

IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING ON CONSUMER PURCHASE DECISIONS: A STUDY OF CHANGING CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR IN THE DIGITAL ERA

Preeti

Assistant Professor

Subject: Commerce

Email ID: Preetirathi09@gmail.com

Abstract

Social media marketing has emerged as one of the most influential components of contemporary marketing communication and has substantially transformed the manner in which consumers discover, evaluate and purchase products and services. The rapid diffusion of smartphones, social networking platforms, short-form video, influencer marketing, electronic word-of-mouth and personalised advertising has shifted consumers from being passive recipients of promotional communication to active participants in the digital marketplace.

The present paper examines the impact of social media marketing on consumer purchase decisions, with particular reference to the changing consumer behaviour of digitally connected consumers in Haryana. The study adopts a descriptive-analytical approach and integrates recent empirical research on social media marketing, influencer credibility, electronic word-of-mouth, online reviews, consumer engagement, trust and purchase intention with the consumer context of Haryana. Social media marketing is examined through major dimensions including content quality, influencer credibility, electronic word-of-mouth, personalised advertising and brand interaction, while purchase behaviour is considered through product awareness, evaluation of alternatives, purchase intention and actual purchase decisions.

Recent marketing research provides growing evidence that social-media communication can significantly influence consumer attitudes, brand engagement, trust and purchase intention. The analytical framework developed in this paper proposes that social media marketing can influence purchase decisions both directly and indirectly through consumer engagement, perceived credibility and trust. The Haryana context makes this relationship particularly relevant because consumers across urban, semi-urban and increasingly digitally connected rural markets are being exposed to rapidly changing forms of online marketing.

The paper concludes that the effectiveness of social media marketing increasingly depends not merely upon advertising exposure but upon authenticity, relevance, credibility, social proof and consumer trust. Businesses targeting consumers in Haryana can potentially improve marketing outcomes through credible influencer partnerships, interactive content, effective management of online reviews and consumer-oriented digital communication.

Keywords: Social Media Marketing; Consumer Behaviour; Purchase Decision; Purchase Intention; Influencer Marketing; Electronic Word-of-Mouth; Consumer Trust; Haryana

1. Introduction

Consumer behaviour has undergone substantial transformation during the digital era. Traditionally, consumers depended upon television advertisements, newspapers, sales personnel, physical retail stores and recommendations from family and friends for information about products and services. The emergence of social media has created a considerably more interactive information environment in which consumers can discover products, compare alternatives, communicate with brands and evaluate the experiences of other consumers before making purchase decisions.

Social media marketing refers broadly to the use of social networking platforms and digital communities by businesses to communicate with consumers, create brand awareness, generate engagement and influence consumer behaviour. Unlike conventional advertising, social-media communication allows consumers to respond immediately through likes, comments, reviews, shares and direct interactions.

Contemporary consumers therefore play a more active role in the marketing process. Before purchasing a product, consumers may encounter promotional content through social media, watch product demonstrations, examine influencer recommendations, read customer reviews, compare competing brands and seek opinions from online communities.

Recent empirical research has consequently moved beyond examining whether consumers are exposed to digital advertising and increasingly investigates how content quality, influencer credibility, electronic word-of-mouth, social proof, engagement and trust influence purchase intention and behaviour.

This issue has particular relevance in Haryana. The state combines highly urbanised consumer markets such as Gurugram and Faridabad with rapidly developing cities, semi-urban markets and digitally connected rural areas. Differences in age, income, education, occupation, digital literacy and location can influence how consumers respond to social-media marketing. Understanding these relationships can therefore assist businesses in developing more effective and context-sensitive digital marketing strategies.

2. Aim, Scope and Methodology

The principal aim of this paper is to analyse the impact of social media marketing on consumer purchase decisions and changing consumer behaviour in the digital era, with special reference to Haryana.

More specifically, the study seeks to:

- examine the relationship between social media marketing and consumer purchase intention;
- analyse the influence of social-media content on consumer engagement;
- examine the role of influencer credibility in shaping purchase decisions;
- assess the influence of electronic word-of-mouth and online reviews;
- analyse consumer trust as a potential pathway connecting social-media marketing with purchase behaviour; and
- develop recommendations relevant to businesses and marketers operating in Haryana.

The study adopts a **descriptive-analytical research design**. Recent peer-reviewed research, primarily from 2022–2025, can be used to establish the contemporary empirical position. Current official and credible digital-consumption information relating to India and Haryana can be incorporated separately to provide contextual evidence.

For a subsequent primary empirical extension, a structured questionnaire may measure social media marketing exposure, influencer credibility, e-WOM, engagement, trust, purchase intention and reported purchase behaviour among consumers in Haryana. Correlation, regression and mediation analysis can then be applied to determine statistical relationships among these constructs.

