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SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING AND ITS EFFECT ON BRAND TRUST AND PURCHASE INTENTION: INSIGHTS FROM UNIVERSITY STUDENTS OF MADHYA PRADESH

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ABSTRACT

In today's highly competitive and technologically advanced environment, organisations must consistently revise their strategies to accommodate changing market demands and prevent becoming obsolete. In an era characterised by devices and the internet, conventional business models are no longer adequate. As a result, it is imperative for businesses to develop marketing strategies that incorporate social media and networking. Companies have adopted social media as an indispensable element of their marketing and promotional strategies. Businesses have extensively adopted and embraced online marketing through social networking sites as a fundamental component of their overall strategy.

The impact of social media marketing on Madhya Pradesh university students' brand trust and purchase intention is investigated in this study.It is essential for businesses to understand the influence of social media on young consumers in order to improve customer engagement and loyalty, as it plays a dominant role in modern marketing. A structured questionnaire was distributed online to 60 students who were selected through convenience sampling. The analysis suggests that the implementation of effective social media marketing strategies can significantly increase the brand trust and purchase intent of college students. These findings empirically validate the critical role of social media marketing in shaping consumer behaviour. By utilising these insights, businesses that are focussing on youthful consumers can create more effective social media campaigns that foster brand trust and increase purchase intent. The study contributes to the existing body of knowledge by offering a focused analysis of a specific demographic, which provides practical insights for businesses and marketers seeking to engage with university students of Madhya Pradesh.

KEYWORDS; *Social Media Marketing, Brand Trust, Purchase Intention, Consumer Behaviour, Social Media Strategies, Online Advertisements".*

INTRODUCTION

The market is becoming more and more reliant on social media. Businesses acknowledge social networking as a vital marketing tool that helps businesses communicate directly with their customers by avoiding traditional middlemen like dealers, distributors, wholesalers, and retailers.Consequently,social media marketing strategies are being integrated into the campaigns of nearly every business, from large corporations such as Reliance Trends and Genpact to small coffee stores. Just one year ago, the landscape of social media was uncertain for companies; however, it has since dramatically changed, with businesses swiftly adopting social media marketing (SMM). SMM is the current marketing revolution, and it is on the brink of accelerated growth as a result of the nationwide increase in internet access, much like the internet revolution of the 1980s. The emergence of 4G technology has further facilitated the participation of individuals in social media networking through their handsets, thereby offering companies new opportunities to market their products.

Thanks to the advancement of smartphones and affordable data plans, social media platforms have transformed into mobile applications since their inception as websites. This transition has generated unparalleled opportunities for businesses to establish connections with prospective customers. Direct engagement with customers is facilitated by social media, which fosters commitment by addressing their requirements at a personal level and offering customised solutions. SMM has simplified the lives of both customers and marketers by enabling them to easily access products and services with the tip of a finger. This capability is in perfect harmony with the

objectives of marketers, who are to target specific consumers who are actively pursuing their products and services, in addition to a broad audience.

The expanding trend is encapsulated by the phrase "social media marketing is the new mantra for several brands since early last year." Companies and their marketing teams are actively monitoring emergent opportunities and utilising the social media market in a timely manner. Those who neglect to establish a social media presence are at risk of falling behind their competitors who effectively market their products and services through these channels. The significance of SMM is underscored by its rapid expansion, as multinational corporations have recognised social media promotion as a critical marketing niche and have implemented SMM to improve their marketing operations.

Modern marketing strategies have been transformed by the advent of social media, which has provided businesses with novel opportunities to interact with their target audiences. Brand awareness, product promotion, and consumer engagement are all facilitated by platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook, which have become essential resources for marketers. Social media marketing leverages the interactive capabilities of these platforms to enhance the relationship between brands and consumers, facilitating personalised communication and real-time feedback. This dynamic environment not only enables businesses to more effectively monitor consumer behaviour and preferences, but also facilitates the dissemination of information.

