

Consumer Behavior and Social Influence: A Social Science Perspective in Marketing Management

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ABSTRACT

The actions of consumers are significantly moulded by social dynamics, particularly within the realm of digital marketing, where platforms of social media, suggestions from peers, and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) are crucial in influencing buying choices. This research investigates the impact of social influence on consumer buying patterns within the Delhi NCR area, employing quantitative methodologies and survey-driven analysis from a sample of 150 participants. The results reveal that social media marketing plays a crucial role in shaping consumer behaviour, with regression analysis demonstrating an R-squared (R^2) value of 0.54. This indicates that 54% of buying choices can be linked to social media visibility, endorsements from influencers, and various digital marketing initiatives. In a comparable manner, electronic word-of-mouth exerts a significant impact on consumer actions, evidenced by a R^2 value of 0.30. This indicates that content created by users and endorsements from peers play a crucial role in moulding brand perceptions and fostering trust. The research underscores the significant role of peer influence and customer involvement in shaping consumer choices, emphasising that dynamic marketing approaches surpass conventional advertising methods in effectiveness. Research indicates that companies prioritising customer interaction, partnerships with influencers, and genuine content development are more inclined to cultivate consumer confidence and enhance buying motivation. Companies must focus on tailored and analytics-based marketing approaches to stay relevant in a landscape heavily influenced by social media consumer trends. This study enriches the expanding collection of knowledge surrounding online marketing, social impact, and consumer choices, offering practical guidance for companies to improve their promotional approaches.

Keywords: Consumer Behavior, Social Influence, Social Media Marketing, Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM), Digital Marketing Strategies

1. INTRODUCTION

The patterns of consumer behaviour have historically been shaped by social engagements and outside endorsements, yet the emergence of digital platforms and social networking sites has greatly amplified this influence. The impact of social influence has become pivotal in the realm of consumer choices, with individuals increasingly depending on suggestions from peers, endorsements from influencers, and content created by users to mould their views and buying habits (Anjorin, Raji, & Olodo, 2024). Conventional marketing approaches that emphasise unilateral communication, like TV commercials and printed publications, are steadily diminishing in efficacy, as modern consumers increasingly favour dynamic and tailored interactions with brands (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). As the impact of platforms like Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube continues to expand, it is essential for businesses to thoughtfully weave social media marketing into their promotional strategies to bolster customer trust, foster loyalty, and boost engagement (Boyd & Ellison, 2008)



The dynamics of consumer behaviour are significantly shaped by the impact of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), the strategies of influencer marketing, the power of online reviews, and the endorsements from peers (Bhukya & Paul, 2023). Individuals tend to place greater confidence in the perspectives of their peers, companions, and online influencers instead of conventional marketing methods (De Vries, Gensler, & Leeftang, 2012). Consequently, enterprises need to prioritise cultivating authentic dialogues and community-oriented engagement tactics to remain competitive in the contemporary digital landscape. Research indicates that digital brand involvement, consumer-created content, and immediate interactions play a crucial role in influencing buying intentions and shaping brand image (Schultz, Peltier, & Bergh, 2012). Modern marketers are increasingly harnessing the capabilities of extensive data analysis and artificial intelligence-powered marketing strategies to tailor content according to individual consumer tastes and digital interactions, thereby enhancing the impact of social dynamics on buying choices (Parsons et al., 2023).

The growing dependence on social media channels has prompted a transition from conventional e-commerce to social commerce, where consumer confidence and involvement are fostered through dynamic brand interactions instead of unchanging advertisements (Liang & Turban, 2011). Online marketplaces like Tokopedia, Shopee, Lazada, and Amazon have seamlessly incorporated social commerce functionalities, enabling shoppers to engage with brands, explore reviews, and make well-informed buying choices influenced by recommendations from their peers (Rachmad, 2022). This transition highlights the pivotal impact of digital marketing in shaping consumer habits. Studies indicate that companies that proactively interact with their audience on social platforms, address questions, and develop campaigns centred around community involvement often experience elevated levels of brand trust and customer fidelity (Hennig-Thurau, Hofacker, & Bloching, 2013). A significant catalyst of societal impact is influencer marketing, wherein brands partner with online personas to engage their desired demographic with greater efficacy. Influencers significantly shape consumer choices by offering genuine endorsements and presenting products in a way that resonates with their audience (Lim et al., 2023). Research indicates that shoppers tend to be more inclined to buy items endorsed by influencers they admire and rely on, rather than traditional promotional messages from companies (Smith, Fischer, & Yongjian, 2012). This transformation in consumer confidence underscores the significance of genuineness, reliability, and interaction in contemporary marketing approaches. Moreover, a study conducted by Yang and colleagues (2021) highlights that consumers recognise greater worth in brands that proactively connect with them via social media exchanges, live events, and community involvement initiatives.

