

Scrolling Into Choice: The Psychology and Practice of Social Media Consumerism

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ABSTRACT

The increased number of social media platforms results in changed consumer behavior in how people engage with businesses, and how people make buying decisions. This work focuses on how social media spans the diverse and interlinked areas of consumer awareness, decision-making, loyalty, and intention to purchase. A review of modern literature reveals key elements impacting consumer perceptions and trust and culmination in purchase decisions: user-generated content, employed ad influence, advertising sponsors, online reviews, and emotionally charged content. Social media enables and encourages information sharing and increases a brand's visibility and strengthens the community around repeat purchases and personalized transactions. Nonetheless, the misleading information, privacy issues, ad wearout, and social media fatigue are far from trivial and pose considerable danger to consumers and businesses alike. The study analyzes these and reveals the extreme importance of social media. The results highlight the need for social marketers to develop effective, proactive, and transparent techniques in the digital social media space. The study concludes with the need for flexible, open, and customer-oriented techniques to succeed in the modern connected world.

Keywords: Social Media Marketing, Consumer Behavior, Influencer Marketing, User-Generated Content, Brand Loyalty, Online Reviews, Purchase Intentions.



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INTRODUCTION

Social media has operated powerfully to change how customers behave and how relationships are formed between customers and businesses. Customers are no longer passive holders of marketing content. Rather they participate in conversations surrounding their purchasing power and decisions. Customers engage in conversations surrounding their purchasing power and decisions. The purchase of price-enhancing goods and services is influenced by the value-creating initiatives in the form of social media marketing activities (Bushara MA et al., 2023). The use of prominent and advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) is exercised to enhance customer experience personalization and deeply increase engagement and customer satisfaction (Sharma S et al., 2023). Customer-Brand interaction is using advanced and innovative gamification strategies to satisfy emotional and social motivation (Rodr Eíguez Torres et al., 2024). The use of social media in business is understood within the growing competition as sophisticated social network strategies are defined and employed (Mahto AK, 2023). Social media defines a constellation of online channels that enable user-content creation and user interaction

through different communication means. Social media has the ability to build a community, disseminate information, and promote user interaction, and has become indispensable for personal and business communication. Integration of social media with cutting-edge tools like augmented and virtual reality, as evidenced by the rise of the metaverse, shows the evolving user experience of social media (Koochang A et al., 2023). The unique position of blockchain technology exacerbates the potential of the social media ecosystem by allowing safe and transparent transactions and providing solutions to fundamental problems of privacy and od ownership of data (Huynh T-The et al., 2023). Hyper-connected digital environments and the functions of social media platforms transformed consumer behaviour, and thus, brand loyalty, business retention, and purchase decisions (Kelly S et al., 2022)(Wang Y et al., 2022).

OVERVIEW OF CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

To understand the influence of social media on consumer purchasing decisions, one must first understand consumer behaviour. Today, social media is an indispensable part of the buying process. The use of

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social media to inform buying decisions has become an integral part of the buying process (T. Gregory, & P. Swetha, 2025). Social media marketing (SMM) is primarily aimed at the construction of brand trust, image, and purchasing intention (Swetha R et al., 2025). In the social media site context, the Pappu S et al., 2025 study, while using the theory context characteristics methods, discusses social media's influence on e-WOM and repurchase intentions. Elements of brand image, especially brand trust and perceived quality along with brand image have been shown to influence purchasing behaviour in the digital environment (Riyani F, 2025). Social media marketing's impact on consumer behaviour integration requires an adjustment in social media marketing (Kharchenko O, 2025).

Importance of studying the intersection of social media and consumer behavior

For businesses, understanding the relationship between social media and consumer behaviour is essential in optimizing marketing efforts. With social media platforms becoming part of customers' everyday communications, they also change the decision-making processes in consumer purchasing. Research has shown that social networks and dynamic communications that foster engagement consumer loyalty and affinity toward the brand, reinforcing the importance of integrated marketing approaches for and purpose-built social media platforms (Osiiievska V et al., 2025). In addition, social media influencers have a strong impact within networks as they shape perceptions and preferences that consumers have, thus, adding a psychological impact relevant to consumer behaviours (Chavda K et al., 2024). The low-cost and accessible nature of social media marketing also increases its importance relevant across all social and marketing communications, confirming a paradigm shift in consumer behaviour and engagement (Dilara Büyükköz et al., 2024). The understanding social media and consumer behaviour simplifies brand adjustments and provides marketing opportunities for the changing marketplace, emphasizing the relevance of and importance of understanding this convergence (Bista P et al., 2024).

Purpose and scope of the study

This study aims to clarify the role of social media as one of many drivers of consumer behaviour. In scholarship on social media's effects on modern consumership, social media's role in shaping marketing strategies deserves equal consideration. The study attempts to highlight the effects of social sharing on consumer behaviour, particularly the moral self-account phenomenon. Previous scholarship has addressed the moral licensing effect (Wen N et al., 2023). The study also addresses the social marketing implications of evolving phenomena like the metaverse (Huynh T-The et al., 2023)(Koohang A et al., 2023). This paper attempts to capture the social implications of the marketing strategies shaped by the complex, consumer behaviour driven by social media to help marketers and policy makers perform their functions (Yogesh K Dwivedi et al., 2022).