The impact of social media on the perception of brands and the decisions made during the purchasing process is particularly noteworthy in the context of higher education, particularly among college students. College students are frequently exposed to a diverse array of marketing initiatives as a result of their active social media presence and sophisticated technological skills. Individuals' confidence in brands and their likelihood of making a purchase can be influenced by their interaction with social media content. By understanding the intricacies of how social media marketing affects the demography, businesses can acquire valuable insights into the most effective methods of targeting adolescent consumers.

This investigation investigates the influence of social media marketing on the brand trust and purchase intention of students attending universities at Madhya Pradesh. The objective of the research is to identify the distinctive methods by which social media marketing strategies influence consumer behaviour by concentrating on this demographic. The findings will contribute to the existing corpus of literature by offering empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of social media marketing in influencing the purchasing decisions of this particular demographic and establishing brand trust. Businesses and advertisers will experience tangible repercussions as a result of these discoveries.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

By bringing together many theoretical and empirical findings, Bartoloni and Ancillai (2024) presented an integrative framework. After looking at social media marketing for 20 years, they looked at how it affected customer behaviour, specifically how they bought and bought again. Improving social media marketing tactics to increase customer involvement and loyalty can be facilitated by consulting this extensive paper.

Modern marketing techniques, shaped by social media, incorporate both online and offline communications, which Smith and Zook (2024) investigated. Models of consumer behaviour and the psychological aspects of purchasing decisions were examined. The necessity of a unified marketing approach that makes use of digital technology to cultivate customer loyalty is highlighted by their comprehensive study, which shows how businesses can engage with consumers and impact their buying habits.

With a focus on social media marketing, Wilson, Johnson, and Brown (2024) investigated how digital marketing influences consumers' purchase decisions. The importance of organisations keeping up with technological improvements and adapting to changing client demands to be competitive is highlighted by their findings. Using a variety of digital marketing tactics, the study delves into the ways social media impacts customer decision-making processes.

Noting the substantial increase of social media marketing, Chowdhury, Faruque, and Sharmin (2024) studied its impact on consumer behaviour in the fashion retail sector. They looked at how different social media marketing approaches affected consumer participation, confidence, and intent to buy. In order to increase sales velocity and build strong client ties, they highlight the significance of targeted and personalised social media advertising.

An in-depth analysis of how digital marketing tactics impact consumer actions was carried out by Pires, Santos, and Pereira (2023). Their findings highlight the importance of interacting with customers on social media and adjusting to the dynamic digital advertising industry. In order to show how businesses may use social media to boost customer engagement and influence buying decisions, they investigate different consumer behaviour models.

Researchers Ali-Alsaadi et al. (2023) examined how social media marketing and company-created content affected adults' fast food consumption in the United Arab Emirates. Consumer engagement, social media marketing, and purchasing choices are positively correlated, according to their research. Loyalty programs and targeted social media ads, according to the authors, are great ways to influence customer behaviour and build confidence in brands.

Yuruk-Kayapinar (2020) investigated how omnichannel social media influences consumer actions. According to the research, businesses need to change their marketing approaches to reflect the impact of social media on consumers' purchasing decisions. This study sheds light on the many ways in which social media aids in the development of coherent and fruitful advertising campaigns.

Both business-to-business and business-to-consumer digital marketing may be future-proofed, according to Sharma (2023). Digital voice assistants have a significant impact on consumer behaviour and the expansion of online shopping, according to the results. Sharma stresses that in order to keep ahead of the competition, marketers must monitor changes in consumer tastes and new technology.

The impact of social media, livestreaming, and online gaming on food marketing and consumption habits was studied by Keller et al. (2024). Their findings highlight the power of digital marketing to sway consumer choices and the importance of a trustworthy brand identity. They argue that loyalty programs and intelligent social media marketing can influence customer behaviour for the better.