A crucial element of social impact on consumer behaviour is the influence of digital testimonials and electronic word-of-mouth. Studies indicate that more than 80% of shoppers consult online evaluations prior to finalising their buying choices, highlighting the essential influence of consumer insights on brand image and the establishment of trust (De Vries, Gensler, & Leeftang, 2012). Favourable feedback and endorsements bolster brand trustworthiness and elevate the likelihood of purchases, while unfavourable reviews may dissuade prospective customers. Firms like Amazon, Google, and TripAdvisor have integrated strong evaluation systems to enhance the process of consumer choice. This underscores the necessity for enterprises to proactively oversee their digital reputation, address customer issues, and cultivate affirmative consumer engagements (Ryan & Jones, 2009). The mental dimension of social persuasion significantly impacts consumer actions and decisions. Research suggests that individuals often align with societal expectations and depend on collective agreement when deciding on purchases (Bhukya & Paul, 2023). This occurrence, referred to as social validation, serves as a potent psychological catalyst that companies utilise to enhance interaction and boost conversions. For example, companies that showcase client endorsements, social media interactions, and community involvement statistics tend to have a greater impact on prospective customers. According to a study conducted by Schultz, Peltier, and Bergh (2012), it appears that consumers tend to view brands that exhibit significant social media interaction as being more dependable and credible. This highlights the significance of cultivating a vibrant and involved online community to boost brand recognition and trustworthiness.

The expanding web of digital ecosystems, interconnected consumer communities, and tailored marketing approaches has transformed the dynamics of consumer conduct. The realm of social influence has transcended traditional word-of-mouth endorsements, evolving into a landscape enriched by AI-powered marketing strategies, precision-targeted social media advertisements, and dynamic partnerships with influencers (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). As companies navigate this transforming digital landscape, they need to prioritise crafting impactful customer interactions, promoting openness, and utilising data-informed insights to enhance their marketing strategies. The trajectory of consumer conduct is anticipated to be significantly shaped by groundbreaking technologies like augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), and artificial intelligence-driven suggestions, amplifying the impact of social factors in determining buying choices (Hennig-Thurau, Hofacker, & Bloching, 2013).

The impact of social influence has emerged as a powerful catalyst in the realm of consumer choices, transforming the dynamics of how companies engage with their clientele. Companies that emphasise dynamic interaction, tailored marketing approaches, and consumer-focused tactics are more inclined to foster enduring customer loyalty and brand support. With the ongoing transformation of digital landscapes, enterprises need to stay flexible and creative in their promotional strategies to harness the impact of social dynamics on contemporary purchasing habits.

1.1 Research Problem

Although prior research has explored social influence in consumer decision-making, limited quantitative studies focus on the Delhi NCR region. This study addresses this gap by analyzing how social influence impacts consumer behavior in a



digital environment.

1.2 Research Objectives

To examine the influence of social media marketing on consumer purchasing decisions in Delhi NCR.

To assess the effect of peer recommendations on purchase intention.

To determine the role of eWOM in shaping consumer preferences.

1.3 Research Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: Social media marketing has no significant impact on consumer purchase behavior.

Hypothesis 2: eWOM does not have a stronger influence on purchase behavior than traditional advertising.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Social Influence and Consumer Behavior

The impact of social dynamics is broadly acknowledged as a crucial factor shaping consumer buying habits, especially in today's digital era, where engagements take place in both virtual and physical settings. It includes a variety of elements, such as social peer pressure, digital testimonials, brand sponsorships, and influencer promotions, all of which play a crucial role in moulding consumer confidence and brand image (Bhukya & Paul, 2023). In the past few years, the surge of social media platforms and online communities has amplified the significance of social influence in the decision-making process. Consumers increasingly depend on recommendations from peers, content created by users, and social endorsement prior to making their purchasing choices (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Studies indicate that more than 70% of shoppers place greater confidence in recommendations from peers rather than conventional advertising, underscoring the transition in consumer faith from corporate communications to genuine, experience-driven endorsements (De Vries, Gensler, & Leeflang, 2012). The psychological principle of social proof significantly influences consumer behaviour, as people often emulate the buying habits of those around them to reduce feelings of uncertainty and mitigate risk (Schultz, Peltier, & Bergh, 2012). This phenomenon is particularly prominent in the realm of e-commerce, where digital evaluations and scores significantly sway buying decisions. A research conducted by Chou et al. (2020) reveals that shoppers tend to favour items boasting a greater quantity of favourable evaluations, even when these products come with a steeper price tag compared to options that have fewer or mixed feedback. This occurrence highlights the significance of societal endorsement and the establishment of trust in contemporary marketing approaches. Moreover, the impact of social influence transcends mere direct suggestions, encompassing the realms of observational learning and aspirational buying. In this context, consumers often mirror the purchasing habits of influencers, celebrities, and trendsetters (Bhukya & Paul, 2023). Online platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok have fostered a culture of aspirational marketing, prompting consumers to embrace lifestyle choices that resonate with the influencers they look up to (Boyd & Ellison, 2008). This phenomenon is especially pronounced within the realms of fashion, beauty, and technology, where the endorsements from influencers can profoundly enhance brand visibility, foster customer interaction, and ultimately boost sales conversions.

