

Article

The Influence of Social Media on Customer Buying Behavior

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the influence of social media on consumer purchasing behavior using a qualitative approach. Social media has become a primary medium in digital marketing, enabling direct interaction between brands and consumers. This study used an online questionnaire distributed to 50 respondents aged 18–24 years, as well as semi-structured interviews with five informants who had experience shopping through social media. The results showed that attractive visual content, influencer support, and Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) play a significant role in shaping purchasing decisions. This study contributes to the understanding of contemporary marketing practices and offers effective strategies in optimizing social media. Visual content increases product appeal, influencers build consumer trust, and E-WOM serves as a source of information and social validation. These findings provide theoretical contributions to the study of digital consumer behavior and offer practical implications for business actors in designing more effective and relevant social media marketing strategies in the digital era. This study not only enriches the theoretical understanding of consumer behavior in the digital context but also offers practical implications for business actors and marketers. Marketing strategies that emphasize authentic visual elements, collaboration with relevant influencers, and encouraging consumer engagement through online reviews and testimonials have proven effective in influencing purchase intentions. Thus, this study provides an important contribution in the development of social media-based marketing strategies that are more adaptive and responsive to current consumer trends.

Keywords: Consumer Behavior, E-WOM, Influencers, Marketing Strategy, Social Media.

1. Introduction

Marketing is a series of activities carried out through promotion, sales, and distribution of goods or services to consumers. Marketing plays a major role in understanding the market and customer needs, designing attractive value offerings, and formulating strategies to create value advantages for customers. Meanwhile, sales activities focus on implementing these marketing strategies, building and maintaining relationships with customers, and completing the sales transaction process (Biemans et al., 2022). This marketing aims to meet consumer needs and in a way that can benefit the company. This marketing is not only about promotion, selling, and distribution of goods or services, but also functions to analyze market desires. This analysis can help companies conduct market research, and determine the value of goods or services according to the target market. So that the company can continue to grow following trends (Guo, 2025). In addition, marketing also needs to build good relationships with consumers. Because basically, communication between companies and consumers is one of the most important things to get a good image and can strengthen the company's brand. In marketing activities through market analysis and research, it can be said that companies must be able to adapt to the development of technology and current trends (Babu et al., 2025). This can be the right step for companies to be able to develop.

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According to (Habes et al., 2020), the rapid growth in the use of social media is a phenomenon that has emerged along with the development of internet technology. In today's era, marketing is not only through newspapers, direct consumer reviews (Word Of Mouth), and via radio. But marketing now uses a lot of social media as a place to promote products. Digital marketing is a flexible and technology-based process, where companies work with customers and partners to jointly build, deliver, and maintain value that is beneficial to all stakeholders. It is undeniable that the most influential technology that triggered the emergence of digital marketing was the presence of the World Wide Web in 1990 (Gensler & Rangaswamy, 2025). Companies can include visuals that are attractive to potential consumers, so that they can be interested in buying the product. In this context, the transformation of marketing strategies becomes very urgent, requiring a more customer-oriented approach, precise targeting of potential customers, and building long-term relationships with them. Social media marketing has emerged as a powerful tool that allows hotels to reach a wide audience through customized and personalized content. Compared to traditional marketing methods, the advantage of social media lies in its ability to achieve real-time interactions, thereby obtaining valuable customer feedback, building a community around the brand, and playing a vital role in increasing brand visibility and influencing customer decisions (Han et al., 2025). Social media is now a very important tool for entrepreneurs to develop and market their businesses. With this media, they can establish relationships with potential customers, increase brand visibility, and reach more people (Gupta et al., 2024). Changes in consumer behavior that are starting to turn to social media to find information about trends, and interact with brands can drive their marketing strategies. In other words, this social media has a wider and unlimited reach. So companies do not need to promote their products offline, but online (Muhammad et al., 2025). Companies only need to improve their marketing strategies on social media, or companies that will innovate promotions by using attractive visuals, endorsement of social media celebrities (Khan et al., 2025). Along with the rapid development of technology and digitalization, marketing has also undergone significant transformation. One of the biggest changes in the world of contemporary marketing is the presence of social media as the main platform for communication and interaction between brands and consumers. Social media has revolutionized the way companies promote their products, by presenting channels that are more interactive, fast, and wide-reaching than traditional marketing methods. Companies now no longer rely solely on print or broadcast media to reach audiences, but can utilize platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook to build direct connections with consumers.

This research is expected to be a reference for the parties concerned in designing the company's marketing strategy. By using social media as an effective marketing tool, companies can start allocating the resources needed efficiently, in order to increase product sales. By optimally utilizing social media as an effective marketing tool, companies can allocate resources more efficiently, increase competitiveness in the market, and strengthen long-term relationships with their consumers. Thus, this research contributes to the development of digital marketing strategies that are adaptive, responsive, and oriented to today's consumer behavior.

