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The effect of social media marketing on consumer behaviour

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ABSTRACT

Nearly every industry in India has adopted social media marketing. According to a Goldman Sachs report, the Indian digital marketing business is expected to be worth $160 billion by 2025. Digital marketing is expanding quickly in India as consumers have been inspired to purchase from a new brand after seeing social media images or posts,thus it has been found that 71% consumers are more likely to make a purchase based on social media referrals.Thus it is important for us to understand how social media has influenced consumers purchase behavior. Therefore the research aimed to investigate the factors that influence customer buying decisions through online forms of marketing (social media) by comparing it with offline forms of marketing(billboards),by making use of the advertisements provided by the multinational company Starbucks. The research also aimed to investigate why individuals are more convinced to buy a drink through social media then through offline marketing. The research was conducted on 40 customers of Starbucks in India, Mumbai, most of them being students who follow Starbucks on various social media platforms. Data was collected through an online questionnaire sent through google forms.The results of the research indicated that since social media marketing makes use of various creative elements(music, graphic and colors), customer testimonials and helps satisfy a need,which gives them a social proof, individuals are more convinced to purchase a drink from starbucks than through offline forms of marketing. Thus concluding that the social media marketing is more effective then offline marketing since it gives a social proof, and therefore has a greater effect on consumers purchase behavior.

Keywords: *Social Media Marketing, Consumer, Purchase Behavior, Online And Offline Marketing, Social Proof*

1. INTRODUCTION

Social media marketing is the process of producing content for social media websites in order to advertise business goods and/or services, create community among the target market, and increase customer traffic. Social media marketing is continuously changing as new features and platforms appear every day(Baker, 2022).

Social media networks are accessible to everyone, allowing businesses a chance to monitor the online activity of their customers or future clients. This enables marketers to develop a more effective marketing strategy to draw in customers who fit their target audience's likes, dislikes, and interests(Azharuddin et al., 2022).

The social media analytics market was valued at USD 7.26 billion in 2020 and is expected to reach USD 25.96 billion by 2026, at a CAGR of 23.3% over the forecast period 2021 - 2026(Nalkande, 2022).

Nearly every industry in India has adopted digital marketing. Online banking, payment systems, content management, and order and shopping monitoring are a few examples of E-Marketing applications. According to a Goldman Sachs report, the Indian digital marketing business is expected to be worth $160 billion by 2025(Naidu, 2022). Digital marketing is expanding quickly in India.

People post product reviews, details about services, dietary or health advice, product warnings, etc. via social media. On social media, people have many "connections," and as a result, many people consume information(West, 2022). Consumers' purchasing decisions and behavior are thus influenced by this information.

Social proof has grown in importance as a factor in purchasing decisions as a result of social media marketing(Lua, 2020). People's propensity to copy the actions of those around them, and vice versa, has given rise to social proof. Various firms have been able to increase client loyalty and trust in their brand by using customer testimonials, case studies, comments, and ranking systems on social media platforms.

According to a recent survey it has been found that 64% of online consumers wait to buy things until they go for sale. Thus social media gives brands instant reach to billions of active social media users(Nayar, 2022). Through this, brands can ensure that the target audience sees their products, likes them, and shares them on social media, which helps to influence consumer behavior.

Another survey found that " 49% of consumers seek guidance from social media influencers before making a buying decision".Consumers are more likely to buy when they get recommendations from a person they trust(Azharuddin et al., 2022). Celebrities and popular people inspire their audience through their posts or tweets and thus this influences their buying behavior.

2. PURPOSE OF INVESTIGATION

More than 80% of shoppers claim that social media, and especially content from influencers, significantly influences their shopping choices. As a result, social media marketing (SMM) is evolving from a single instrument to a multidimensional source of marketing intelligence on a significant and expanding audience(Dan, 2022).

Many researchers have also found out that 81% of consumers' purchasing decisions are influenced by their friends' social media posts(Forbes). 66% of consumers have been inspired to purchase from a new brand after seeing social media images from other consumers.Consumers are 71% more likely to make a purchase based on social media referrals(Dan,2022).Thus it makes it important for us to understand how social media has influenced consumer behavior in order to understand such increasing figures.

3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The objective of the research is to explain how social media impacts the consumer decision making process. The empirical data was gathered by sending out questionnaires to individuals in Turku.The findings indicated that individuals pursue an active role in information search on social media compared to mass media, yet information exposure is selective and subjective during the course of information search when deciding which product or service they want to buy(Lee, 2013).

This research considered social media marketing activity (SMMA) and Customer Experience (CE) to measure the customer's relationship quality, which can impact customer behavioral outcomes, which are purchase intention, loyalty intention, and participation intention. The 413 online questionnaire surveys were measured and analyzed using SmartPLS 3. The results showed that SMMA and CX have a significant influence on the customer relationship quality, which also leads to a positive impact on customer behavioral outcomes(Wibowo et al., 2020).