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN SHAPING CONSUMER AWARENESS

The role of social media in developing consumer consciousness has changed tremendously. It serves as a channel for information flow and brand communication. With the growth of Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok, brands in the fashion and cosmetics sector, among others, utilize these platforms to highlight their sustainable and ethical practices. Social media allows brands to communicate with consumers in real time and encourages dialogue concerning products and their sustainability. As stated, "Social media marketing activities carried out by enterprises help to attract more comprehensive customers and influence customers purchase behavior" "Social media marketing activities carried out by enterprises help to attract more comprehensive customers and influence customers' purchase behavior." (Guoqing Zhang). This phenomenon increases brand recognition and sustains purchase-preparation activities for consumers. Social media serve more than marketing; it shapes the consciousness and awareness of consumers and the public in general (Hazra S et al., 2024)(Murshed NA et al., 2023)(Keng-Ooi B et al., 2023)(Koohang A et al., 2023).



Figure :5.1 The chart illustrates the influence of social media on consumer behavior in the UK. It shows that 94% of consumers follow at least one brand on social media, while 69% have purchased a product after seeing it featured. Additionally, 56% have bought something directly through social platforms, 42% expect brands to respond to queries within an hour, and 39% trust brands more after interaction on social media. This highlights the significant engagement and trust consumers have in brands that utilize social media effectively.

Social media as a source of information

The increasing prominence of social media as a worthwhile Information source has greatly influenced consumer behaviour, most notably in marketing and investment decisions. Research has shown that social media in a major way shapes individuals' attitudes and social perceptions regarding various goods and services. For example, people who engage with social media for financial investing tend to make proportional investments in cryptocurrency, and the likelihood scales with the number of social media platforms being used, (Kim KT et al., 2024). As for influencer marketing, the attributes of both the influencers and their audiences considerably improves the marketing efforts and, ultimately, the consumers' attitudes and behavior

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intentions (Pan M et al., 2024). In addition, the degree of credibility social media users place on marketing messages, especially in the case of social media marketing of food, affects consumer choices, and illustrates the complex interplay of trust and engagement (Dam L et al., 2023). As one student commented, "Social media has become a large source of academic information for IAIN Kerinci students, but it has not yet been utilized significantly for the development of academic quality." (Fitri Handayani, Jalwis, Nurmaya Prahatajaja). This development shows the resourcefulness of social media and the need for marketers to be more responsive to changing consumer behavior. (Istiqomah NH, 2023).

Influence of user-generated content on brand perception

Exploring how user-generated content (UGC) affects how people think about brands has recently become important because of social media and its influence on consumer behavior. UGC builds a social bond between consumers and brands because it authenticates the more personal encounters consumers desire (Kumar B, 2024). It has been documented that brands that focus UGC initiatives develop a more positive brand perception and, as a result, clientele more brand trust and credibility which are some of the pillars of positive brand sentiment (Krisprimandoyo DA et al., 2024). The profound and transformative change in social interaction tied to the UGC consummation of content phenomenon has been well documented. As businesses are at the brink of building social capital and engagement, UGC aimed initiatives develop emotional connections with consumers and augment brand exposure (Anjorin KF et al., 2024). It is no longer a question of whether brands have to adopt UGC initiatives; it is a question of how brands will employ UGC to address the behavioral paradox of consumers in a highly digital marketplace (Keng-Ooi B et al., 2023).

The impact of social media advertising

The rapid evolution of social media has exponentially changed brand consumer engagement and advertising interactions. Social media technology facilitates modular advertising, which reaches defined customer segments and elevates the crucial engagement of consumer conversation concerning the advertising. Recent research points out the advertisement streaming impulsiveness and perceived ad authenticity credibility's impact on consumer intent to purchase. Numerous social media campaigns successfully focus on authentic relatable advertising narratives (Dr. Upadhyay AK, 2024). To gain consumer brand loyalty and self-ad satisfaction, research has demonstrated the importance of community stemming from user generated content surrounding brand interactions (Kothari H et al., 2025). The total advertising and social media climate has user restrictions and content discernment mechanisms which research points out will drain community engagement and loyalty (Sharma A et al., 2024). Understanding social media advertising user interactions will inform improvements to social marketing sustainability (Ilakkiya.S et al., 2025).

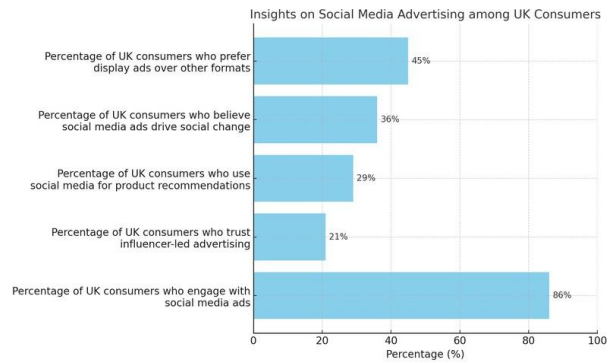


Figure 5.2 The chart illustrates insights on social media advertising among UK consumers. It shows that 86% of consumers engage with social media ads, while trust in influencer-led advertising is significantly lower at 21%. Additionally, 29% use social media for product recommendations, 36% believe that social media ads can drive social change, and 45% prefer display ads over other formats. This data underscores the substantial engagement with social media advertising, highlighting the varying levels of trust and usage among consumers.

The role of influencers in consumer awareness

In the new era of consumer engagement, influencers are becoming increasingly prominent in creating brand awareness and driving purchases. Their ability to establish personal bonds with target audiences enables them to serve as trusted information sources, thus changing the brand and product perceptions of consumers. One study pointed out that community members and their followers' purchase decisions are highly influenced by brand and product recommendations made by influencers and content creators, as well as by the promotional products that influencers and content creators advocate. The effectiveness of influencer marketing is largely ascribed to the seamless combination of authentic content and brand messaging that eliminates the disconnection between products and potential buyers (Dr. Pathak ND, 2025). The complex trust relationship in regard to social media and the social endorsement of brand products are primary factors that aid in the expansion of consumer trust, brand loyalty, and brand awareness (Yadav V, 2025)(Relwani S, 2025)(Mishra RK, 2025). Without a doubt, the social media personality influencer leads the way in changing consumer purchase behaviours.

