International Journal of Management and Humanities (IJMH)
ISSN: 2394-0913 (Online), Volume-10 Issue-12, August 2024

A Comprehensive Analysis of Social Media Platforms and their Impact on E-Consumer Purchase Behavior (With Reference to Coimbatore City)

S. Akhila

Abstract: ***In contemporary times, social media has emerged as a highly effective platform for establishing direct connections with prospective clients. Through deeper user engagement, community social networking sites have garnered customer trust and are predominantly utilized for social interactions. Since the beginning of the year, many manufacturers, wholesalers, and retailers have adopted social media marketing strategies. Marketers are increasingly exploring diverse social media channels and introducing innovative social initiatives at an unprecedented rate. The exponential expansion and rapid evolution of social media marketing are extraordinary, reflecting a transformative shift in promotional strategies. Recognizing its immense potential, multinational corporations have integrated social media marketing into their campaigns, significantly enhancing their outreach and engagement efforts. This paper examines the level of awareness among e-consumers regarding social media sites and analyzes the impact of social media advertisements on these consumers. Additionally, it provides a comprehensive overview of Coimbatore's social media marketing practices.***

Keywords: Social media, Social Media Marketing, Community Social Networking, E-consumer Awareness.

I. INTRODUCTION

The multifaceted nature of online marketing, encompassing various terms such as net marketing, web marketing, digital marketing, and search engine marketing (SEM), represents a paradigm shift in business-customer interactions. This innovative approach transcends traditional marketing methodologies by leveraging the Internet's dynamic ecosystem to forge meaningful connections between organisations and their ideal target audiences. By integrating creative and technical elements—including design, development, sales, and advertising—online marketing creates a synergistic framework that not only enhances but fundamentally transforms core business models.

Manuscript received on 26 July 2024 | Revised Manuscript received on 14 August 2024 | Manuscript Accepted on 15 August 2024 | Manuscript published on 30 August 2024.

*Correspondence Author(s)
Dr. S. Akhila,* Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce BPS & BI, Sri Krishna Arts &Science College, Coimbatore (Tamil Nadu), India. Email ID: akhilas@skasc.ac.in, ORCID ID: 0000-0002-7896-282X

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The digital landscape has revolutionized the concept of marketing, giving rise to a sophisticated ecosystem known as online marketing. This paradigm encompasses a diverse array of powerful digital tools and methodologies, strategically deployed to promote products and services across the vast expanse of the internet. The distinction between online marketing and its traditional counterpart lies in its exponentially expanded scope and reach, facilitated by the internet's unique architecture.

This digital framework offers a multitude of channels and mechanisms previously unavailable, enabling marketers to engage with audiences in ways that transcend conventional boundaries. The digital revolution has catapulted the Internet into a position of unprecedented prominence as the quintessential medium for business promotion.

The exponential growth in Internet adoption rates over recent years has created a vast, interconnected global audience, transforming the online realm into a fertile ground for business stimulation and expansion. This digital ecosystem now serves as a critical nexus where consumer attention, market dynamics, and business strategies converge, offering unparalleled opportunities for growth and innovation.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A literature review provides researchers with firsthand knowledge of higher-order thinking. To gain a comprehensive understanding of the proposed study, the following research studies have been reviewed.

Mishra, Sita (2010) [1] in her study "Participation of Youth in Social Networking Sites in India," asserts that social networking sites have emerged as a formidable force online [7]. This global trend has gained significant traction, especially among the Indian youth, despite being relatively new in India.

Vinita Srivastava (2012) [2] in her study "A Study on the Effectiveness of Internet Advertisements," concluded that the Internet's rapid growth as a communication medium has facilitated the development of a global online marketplace for businesses and consumers. The study also reveals that consumers perceive internet advertisements as reliable and often compare them with other sources of information.

Voorveld et al. (2018) [3] conducted a comprehensive study on engagement with social media and social media advertising.

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Their findings indicate that different social media platforms have varying effects on consumer engagement and purchase intent. Notably, Instagram and Pinterest were found to be particularly influential for product discovery and inspiration [9], suggesting that visual-centric platforms may have a more substantial impact on specific aspects of consumer behavior.

Lin et al. (2019) [4] examined how Instagram's visual-centric nature influences purchase decisions, particularly in the fashion industry. Their research found that aesthetic appeal and perceived usefulness of posts were key factors in driving purchase intent [10]. This study emphasizes the importance of understanding and leveraging platform-specific features in marketing strategies.