2.2 The Role of Social Media in Marketing

Social media has fundamentally altered the landscape of marketing by reshaping how consumers interact, how brands convey their messages, and how purchasing choices are made. Social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Twitter, and LinkedIn offer companies remarkable avenues to connect with their audience, tailor content to individual preferences, and encourage immediate interaction (Boyd & Ellison, 2008). In contrast to conventional marketing avenues that depend on unidirectional communication, social media facilitates reciprocal interactions, empowering brands to cultivate connections with consumers via engaging campaigns, partnerships with influencers, and dialogues driven by the community (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). A crucial element of social media marketing lies in targeted advertising, leveraging sophisticated data analysis to provide tailored content to distinct audience groups (Ryan & Jones, 2009). Social networking sites amass extensive volumes of consumer behaviour information, encompassing search histories, browsing tendencies, and purchasing intentions, enabling brands to tailor advertisements and marketing initiatives according to personal preferences (Lim et al., 2023). This highly tailored strategy boosts interaction levels, improves advertisement pertinence, and optimises conversion opportunities, positioning social media as a budget-friendly substitute for conventional marketing techniques. The realm of influencer marketing has emerged as a powerful entity in the social media sphere, with individuals increasingly relying on the endorsements of peers and online personas rather than traditional corporate promotions (Smith, Fischer, & Yongjian, 2012). Research demonstrates that products promoted by influencers tend to achieve a greater conversion rate, attributed to the genuine and relatable nature of influencer marketing (Chou et al., 2020). Social media platforms like TikTok and Instagram have experienced remarkable expansion in collaborations between brands and influencers, where companies join forces with influencers to produce captivating, authentic content that effortlessly weaves products into lifestyle stories (Hennig-Thurau, Hofacker, & Bloching, 2013). Moreover, interaction on social media platforms significantly impacts the trust and allegiance consumers have towards a brand. Studies indicate that companies that engage with customer questions, join conversations, and tackle feedback on social media are likely to cultivate more robust consumer connections and enhance their brand trustworthiness (Schultz, Peltier, & Bergh, 2012). Organisations that prioritise real-time interaction tactics, host



live question-and-answer sessions, and create engaging content are more inclined to maintain customer loyalty and cultivate enduring brand support (Parsons et al., 2023). Beyond involvement and promotional activities, social media serves a crucial function in social commerce, enabling consumers to buy products directly via marketplaces integrated within the platforms (Liang & Turban, 2011). Platforms like Facebook Marketplace, Instagram Shopping, and TikTok Shop have revolutionised the shopping experience, facilitating a seamless transition from discovering products to making purchases, thereby removing the necessity for third-party e-commerce sites (Rachmad, 2022). This development underscores the increasing importance of social media as a key sales avenue, urging companies to refine their digital marketing approaches in response.

2.3 Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM)

Digital word-of-mouth (dWOM) has surfaced as a significant catalyst in influencing consumer actions, where online evaluations, endorsements, and suggestions are pivotal in moulding brand image (De Vries, Gensler, & Leeflang, 2012). In contrast to conventional word-of-mouth, which confines itself to face-to-face exchanges, electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) boasts an expansive influence, enabling consumers to tap into insights and experiences from a worldwide community (Schultz, Peltier, & Bergh, 2012). Studies reveal that more than 90% of shoppers seek out online evaluations prior to finalising a purchase, underscoring the crucial influence of user-generated content in shaping their choices (Ryan & Jones, 2009). Favourable electronic word-of-mouth significantly boosts brand trustworthiness and the likelihood of purchase, while adverse feedback can discourage prospective customers (Chou et al., 2020). Organisations like Amazon, TripAdvisor, and Yelp have established strong evaluation systems, allowing customers to make educated choices grounded in authentic user encounters (Lim et al., 2023). The surge of online conversations, product evaluation platforms, and endorsements from influencers significantly enhances the impact of electronic word-of-mouth on consumer decision-making. Furthermore, studies indicate that individuals are more inclined to place their trust in organic, community-driven content rather than promotional materials crafted by brands, underscoring the importance of genuine interaction and customer-focused marketing approaches (Hennig-Thurau, Hofacker, & Bloching, 2013). Companies need to diligently track and engage with electronic word-of-mouth, tackle customer issues, and harness favourable reviews to enhance their image and boost sales.

2.4 Marketing Strategies and Consumer Attitudes

Contemporary shoppers are increasingly knowledgeable, digitally engaged, and acutely aware of brand identities like never before. Marketing approaches that emphasise genuineness, openness, and active participation are more inclined to thrive in a time when consumer perceptions are moulded by social dynamics and online engagements (Parsons et al., 2023). Companies need to embrace analytics-based marketing approaches, leverage AI-enhanced consumer intelligence, and execute cross-platform interaction strategies to stay competitive in the changing digital environment (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). With the ongoing growth of the online marketplace, companies that prioritise fostering connections, launching community-focused initiatives, and partnering with influencers are poised to become frontrunners in engaging consumers and cultivating brand allegiance (Bhukya & Paul, 2023). Achieving marketing triumph today hinges on the effectiveness with which a brand weaves social influence into its strategic framework, rendering interactive, customer-focused marketing a vital tactic in the contemporary consumer landscape. Social impact is also evident within brand communities and digital platforms, where consumers share their experiences and offer suggestions about various products and services. Studies indicate that engaging actively in brand communities cultivates enhanced brand loyalty and increases the probability of purchases, as consumers experience a feeling of connection and common values with others who share similar interests (Parsons et al., 2023). Online venues like Reddit, Facebook Groups, and Quora have emerged as dynamic arenas for consumer-led dialogues, moulding brand images and swaying buying habits in manners that conventional advertising finds challenging to replicate (Lim et al., 2023). With the ongoing evolution of digital landscapes, the incorporation of AI-powered suggestions and tailored social media streams significantly amplifies the impact of social influence on consumer behaviour (Hennig-Thurau, Hofacker, & Bloching, 2013). Companies need to acknowledge the increasing interconnectedness of consumer communities and adopt marketing strategies that are informed by data and actively engage with social dynamics to stay competitive in a landscape where social influence shapes buying behaviours.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This investigation employs a quantitative research framework, utilising a survey-oriented methodology to examine the effects of social influence on consumer behaviour within the Delhi NCR region. This research delves into the realm of social media promotion, the influence of peer endorsements, and the dynamics of electronic word-of-mouth communication (eWOM).