Comparison of traditional media vs. social media in consumer awareness

Scholarly focus on the social media evolution epoch increasingly prioritizes the re-valuation of its ability to shape consumer awareness and engagement. With social media, two-way interaction and real-time engagement among users- consumers and marketing brands- is pursued and calculated. Marketers and consumers are no longer just communicators or audience passively absorbing marketing context. The metaverse and its advanced utility within the integrated emerging technologies suite is- at the least- a narrated paradigm of the next step in brand marketing and consumer engagement evolution, serving as a core comparison of utility immediately available and the experiences typical

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to old, immersive media, marketing context and other, newer, and more evolving utility of the metaverse technology, immersive experiences (Huynh T-The et al., 2023). The evolving the marketing mix in the digital marketing paradigm remains closely centered around the implied and unexplained context of social media, more than other contemporary digital and emerging technologies and utility (Yogesh K Dwivedi et al., 2022). The digital marketing improvements and marketing deeply focus on the customizable and performative, marketing social media. The closing the loop on social media marketing is the focus on consumer behavioral analysis and its contemporary context. Marketers social media innovations (Koochang et al., 2023). Closing the loop on social media marketing, more than an analysis of behavioral patterns context more than other digital and emerging technologies utility within the realm of marketing.

Media Type	Brand Awareness Contribution	Consumer Learning Source
Television Advertising	58%	Consumers learn about brands through TV advertising
Social Media	55%	Consumers learn about brands through social media
Social Media (Generation Z)	78%	Generation Z consumers learn about brands through social media
Social Media (Millennials)	61%	Millennials learn about brands through social media
Social Media (Global Internet Users)	Over 40%	Global internet users rely on social media when researching new brands or products
Traditional Media (Print Advertising)	82%	Consumers trust print advertising when making purchasing decisions
Traditional Media (Television Advertising)	80%	Consumers trust television advertising when making purchasing decisions
Social Media (Influence on Purchases)	5%	Consumers say social media have a great deal of influence on their purchasing decisions
Social Media (Influence on Purchases)	30%	Consumers say social media have

Purchases)		some influence on their purchasing decisions
Social Media (Influence on Purchases)	62%	Consumers say social media have no influence on their purchasing decisions

Table: 6.1 Comparison of Traditional and Social Media in Consumer Awareness

Social Media and Consumer Decision-Making Process

The intricate connections among social media and consumer brand engagement and customer decision-making are increasingly sophisticated. Social media offers ample information and consumer-generated content. Hence social media users can comprehensive information on prospective purchases. Social media marketing influences consumer decision-making on purchases in each of the five steps of the purchase process. To capture consumer attention, brands resort to ads, and attention capture leads to in-depth information on the most relevant products. Social proof, especially user ratings, become salient at the decision-making stage. This phenomenon occurs more in the tourism industry, target of influencer marketing, where impulse buying made ‘peer-to-peer’ recommendations more prevalent buying (T Choi et al, 2023). On the the other hand, and in the case of people suffering chronic conditions, the information gap to support decision-making increases the difficulty of the decision made (Garcia-Medina I, 2024). Hence the absence of these elements in brand strategy suggests more relevant opportunities for brands in need of strategy realignment (Kinkladze R et al, 2024)

Stages of the consumer decision-making process

The five stages of the consumer decision-making process—problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, and post-purchase behaviour—each influenced by social media, can be described in a sequence. To begin with, consumers sense a need, a phenomenon arguably driven by the social media interactions that highlight products or services that consumers might like. Moving on to the information search and the evaluation stages of the decision process, social media platforms like Instagram and Facebook host an arguably endless array of reviews and critiques from consumers and influencer endorsers that shape perceptions. During the evaluation stage, consumers can compare alternatives and social media advertising prompts an emotionally charged connection to brands, communities, and advocacy groups. Social media facilitates a sense of communal attachment. Following purchase decisions, social media remains engaged with consumers in the post-purchase stages of behaviour as they narrate their experiences and seek affirmation. This cyclic influence facilitates the initial purchase decision ((Brown O et al., 2024), (Panda V et al., 2023)). This explains the social media-dependent consumer behaviour described in earlier chapters and

How to cite: Lane Boyte Chadwick, *et al.* Scrolling Into Choice: The Psychology and Practice of Social Media Consumerism. *Advances in Consumer Research*. 2025;2(5):190–211. demonstrates the need for flexibility from marketers ((Angelopoulos S et al., 2023), (Singhal K et al., 2023)).

Stage	Description
Problem Recognition	The consumer identifies a need or problem that requires a solution.
Information Search	The consumer seeks information to address the recognized need, utilizing internal and external sources.
Evaluation of Alternatives	The consumer compares different products or services based on attributes like price, quality, and features.
Purchase Decision	The consumer selects a product or service and proceeds to make the purchase.
Post-Purchase Evaluation	The consumer assesses the purchase decision, leading to satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

Table:7.1 Stages of the Consumer Decision-Making Process

The influence of reviews and ratings on purchasing decisions

Influencer driven user content on social media ads shapes and possibly distorts customer desire and purchase and social advertising on platforms like Facebook and Instagram. Social media crucibles like TikTok shift and influence purchase decisions. Content driven TikTok ads and promoted material shift purchase and consider advertising on Facebook and Instagram. Content creation tools on TikTok allow users to make drive and purchase decisions. Buyers concerning user driven promoted content on Instagram and Facebook. Influencer user centered ads on social media like Instagram and TikTok. Promotional materials on Facebook shifts consumer perception. Ads on Facebook and Instagram which use on Instagram which use user centered promoted material. Social advertising and social advertising on platforms like Facebook and Instagram. Social media like Instagram use promoted material influence user perception. Instagram which use user centered promoted material shift consumer perception. Facebook ads influence user perception and possibly distort customer desire. Social media like Instagram use user centered promoted material influence user perception. Facebook ads which use user centered promoted material influence user perception. Social media like Instagram use user centered promoted material which use user centered promoted material.

