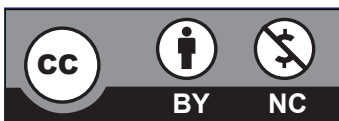


Effects of Social Media Marketing on Consumer Buying Behavior

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the effect of social media marketing on consumer buying behavior in Nepal, a typical developing country. The study used non-probability convenience sampling to survey 108 consumers and analyzed the effect of purchase intention, social network, social influence, and content marketing. Descriptive statistics, correlation, ANOVA, and multiple regression were employed for data analysis. The findings indicate that consumer buying behavior can be influenced by focusing on social network, social influence, and content marketing. The study aligns with previous research that highlights the importance of these factors in influencing consumer behavior. However, it is important to note that the literature review reveals a lack of research on the impact of social media on purchasing decisions in developing countries like Nepal.

The implications of this study are significant for marketers in Nepal. Firstly, marketers should prioritize social media marketing strategies to influence consumer buying behavior. Secondly, they should pay attention to building strong social networks, leveraging social influence, and creating compelling content to engage consumers. Thirdly, marketers should consider the role of purchase intention in shaping consumer behavior. Lastly, developing effective social media marketing strategies is crucial for influencing consumer buying behavior. In conclusion, this study contributes to the understanding of the effect of social media marketing on consumer buying behavior in Nepal. The findings suggest that social media marketing can influence consumer behavior, and the identified factors of social network, social influence, and content marketing play a crucial role. The study highlights the need for further research in this area and provides valuable insights for marketers seeking to leverage social media to drive consumer engagement and purchasing decisions in developing countries like Nepal.

Keywords: social networks, social influence, content marketing, consumer buying behavior , media

Introduction

Social media has become an integral part of modern society, and its impact on consumer behavior has been widely studied. Social media is defined as a group of internet-based applications that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Social media marketing (SMM) is a type of internet marketing that uses social media platforms to achieve marketing communication and branding goals (Falls, D.). Social media also provides an opportunity for consumers to compare price, quality, features, services, and usability of products and services offered by different companies of the same kind (Rafiq Y & Javeid U, 2014).

Several studies have been conducted to assess the impact of social media on consumer buying behavior, purchase intention, purchase decision, customer satisfaction, and online shopping behavior from the perspectives of customers all over the world (Jeenefa, L. et al., 2022). Asma and Misbah (n.d.) have presented a linked relationship between social media marketing and consumer buying behavior, showing that social media marketing is an effective marketing tool that affects the perception of customers and ultimately influences their purchase decision.

Despite the growing body of research on the impact of social media on consumer behavior, there is still a lack of research on the trend of social media impact when buying a product online in developing countries like Nepal (Neupane, 2021). Therefore, this study aims to examine the effect of social media marketing on consumer buying behavior in Nepal, a typical developing country. The study used non-probability convenience sampling to survey 108 consumers and analyzed the effect of purchase intention, social network, social influence, and content marketing (Neupane, 2021). The findings suggest that consumer buying behavior can be influenced by focusing on social network, social influence, and content marketing.

This study contributes to the understanding of the effect of social media marketing on consumer buying behavior in Nepal. The study highlights the need for further research in this area and provides valuable insights for marketers seeking to leverage social media to drive consumer engagement and purchasing decisions in developing countries like Nepal.

Problem Statement

Social media has become an important source of information for consumers, providing comfort, effectiveness, and credibility (Evans, D.). Studies have shown that social media is an effective platform for gathering information and advice (Boyd, D. M., & Ellison, N. B.) and for meeting specialized consumer needs (Khanna, U., 2016). Social media has also been found to have a significant impact on consumer buying behavior by increasing participation and providing social and viral capabilities (Chisman, 2008).

However, most prior research on the impact of social media on consumer buying behavior has been conducted in developed countries, and there is limited research on the topic in developing countries like Nepal. Therefore, the objective of this study is to investigate the impact of social media marketing on consumer buying behavior in Nepal and to explore the relationship between social media marketing tools and consumer buying behavior.