Mou and Benyoucef (2021) [5] [8] analyzed the factors affecting consumer adoption of social commerce. Their research identified trust, perceived usefulness [11], and social influence as crucial elements in driving social commerce adoption. Additionally, they noted the significant role of hedonic motivation in shaping social commerce intentions.

Huang et al. (2022) [6] investigated how AI-powered recommendation systems on social media platforms affect consumer purchase behavior. Their findings suggest that personalised recommendations can significantly increase purchase likelihood and enhance consumer engagement on social media platforms.

A. Statement of the Problem

In today's interconnected world, millions of people are online, representing potential customers for companies offering products or services. Understanding what strategies and elements contribute to increased sales is crucial for online retailers competing in a demanding market. Research indicates that websites delivering exceptional customer experiences have a significant edge in driving online sales. As online shopping evolves with new consumer expectations, it becomes essential to understand and analyse consumer behaviour and preferences to enhance performance and attract more customers. Unlike traditional shopping, which is heavily influenced by social, cultural, personal, and psychological factors, online shopping introduces different dynamics. Therefore, studying consumer behaviour through social media platforms becomes imperative, as these platforms enable consumers to freely share their purchase decisions, preferences, and e-marketing insights.

B. Objectives of the Study

Based on the problem statement, the following objectives have been formulated:

i. To assess the awareness levels of e-consumers regarding social media platforms.

ii. To investigate how social media platforms influence the purchasing behavior of e-consumers.

C. Method of Data Collection

Primary data is gathered using a structured questionnaire designed according to the study's objectives. The questions are structured in a descriptive format. Additionally, face-to-face interviews are conducted to enhance the efficiency and depth of the data collected.

D. Technique of Data Collection

Data collection utilized random sampling methods. Initially, all participants were briefed on how to complete the questionnaire using a standardized scale. Questionnaires were then distributed to the respondents, who subsequently returned them once they were finished. The filled questionnaires were collected for statistical analysis of the gathered data.

E. Sample Size

The sample size, a critical component in research methodology, encompasses 294 participants drawn from the diverse population of Coimbatore city.

F. Sample Unit

In this study, a random sample of participants was selected from the literate population residing in Coimbatore city, specifically targeting urban literate individuals within the study area.

G. Data Analysis

The following tools analyzed the data collected from the potential respondents:

(i) Percentage Analysis

(ii) Factor Analysis

(i) Percentage Analysis: Percentage analysis has been employed to evaluate the frequency distribution of sample respondents' awareness regarding the use of social media marketing in Coimbatore city. This analysis standardizes the data, facilitating comparative assessments. To enhance comprehension and provide a comprehensive overview of the issue, appropriate diagrams and charts were also created.

$$Percentage = \frac{Number\ of\ Respondents}{Total\ number\ of\ Respondents} * 100$$

Table 1.1: Sources of Information About Social Media Advertisements

S.No.	Sources of Information	Frequency	Percent
1	Media	114	38.8
2	Friends	124	42.2
3	Journals	34	11.6
4	Others	22	7.5
	Total	**294**	**100**

Source: Primary Data

The data presented in the table reveals that 38.8% of respondents obtain information about social media advertisements from media sources. Additionally, 42.2% rely on friends for this information, 11.6% refer to journals, and 7.5% use other sources. This distribution highlights the predominant role of interpersonal communication and media in disseminating information about social media marketing.

It is evident that most respondents, comprising 42.2%, primarily acquire information about social media advertisements from their friends. This highlights the substantial impact of peer networks on the dissemination of social media marketing information.

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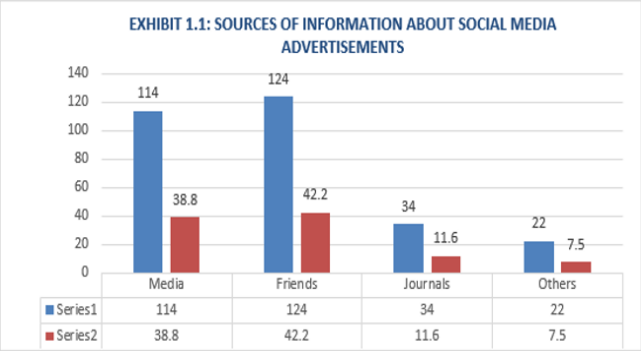

Table 1.2: Mode of Using Social Media Sites

S.No.	Mode of Using Social Media Sites	Frequency	Per cent
1	Smartphones	214	72.8
2	Laptop/desktop computers	42	14.3
3	Browsing centers/Internet café	21	7.1
4	Other modes	17	5.8
	Total	**294**	**100**

Source: Primary Data

The data indicates that 72.8% of respondents predominantly use smartphones to access social media sites. In contrast, 14.3% primarily use laptops or desktop computers, 7.1% rely on browsing centers or internet cafés, and 5.8% utilize other modes. This distribution underscores the overwhelming preference for smartphones as the primary device for engaging with social media platforms.