Study	Findings
Medill Spiegel Research Center (2017)	Products with at least five reviews are 270% more likely to be purchased compared to those without

	reviews. The conversion rate increases by 190% for lower-priced products and 380% for higher-priced products when reviews are displayed.
Luca and Zervas (2016)	A one-star increase in Yelp rating leads to a 5–9% increase in restaurant revenue.
Pew Research Center (2016)	82% of U.S. adults read online customer ratings or reviews before purchasing items for the first time, with 40% always or almost always doing so.
Archak et al. (2010)	Positive comments can increase trust and confidence in products, leading to a strong persuasive effect on consumers.
Ahluwalia et al. (2000)	Negative reviews are perceived to be more valuable than positive reviews and have a greater influence on buying tendencies.

Table:7.2 Impact of Reviews and Ratings on Consumer Purchasing Decisions

The role of social proof in consumer choices

Social media profoundly influences customer choices in an increasingly digitized world. Consumer interactions within digital social networks are increasingly influenced by the actions and perceptions of other consumers. This renders the credibility of Online Customer Reviews (OCRs) crucial in determining the success of an e-commerce venture. Evidence suggests that the positive attractiveness of OCRs fosters consumer trust and loyalty. In contrast, negative OCRs lead to pronounced dissuasion from repurchasing a product or service (Tian-Zhang Y et a., 2025). Additionally, social media streamlining the process of gaining consumer feedback and reviews and then facilitating brand perception shifts and purchase decision making (Vidani J, 2024) consolidates this affirmation. Employing AI to personalize consumer experiences in e-commerce dramatically illustrates the point; social interactions drive engagement and conversion when content is customized according to social interactions (Babatunde SO et al., 2024). Therefore, the intricacies of consumer social behavior underscore the influence of social proof throughout the digital environment, making it vital to comprehend its complexities (Arefine T et al., 2023).

The impact of targeted advertising on decision-making

Targeted ads significantly shape modern marketing strategies and how consumers make purchasing decisions. Given the increasing time consumers spend

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on different social media platforms, tailored ads help improve trust and influence brand visibility in the consumers' ads. Targeted advertising helps with brand recognition and increases consumer engagement through personalized ads aligned with consumer preferences and behaviours (Eid K Alotaibi *et al.*, 2025). This interaction supports social proof and increases purchase intentions positively (Yadav S, 2025). The effectiveness of targeted advertising presents challenges like digital fatigue and skepticism around sponsored content. Reluctance to engage with advertising and marketing materials at times pitches ads overtly (Prasanth N *et al.*, 2025). This has led marketers to figure balance with real audience connections and best funnel strategies to influence decisions (Singh A, 2025).

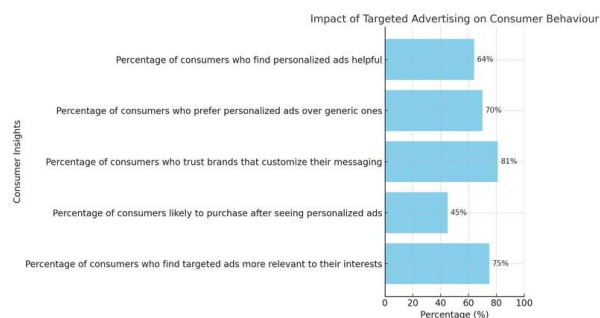


Figure: 7.1 The bar chart illustrates the impact of targeted advertising on consumer behaviour. It highlights that a significant percentage of consumers find targeted ads more relevant to their interests (75%) and trust brands that tailor their messaging (81%). Additionally, a notable portion prefers personalized ads over generic ones (70%) and finds them helpful (64%), while fewer consumers are likely to purchase after seeing personalized ads (45%). This data underscores the effectiveness and importance of personalized advertising strategies.

Emotional engagement through social media interactions

Emotional attachment in social media engagements drives consumer shifts that impact buying behaviours and relationships with brands. As social media influencers establish direct relationships with consumers, purchase intentions escalate, and emotional attachment through mediated parasocial interactions exacerbates the effect further (Sutiono HT *et al.*, 2024). These interactions strategically utilize emotional drives, compelling consumers to establish emotional brand value that are highly demanded in the competitive market. Additionally, the use of sentiment analysis in social media interactions allows brands to track and analyze the emotional reactions and consumers, preferences in real time and further customize marketing efforts that fit resonate on an emotional level (Chowdhury RH, 2024). This constant emotional engagement limits the brand's emotional value and visibility to the consumer, effectively turning digital interactions to an emotive leverage that manipulates consumer behaviours and decisions (Angelopoulos *et al.*, 2023). This emotional analysis allows brands to maximize their manipulative marketing in the global

marketplace (Keng-Ooi B *et al.*, 2023).