Researchers Armutcu et al. (2024) looked at how Turkish consumers who care about the environment, shop for eco-friendly food on social media. According to their research, social media marketing has the potential to persuade consumers to make greener purchase decisions. In order to raise consumer awareness and encourage eco-friendly consumption, the authors propose that politicians and businesses utilise social media channels.

With the goal of identifying the key elements that impact customers' attention and decision-making, Alsharif et al. (2022) methodically examined consumer behaviour in connection to advertising. Their findings paves the way for more studies by highlighting the significance of knowing consumer psychology in order to develop effective advertising techniques.

Nyagadza (2022) looked at how SMM and Search Engine Marketing (SEM) could change in the future and how it could affect African businesses looking to expand. This study emphasises the significance of social media marketing in increasing brand awareness and consumer involvement, and it stresses the need to tailor campaigns to local tastes and customs for maximum efficacy.

The effect of digital self-formation on positive eWOM and customer loyalty was studied by Bischoff, Berezan, and Scardicchio (2019). Their studies illuminate the ways in which social media and online platforms have changed the way people express themselves and shop, and they provide suggestions for how businesses may foster loyal customers by encouraging digital self-formation.

In their 2022 study, Kwon and Namkung looked at how coffee industry consumers' attitudes towards brands and their willingness to co-create value were affected by the perceived value of social network services. Firms seeking to increase brand recognition and include customers in value co-creation initiatives will benefit greatly from their research, which emphasises the strong association between social media involvement, consumer engagement, and brand loyalty.

Bozkurt, Gligor, and Babin (2021) investigated how customers' perceptions of firmness in social media interactions correlated with their actual involvement levels. The research highlights the relevance of involvement in developing strong customer relationships and driving business success by providing empirical data on the effectiveness of interactive social media techniques in improving client engagement and loyalty.

Public health campaigns to eradicate viral hepatitis were studied by Pourkarim et al. (2022) in relation to digital marketing tactics, including social media. Their findings show that influencer marketing and social media initiatives can improve people's health literacy and encourage them to make healthier lifestyle choices.

Domingos (2022) identified the elements that influence online shoppers' propensity to be loyal to certain brands. In order to help companies improve their digital marketing tactics and build lasting relationships with online consumers, the study highlights the importance of social media and online involvement in creating customer loyalty.

Key marketing ideas, such as customer orientation and market orientation, have evolved over time in reaction to changing consumer behaviours, according to Bergkvist and Eisend (2021). The need of companies adjusting their marketing approaches to match changing customer demands is emphasised by their research.

The effect of being present, engaging, and responsive on business-to-business connections on social media was investigated by Karampela, Lacka, and McLean (2020). Engaging with customers and having a strong social media presence are crucial for building trust and long-term partnerships, according to their research.

The effects of social media marketing technology integration on CRM and marketing capacities were investigated by Wang and Kim (2017). Their findings show that businesses can boost their performance by interacting with customers more effectively using social media marketing strategies that are based on the dynamic capabilities approach.

A study conducted by Hamilton, Kaltcheva, and Dang (2016) looked into the ways in which consumer value is created through social media interactions. Emphasising the significance of involvement in cultivating client loyalty, they highlighted interaction immersion and interaction satisfaction as key processes impacting good consumer behaviours.

The effect of consumers' sentimental investment in social media on their interactions with companies and actions was studied by VanMeter, Grisaffe, and Chonko (2015). Social media is increasingly playing a role in influencing consumer attitudes and behaviours, according to their research, which highlights the importance of having a strong affinity for brand interaction and purchasing decisions.

The impact of social media interactions on brand engagement and perception within the social media echoverse was investigated by Hewett, Rand, and Rust (2016). According to their research, social media buzz has a major effect on consumer actions and brand success, thus it's crucial to keep an eye on social media analytics in order to fine-tune advertising campaigns.

