

CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT IN SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING AND ITS IMPACT ON PURCHASE INTENTION: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

The rapid proliferation of social media platforms has transformed the way businesses interact with consumers, making consumer engagement a central focus of contemporary marketing strategies. Social media marketing enables firms to create interactive, participatory, and relationship-oriented communication, which significantly influences consumer decision-making processes. This study examines the impact of consumer engagement in social media marketing on purchase intention. Consumer engagement is conceptualized as a multidimensional construct encompassing cognitive, emotional, and behavioral engagement. Primary data were collected from 250 active social media users through a structured questionnaire. The study employs descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression analysis to examine the proposed relationships. The findings reveal that consumer engagement in social media marketing has a significant positive impact on purchase intention, with emotional and behavioral engagement emerging as the strongest predictors. The study contributes to the growing body of literature on digital marketing and provides practical insights for marketers seeking to enhance consumer purchase intention through effective social media engagement strategies.

Keywords: Consumer Engagement, Social Media Marketing, Purchase Intention, Digital Marketing, Consumer Behavior

1. INTRODUCTION

The emergence of social media has fundamentally altered the marketing landscape by enabling two-way communication between organizations and consumers. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter allow brands to engage consumers beyond traditional promotional messages, fostering interaction, dialogue, and relationship building. As consumers increasingly rely on social media for information, entertainment, and social interaction, marketers are leveraging these platforms to influence consumer attitudes and purchase decisions.

Consumer engagement has gained prominence as a key construct in social media marketing research. Engagement reflects the degree to which consumers actively interact with brand-related content through likes, comments, shares, reviews, and discussions. Unlike traditional advertising, social media marketing emphasizes participation and co-creation of value, making engagement a crucial determinant of marketing effectiveness.

Purchase intention represents a consumer's willingness and likelihood to buy a product or service. Prior studies suggest that engaged consumers are more likely to develop favorable brand perceptions, trust, and emotional attachment, which ultimately influence their purchase intentions. Despite the growing interest in social media marketing, empirical studies examining the direct impact of consumer engagement on purchase intention, particularly in emerging markets, remain limited.

This study aims to bridge this gap by empirically examining the relationship between consumer engagement in social media marketing and purchase intention.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing refers to the use of social networking platforms to promote products, services, and brands through interactive communication. It enables firms to disseminate information, build brand communities, and maintain long-term relationships with consumers. Research indicates that social media marketing enhances brand awareness, brand image, and consumer trust.

2.2 Consumer Engagement

Consumer engagement is defined as the level of a consumer's cognitive, emotional, and behavioral involvement with a brand.

- **Cognitive engagement** relates to the level of attention and interest consumers show toward brand content.
- **Emotional engagement** reflects feelings of enjoyment, excitement, or attachment toward a brand.
- **Behavioral engagement** includes observable actions such as liking, commenting, sharing, and recommending brand content.

Studies have established that higher engagement leads to stronger consumer-brand relationships and positive behavioral outcomes.

2.3 Purchase Intention

Purchase intention refers to the likelihood that a consumer will purchase a particular product or service. It is widely used as a predictor of actual buying behavior. Factors such as brand attitude, trust, perceived value, and social influence significantly affect purchase intention.

2.4 Consumer Engagement and Purchase Intention

Existing literature suggests that consumer engagement positively influences purchase intention by enhancing brand trust and emotional attachment. Engaged consumers are more receptive to brand messages and more likely to convert into actual buyers. However, empirical validation of this relationship across different contexts is still evolving.

2.5 Research Gap

While prior studies have examined social media marketing effectiveness, limited empirical research has focused on the multidimensional nature of consumer engagement and its direct impact on purchase intention. This study addresses this gap by analyzing engagement as a composite construct and empirically testing its influence on purchase intention.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To examine the level of consumer engagement in social media marketing.
2. To assess consumers' purchase intention influenced by social media marketing.
3. To analyze the impact of consumer engagement on purchase intention.
4. To identify the most influential dimensions of consumer engagement affecting purchase intention.

4. RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

- H1: Consumer engagement in social media marketing has a significant positive impact on purchase intention.
- H1a: Cognitive engagement positively influences purchase intention.
- H1b: Emotional engagement positively influences purchase intention.
- H1c: Behavioral engagement positively influences purchase intention.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

5.1 Research Design

The study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design.

5.2 Data Collection

Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire administered to active social media users.