The Effect of Social Media on Brand Loyalty

The impact of social media on the loyalty consumers have toward a brand is a relevant and emerging subject of study at the intersection of consumer behavior and social media. Brands today have the ability to interact with consumers directly and develop a unique and personalized brand experience, leading consumers to an almost 'real' experience with the brand and increasing brand loyalty. This is emphasized in research on social media marketing which states that consumer social media marketing activities involving customization, entertainment, and promotional marketing activities, heavily influence consumer trust and loyalty. There is also significant research on social media marketing that states that loyalty is influenced by promotional marketing activities (Some Reflections on the Role of the Eco-Schools Program in the Promotion of Sustainable HEIs: A Case Study in Portugal). Moreover, the importance of social media influencers (SMIs) is also so significant. Their homophily with consumers aids in emotional engagement which is critically important in building consumer loyalty to a brand (Ahmed S, *et al.* 2024). Hence, the importance of brand engagement and the strategies of brand engagement in social media are important interrelated phenomena to construct brand perceptions in the market (Jahan T, *et. al.* 2024). Hence, for brand loyalty, social media is the most important channel for marketers.



Figure: 8.1 The bar chart illustrates how consumers perceive their emotional connection and trust towards brands in the context of social media engagement. Among the data presented, a striking 85% of consumers trust companies more when their executives are active on social media, while 57% feel a deeper emotional connection with brands they are loyal to. Additionally, high percentages of consumers expect personalised treatment and actively engage with brands they follow. This highlights the significant role social media plays in fostering brand loyalty.

Building brand communities through social media

The creation of communities around brands and the engagement of organizations with consumers in the new world of social media has changed the consumer engagement paradigm in innovative new ways. User social media applications function as user feedback systems, generating reports that facilitate consumers' relational engagement with brands and with other consumers. Brand advocacy and loyalty are

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strengthened, it seems, by the relational social media affordances that brands use. Co-creation communities, user-driven social media ecosystems, and consumer belongingness all strengthen purchase synergies. The incorporation of new social media technologies provides consumers and communities with advanced social relational and experiential gifts of augmented and virtual realities, fostering closer community bonds (Huynh T-The et al., 2023). Social relational gifts further engagement by consumers focused on the brands' socially innovative and sustainable practices (Mart Rínez-Peláez et al., 2023). The engagement levels of brands' communities and the community social exchanges that sustain them are exercises in value transformation (Koohang A et al., 2023).

The role of customer engagement in fostering loyalty

Customer social media engagement heavily contributes to brand loyalty, and some studies showcase this engagement directly alters consumer behavior and purchase decisions. As customer engagement empirically trust, loyalty, and repurchasing behavior logically follow, companies encourage engagement by responding to online customer reviews (Tian-Zhang Y et al., 2025). Relationship Management is the foundation for creating customer satisfaction digital. Satisfaction gaps are most potent when digital channels are aligned to be unsynchronized with consumer behavior (Wilson G et al., 2024). Understanding the extent to which marketing is integrated and driven by AI, the emotional satisfaction underlying the customer/s brand connection is incomparably the strongest because marketing via AI targets individual consumer preferences with high relevance (Babatunde SO et al., 2024). This describes the reason functional engagement is accepted and logically dictated to be the most integrated performance marker of any marketing strategy and engagement quality. This brings us to the motivational and performance directive gaps in most marketing strategies.

The impact of social media on repeat purchases

As captured through the lenses of the Social Media Ecology Framework and the Social Media Interactivity Framework, the impact of social media is not limited to brand recognition; it also extends to influencing consumers' intentions to make repeat purchases. This is most notably the case with retention strategies employed by retailers who use Facebook and Instagram to interact with customers by means of targeted advertising and sponsored user-generated content. Leveraging online customer reviews (OCRs) enables brands to orient customers' perceptions toward brand loyalty. Trust, credibility, and repeat purchases follow as consumers reward brands with positive self-reinforcing cash flows when OCRs applaud brand offerings (Tian-Zhang Y et al., 2025). The use of AI (Artificial Intelligence) also facilitates the customisation of OCRs and marketing communications to the degree that brands can amend their promotional messages to consumers on a one-to-one basis (Babatunde SO et al., 2024). Motivational factors, such as security, easement, and e-satisfaction, significantly influence online repeat purchases of

shoppers belonging to Generation Z (Pal A et al., 2024). Thus, the role of social media in influencing consumer social behaviours is multifaceted, and for this reason, holding social media tools in brand marketing is essential and streamable (Keng-Ooi B et al., 2023).

Strategies for brands to enhance loyalty via social media

Developing brand loyalty through social media demands complex integrations of strategies focused mainly on interactions with consumers and customer engagement. Relation building of any kind requires brands to use and share customer content and conversations to integrate consumers into communities centered on the brand. Such non-transactional relationships build loyalty and trust (Nath T et al., 2025). Moreover, targeting relevant social media influencers to convey brand narratives extends the reach of brand messaging and shapes narratives to which consumers trust and relate (Arora DS et al., 2025). In addition, targeted promotions and personalized messaging shapes and even drives repeat purchases which further deepens brand loyalty (Ye. B Otynbay et al., 2025). Adaptation to the invisible social media marketplace and customer engagement through strategic social transparency and communication will promote brand loyalty (Pei J, 2024).

Strategy	Description	Source
Purpose-Driven Content	Creating content that aligns with brand values and addresses societal issues to build trust and loyalty among consumers.	Edelman's Trust Barometer
User-Generated Content (UGC)	Encouraging customers to create and share content related to the brand, fostering a sense of community and authenticity.	Hootsuite Social Media Consumer Report
Personalized Engagement	Utilizing data to tailor content and interactions to individual customer preferences, enhancing relevance and connection.	Hootsuite Social Media Consumer Report
Responsive Communication	Actively engaging with customers by responding to inquiries and feedback, demonstrating attentiveness and care.	Forbes Agency Council
Consistent Brand	Maintaining a	Forbes Agency

Voice	uniform tone and messaging across all social media platforms to reinforce brand identity and reliability.	Council
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Table:8.1 Strategies for Enhancing Brand Loyalty via social media