In 2016, Park, Choi, and Rho looked examined how social media affected public involvement and loyalty when used as a means of communicating government services. By incorporating the moderating influence of media synchrony into the perceived value framework, their study shows that social media can improve people's happiness with government services.

Social media marketing is defined by Barefoot and Szabo (2010) as an organization's or brand's use of social media platforms for advertising purposes. According to their definition, this type of marketing is a subset of web-based marketing activities that supplement more conventional approaches like online marketing campaigns and email newsletters. The importance of social media in enhancing traditional web-based techniques is shown by their findings, which highlight how marketing strategies are evolving in the digital age.

According to Hafele (2011), a new channel for firms to reach a wide audience with product and service information has emerged: social media marketing. Using P2P communication, SMM increases brand exposure by letting consumers exchange brand-related content with their personal networks. Hafele elaborates by saying that marketers have better resources at their disposal thanks to the ever-evolving analytics applications and tools offered by social media platforms, which allow them to more effectively reach and engage their audiences.

It is worth noting that Facebook (2012) is a well-known social media platform that has greatly impacted the field of social media marketing. May 2012 saw more over 900 million monthly active users, a significant increase from Facebook's 2004 inception. A plethora of networking possibilities arise when users build profiles, link up with

friends, and join interest groups. As part of its effort to create a more open and connected world, the platform promotes community development and information sharing, making it an effective tool for marketers.

Bernie Borges (2009) defines Twitter as "microblogging plus social networking" that lets users get updates in real-time and ads from brands they like. Borges notes that the 140-character limit on tweets allows for frequent and succinct engagement between brands and users. Because of its microblogging feature, which enables sharing and engagement in real-time, Twitter is a must-have for social media marketing campaigns.

Hafele (2011) cites research by Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) that classifies several social media platforms, each of which presents its own set of marketing possibilities. They talk about how wikis and other collaborative initiatives with editable data sources are great for getting people involved. The significance of social media in moulding consumer behaviour is underscored by the patterns pointed out by Kaplan and Haenlein, which imply that these collaborative platforms are rapidly becoming the preeminent sources of information.

According to Gunelius (2011), individuals are able to build networks for communication and businesses are able to engage with their clients more efficiently using social media. Beyond more conventional methods, this kind of two-way communication is essential for establishing brand loyalty. By allowing users to have two-way discussions with brands, social media creates a strong platform for customer interaction and boosts brand recognition, awareness, and recall.

Marketing strategies should investigate and utilise this potential. Marketing campaigns must focus on the internet because of customers' increasing interest in using it and the credibility that people attribute to information posted on social media. Constantinides et al. (2010) found that customers trust information published on social media more than direct communications from companies, highlighting the importance of social media marketing for businesses.

RESEARCH GAP

Despite an abundance of research on the subject, there is a dearth of specific studies that investigate the impact of social media marketing on brand trust and purchase intention among students in universities of Madhya Pradesh. The objective of this investigation is to address this deficiency by presenting tangible evidence from this particular demographic.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. “To examine the impact of social media marketing on brand trust among University students of Madhya Pradesh”.
2. “To investigate the influence of social media marketing on purchase intention within the same group”.

RESEARCH SIGNIFICANCE

This study provides useful information about how social media marketing affects college students' purchase intentions and brand trust. This study advances our understanding of how to best utilize digital marketing tactics to boost business performance and customer satisfaction. It concentrates on students from universities of Madhya Pradesh, providing valuable insights into consumer behaviour within a specific regional context. Businesses can enhance their marketing outcomes by customising their social media marketing strategies to more effectively engage with this critical consumer demographic through data analysis.

METHODOLOGY

The study employed a convenience sampling method to select a sample of 60 students from universities of Madhya Pradesh in order to investigate the influence of social media marketing on brand trust and purchase intention. We employed a structured questionnaire to collect data, which is disseminated via an online survey to enhance the number of responses and make it more expedient for our target audience. Descriptive statistics, such as the mean and standard deviation, is computed to summarise the levels of social media marketing, brand trust, and purchase intention for data analysis. Pearson Correlation Tests are implemented to investigate the correlations between social media marketing and brand trust (H1) and between social media marketing and purchase intention (H2). This examination provided valuable insights into the intensity and direction of these associations.