A significant majority of respondents, 72.8%, primarily utilize smartphones to access social media sites. This highlights the dominant role of mobile technology in social media engagement.

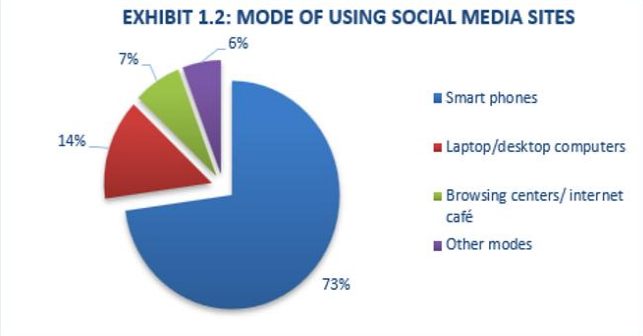

Table 1.3: Duration of Using Website by the Respondents

S. No.	Duration of using the Website	Frequency	Percent
1	Less than a month	49	16.7
2	Between 1-6 months	52	17.7
3	Between 6 months and 1 year	48	16.3
4	Above 1 year	145	49.3
	Total	**294**	**100**

Source: Primary Data

Based on the data provided, a notable pattern emerges in the duration of social media usage among respondents. A small proportion, 16.7%, have been recent adopters, engaging with social media for less than a month. This is closely followed by 17.7% who have used these platforms for a period spanning from 1 to 6 months. A slightly smaller segment, 16.3%, has a moderate usage history of 6 months to 1 year. However, the majority, constituting 49.3%, are long-term users with over a year of experience on social media sites. This distribution suggests a trend where nearly half of the respondents have integrated social media into their routines for an extended period, highlighting the pervasive and enduring nature of social media engagement. Most respondents have been using social media sites for over 1 year (49.3 per cent).

Exhibit 1.3: Duration of Using the Website by the Respondents

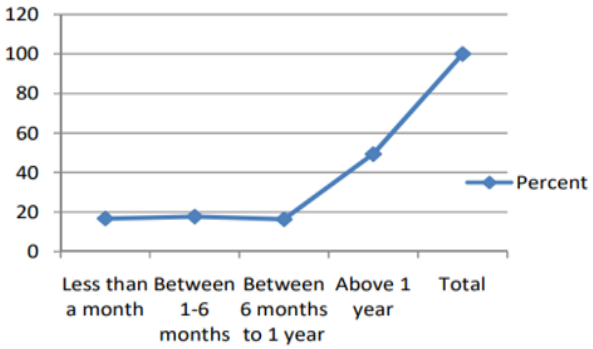

Table 1.4: Average Time Spent on Social Media Sites

S. No.	Average time spent on Social Media Sites	Frequency	Per cent
1	Less than 1 hour	105	35.7
2	Between 1-5 hours	115	39.1
3	Between 5-8 hours	53	18
4	More than 8 hours	21	7.1
	Total	**294**	**100**

Source: Primary Data

The data reveals varying levels of social media engagement among respondents. While 35.7% spend less than an hour daily, indicating minimal use, the majority (39.1%) engage for 1-5 hours, reflecting moderate and consistent usage. Additionally, 18.0% use social media for 5-8 hours, and 7.1% exceed 8 hours daily, showing intense involvement. The prevalence of the 1–5-hour daily usage category suggests that social media occupies a significant but manageable portion of most respondents' routines, highlighting its diverse impacts on digital habits and lifestyle choices.