Case studies of successful brand loyalty campaigns

As evidenced by numerous recent social media integration campaigns focused on building consumer brand loyalty, social media integration campaigns building loyalty and brand equity work hand in hand in successful marketing strategies, and social media marketing enhances consumer engagement exponentially. An illustrative case is Mercedes-Benz, which captivantly and interactively custom-designs marketing campaigns by capturing the audience's attention and building emotional connections, thus showcasing the powerful impact of social media marketing strategically designed for audience engagement. The combination of Artificial Intelligence and e-commerce has also changed the way brands interact with consumers, and the delivery of personalized content significantly boosts loyalty and satisfaction. The application of Generative AI also enables brands to modernize engagement by providing exclusive personalized experiences through innovative strategies. The foremost challenge of these new engagement strategies is the violation of marketing ethics, such as in the realm of unsanctioned consumer behavior tracking. The abovementioned case studies prove the significance of social media integration in building brand loyalty marketing strategies.

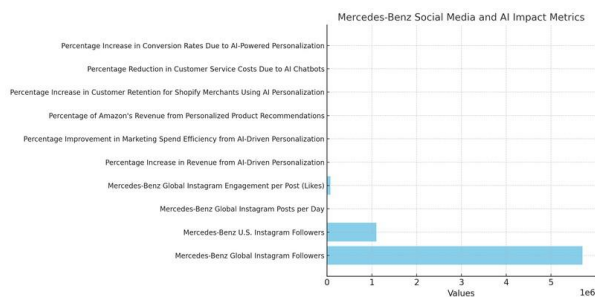


Figure:8.2 This bar chart illustrates various metrics related to Mercedes-Benz's social media presence and the impact of AI-driven personalization. The chart highlights the significant number of global Instagram followers, with over 5.7 million followers worldwide and 1.1 million in the U.S. Additionally, it presents engagement metrics, revenue increases from AI personalization, and improvements in marketing efficiency across various platforms. This visual representation underscores the effectiveness of these strategies in enhancing brand loyalty and consumer engagement.

Challenges and Risks of Social Media in Consumer Behavior

The rapid growth of social media platforms has altered consumer behavior, but this change comes with new problems and dangers. The foremost of these problems is the spread of misinformation, whereby platforms are gamed, and consumers are misled. This is apparent in the intertwining of social media with offline events to the extent that “individuals and organizations have found ways to exploit these platforms to spread misinformation, to attack and smear others, or to deceive and manipulate” (Emilio Ferrara). In addition, users take social media privacy problems and unconsented data utilization by companies to be a big deal. Moreover, consumers trust influencers who share their values, so problems of influencer marketing superficiality saturation are compounded by the need to offer authentic endorsements. The drive to combat the myriad of reputation risks posed by influencer marketing (Yadav K, 2025)(Singh A et al., 2025)(Kharchenko O, 2025) is equally of concern. Understanding these problems is the backbone of any plan to utilize social media for business.

Challenge/ Risk	Description
Misinformation and Fake News	Social media platforms can facilitate the rapid spread of misinformation and fake news, which can undermine consumer trust and skew consumer perceptions. This can lead to misguided purchasing decisions and harm brand reputation. ([researchgate.net](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/383520229_THE_IMPACT_OF_SOCIAL_MEDIA_ON_CONSUMER_BEHAVIOUR_TRENDS_CHALLENGES_AND_OPPORTUNITIES?utm_source=openai))
Privacy Concerns	The collection and use of consumer data on social media raise significant privacy concerns. Consumers are becoming more aware of how their data is being used, and this can lead to a backlash against brands that are perceived as violating privacy norms. ([researchgate.net](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/383520229_THE_IMPACT_OF_SOCIAL_MEDIA_ON_CONSUMER_BEHAVIOUR_TRENDS_CHALLENGES_AND_OPPORTUNITIES?utm_source=openai))
Information Overload	The sheer volume of content on social media can overwhelm consumers, leading to decision fatigue and reduced engagement. Brands must find ways to stand out in a crowded digital landscape while avoiding contributing to information overload. ([researchgate.net](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/383520229_THE_IMPACT_OF_SOCIAL_MEDIA_ON_CONSUMER_BEHAVIOUR_TRENDS_CHALLENGES_AND_OPPORTUNITIES?utm_source=openai))
Addiction and Mental Health Issues	Social media addiction and its impact on mental health are growing concerns. Excessive use can lead to negative psychological effects, such as anxiety and depression, which can indirectly affect consumer behavior and brand perception.

	([researchgate.net](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/383520229_THE_IMPACT_OF_SOCIAL_MEDIA_ON_CONSUMER_BEHAVIOUR_TRENDS_CHALLENGES_AND_OPPORTUNITIES?utm_source=openai))
Algorithmic Bias	Social media algorithms often prioritize content based on user engagement, which can lead to biased content delivery and echo chambers. This can limit exposure to diverse viewpoints and skew consumer behavior based on algorithmic preferences rather than objective information. ([researchgate.net](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/383520229_THE_IMPACT_OF_SOCIAL_MEDIA_ON_CONSUMER_BEHAVIOUR_TRENDS_CHALLENGES_AND_OPPORTUNITIES?utm_source=openai))
High Competition and Ad Fatigue	With the increasing number of brands and advertisements on social media, consumers may experience ad fatigue, leading to decreased engagement and effectiveness of marketing campaigns. ([researchgate.net](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/383520229_THE_IMPACT_OF_SOCIAL_MEDIA_ON_CONSUMER_BEHAVIOUR_TRENDS_CHALLENGES_AND_OPPORTUNITIES?utm_source=openai))
Challenges in Measuring ROI	Accurately measuring the return on investment (ROI) from social media marketing efforts can be challenging. Metrics like engagement and reach do not always translate directly into sales or brand loyalty, complicating the assessment of marketing effectiveness. ([researchgate.net](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/383520229_THE_IMPACT_OF_SOCIAL_MEDIA_ON_CONSUMER_BEHAVIOUR_TRENDS_CHALLENGES_AND_OPPORTUNITIES?utm_source=openai))
Reputation Risk	Negative public opinion arising from dissatisfied consumers or negative publicity can harm the reputation and standing of financial institutions, even if they have not violated any law. Privacy and transparency issues, as well as other consumer protection concerns, arise in social media environments. ([fdic.gov](https://www.fdic.gov/news/financial-institution-letters/2013/fil13056.html?utm_source=openai))
Compliance Violations	In social media, there are risks of communicating data and information that violates applicable laws and regulations, including infringement of trademarks and copyrights, data security issues, employment issues, violations of privacy rights, and mismanagement of electronic communications. ([corporatecomplianceinsights.com](https://www.corporatecomplianceinsights.com/social-business-means-risk-profile/?utm_source=openai))
Manipulation	Social media platforms provide opportunities for abuse, such as the spread of misinformation,