HYPOTHESIS

H01: Social media marketing does not significantly impact brand trust among University students of Madhya Pradesh.

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H2: Social media marketingdoes not significantly influence purchase intention among the students.

DATA ANALYSIS

For the purpose of testing the hypotheses, "Pearson Correlation Tests were conducted to examine the relationship between social media marketing (SMM) and brand trust (BT), as well as between social media marketing (SMM) and purchase intention (PI) among the respondents". The analysis was conducted using SPSS, and the results are displayed in the tables below.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
SMM	4.2	0.6
BT	3.8	0.5
PI	4	0.7

The descriptive statistics indicate that the students' engagement with social media marketing (SMM) is generally high and relatively consistent, with a mean score of 4.2 and a standard deviation of 0.6. The mean score of brand trust (BT) is 3.8, with a standard deviation of 0.5, indicating a moderate to high level of trust in brands that are influenced by social media marketing, with low variability. The purchase intention (PI) metric has a mean score of 4.0 and a standard deviation of 0.7, indicating a high probability that students intend to purchase products that have been promoted on social media. However, there is a minor increase in variability when comparative to brand trust.

Hypothesis Testing

H1: social media marketing and brand trust

Table 2: Pearson Correlation Test Results

Variables	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Significance (p-value)
SMM & BT	0.65	0.001

"The Pearson correlation coefficient (r) between social media marketing and brand trust is 0.65, suggesting a robust positive correlation. The p-value is 0.001, which is less than the significance level of 0.05". Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and adopt the alternative hypothesis, thereby determining that brand trust among students of Universities of Madhya Pradesh is significantly influenced by social media marketing.

H2: social media marketing and purchase intention

Table 3: Pearson Correlation Test Results

Variables	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Significance (p-value)
SMM & PI	0.72	0.001

"The Pearson correlation coefficient (r) between purchase intention and social media marketing is 0.72, suggesting a strong positive correlation. The p-value is 0.001, which is less than the significance level of 0.05". Consequently, we reject the null hypothesis and adopt the alternative hypothesis, thereby determining that social media marketing has a substantial impact on the purchase intention of students.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The analysis indicates a robust positive correlation between social media marketing and brand trust, as well as between social media marketing and purchase intention. Furthermore, there is a significant correlation between brand trust and purchase intention. These findings underscore the importance of effective social media strategies in the process of nurturing consumer trust and influencing purchase decisions.

Conclusion

The findings validate the hypothesis that social media marketing plays a pivotal role in shaping students' purchase intentions and cultivating their brand trust at Universities of Madhya Pradesh. The empirical evidence indicates that there are significant positive correlations between social media marketing and both brand trust and purchase intention. This underscores the effectiveness of well-executed social media strategies. These results emphasise the significance of interacting with students on social media platforms to cultivate their confidence in brands and influence their purchasing decisions.

Additionally, the descriptive statistics suggest that the respondents have a strong propensity for purchase intention, moderate to high brand trust, and high levels of engagement with social media marketing.By leveraging these insights, businesses that are targeting this demographic can optimise their social media marketing efforts by customising their campaigns to effectively drive consumer behaviour and enhance brand trust. This study is a

valuable addition to the field of digital marketing, as it offers practical implications for marketers who are interested in engaging with young consumers in a world that is becoming more digital.

Suggestions

1. Increase interactive content on social media platforms.
2. Enhance customer engagement through regular updates and feedback.
3. Implement targeted social media campaigns to build brand loyalty.

Limitations

1. The sample size is limited to 60 students.
2. The study focuses only on University students of Madhya Pradesh.

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