3. Review of Literature

Recent research has moved beyond treating social media merely as an advertising channel and increasingly examines its role in shaping the entire consumer decision-making process.

Contemporary studies indicate that social-media marketing activities can influence brand awareness, consumer engagement and purchase intention by providing consumers with continuous access to promotional and informational content.

Recent influencer-marketing research further demonstrates that credibility and authenticity are central to consumer response. Consumers may be more willing to consider a product when an influencer is perceived as knowledgeable, trustworthy and appropriately matched with the promoted brand.

Electronic word-of-mouth has also received considerable attention in recent research. Reviews, ratings, comments and recommendations created by other consumers can reduce uncertainty and provide social proof during the evaluation of alternatives.

Recent studies of user-generated content indicate that consumers may perceive content created by other users as more

authentic and relatable than conventional brand-controlled advertising. This can influence both brand perception and purchase intention.

Personalised digital advertising represents another important development. Social-media platforms can deliver advertisements based upon consumers' interests and previous digital behaviour. Relevant personalisation may improve consumer response, although excessive targeting can simultaneously create concerns regarding privacy and manipulation.

The contemporary literature therefore suggests three convergent propositions. First, social-media marketing influences multiple stages of the consumer decision process. Second, credibility, engagement and trust can determine whether digital exposure develops into purchase intention. Third, electronic word-of-mouth and user-generated content have increased the role of consumers themselves in shaping other consumers' purchasing decisions.

However, the Haryana-specific consumer context remains comparatively underexplored. This provides the rationale for developing a geographically focused analytical framework.

4. Social Media Marketing and the Consumer Purchase Process

Four dimensions are particularly relevant to the present analysis.

Content Quality

Informative, relevant and visually engaging content can attract consumer attention and improve product understanding. In an environment characterised by high information volume, content quality can determine whether consumers engage with or ignore a marketing message.

Influencer Credibility

Influencers can shape consumer attitudes by combining commercial communication with personal experience and social interaction. Trustworthiness, expertise and authenticity can determine the effectiveness of influencer recommendations.

Electronic Word-of-Mouth

Online reviews, comments, ratings and recommendations enable consumers to access experiences shared by other buyers. Positive e-WOM can reduce perceived risk, while negative reviews can discourage purchase.

Consumer Engagement and Trust

Interaction with brands through social media can strengthen familiarity and involvement. However, engagement is more likely to influence purchasing behaviour when consumers perceive brand communication as credible and trustworthy.

Figure 1. Analytical Framework of Social Media Marketing and Consumer Purchase Decisions



5. Contemporary Evidence and Its Relevance to Haryana

Table 1. Recent Evidence on Social Media Marketing and Consumer Behaviour

Recent Evidence	Consumer/Context	Major Relationship Examined	Principal Implication for Haryana
Social-media marketing research, 2023	Digitally connected consumers	Social-media marketing and purchase intention	Digital communication can influence consumers' willingness to purchase
Influencer-marketing research, 2023–2024	Social-media users	Influencer credibility and purchase intention	Credibility should be prioritised over follower count alone
e-WOM research, 2024	Online consumers	Reviews, social proof and purchase behaviour	Online opinions can reduce or increase perceived purchase risk
Social-commerce research, 2024–2025	Digital consumers	Engagement, trust and purchase intention	Trust can help convert digital engagement into behavioural intention
Digital consumer research, 2025	Young/social-media consumers	Personalisation, content and consumer response	Relevant content can strengthen engagement when consumers do not perceive it as intrusive

The recent evidence indicates that social-media marketing should not be examined independently from the wider consumer decision process. Engagement, credibility, trust, reviews and social influence repeatedly appear as mechanisms connecting marketing exposure with behavioural outcomes.

For Haryana, this is particularly relevant because consumers differ considerably in digital experience and purchasing environments. Consumers in highly urbanised markets may interact with social media and e-commerce differently from consumers in smaller cities or rural areas. A common marketing message may therefore produce different behavioural responses across consumer segments.

6. Haryana-Based Analytical Framework

The Haryana consumer environment can be conceptualised through several interacting components.

Table 2. Haryana Consumer Context and the Role of Social Media Marketing

Consumer Dimension	Changing Consumer Behaviour	Relevant Social Media Factor	Expected Marketing Effect
Rural–urban diversity	Different levels of digital exposure	Relevant and localised content	Improved consumer reach
Young consumer population	High engagement with short-form content	Influencer and video marketing	Greater product awareness
Growing digital purchasing	Online search before purchase	Reviews and e-WOM	Reduced perceived risk
Price-conscious behaviour	Comparison of offers and alternatives	Promotions and personalised advertising	Stronger purchase intention

Diverse linguistic preferences	Demand for relatable communication	Regional-language content	Greater consumer connection
Trust concerns	Verification before online purchase	Authentic reviews and credible communication	Increased purchase confidence

The analytical significance of the Haryana context lies not in assuming that all consumers respond similarly to social-media marketing, but in examining whether demographic, geographical and digital characteristics alter the strength of these relationships.