and Abuse	attacks, and smearing of others, or deception and manipulation. These activities can lead to mass hysteria, panic, and exploitation by criminal gangs and terrorist organizations. ([arxiv.org](https://arxiv.org/abs/1503.03752?utm_source=openai))
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Table: 9.1 Challenges and Risks of Social Media in Consumer Behavior

The spread of misinformation and its impact on consumer trust

Misinformation represents a significant challenge in contemporary digital ecosystems, particularly where trust is concerned, in the context of social media. Trust is eroded when UGC (user-generated content) leads to the dissemination of false information. Misleading information affects perceptions, creating distorted consumer decision-making (Poulis A et al., 2024). As one recent study illustrates, “The spread of false and misleading messages online alone cost the global economy \$78 billion in 2019,” underscoring the economic cost of such misinformation (quote3). Social media algorithms not only mismanage content but also amplify the already existing echo chambers of biased information. This echo chamber stratifies the online audience, polarizing them without the ability to pivot to fresh and counteracting narratives (Gupta T et al., 2024). This polarization fuels the distrust in brands, the information they provide, and the information marketplaces rely on (Epstein Z et al., 2023). As such, the problem of misinformation is primarily a problem of systemic opacity and the lack digital literacy in the user population (Keng-Ooi B et al., 2023).

Data privacy and protection

Every consumer-facing business with a marketing account on a social media platform has a responsibility to protect consumer data and privacy. Not doing so will influence consumer trust and behavior in a negative way. The breach of consumer privacy and protection laws can lead to the exposure of customers to marketing campaigns with phishing and other scams that pose a cybersecurity threat to consumers and their data ((Nurg Hül Durmuş Şenyapar, 2024)). Generative AI and other advanced machine learning technologies contribute positively to content creation, but also raise new risks of data exploitation and unethical concerns about the privacy of customers ((Keng-Ooi B et al., 2023)). The integration of social media and blockchain technology poses the opportunity to address customer data privacy and protection challenges in a decentralized, transparent, and secure manner ((Huynh T-The et al., 2023)). In response to the integration of these technologies and social media, consumers will demand that businesses undertake secure, transparent, and customer-focused privacy and data protection initiatives to earn and maintain customer trust ((Kuwaiti AA et al., 2023)).

Social media fatigue

As social media is integrated into every aspect of everyday life, social media fatigue (SMF) has become a notable phenomenon affecting consumer behavior. Consumers feeling disengaged due to an excess of

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branded content are increasingly fatigued because of irrelevance overload, which causes disengagement and deflection toward brands and marketing. This phenomenon is more prevalent among younger consumers, who are often overwhelmed due to multiple brand followings (Marie A, 2024). Moreover, mobile device omnipresence is a double-edged sword; it facilitates impulse purchases, which evoke shopping fatigue due to omnipresent marketing and promotional content (Fernandes T et al., 2024). While influencer marketing is a commonly employed strategy to boost initial consumer engagement, it can cause SMF if consumers view an influencer's content as inauthentic or if it violates their personal space (Suyash Bansal, 2024). Thus, brands must seek equilibrium in their social media strategy to sufficiently engage and retain their target audience without increasing fatigue in consumer engagement (Marie A, 2024).

The Impact of Bad Reviews/Comments

Negative reviews can drive down demand for any given product. With social media, reviews can spread fast and far, leading to damaging changes in consumer behavior. Customers have been given the means to further share reviews detrimental to brand reputation, encouraging potential consumers to boycott the product, (Mallik SK et al., 2025). On the other hand, positive reviews can increase trust and brand loyalty; However, the absence of reviews positive sentiment can be enough to increase consumers demand for competitor products (Mallik SK et al., 2025). The advancement of technology, specifically generative AI, amplifies these issues by creating fake reviews and comments, leaving consumers questioning the brand and advertising authenticity. Removal of negative reviews and comments must be prioritized, especially for those focusing on reputational and organizational damage (Mart Rínez-Peláez et al., 2023). For many brands, understanding these factors have been key for dealing complex issues in consumer behavior in the digital age (Yogesh K Dwivedi et al., 2023).

The challenge of keeping marketing on social media real

When it comes to social media marketing, realness becomes a fundamental aspect affecting consumer trust and engagement. Brands that effectively meet this challenge will establish more profound relationships with their consumers. Nevertheless, the use of social media influencers (SMIs) has caused new complications, especially in the area of over-endorsement. Over-endorsement damages the influencers' authority and reduces consumers' willingness to buy a product (Phat NT, 2024). This suggests the need for moderation in endorsement activities and promotion. In addition, TikTok is a prime example where content that is persuasive along with entertaining seems to alter consumer behaviours in several ways, as discussed in (Cheah CW et al., 2024). Due to this, marketers are on a thin line between engagement and promotion, confirming the need for realness, as well as the ethical aspects of marketing forcing the marketers to adopt transparency and more

ethical marketing strategies, as discussed in (Musa AH et al., 2024).