3.2 Data Collection

Information was gathered using a meticulously designed online survey, disseminated through various social media channels such as WhatsApp, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram. The survey encompassed enquiries regarding demographics, responses measured on a Likert scale, and evaluations of purchasing behaviours.

3.3 Sampling Method and Size

- Sampling Method: Random Sampling



- Sample Size: 150 respondents
- Target Audience: Consumers in Delhi NCR, aged 18–45 years
- Data Collection Period: January 2025

3.4 Measurement Instruments

The study uses a structured questionnaire with the following components:

3.4.1 Demographic Information

- Gender
- Age Group
- Education Level
- Monthly Income
- Daily Social Media Usage

3.4.2 Likert Scale-Based Consumer Behavior Assessment

A 15-item Likert scale-based questionnaire (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree) assessing:

- Influence of social media marketing on purchasing decisions
- Effect of peer recommendations on trust and purchase intent
- Role of eWOM in shaping consumer perceptions

3.4.3 Purchase Behavior Questions

- Frequency of online purchases
- Preferred sources of brand recommendations
- Trust in user-generated content vs. traditional advertising

3.5 Data Analysis Techniques

To analyze the collected data, the study employs the following techniques:

- **Descriptive Statistics**

Mean, Standard Deviation, and Frequency Distributions for demographic and Likert scale responses.

- **Regression Analysis**

To determine the influence of social media marketing and eWOM on purchase behavior.

- **Hypothesis Testing**

Statistical tests:

- p-value: To test the significance of relationships.
- R-squared (R^2): To measure the explanatory power of the model.
- T-statistic: To measure the strength of variable impact.
- **Correlation Analysis**

Examining the relationship between social media engagement and brand trust.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

This section provides an overview of the demographic characteristics of the 150 respondents in the Delhi NCR region.

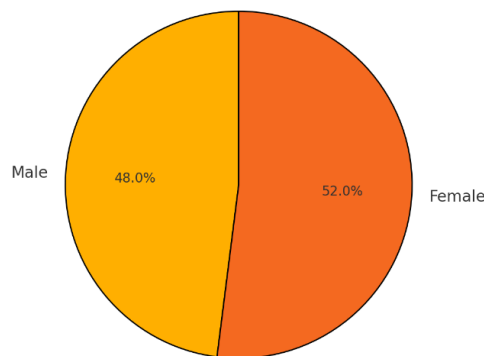
Table 1. Demographic Profile of Respondents

Category	Subcategory	Percentage (%)	Number of Respondents (N=150)
Gender Distribution	Male	48%	72
	Female	52%	78
Age Group Distribution	18-24 years	35%	53
	25-34 years	45%	68
	35-44 years	15%	23



	45+ years	5%	6
Education Level	Undergraduate	40%	60
	Graduate	45%	67
	Postgraduate	15%	23
Monthly Income (INR)	Below 30,000	30%	45
	30,000 - 50,000	40%	60
	Above 50,000	30%	45
Daily Social Media Usage	Less than 2 hours	20%	30
	2-4 hours	50%	75
	More than 4 hours	30%	45

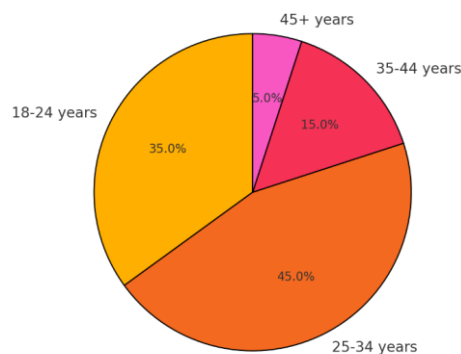
Gender Distribution



Graph 1: Gender Distribution

The demographic profile of the 150 respondents in the Delhi NCR region provides a comprehensive understanding of the sample composition. The gender distribution shows a nearly balanced ratio, with 48% (72 respondents) being male and 52% (78 respondents) being female. This balance ensures that the findings are not significantly biased toward any particular gender.

Age Group Distribution

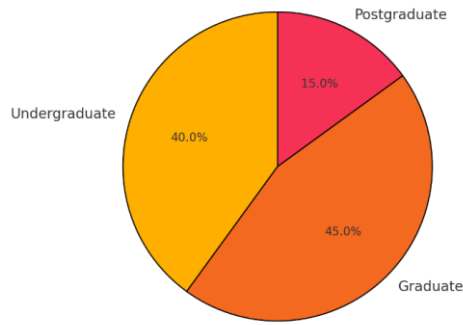


Graph 2: Age Group Distribution

The age group distribution reveals that the largest proportion of respondents, 45% (68 respondents), falls within the 25–34 years age range, followed by 35% (53 respondents) in the 18–24 years category, 15% (23 respondents) in the 35–44 years group, and a smaller representation of 5% (6 respondents) from individuals aged 45 and above. This distribution suggests that the study predominantly captures insights from young and middle-aged consumers, who are typically more active in digital consumer behavior.