Exhibit 1.4: Average Time Spent on Social Media Sites

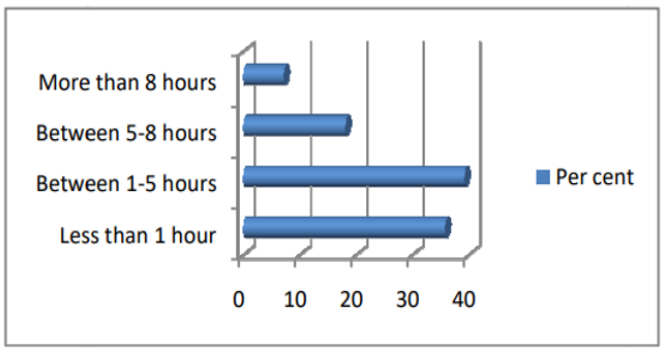

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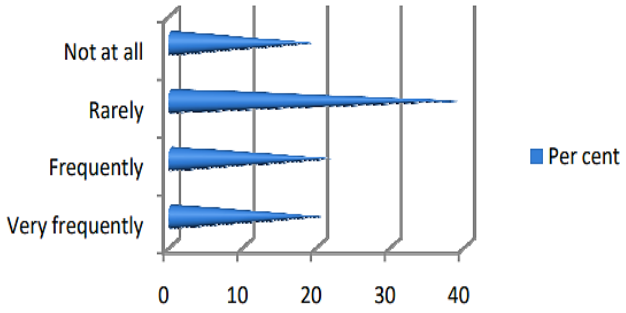
Table 1.5: Frequency of Viewing the Advertisements Seen on User Account

S.No.	Frequency of Viewing the Advertisements Seen on a User Account	Frequency	Per cent
1	Very frequently	60	20.4
2	Frequently	64	21.8
3	Rarely	114	38.8
4	Not at all	56	19
	Total	**294**	**100**

Source: Primary Data

The data shows that 38.8% of respondents rarely click on advertisements, indicating limited engagement. In contrast, 21.8% frequently click on ads, 20.4% very frequently click, and 19.0% never click. This suggests that while most users are not highly engaged with ads, a notable minority interacts with them regularly.

Exhibit 1.5: Frequency of Viewing the Advertisements Seen on User Account



III. FACTOR ANALYSIS

Factor analysis is a set of techniques used to reduce the number of variables by analyzing their correlations, resulting in fewer factors that explain the original data more efficiently. Although the interpretation of factor analysis output can be subjective, the process often provides valuable insights into relevant psychographic variables and enables more economical data collection. To minimise the subjective element, the sample can be randomly split into two parts, with factors extracted separately from each part. If similar factors emerge, the analysis is considered reliable or stable.

Table 2.1 KMO and Bartlett's Test – Factors That Influence the Usage of Social Media Sites

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.839
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1025.334
	Df	45
	Sig.	.000

**p<0.01 S-Significant

From the table, two tests—Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity—have been applied to assess the significance of the relationships among the variables. The KMO measure indicates a test statistic value of 0.839, suggesting that factor analysis is appropriate and suitable for the data. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity evaluates whether the data are statistically significant by examining the test statistic value and the associated significance level. The results indicate a strong relationship among the variables.

Table 2.2 Eigenvalues and Proportion of Total Variance of Each Underlying Factor that Influence the Usage of Social Media Sites

Total Variance Explained									
Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of SquaredLoadings			Rotation Sums of SquaredLoadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	4.334	43.338	43.338	4.334	43.34	43.338	4.135	41.35	41.347
2	1.153	11.533	54.871	1.153	11.53	54.871	1.352	13.52	54.871
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.									

The results of the factor analysis shown in Table 2.2, which pertain to factors influencing the usage of social media sites, indicate that ten factors have Eigenvalues exceeding one. Among these, the first factor accounts for 43.33 percent of the variance, and the second factor accounts for 11.533 percent. The first four factors constitute the final factor solution, collectively representing 54.87% of the total variance in the scale items measuring factors related to social media usage. Therefore, it is evident from these results that these factors are associated with the usage of social media sites.

Table 2.3 Communalities for Factors That Influence the Usage of Social Media Sites

Communalities		
	Initial	**Extraction**
ECB1-Easy Navigation	1.000	.406
ECB2-Appealing Look	1.000	.666
ECB3-Updates	1.000	.564
ECB4-Highlighting Social Issues	1.000	.510
ECB5-Entertainment	1.000	.642
ECB6-Communication	1.000	.576
ECB7-Sharing	1.000	.656
ECB8-Gain new acquaintances with people	1.000	.538
ECB9-Make professional and business contacts	1.000	.475
ECB10-Advertisement	1.000	.455
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.		

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The above table (Communalities) illustrates the application of the Factor Extraction Process, performed using Principal Component Analysis (PCA), to determine the number of factors to extract from the data. This process employs the widely used Varimax rotation method. In PCA, the total variance in the data is considered. The commonalities represent the proportion of variance explained by the fourteen factors in each variable. PCA operates on the initial assumption that all variance is common, so, before extraction, the commonalities are all set to 1.000. To determine the number of factors to retain, the Eigenvalues were examined, which is the most common approach.