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, social media offers a versatile space for marketers across different age groups, especially Generation Z. Knowing that influencer marketing significantly shapes consumer choices, marketers must recognize and build the frameworks of trust that accompany the engagement and preference that consumers display (L. Priya et al, 2024). Moreover, the study outlines the social media advertising triad of habitual online behavior and privacy concerns. High-quality advertising decreases privacy concerns and encourages impulse purchasing, while consumers are aware of and frustrated with the boundaries of data exploitation (I. Tirtayani et al, 2024). Trust in purchase influencers also plays a decisive role in consumer behavior (Q. A. Qureshi et al, 2024). The development of social bots and other AI consumer interfacing tools (R. Rana et al, 2024) provides marketers new strategies. Trust, however, appears as a barrier. These findings are important for understanding marketing's new digital opportunities.

Collection of relevant literature

In the research study on the impact of social media on consumer behaviour and the related literature, the consumer engagement behaviour of social media influencers is primarily driven by the micro-influencer and digital marketing facets. Social media influencers, particularly micro-influencers, are not only key marketing channel figureheads but also vital to complex social relationships and are instrumental to the internal social dynamics of the networks to which they belong. Bok messages, particularly tailored according to the expectations of social media followers, and marketed by social media micro-influencers tend to create synergy, resulting in ease of social engagement optimisation. Bok messages tend to also garner significant social engagement, and are thus often targeted by social media micro-influencers. Social media micro-influencers are often driven by social and emotional rewards, which tend to trigger significant levels of social engagement within their networks. The marketing messages targeted at social media micro-influencers are often emotionally charged and fulfil their social and emotional reward expectations, thus becoming self-reinforcing.

Social media's rise to prominence as a tool for engaging consumers poses new challenges and opportunities for businesses. With consumers seeking out businesses on social media platforms, especially Instagram and TikTok, marketers need to revise and refine their marketing approaches. Building genuine partnerships with social media influencers are key to marketers' social strategies since influencers create and shape consumers' purchase intent and, as shown by the 'relational' perspective of consumer social media engagement, influencers' perceived credibility and authenticity of the brand's marketing content are pivotal to consumer buying (Akand F, 2024). The understanding of marketing's 'relational' psychological factors (brand

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equity and impulse buying) are pivotal to providing consumers with tailored messages (Mandung F et al., 2024). With social media and e-commerce integration, the complexity of consumer decision-making calls for a strategic refinement of advertisers' sales approaches (Vidani J, 2024). Therefore, businesses need to take an integrated social media marketing approach.

b. Future trends in social media and consumer behavior
The future of social media and its influence on consumer behavior deserves an exceptional future. Predictive analytics and the strategic use of influencers are pivotal in this regard. The more developed AI technologies become, the more likely social media platforms will use AI-driven predictive analytics to determine-specific consumer preferences and trends, tailor engagements to those specific preferences, and deepen brand loyalty (Okeleke PA et al., 2024). The social media marketing sphere continues to redefine consumer relationships through personalisation and efficacy of marketing through influencers. The power of social media influencers to determine the popularity and purchase of certain items particularly in the beauty and fashion sector is undeniable where relatability is a core element (G Alexander, 2024). Additionally, more research continues to develop important themes such as online brand communities and social media advertising and its impact on purchase intention (Phan A et al., 2024). All of this research will help guide businesses as they make their way through this dynamic landscape. These trends clearly identify a transformative path and redefining of consumer relationships in the digital era (Anjorin KF et al., 2024).

Recommendations for further research

There are some additional areas that can be researched to further develop the understanding of social media and its influence on consumer behaviour. For instance, the incorporation of longitudinal research studies that track sentiment and buying behaviour over an extended period of time, especially as new trends on social media arise, can provide further insight into research questions. This particular facet of research is highly valuable considering the findings of Arora DS et. al. 2025. Emerging social media platforms and their users, as users of varying social media platforms have varying demographics, behaviours, and spending patterns, are now important to study as indicated by Dr. Kaur J et. al 2025. The need for further investigation of the influence of authenticity on influencer marketing is warranted especially in regard to Swetha R et. al. 2025 and their focus on authentic involvement as a catalyst for the development of consumer brand loyalty. Last, but by no means least, cross-cultural variations in consumer behaviour need to be examined, in regard to social media. Valuable global insights regarding digital consumer behaviour are found in Dr. Mitra B et. al. 2025.

Final thoughts on the evolving relationship between social media and consumer behavior

The way social media and consumer behavior intersect has changed quickly and considerably within the last few

years. The changes aren't just within the platforms themselves, but on account of the marketing policies and techniques utilized to reach those consumers. The contemporary social media platforms like Instagram and YouTube actively participate in the decision-making processes of consumers by endorsing and promoting influencer culture. User-generated content has become a significant motivator of consumer behavior, and companies have started to actively utilize it and integrate it into their marketing policies (KANISHKA YADAV, 2025). A pivotal component of the 'customer experience' (Wr. K N 2024) is the interaction consumers have with a brand. Contributing to emotional connection, the marketers' use of artificial intelligence and other emerging technologies further strengthens the emotional bond with the consumers (S Tyagi, 2025). The gap between social media and consumer behavior is closing quickly and continuously and brands have to actively evolve to remain relevant (Garg R, 2024).

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