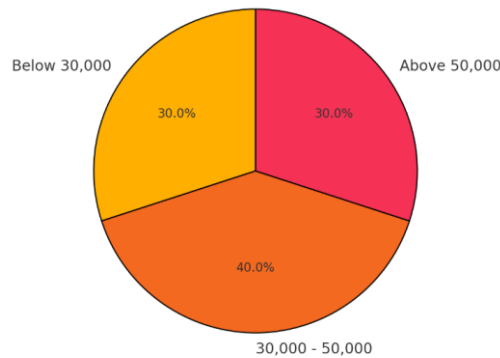
Education Level Distribution



Graph 3: Education Level Distribution

Regarding educational background, 40% (60 respondents) have completed undergraduate studies, while 45% (67 respondents) hold a graduate degree, and 15% (23 respondents) possess a postgraduate qualification. The higher proportion of respondents with a graduate or higher degree suggests that the participants are well-educated, which could influence their engagement with digital marketing strategies and their ability to critically assess online reviews and recommendations.

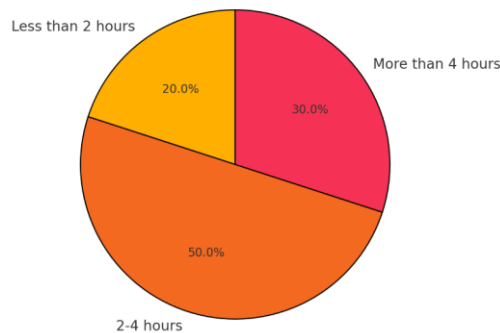
Monthly Income Distribution (INR)



Graph 4: Monthly Income Distribution (INR)

The monthly income distribution indicates that 30% (45 respondents) earn below INR 30,000, while 40% (60 respondents) fall within the INR 30,000–50,000 bracket, and another 30% (45 respondents) earn above INR 50,000. This variation in income levels allows for a more inclusive analysis of how financial status impacts purchasing behavior in a digital environment.

Daily Social Media Usage



Graph 5: Daily Social Media Usage



The frequency of social media engagement among participants is notably high, as evidenced by 50% (75 individuals) dedicating 2 to 4 hours each day to various platforms. In addition, 30% (45 individuals) allocate over 4 hours daily to their online interactions, while 20% (30 individuals) limit their social media usage to under 2 hours per day. The significant interaction with social media indicates that these platforms are pivotal in shaping consumer behaviour, rendering this research particularly pertinent in evaluating the effects of social media marketing, peer suggestions, and electronic word-of-mouth on consumer choices.

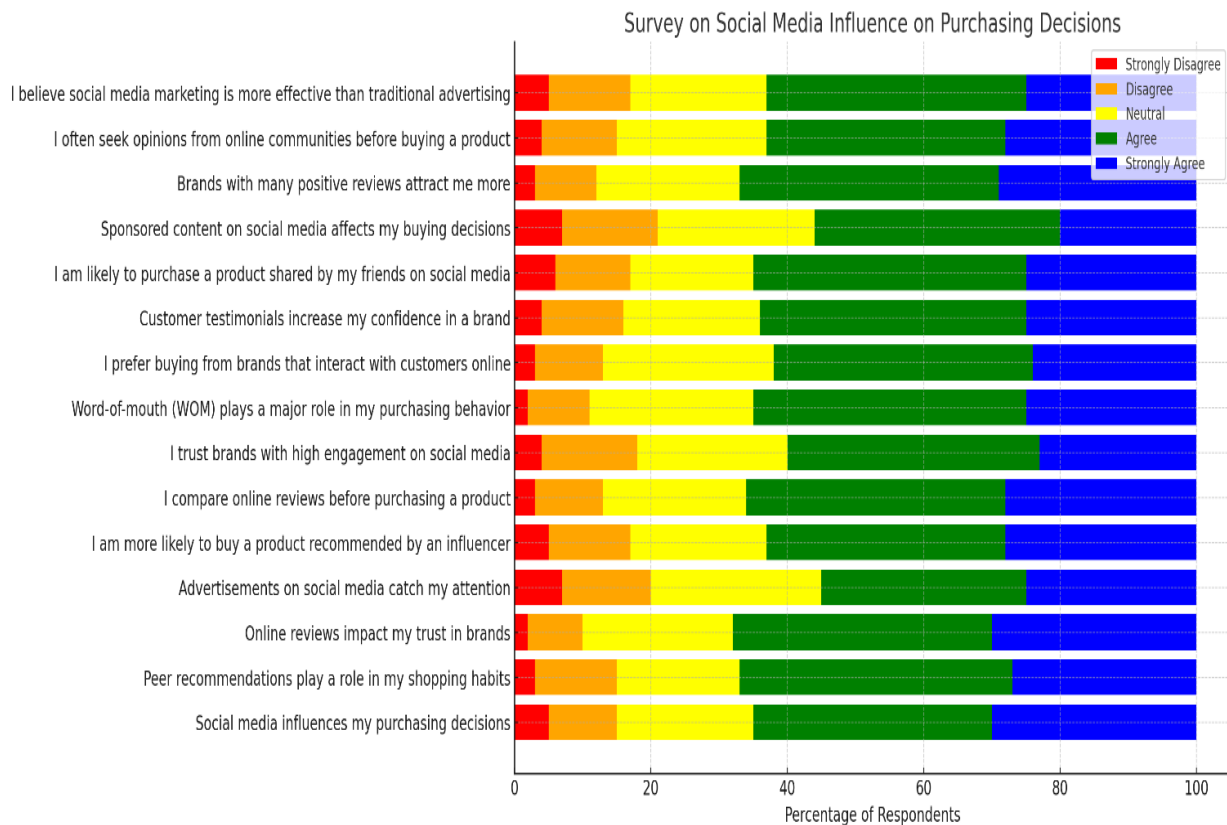
4.2 Likert Scale-Based Questionnaire Analysis

This section presents the responses to **15 Likert scale-based questions** measuring consumer behavior related to social influence and marketing.