This study aims to fill the gap in the literature by examining the impact of social media marketing on consumer buying behavior in Nepal, a developing country. The study will use a quantitative research design and incorporate descriptive and causal comparative research methods. The study will collect primary data from Nepalese consumers using a structured, self-administered questionnaire. The data will be analyzed using reliability tests, correlation, regression analysis, and hypothesis testing.

The findings of this study will provide valuable insights into the impact of social media marketing

on consumer buying behavior in Nepal and will have significant implications for marketers seeking to leverage social media to drive consumer engagement and purchasing decisions in developing countries.

Objective

To examine the effect of social networks, social influence and content marketing on consumer buying behavior

Literature Review

The literature review reveals several studies that have examined the impact of social media on consumer buying behavior, particularly in the context of developing countries like Nepal. These studies provide valuable insights into the influence of social media marketing on consumer decision-making processes and purchasing intentions.

Ziyadin Sayabek (2019) explores how consumers experience and are influenced by the digital environment, emphasizing the role of social media advertising in increasing brand loyalty. The study highlights the potential of social media to interact directly with potential customers and enhance customer engagement.

Sony Varghese (2021) focuses on the impact of social media on the buying process of complex purchases. The study emphasizes the positive influence of social media influencers on customers' buying decisions.

Perumal Prasath (2018) evaluates the influence of social media marketing on consumer buying decision-making processes. The study demonstrates that social media marketing has a significant impact on consumer decision-making.

Neupane (2019) investigates how social media networks influence the purchasing intentions of consumers in Nepal. The study highlights the differences in social media usage patterns between men and women, which may be attributed to

various factors such as lifestyle choices and living standards.

Kostov (2020) analyzes the impact of social media marketing on consumer attitudes. The study reveals that social media marketing influences consumer attitudes, emphasizing the importance of maintaining a positive brand image through constant online presence.

Jade Xuccheney N. Jacinto (2021) evaluates the influence of social media marketing on consumer buying behavior, particularly among consumers who predominantly use social media websites for purchasing products and services. The study identifies social media marketing as a predictor of consumer buying behavior.

Alsubagh (2015) examines the impact of social media networks on consumer behavior and decision-making processes. The study highlights the role of online social media networks in facilitating communication, connecting people, and improving interactions among consumers. In terms of major variables used in these studies.

Consumer Buying Behavior: Kotler and Keller (2011) define consumer buying behavior as the study of how individuals, groups, and organizations buy and dispose of goods, services, ideas, or experiences to satisfy their needs and wants.

Social Networks: Sin et al. (2012) define social networks as websites that link users with similar interests, views, and hobbies. These studies measure the impact of social media tools such as Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok on consumer buying behavior.

Social Influence: Venkatesh, Speir, and Morris (2002) describe social influence as the degree to which a person believes that others perform a particular behavior. These studies examine how social influence, influenced by cultural, social, and personal factors, affects consumer buying behavior.

Content Marketing: Penpece (2013) defines content marketing as the creation of content to attract and engage the target audience, making products and services appealing. These studies investigate how content marketing, particularly the quality of content, influences consumer buying behavior.

Overall, the literature suggests that social media marketing plays a significant role in influencing consumer buying behavior in developing countries like Nepal. It highlights the importance of understanding the impact of social media on consumer decision-making processes and emphasizes the need for further research in this area.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this research paper is based on the impact of social media on consumer buying behavior in Nepal. The hypothesis is formulated based on the literature review and the research question. The four hypotheses are as follows:

- H1: Content marketing has an impact on consumer buying behavior.
- H2: Social influence has an impact on consumer buying behavior.
- H3: Social networks have an influence on consumer buying behavior.
- H4: Hours spent on social media are different across all age groups.