2. Proposed Method

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach that aims to deeply understand how social media influences consumer purchasing behavior. This approach was chosen because it is able to explore individual perceptions, experiences, and views on a social phenomenon in detail and contextually. Through this approach, researchers can trace how consumers form perceptions, respond to information, and make purchasing decisions in the context of social interactions on digital platforms. The main emphasis of this approach is not on numbers or generalizations, but on the meaning behind individual experiences and the dynamics that occur in the consumption process. Therefore, a descriptive qualitative approach is considered appropriate to contextually and deeply explore how social media, as a modern interaction space, influences the mindset and behavior of today's consumers.

The research subjects consisted of 50 respondents aged 18 to 24 years. They were selected using a purposive sampling technique, namely based on the criteria that they actively use social media (such as TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook) and have made product purchases based on information or promotions obtained from these social media. In addition, five informants from among active social media users were selected to be interviewed in more depth in order to obtain sharper qualitative data.

The main instruments in this study were an online questionnaire and a semi-structured interview guide. The questionnaire was structured in the form of closed and open questions and distributed using the Google Forms platform. Questions were designed to reveal the frequency of social media use, platforms used, factors influencing purchases, and the role of visual content and influencers. Interviews were conducted online via Zoom or WhatsApp call to reach informants flexibly. The data obtained from the questionnaire and interviews were then analyzed using thematic analysis techniques. The analysis steps include data reduction, presentation of data in narrative and tabular form, and drawing conclusions. To maintain data validity, triangulation of sources and methods was carried out, namely comparing data from questionnaires and interviews, and conducting discussions between researchers in interpreting the findings.

This method provides a comprehensive overview of the mindset and shopping habits of young consumers influenced by social media activities, and offers practical insights for companies in designing effective digital marketing strategies.

3. Results and Discussion

This study is relevant to several previous studies, namely studies that discuss marketing strategies on social media and articles that discuss the influence of social media on product marketing. One of these studies that can provide information is a study that analyzes consumer behavior towards marketing strategies on social media. By referring to previous studies, this study is expected to strengthen understanding of the effectiveness of social media in supporting marketing activities.

This study aims to analyze what types of marketing can attract potential consumers to buy products from the company. One article states that the Instagram application has a large reach, namely 700 million active users each month (Sugiyanti et al., 2023). Meanwhile, the results of an online survey from our group, the Instagram platform is not larger than product purchases on the TikTok platform.

From the survey results we got, as many as 56% use the TikTok platform to get a product. The reason is because on TikTok there are already many videos that review products directly, and the way of conveying and taking pictures is also interesting so that potential customers are interested and curious to try the product. By using online platforms such as Instagram and TikTok, it can provide benefits for companies, some of which are:

1. Can improve brand image: by publishing content regularly and planned on social media platforms, a brand has the potential to expand its reach and increase its recognition among the public. Either through direct uploads from the company's official account or through collaboration with influencers in the form of endorsements, the message to be conveyed can be presented in an interesting and creative way. Original, interesting, and relevant content to the target audience not only helps build a positive brand image, but also strengthens consumer engagement which can ultimately increase brand awareness and encourage buyer interest. Below is the percentage where consumers are more often fooled into buying a product, and the diagram shows that the highest percentage is with influencers.



Image 1. Tempat melihat promosi

2. Getting feedback related to the product: after the product starts to get attention and is recognized by some people through social media, users tend to respond to related content, either in the form of comments, likes, shares, or sending direct messages. These responses provide an important contribution for companies in obtaining direct input from consumers regarding their views, expectations, and level of satisfaction with the

products or services offered. Through this interaction, companies can conduct comprehensive evaluations and analyses to identify areas that need to be improved or developed, so that they can be more effective in meeting market needs and preferences.

In conducting online marketing, several skills must be mastered, namely taking pictures, editing, copywriting. The ability to take pictures is crucial because visual content is the first element that attracts the attention of the audience on social media. High-quality photos and videos, have good composition, and are able to convey brand messages visually will more easily attract consumer interest. In the midst of very dense content competition on various digital platforms such as Instagram and TikTok, prominent visuals will be an added value for the company. After the shooting process, expertise in editing content is no less important. The editing process not only serves to beautify the visual appearance, but also ensures that the message to be conveyed can be presented clearly, professionally, and in accordance with the brand identity. Good editing can create an atmosphere, emotion, and visual narrative that is in line with marketing objectives.