7. Proposed Analytical Relationships

Three principal relationships emerge.

Relationship I: Social Media Marketing → Consumer Engagement

Relevant and interactive digital content can increase consumer attention, product awareness and interaction with brands. Greater engagement may encourage consumers to seek additional product information and evaluate available alternatives.

Relationship II: Consumer Engagement and Trust → Purchase Intention

Engagement alone may not produce a purchase. Consumers who consider online information credible and develop confidence in the brand are more likely to demonstrate stronger purchase intention.

Relationship III: Social Media Marketing → Purchase Decision

Social-media communication may also influence purchase decisions directly through promotional offers, product discovery, influencer recommendations and social-commerce facilities.

The central analytical relationship is therefore:

Social Media Marketing → Consumer Engagement & Trust → Purchase Intention → Purchase Decision

8. Analytical Indicators for Haryana Consumers

Table 3. Measurement Framework

Construct	Indicator	Expected Relationship
Social Media Marketing	Content quality	Positive
Social Media Marketing	Personalisation	Positive
Influencer Marketing	Influencer credibility	Positive
Electronic Word-of-Mouth	Online reviews and recommendations	Positive/Negative
Consumer Engagement	Brand interaction	Positive
Consumer Engagement	Product information seeking	Positive
Consumer Trust	Perceived credibility	Positive
Consumer Trust	Brand reliability	Positive
Purchase Intention	Willingness to purchase	Dependent/intermediate outcome
Purchase Decision	Reported purchasing behaviour	Dependent outcome
Purchase Decision	Brand/product selection	Dependent outcome

This framework permits social media marketing to be examined both as an overall construct and through individual dimensions such as content quality, influencer credibility and electronic word-of-mouth.

9. Hypothesis Framework

The following hypotheses can be empirically tested using Haryana consumer data:

H1: Social media marketing has a significant positive relationship with consumer purchase intention in Haryana.

H2: Content quality has a significant positive relationship with consumer engagement.

H3: Influencer credibility has a significant positive relationship with purchase intention.

H4: Electronic word-of-mouth significantly influences consumer purchase decisions.

H5: Consumer trust mediates the relationship between social media marketing and purchase intention.

H6: The influence of social media marketing on purchase decisions differs significantly across selected demographic and geographical groups of Haryana consumers.

10. Proposed Haryana Empirical Analysis

Table 4. Descriptive Analysis Format

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Rank
Content Quality	To be calculated	To be calculated	—
Influencer Credibility	To be calculated	To be calculated	—
Electronic Word-of-Mouth	To be calculated	To be calculated	—
Consumer Engagement	To be calculated	To be calculated	—
Consumer Trust	To be calculated	To be calculated	—
Purchase Intention	To be calculated	To be calculated	—
Purchase Decision	To be calculated	To be calculated	—

Table 5. Correlation Analysis Format

Variable	Social Media Marketing	Consumer Engagement	Consumer Trust	Purchase Intention
Social Media Marketing	1.000	Survey result	Survey result	Survey result
Consumer Engagement	Survey result	1.000	Survey result	Survey result
Consumer Trust	Survey result	Survey result	1.000	Survey result
Purchase Intention	Survey result	Survey result	Survey result	1.000

The cells have deliberately not been populated with artificial correlation coefficients. They should be calculated from actual Haryana consumer responses.

11. Current Analytical Interpretation

Recent marketing literature supports the theoretical expectation that social-media marketing contributes to contemporary consumer decision-making. However, the strongest interpretation is not simply that greater exposure to social media produces more purchases. Rather, digital marketing appears to interact with credibility, engagement, social influence and consumer trust.

This distinction is important. A consumer may initially discover a product through a social-media advertisement. Influencer content or user-generated reviews may subsequently provide additional information. Positive social proof can reduce perceived uncertainty, while credible brand communication can strengthen trust. Greater trust may then increase purchase intention and ultimately contribute to an actual purchase decision.

12. Findings and Recommendations

Five conclusions emerge from the contemporary evidence and Haryana-focused analytical framework.

First, social media is increasingly relevant to consumer decision-making because product discovery, information search and evaluation now frequently occur within digital environments.

Second, consumer trust provides an important mechanism connecting social-media exposure with purchasing behaviour. Consumers are more likely to respond positively when marketing communication appears credible and authentic.

Third, influencer marketing should be evaluated in terms of credibility, relevance and audience fit rather than follower numbers alone.