The literature review provides evidence that social media has a significant impact on consumer buying behavior. The studies by Ziyadin Sayabek (2019), Sony Varghese (2021), Perumal Prasath (2018), Neupane (2019), Kostov (2020), and Jade Xuccheney N. Jacinto1 (2021) all support the idea that social media has an impact on consumer buying behavior. The studies show that social media marketing, social influence, and social networks all have an impact on consumer buying behavior.

Based on the literature review, the first hypothesis is that content marketing has an impact on consumer buying behavior. The study by Penpece (2013) shows that content marketing can influence consumer buying behavior by creating awareness and attracting the target audience. The second hypothesis is that social influence has an impact on consumer buying behavior. The study by Venkatesh, Speir, & Morris (2002) shows that social influence can affect consumer buying behavior in terms of cultural, social, and personal factors. The third hypothesis is that social networks have an influence on consumer buying behavior. The study by Sin et al. (2012) defines social networks as websites that link millions of users from all over the world with the same interests, views, and hobbies. The fourth hypothesis is that hours spent on social media are different across all age groups. This hypothesis is based on the study by Neupane (2019), which found that there is a difference in usage pattern of social media among men and women, which may be due to different lifestyle choices and/or living standards among other things:

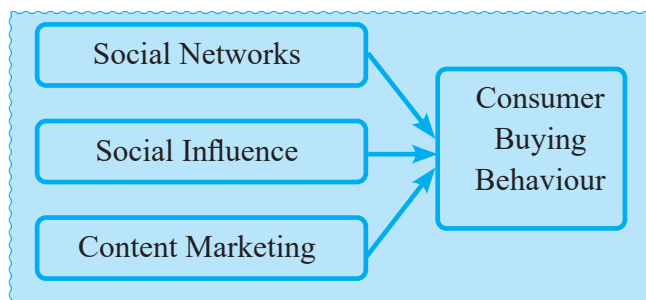


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Methodology

This study used a quantitative research design and collected primary data from social media users in Nepal, specifically in the urban areas of Kathmandu and Bhaktapur. The sample size was 60 respondents, selected proportionately from each city using the rule of 1:6. The study analyzed the impact of social media marketing on consumer buying behavior, with consumer buying behavior as the dependent variable and social network, content marketing, and social influence as the independent variables. The data was collected using a set of questionnaires containing 12 items measured on a 5-point Likert scale. The internal validity of the study was tested using Cronbach alpha, while external validity was tested by screening and sorting the buyer's response or missing response. The data was analyzed using IBM SPSS 20 software.

Previous studies have investigated the effects of social media networking on consumer purchase decisions in Nepal. These studies have used quantitative research designs and incorporated descriptive and causal comparative research designs. They have also used primary data sources and conducted reliability tests, correlation, regression analysis, and hypothesis testing. The studies have shown that social media has a significant impact on consumer purchase decisions, and social media marketing tools such as word of mouth and user-generated content can influence consumer behavior. Other studies have also investigated the impact of social media on consumer behavior and purchase decisions in different countries. These studies have assessed the influence of social media on buying behavior, purchase intention, purchase decision, customer satisfaction, and online shopping behavior from the perspectives of customers all over the world. Mishra, A.K., & Aithal, P. S., (2021 a&b), Mishra.A.K., (2019), Mishra, A.K., & Aithal, P. S. (2021) and Sah,S., Mishra,A.K.,(2020) have been adopting similar research methods in case of Nepal. The similar approach of methods applied in research gives validity for the methodology.

Analysis and Result

Table 1: Gender, Education and Hours Spent on Social Media of the Respondents

Particular		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	53	49.10%
	Female	55	50.90%
	Total	108	100
Education	High school	18	17%
	Undergraduate	73	67.60%
	Master level	12	11.10%
	Above Master	5	4.60%
	Total	108	100.00%
Hours spent on social media	1 hour	6	5.60%
	3 hours	41	38%
	5 hours	49	45.40%
	8 hours	12	11.10%
	Total	108	100

We observe that out of 108 respondents, the number of male respondents was lower than female respondents. The male respondents were 49.10% whereas the females were 50.90%. This implies that consumer buying behavior should make its various strategies focusing on males. Similarly, out of 108 respondents, the social media marketing users is between High school and above masters. Where Undergraduates have the higher percentage i.e. 67.60% and the least user is from above Masters Level i.e. 4.60%. The hours spent on social media shows that consumers spent 1-8 hours daily in social media. Where consumers mostly spent 5 hours in social media daily which is 45.40%.