Likert Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree

Table 2: Likert Scale-Based Questionnaire Analysis (N=150)

Question	Strongly Disagree (N %)	Disagree (N %)	Neutral (N %)	Agree (N %)	Strongly Agree (N %)
Social media influences my purchasing decisions.	8 (5%)	15 (10%)	30 (20%)	52 (35%)	45 (30%)
Peer recommendations play a role in my shopping habits.	4 (3%)	18 (12%)	27 (18%)	60 (40%)	40 (27%)
Online reviews impact my trust in brands.	3 (2%)	12 (8%)	33 (22%)	57 (38%)	45 (30%)
Advertisements on social media catch my attention.	11 (7%)	20 (13%)	38 (25%)	45 (30%)	38 (25%)
I am more likely to buy a product recommended by an influencer.	8 (5%)	18 (12%)	30 (20%)	52 (35%)	42 (28%)
I compare online reviews before purchasing a product.	4 (3%)	15 (10%)	32 (21%)	57 (38%)	42 (28%)
I trust brands with high engagement on social media.	6 (4%)	21 (14%)	33 (22%)	55 (37%)	35 (23%)
Word-of-mouth (WOM) plays a major role in my purchasing behavior.	3 (2%)	14 (9%)	36 (24%)	60 (40%)	38 (25%)
I prefer buying from brands that interact with customers online.	5 (3%)	15 (10%)	38 (25%)	57 (38%)	35 (24%)
Customer testimonials increase my confidence in a brand.	6 (4%)	18 (12%)	30 (20%)	59 (39%)	37 (25%)
I am likely to purchase a product shared by my friends on social media.	9 (6%)	17 (11%)	27 (18%)	60 (40%)	37 (25%)
Sponsored content on social media affects my buying decisions.	11 (7%)	21 (14%)	34 (23%)	54 (36%)	30 (20%)
Brands with many positive reviews attract me more.	5 (3%)	14 (9%)	32 (21%)	57 (38%)	42 (29%)
I often seek opinions from online communities before buying a product.	6 (4%)	17 (11%)	33 (22%)	52 (35%)	42 (28%)
I believe social media marketing is more effective than traditional advertising.	8 (5%)	18 (12%)	30 (20%)	57 (38%)	37 (25%)



Graph 6: Likert Scale-Based Questionnaire Analysis (N=150)

The analysis of responses to the 15 Likert scale-based questions provides deeper insights into consumer behavior related to social influence and digital marketing. When asked whether social media influences purchasing decisions, 65% of respondents (97 individuals) either agreed or strongly agreed, while only 15% (23 respondents) disagreed, and 20% (30 respondents) remained neutral. This confirms that social media marketing has a substantial impact on consumer purchasing decisions. Similarly, 67% (100 respondents) agreed that peer recommendations play a role in their shopping habits, reinforcing the importance of word-of-mouth marketing.

Online reviews significantly impact consumer trust in brands, as indicated by 68% (102 respondents) who either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. Meanwhile, advertisements on social media catch the attention of 55% (83 respondents), while 20% (30 respondents) remained neutral, suggesting that while advertisements are influential, they may not be as strong a driver as organic peer recommendations. The effectiveness of influencer marketing is evident, with 63% (94 respondents) agreeing or strongly agreeing that they are more likely to buy a product recommended by an influencer, while only 17% (26 respondents) disagreed.

A strong majority of respondents, 66% (99 individuals), reported that they compare online reviews before making a purchase, highlighting the critical role of eWOM in shaping buying behavior. Trust in brands with high social media engagement is also significant, with 60% (90 respondents) agreeing that they are more likely to trust and buy from such brands. Word-of-mouth (WOM) marketing also plays a crucial role, with 65% (98 respondents) agreeing that it influences their purchasing behavior. Furthermore, 62% (93 respondents) stated that they prefer buying from brands that actively engage with customers online, indicating the importance of two-way communication in digital marketing.

Customer testimonials enhance brand confidence for 64% (96 respondents), while 65% (97 respondents) agreed that they are likely to purchase a product shared by their friends on social media. Sponsored content affects buying decisions for 56% (84 respondents), while 67% (101 respondents) stated that brands with many positive reviews attract them more. Seeking opinions from online communities before making a purchase is a common behavior, as indicated by 63% (95 respondents), and 63% (94 respondents) believe that social media marketing is more effective than traditional advertising.

4.3 Hypothesis Analysis

This section presents the hypothesis testing results using regression analysis to determine the statistical significance of social influence on consumer behavior.

4.3.1 Impact of Social Media Marketing on Purchase Behavior

Hypothesis 1:



- Null Hypothesis (H_0): Social media marketing has no significant impact on consumer purchase behavior.
- Alternative Hypothesis (H_1): Social media marketing significantly influences consumer purchase behavior.