Meanwhile, writing effective promotional scripts is one of the determining aspects of marketing communication. The ability to write short, concise, but persuasive texts is needed so that the content is not only visually appealing, but also encourages audience engagement. Texts written in a style that suits the characteristics of the target market can influence perception, build emotional connections, and encourage actions such as visits to websites, filling out forms, and purchasing decisions. Thus, these three skills complement each other and form the main foundation in implementing an effective digital marketing strategy. Companies or individuals who are able to master and integrate these three aspects consistently will have a competitive advantage in building brand image, attracting consumer interest, and increasing sales amidst increasingly tight market competition.

Social media users prefer promotions of goods or services that provide attractive visuals. Such as taking pictures with the right angle, editing videos that are right and not long-winded, and inseparable from persuasion that is useful for seducing potential consumers. So the company needs to make a special allocation for marketing its products. In addition to the company's marketing strategy, E-WOM from consumers also influences the image of the product. This E-WOM can be positive E-WOM and negative E-WOM. Positive E-WOM is a good review of a product from consumers who have tried the product. While negative E-WOM is a less good review from consumers, so it can harm the company. If negative E-WOM is written in the comments on the company's social media account, the company must analyze what caused the negative e-wom to appear, and how the company responded to consumers to overcome the problem. This E-WOM is actually very helpful for prospective consumers, because with this review, they know the quality, the materials used, and also the comfort when using the product. So brand experience is one of the important things for consumers. This is a factor of E-WOM which also has a major influence on online shopping behavior. This phenomenon forms consumer perceptions of a product and plays a role in the purchasing decision-making process. When exposed to E-WOM, prospective buyers tend to consider the experiences and reviews of other consumers as references which ultimately help them make more confident and informed purchasing choices (Jeljeli et al., 2022)

In addition to marketing strategies and E-WOM, customer loyalty is also very important, because customer loyalty from this company can make consumers repurchase products. Now there are many brands that hold giveaways as a form of loyalty to their consumers which are done online. Usually the brand also wants reciprocity from consumers, such as providing conditions to be able to participate in the giveaway, for example:

1. Follow the brand's social media account
2. Make a product purchase with a minimum purchase
3. Carry out a product campaign on social media and tag the brand account.
4. Then use a special caption that invites people to use the product and use the hashtag provided by the brand.

With the giveaway, it can be an indirect promotion from the company, and can reach a wider audience. Of course, the company will get benefits from the giveaway, namely the brand campaigned by consumers can be known by the public. In addition, consumers will also get the benefits promised by the company. The main benefit of giveaways for companies is increased brand exposure. When consumers are asked to follow certain conditions such as sharing posts, tagging friends, following the company's social media accounts, or using certain hashtags, it creates a viral effect that can expand the reach of the campaign organically. Thus, the brand or product being campaigned has a greater chance of being known by people who may not have been familiar with it before.

In addition, giveaways also create positive interactions between companies and consumers. Consumers feel directly involved in promotional activities and have the opportunity to obtain prizes or benefits promised by the company. This not only increases engagement, but can also strengthen consumer loyalty and emotional closeness to the brand. With a well-designed strategy, companies can gain a number of benefits from implementing giveaways, such as increasing the number of followers on social media, increasing traffic to websites or online stores, and increasing brand awareness. On the other hand, consumers also feel the benefits through the opportunity to win prizes, have a pleasant experience, and feel appreciated as part of the brand community.

Therefore, giveaways can be said to be a two-way promotional strategy that is mutually beneficial: companies gain benefits in the form of higher visibility and engagement, while consumers get added value according to the benefits promised.

Not only give away as a form of customer loyalty, but also good service, and communication between consumers and companies. When consumers have complaints about the products used, the company must quickly respond to the complaint and provide a response that is in accordance with the consumer's complaint. So that when complaints can be resolved quickly, there will definitely be positive E-WOM about the company, and from this incident it can improve the company's positive image.

From this explanation, it can be seen that marketing carried out on social media is very fast to reach widely. By creating content consistently and doing endorsements is also one of the company's efforts that can increase sales and promote the brand to be known to the public. In addition, companies must also follow the trends that occur in order to continue to develop and innovate, especially in the field of technology that focuses on social media

4. Conclusions

Our research analyzes the influence of social media on customer purchasing behavior on social media. Through the presentation of interesting content, user testimonials (E-WOM), and the implementation of promotional strategies such as endorsements and giveaway programs, social media can increase brand awareness, strengthen the company's image, and drive increased sales. The existence of digital platforms such as TikTok and Instagram is not only a communication tool, but also the main means of influencing purchasing decisions through various creative marketing strategies. The use of interesting visual content, reviews from other consumers, as well as influencer-based promotions and giveaways, has been proven to be able to form a positive perception of the brand. Active interaction between companies and customers on social media also strengthens loyalty and increases consumer satisfaction. Therefore, companies need to strategically integrate social media in their marketing to achieve higher effectiveness in reaching and retaining customers.

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