Table 2: Correlation

		CBB	SN	SI	CM
	Pearson Correlation	1	.951**	.964**	.961**
CBB					
	Sig.(2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	108	108	108	108

We can observe that the P-value between Social Network, Social Influence and Content Marketing

with respect to consumer buying behavior has a P- value less than 0.05. This indicates that they have significant Positive correlation with consumer buying behavior.

In accordance with the findings, the consumer buying behavior of consumers can be influenced by focusing on the Social Network, Social Influence and Content Marketing.

Table 3: Regression Analysis- ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Regression	64.799	3	21.600	500.822	.000b
Residual	4.485	104	.043		
Total	69.284	107			

The table above shows that fitness of the overall regression model. According to the table, the P-value is 0.000 which is less than 0.05. This shows that we reject Ho. This indicates that the overall regression model is statistically fit.

Table 4: Regression Analysis- Coefficients

Unstandardized Coefficients				
	B	Std. Error	t	Sig
(Constant)	.974	.128	7.604	.000
Avg_SI	.490	.129	3.806	.000
Avg_cm	.248	.112	2.210	.029
avg_sn	.075	.110	.679	.499

Since the p value of Social Influence (SI) is less than 0.05, we reject Ho. This indicates that Social Influence (SI) is the significant explanatory variables on consumer buying behavior. While the p-value of social Network (SN) and content marketing (CN) are greater than 0.05, we do not reject our Ho in all cases. This indicates that Social Network (SN) and Content Marketing (CM) are not significant explanatory variables on consumer buying behavior.

Conclusion

Based on the analysis conducted in this study, it can be concluded that social networks have a positive effect on consumer buying behavior. This finding is consistent with previous research by Chui and Manyika (2012), Rockendorf (2011), and Forbes & Vespoli (2013), which also found that social networks have a positive influence on consumer buying decision-making. The use of social media platforms allows consumers to connect with others, gather information, and seek recommendations, which can ultimately impact their purchasing decisions.

Furthermore, this study reveals that consumer buying decisions are not significantly influenced by factors such as income level or gender. This suggests that social networks play a more prominent role in shaping consumer behavior, regardless of demographic characteristics. These findings align with the notion that social media has become an influential platform for consumers to engage with brands, seek product information, and make informed purchase decisions.

It is important to note that this study focused specifically on the Nepali consumer market. The research conducted in Nepal is limited, but it contributes to the growing body of literature on the effects of social media on consumer buying behavior. The findings of this study are consistent with previous research conducted in other countries, indicating that the impact of social media on consumer behavior transcends geographical boundaries.

Overall, the results of this study highlight the significance of social networks in influencing consumer buying behavior. Marketers and businesses should recognize the importance of

utilizing social media platforms as a means to engage with consumers, build brand loyalty, and influence purchasing decisions. By understanding the role of social networks in consumer behavior, businesses can develop effective marketing strategies that leverage the power of social media to drive consumer engagement and increase sales.

However, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of this study. The sample size was relatively small, and the study focused only on urban areas in Nepal. Future research could expand the scope by including a larger and more diverse sample from different regions of the country. Additionally, qualitative research methods could be employed to gain deeper insights into the specific mechanisms through which social networks influence consumer buying behavior.

In conclusion, this study provides valuable insights into the impact of social networks on consumer buying behavior in Nepal. The findings support the existing literature on the positive influence of social media on consumer behavior. Businesses can use these findings to inform their marketing strategies and effectively engage with consumers through social media platforms. Further research in this area will contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the role of social media in shaping consumer behavior.

Authors Note

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