Table 2.4 Rotated Component Matrix for Factors That Influence the Usage of Social Media Sites

Rotated Component Matrix		
	Component	
	1	2
Communication	.735	
Gain new acquaintances with people	.714	
Highlighting Social Issues	.714	
Advertisement	.672	
Appealing Look	.660	
Make professional and business contacts	.658	
Easy Navigation	.634	
Entertainment		.551
Sharing		.626
Updates		.562
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.		
a. Rotation converged in 3 iterations.		

The above table presents the Rotated Component Matrix, a key output of principal component analysis. The coefficients, known as factor loadings, represent the correlation between the factors and the twelve variables (X1 to X10). The matrix shows that Factor I has high absolute correlations with the variables Communication (.735), Gain New Acquaintances (.714), Highlighting Social Issues (.714), Advertisement (.672), Appealing Look (.660), Making Professional & Business Contacts (.658), and Easy Navigation (.634). Similarly, Factor II shows high absolute correlations with the variables Entertainment (.551), Sharing (.626), and Updates (.562).

Table 2.5 Component Transformation Matrix Factors That Influence the Usage of Social Media Sites

Component Transformation Matrix		
Component	**1**	**2**
1	.968	.250
2	.250	-.968
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.		

The above table displays the factor correlation matrix. If the factors are uncorrelated, the diagonal elements of the matrix will be 1's and the off-diagonal elements will be 0's. Since the matrix was rotated using Varimax, most variables show low correlations, even though they are not exactly zero, with only a few exceptions.

Factor Analysis: Conclusion

Thus, the ten variables in the data were reduced to two Component factors, and each factor may beidentified with the corresponding variables as follows:

Variables	%	Factor
Communication	54.02	
Gain new acquaintances with people	50.98	
Highlighting Social Issues	50.98	
Advertisement	45.16	FACTOR I
Appealing Look	43.56	
Make professional and business contacts	43.3	
Easy Navigation	40.2	
Entertainment	30.36	
Sharing	39.19	FACTOR II
Updates	31.58	

IV. SUGGESTIONS

An emerging strategic focus is on leveraging user-generated content, which consumers create in response to specific brands or brand requests, and influences the perceptions of other consumers. This strategy requires significant upkeep, and companies adopting this approach should be ready to allocate a marketing service specifically for managing online customer relationships.

V. CONCLUSION

Finally, the study suggests that using social media enhances consumer satisfaction during the initial stages of data search and alternative evaluation; however, it does not significantly improve satisfaction during the purchase decision stage or post-purchase evaluation. Many consumers are equally content to make their purchase decisions in traditional physical stores after conducting their search and evaluation online, indicating that brick-and-mortar shops still retain their importance.

DECLARATION STATEMENT

I must verify the accuracy of the following information as the article's author.

- **Conflicts of Interest/ Competing Interests:** Based on my understanding, this article has no conflicts of interest.
- **Financial Support:** This article has not been funded by any organizations or agencies. This independence ensures that the research is conducted with objectivity and without any external influence.
- **Ethical Approval and Consent to Participate:** The content of this article does not necessitate ethical approval or consent to participate with supporting documentation.

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- **Data Access Statement and Material Availability:** The adequate resources of this article are publicly accessible.
- **Author's Contributions:** The authorship of this article is attributed as a sole author.

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AUTHOR PROFILE

Dr. S. Akhila, M.Com., M.B.A., M.Phil., DBL., UGC-NET., Ph.D., is a highly accomplished professional with a diverse background and a strong commitment to education. With a total of 14.5 years of experience, she has made significant contributions to both academia and the IT industry. Her extensive list of publications, presentations, and conference participation showcases her active involvement in research. In addition to her academic and research achievements, she has published almost 14 research papers in the UGC Care List and Scopus. Her dedication to moulding young graduates and making positive contributions to both the workplace and student society is reflected in her objective. She is a Genesis Certified Accounting and Finance Professional. She has completed a diploma in Business Law from Bharathiar University. She is associated with TCS-Commerce Industry Integrated by attending various Academic Interface Programs, both online and offline, with TCS. Her areas of specialisation include Accountancy, Marketing, and multiple domains of TCS courses. Her awards and achievements, including being a keynote speaker at the 12th International Virtual Conference on Interdisciplinary Research for Sustainable Development and winning the "Distinguished Young Aspirant Award" at the Global Edu-Conclave Awards 2023, highlight her recognition in both academic and professional spheres. She is also involved in other extracurricular activities, such as singing and playing musical instruments.

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