Table 3: Impact of Social Media Marketing on Purchase Behavior

Hypothesis	Regression Coefficient (β)	Intercept	R-squared (R^2)	p-value	Standard Error (SE)	T-statistic	Result
Social Media Marketing → Purchase Behavior	0.65	1.42	0.54	<0.001	0.05	13.06	Significant

Above hypothesis regarding the impact of social media marketing on purchase behavior, the regression analysis yields a regression coefficient (β) of 0.65, an intercept of 1.42, and an R-squared (R^2) value of 0.54. The p-value is less than 0.001, indicating that the relationship is statistically significant. The standard error (SE) of 0.05 and a T-statistic of 13.06 further validate the strength of this relationship. Since the p-value is below the significance threshold of 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis (H_0) and accept the alternative hypothesis (H_1), confirming that social media marketing significantly influences consumer purchase behavior. The R-squared value suggests that social media marketing explains 54% of the variation in consumer purchase behavior, making it a strong predictor. The high T-statistic further emphasizes the substantial impact of social media marketing on consumer decision-making.

4.3.2 Impact of eWOM vs. Traditional Advertising

Hypothesis 2:

- Null Hypothesis (H_0): eWOM does not have a stronger influence on purchase behavior than traditional advertising.
- Alternative Hypothesis (H_1): eWOM has a stronger influence on consumer purchase behavior than traditional advertising.

Table 4. Impact of eWOM vs. Traditional Advertising

Hypothesis	Regression Coefficient (β)	Intercept	R-squared (R^2)	p-value	Standard Error (SE)	T-statistic	Result
eWOM → Purchase Behavior	0.49	1.79	0.30	<0.001	0.06	7.95	Significant

Above hypothesis analyzing the impact of eWOM compared to traditional advertising, the regression analysis results indicate a regression coefficient (β) of 0.49, an intercept of 1.79, and an R-squared (R^2) value of 0.30. The p-value is less than 0.001, confirming statistical significance. The standard error (SE) is 0.06, and the T-statistic is 7.95, demonstrating a strong correlation between eWOM and purchase behavior. Given that the p-value is less than 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis (H_0) and accept the alternative hypothesis (H_1), confirming that eWOM has a stronger influence on consumer purchase behavior than traditional advertising. The R-squared value suggests that eWOM accounts for 30% of the variation in consumer purchase behavior, making it a significant but slightly weaker predictor compared to social media marketing.

Table 5: Final Summary of Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Regression Coefficient (β)	Intercept	R-squared (R^2)	p-value	Standard Error (SE)	T-statistic	Result
Social Media Marketing → Purchase Behavior	0.65	1.42	0.54	<0.001	0.05	13.06	Significant
eWOM → Purchase Behavior	0.49	1.79	0.30	<0.001	0.06	7.95	Significant

These findings highlight the crucial role of social influence in shaping consumer behavior, particularly through social media marketing and eWOM. Social media marketing appears to have a greater influence on purchase behavior than eWOM, as indicated by its higher regression coefficient and R-squared value. However, both factors significantly impact consumer decision-making, reinforcing the necessity for businesses to prioritize social media engagement, influencer marketing, and customer testimonials to enhance brand credibility and drive sales.



5. DISCUSSION

This research uncovers the significant effect of social dynamics on purchasing habits, especially via social media promotion and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM). As social networking sites like Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok (Boyd & Ellison, 2008) become pivotal in the dynamics of consumer-brand relationships, companies are progressively channelling resources into tailored marketing approaches to boost customer involvement. The findings from the regression analysis reveal that social media marketing plays a crucial role in shaping purchase behaviour, as evidenced by a R^2 value of 0.54. This suggests that 54% of consumer buying choices can be attributed to their exposure to social media ads, influencer promotions, and recommendations from peers. This corresponds with earlier studies emphasising the increasing significance of digital marketing in influencing brand credibility and consumer choices (Mangold & Faulds, 2009).

A pivotal element of consumer buying patterns is the sway of peers, with 67% of participants affirming that suggestions from friends or influencers significantly shape their shopping choices. This bolsters the assertion made by Bhukya and Paul (2023), who contend that social influence serves as a psychological catalyst in the process of decision-making. Shoppers place their confidence in organic evaluations, personal accounts, and recommendations from those they view as trustworthy, rather than relying on conventional advertising methods. Moreover, confidence in content created by users was found to be remarkably elevated, with 66% of participants indicating they depend on online evaluations prior to finalising a purchase. This supports the conclusions drawn by De Vries, Gensler, and LeeFlang (2012), who determined that electronic word-of-mouth significantly influences brand perception and enhances consumer trust. As enterprises transition to dynamic marketing strategies, connecting with consumers via social media channels is evolving into an essential practice rather than a mere choice.

The influence of digital word-of-mouth (dWOM) compared to conventional advertising is especially significant in this research. The regression examination reveals that electronic word-of-mouth significantly impacts buying behaviour, showcasing a R^2 value of 0.30, which highlights its powerful influence in moulding consumer choices. Nonetheless, in contrast to social media marketing, electronic word-of-mouth demonstrates a somewhat diminished impact, which corresponds with earlier studies highlighting that the influence of peers is potent yet most effective when paired with direct brand interaction tactics (Chou et al., 2020). Furthermore, the relationship between social media involvement and brand confidence underscores the importance for companies to uphold steady and clear online communications. Organisations that promptly address customer enquiries, tackle issues, and interact with content created by users often cultivate stronger brand loyalty. This observation aligns with the assertion made by Schultz, Peltier, and Bergh (2012) that engaging marketing fosters more profound consumer connections compared to conventional advertising methods alone.