Fourth, Haryana's consumer diversity makes a uniform digital marketing strategy insufficient. Marketing communication should recognise differences among urban, semi-urban and rural consumers and across age, income and education groups.

Fifth, electronic word-of-mouth has increased consumers' influence over brand reputation. Businesses must therefore consider customer reviews and post-purchase experiences as components of marketing strategy.

Businesses targeting Haryana consumers should therefore:

- develop informative, engaging and credible social-media content;
- select influencers according to audience relevance and authenticity;
- actively monitor and respond to online consumer reviews;
- encourage authentic user-generated content;
- adapt digital communication to different consumer segments;
- use regional and relatable content where appropriate;
- avoid excessive or intrusive personalisation; and
- strengthen consumer trust through transparent digital communication.

13. Conclusion

Social media marketing represents an increasingly significant influence on consumer behaviour in the digital era. Recent research indicates that consumers' purchasing decisions are influenced not only by promotional exposure but also by the credibility of influencers, electronic word-of-mouth, consumer engagement, social proof and trust.

For Haryana, the issue has particular relevance because the state contains diverse consumer markets ranging from highly digital urban centres to rapidly changing semi-urban and rural environments. Differences in digital exposure, income, education, age and purchasing preferences can therefore influence the effectiveness of social-media marketing.

The analytical framework developed in this paper positions consumer engagement, trust and purchase intention as central mechanisms connecting social-media marketing with actual purchasing behaviour. Effective content can generate awareness and engagement; credible information and positive social proof can strengthen trust; and stronger trust can subsequently increase purchase intention.

References

1. Adaba, G. B., Frimpong, F., & Mwainyekule, L. (2025). Empirical analysis of social media influencers' effect on consumer purchase intentions and behavior. *Platforms*, 3(3), 11. <https://doi.org/10.3390/platforms3030011>.
2. Sardar, S. (2025). Social media influencers and purchase intention: A review and research agenda. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijcs.70046>.

3. Angmo, P., Mahajan, R., & Ranjitha, G. P. (2025). Unveiling the power of virtual influencers: Impact of content and credibility on consumer engagement and purchase intentions. *Journal of Relationship Marketing*, 25(1), 58–89. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15332667.2025.2471668>.
4. Ranjith, P., Nisansala, S., Jayasingha, N., Weerasekara, K., Wisenthige, K., & Dayapathirana, N. (2025). Does social media information credibility influence social commerce purchase intention of skincare products? Evidence from Facebook. *PLOS ONE*, 20(10), e0334126. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0334126>.
5. Sachu, B., Kadeswaran, S., & Jayaseelan, R. (2025). Social media influencer credibility on consumer purchase intentions: A source credibility theory perspective. *International Journal of Environmental Sciences*, 11(16s), 1988–1998. <https://doi.org/10.64252/d4c62073>.
6. Garg, M., & Bakshi, A. (2024). Exploring the impact of beauty vloggers' credible attributes, parasocial interaction, and trust on consumer purchase intention in influencer marketing. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 11, 235. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-024-02760-9>.
7. Liu, X., & Zheng, X. (2024). The persuasive power of social media influencers in brand credibility and purchase intention. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 11, 15. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-023-02512-1>.
8. Ao, L., Bansal, R., Pruthi, N., & Khaskheli, M. B. (2024). From likes to loyalty: Exploring the impact of influencer credibility on purchase intentions in TikTok. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 78, 103709. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2024.103709>.
9. Sahaf, M. F., & Nazir, A. (2024). Influentiality of social media influencers on purchase intention of consumers: A regional perspective. *International Journal of Media and Communication Research*, 5(1), 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.25299/ijmcr.v5i1.14924>.
10. Foroughi, B., Iranmanesh, M., et al. (2024). Determinants of followers' purchase intentions toward brands endorsed by social media influencers: Findings from PLS and fsQCA. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cb.2252>.
11. *The branding power of social media influencers: An interactive marketing approach*. (2024). *Cogent Business & Management*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311975.2024.2380807>.
12. *The impact of social media in marketing on brand awareness and customer trust in increasing purchase intention*. (2024). In *2024 International Conference on Information Technology Research and Innovation (ICITRI)*. IEEE. <https://doi.org/10.1109/ICITRI62858.2024.10698890>.
13. Baskara, A., & Nurhayati. (2023). Consumer behavior in Marketing 4.0: Social media marketing and website marketing on purchasing decisions through TAM as a mediating variable. *International Journal of Social Science and Business*, 7(3), 550–559. <https://doi.org/10.23887/ijssb.v7i3.52056>.
14. Chavare, P. V., & Nayak, S. (2024/2025). Does brand attitude complement influencer credibility in shaping purchase intention of Indian Gen Z consumers? *F1000Research*, 13, 1343. <https://doi.org/10.12688/f1000research.157553.3>.