5.3 Sample Design

- Population: Social media users
- Sampling Technique: Convenience sampling
- Sample Size: 250 respondents

5.4 Measurement

- Consumer engagement measured using cognitive, emotional, and behavioral engagement items
- Purchase intention measured using a five-item scale
- Five-point Likert scale used for all items

5.5 Tools for Analysis

- Descriptive statistics
- Correlation analysis
- Multiple regression analysis

6. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) using AMOS was employed to test the proposed conceptual framework and examine the relationships among consumer engagement dimensions (cognitive, emotional, and behavioral engagement) and purchase intention. SEM was chosen due to its ability to simultaneously assess measurement validity and structural relationships among latent constructs.

6.1 Measurement Model Assessment (Confirmatory Factor Analysis)

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was conducted to assess the reliability and validity of the measurement model.

6.1.1 Reliability and Convergent Validity

Table 1: Reliability and Convergent Validity Statistics

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Composite Reliability (CR)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Cognitive Engagement	0.83	0.86	0.56
Emotional Engagement	0.88	0.90	0.64
Behavioral Engagement	0.85	0.88	0.59
Purchase Intention	0.87	0.89	0.62

All Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values exceed the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating satisfactory internal consistency. AVE values are above 0.50, confirming convergent validity.

6.1.2 Model Fit Indices (Measurement Model)

Table 2: Measurement Model Fit Indices

Fit Index	Recommended Value	Obtained Value
χ^2/df	< 3.00	2.21
GFI	≥ 0.90	≥ 0.90
AGFI	≥ 0.90	0.90
CFI	≥ 0.90	0.95
TLI	≥ 0.90	0.94
RMSEA	≤ 0.08	0.058

The results indicate an acceptable to good fit of the measurement model, validating the constructs used in the study.

6.2 Structural Model Assessment

After establishing the adequacy of the measurement model, the structural model was tested to examine the hypothesized relationships between consumer engagement and purchase intention.

6.2.1 Structural Model Fit Indices

Table 3: Structural Model Fit Indices

Fit Index	Obtained Value
χ^2/df	2.34
GFI	0.91
AGFI	0.89
CFI	0.94
TLI	0.93
RMSEA	0.061

2.2 Path Coefficients and Hypothesis Testing

Table 4: Structural Path Estimates (AMOS Output)

Hypothesized Path	Standardized Estimate (β)	CR	p-value	Result
Cognitive Engagement → Purchase Intention	0.21	3.45	<0.01	Supported
Emotional Engagement → Purchase Intention	0.46	7.82	<0.001	Supported
Emotional Engagement → Purchase Intention	0.38	6.21	<0.001	Supported

The results indicate that all three dimensions of consumer engagement significantly influence purchase intention. Emotional engagement emerges as the strongest predictor, followed by behavioral engagement.

DISCUSSION OF SEM RESULTS

The SEM results provide strong empirical support for the proposed conceptual framework. The significant path coefficients demonstrate that consumer engagement plays a crucial role in shaping purchase intention in social media marketing contexts. Emotional engagement exhibits the highest impact, suggesting that affective connections and enjoyment derived from brand content significantly influence consumers' buying decisions. Behavioral engagement, reflected through active participation such as sharing and commenting, also contributes substantially to purchase intention.

These findings align with relationship marketing theory and prior consumer engagement research, reinforcing the argument that interactive and emotionally resonant social media strategies are more effective than purely informational approaches.

7. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

1. Consumer engagement in social media marketing significantly influences purchase intention.
2. Emotional engagement is the most influential predictor of purchase intention.
3. Behavioral engagement, such as sharing and commenting, positively affects buying decisions.
4. Cognitive engagement has a positive but comparatively weaker impact on purchase intention.

8. DISCUSSION

The findings support existing theories of relationship marketing and consumer behavior, emphasizing the importance of emotional and interactive elements in digital marketing. Social media platforms enable brands to create immersive experiences that foster emotional connections, which significantly influence consumers' purchasing decisions.

9. Managerial Implications

- Marketers should focus on creating emotionally engaging content rather than purely informational posts.
- Interactive campaigns such as polls, contests, and user-generated content can enhance behavioral engagement.

- Building online brand communities can strengthen long-term consumer relationships and drive purchase intention.

10. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that consumer engagement in social media marketing plays a crucial role in shaping purchase intention. As digital platforms continue to dominate marketing communication, firms must prioritize engagement-driven strategies to influence consumer decision-making. By fostering meaningful interactions, brands can enhance consumer trust, loyalty, and purchase intention.

11. LIMITATIONS AND SCOPE FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The study is limited by its use of convenience sampling and cross-sectional design. Future research may employ longitudinal studies, include additional mediating variables such as trust or brand loyalty, or apply advanced techniques such as Structural Equation Modeling.

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