Another key insight from the study is the importance of consumer attitudes toward digital marketing strategies. Findings reveal that brands with strong social media presence and positive customer testimonials tend to attract more buyers, with 67% of respondents agreeing that they trust brands with a high level of online engagement. This reinforces the work of Parsons et al. (2023), who argue that contemporary consumers prioritize authenticity, engagement, and transparency over aggressive advertising tactics. In an age where consumers are highly connected, businesses must leverage data-driven marketing strategies that tailor advertisements and promotional efforts to individual consumer preferences. The shift toward personalized marketing is essential, as indicated by the results showing that 62% of consumers prefer brands that engage with them directly rather than relying solely on influencer partnerships or mass advertising campaigns.

From a strategic perspective, businesses should prioritize content marketing, influencer collaborations, and data analytics to optimize their digital marketing campaigns. Consumers today expect brands to be interactive, authentic, and responsive, making it imperative for companies to adopt integrated marketing communication strategies that align with evolving digital trends (Ryan & Jones, 2009). Moreover, as social commerce continues to expand, platforms such as Shopee, Tokopedia, and Lazada (Rachmad, 2022) illustrate how brands can leverage social influence and e-commerce integrations to boost sales. The findings suggest that brands focusing on real-time engagement and user-generated content are more likely to gain consumer trust and drive higher purchase intentions than those that rely solely on traditional promotional efforts.

The study also highlights the importance of brand credibility in digital marketing. With customer testimonials increasing consumer confidence in a brand (64% agreement), businesses should actively encourage satisfied customers to share positive reviews on online platforms. Hennig-Thurau, Hofacker, and Bloching (2013) argue that modern marketing should follow the "pinball model," where value generation is dispersed across multiple touchpoints, rather than relying on a single-channel approach. This aligns with findings from Liang and Turban (2011), which suggest that social commerce and digital interactions create a feedback loop that reinforces purchase decisions. By focusing on customer satisfaction and long-term engagement, companies can establish stronger brand loyalty and advocacy, ultimately driving sustained business growth.

Overall, the research underscores the transformative role of social influence in shaping consumer behavior. As digital interactions become a primary driver of purchasing decisions, businesses must shift their focus toward strategic engagement, personalized marketing, and community-driven brand-building. The results validate existing literature while providing new insights into how Delhi NCR consumers engage with brands online. Moving forward, brands that integrate social media marketing, influencer strategies, and eWOM-driven campaigns into their marketing mix are more likely to thrive in the competitive digital landscape.



6. CONCLUSION

This research reveals persuasive proof that social impact plays a crucial role in moulding consumer actions within the realm of digital marketing, especially in the Delhi NCR area. The examination reveals that social media marketing exerts a significant influence on consumer buying choices, as evidenced by a R^2 value of 0.54. This suggests that over fifty percent of the fluctuations in consumer behaviour can be accounted for by exposure to social media, the role of influencers, and online advertising. This discovery corresponds with earlier research highlighting the growing dependence on online platforms for brand identification and purchasing choices (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Additionally, the impact of peer persuasion, manifested through electronic word-of-mouth and consumer endorsements, significantly enhances brand trustworthiness and sways buying intentions. The regression analysis conducted in the study regarding electronic word-of-mouth reveals a R^2 value of 0.30, signifying a robust correlation between recommendations from peers and the trust consumers place in them. The findings support the notion that individuals increasingly depend on authentic user-generated content and digital reviews instead of conventional advertising methods (De Vries, Gensler, & Leeflang, 2012). A key insight gleaned from this study is that dynamic marketing strategies and active customer involvement are essential for companies to flourish in the contemporary digital landscape. Companies that proactively connect with their clientele, address enquiries, and cultivate community-oriented exchanges often cultivate elevated degrees of consumer confidence and brand allegiance (Schultz, Peltier, & Bergh, 2012). Moreover, the research indicates that influencer marketing alongside digital advertising initiatives greatly amplifies brand visibility and boosts purchase conversions, affirming that social media holds a pivotal position in contemporary consumer decision-making processes. Companies that incorporate immediate customer interaction, partnerships with influencers, and focused online marketing initiatives into their approach are more effectively equipped to seize consumer interest and foster ongoing brand expansion. The research further emphasises the significance of tailored marketing approaches. Research indicates that brands boasting a robust social media footprint and favourable customer reviews draw in a greater number of purchasers, as shoppers tend to have a higher level of trust in businesses that demonstrate genuineness, openness, and reliability. This insight aligns with the notion that contemporary shoppers prioritise brand engagements and anticipate companies to customise content according to personal tastes and actions (Parsons et al., 2023). As a result, companies need to harness analytics-based marketing techniques and adopt tailored promotional strategies to enhance interaction and boost conversion metrics. This analysis offers practical guidance for marketers and business executives from a tactical viewpoint. The findings indicate that companies ought to allocate resources towards content creation, collaborations with influencers, and engagement strategies focused on the customer to enhance their digital brand presence. Furthermore, enterprises ought to emphasise ongoing creativity in the realm of social commerce, as exemplified by platforms such as Tokopedia, Lazada, and Shopee, which illustrate the synergy between e-commerce and social media marketing to enhance sales and elevate consumer contentment (Rachmad, 2022).

This investigation enhances the expanding collection of studies focused on digital marketing and consumer behaviour, affirming that social influence continues to be a crucial factor in shaping purchasing choices. Subsequent investigations might broaden these discoveries by integrating qualitative perspectives or examining the long-term effects of social media marketing trends on consumer behaviour as it evolves over time. Nonetheless, the present discoveries offer significant perspectives for enterprises, advertisers, and scholars, emphasising the necessity for a fluid and engaging methodology in digital marketing tactics during a time when social impact shapes consumer decisions.

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