Social media platforms utilize user data to deliver customized product recommendations based on browsing history, interests, and preferences. This personalization improves marketing effectiveness and enhances customer experiences.

IV. FACTORS INFLUENCING PURCHASE DECISIONS IN SOCIAL COMMERCE

Trust is one of the most important determinants of purchase decisions in social commerce. Consumers prefer purchasing from brands and sellers that demonstrate credibility, transparency, and reliability. Secure payment systems and authentic customer reviews contribute to building trust.

Influencer marketing has emerged as a powerful factor affecting consumer behaviour. Social media influencers create content that promotes products and services to their followers. Their recommendations often influence purchasing decisions due to perceived expertise and authenticity.

User-generated content, including customer reviews, photos, and testimonials, significantly affects consumer perceptions. Such content provides real-world product experiences and enhances confidence among potential buyers. Consumers often consider peer opinions more trustworthy than traditional advertisements.

Promotional offers, discounts, and limited-time deals also encourage purchasing behaviour. Social media platforms enable businesses to communicate promotional campaigns directly to target audiences, increasing engagement and conversion rates.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Preferred Social Media Platforms for Online Purchases

Platform	2020 (%)	2023 (%)	2025 (%)
Instagram	35	55	70

Facebook	45	50	52
YouTube	28	45	60
WhatsApp	20	42	58
Pinterest	15	25	38

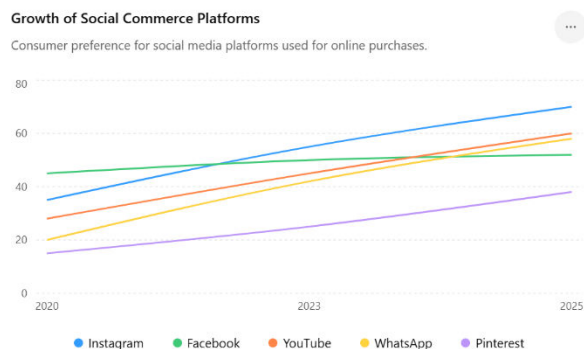


Figure 1. Growth in consumer preference for social media platforms used in social commerce.

Table 2. Factors Influencing Consumer Purchase Decisions

Factor	Influence Level (%)
Product Reviews	88
Influencer Recommendations	82
Discounts & Offers	79
Brand Reputation	75
Social Media Advertisements	68



Figure 2. Influence of various factors on consumer buying behaviour through social media platforms.

The results indicate that Instagram, YouTube, and WhatsApp have experienced substantial

growth as social commerce platforms. Their visual content, user engagement features, and integrated shopping options make them attractive channels for online purchasing. Businesses increasingly utilize these platforms to reach customers and promote products.

The analysis also reveals that product reviews and influencer recommendations are among the most influential factors affecting purchase decisions. Consumers rely heavily on social proof and peer feedback when evaluating products. These findings highlight the importance of trust, credibility, and customer engagement in social commerce strategies.

VI. CHALLENGES AND FUTURE SCOPE

Despite its advantages, social commerce faces challenges related to privacy concerns, data security, counterfeit products, and misleading advertisements. Consumers may hesitate to engage in social commerce if they perceive risks associated with transactions or information sharing.

The future of social commerce appears highly promising due to advancements in artificial intelligence, augmented reality, and personalized marketing technologies. These innovations will enhance customer experiences and improve product discovery processes.

Businesses are expected to increasingly integrate social commerce into their digital marketing strategies. The growth of mobile commerce and social shopping features will further expand opportunities for online retail and customer engagement.

VII. CONCLUSION

Social commerce has emerged as a powerful force in modern commerce by combining social interaction and online shopping experiences. Social media platforms significantly influence consumer buying behaviour through product discovery, reviews, recommendations, and personalized marketing strategies.

The findings demonstrate that social commerce positively affects purchase intentions and

consumer engagement. Trust, influencer marketing, product reviews, and promotional activities are major factors influencing buying decisions. Businesses that effectively leverage these factors can enhance customer satisfaction and improve sales performance.

As technology continues to evolve, social commerce is expected to play an increasingly important role in shaping consumer behaviour and transforming digital retail environments. Organizations must continuously innovate and adapt to changing consumer expectations to remain competitive in the evolving digital marketplace.

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