The study aims to understand the impacts of social media on consumer behavior with particular focus on holiday travel.Qualitative methodology was used that helped in providing an insider's perspective on how consumers use social media throughout the holiday travel process and the impacts of such use on consumer behavior. Seven focus groups were carried out with fifty-one active social media users who have been on a holiday trip during the last twelve months. It was revealed that social media was used during all stages of the travel process, and also during all stages of holiday related decision making processes
(Fotis et al., 2012).

This research aims to analyze the critical significance of social media in day-to-day routines, including its impact on consumers' purchase intention. The research included 307 people from Jakarta, who have around two or three times purchasing experiences at e-commerce sites (repeating customers). The results stated that the highest impact towards consumers' purchase intention is the perceived value, while it is negatively affected by perceived price and risk(Permatasari & Kuswadi, 2017).

The research examines the effects of social media marketing, price promotion, and corporate social responsibility on customer satisfaction in the fast-food industry. The data were collected using a survey instrument from 293 customers of international fast-food restaurants in east coast Malaysia. SPSS and structural equation modeling (AMOS) were utilized to analyze data. The findings revealed that social media marketing and price promotion have significant effects on customer satisfaction(Hanaysha, 2017).

They integrate qualitative user-marketer interaction content data from a fan page brand community on Facebook. A content analysis method was used to construct measures to capture the informative and persuasive nature of UGC(user-generated content) and MGC(marketer-generated content) while distinguishing between directed and undirected communication modes in the brand community. The findings show that engagement in social media brand communities leads to a positive increase in purchase expenditures. Additional examinations of UGC and MGC impacts show evidence of social media contents affecting consumer purchase behavior through embedded information and persuasion(Goh et al., 2012).

The purpose of this study was to investigate the mediating effect of social media on the consumer behavior and intention to purchase cosmetic products in Brunei Darussalam based on the Theory of planned behavior (TPB).The study adopted a descriptive research design in form of cross-sectional and survey in nature. A sample size of one hundred and eighty-seven (187) respondents drawn from Brunei Muara district of Brunei Darussalam. The results revealed that there is a strong significant positive impact on attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioral control on consumer intention/buying behavior to purchase cosmetic products. Also, social media has a significant positive mediating effect on consumer behavior and intention to purchase cosmetic products in Brunei Darussalam(Ringim & Reni, 2019).

This research aims to investigate the effect of social media marketing on consumer behavior by means of brand equity, brand relationship quality and attitude towards brand among the customers of online shops in Tehran. The sampling method of this study is random sampling and the data required to test the hypotheses were gathered by questionnaire. Finally, 391 questionnaires were gathered to analyze.The results show that the effect of social media marketing activities on brand equity and brand relationship

quality are positive and significant. On the other hand, brand equity and brand relationship quality have positive and significant effects on brand attitude and consequently, on consumer behavior (Hosseini & Samiei, 2018).

The research had 5 main objectives which was to explore the history and current trends of social media marketing, determine the influence of social media on customer attitude, consumer purchase intentions, consumer repurchase decisions and provide recommendations to retailers on how to use social media effectively. Primary data was used, and two retail organizations with operations in Finland were targeted, namely: Lidl and IKEA. Six participants were targeted, and they were contacted through interviews.The findings showed that consumer attitudes were influenced by social media marketing and thus organizations ensure that they maintain a positive brand image by constant online presence in order to ensure purchase decisions(Kostov, 2020).

4. RESEARCH GAP
This research will study the effects of customer behavior when purchasing beverages from one of the biggest multinational companies in the world Starbuck, through both social media and offline form(billboards or holdings) of marketing. This research will help us determine how social media marketing has a greater influence on consumer/customers purchase behavior as compared to other forms of offline marketing.

Starbucks Corporation is an American multinational chain of coffeehouses and roastery that often reposts photos from their fans. User-generated photos drive high engagement for the brand.One of the main reasons for Starbucks' success on social media is in how they build their brand image around both themselves and their audience(Huff, 2014).

Starbucks aims to show that its product is more than just coffee. Their social media pages do not push dull, overly commercial product posts, but instead creates a narrative for the products. The brand prioritizes personal experiences of their customers and the shared moments(Ravi, 2019). By focusing on the user experience rather than just the product, the brand manages to promote itself as a lifestyle.

Thus Starbucks then utilizes the Internet, particularly the social media sphere, to raise levels of consumer engagement with the company and participation in organizational co-creation techniques. Ideas included new suggestions made by other customers through posts and suggestions that Starbucks staff members have recently implemented in stores(Ahuja , 2017). The psychological components of consumer behavior and the social connection they have with the business are two variables that encourage customers to publish more ideas in the Starbucks online community, dubbed "My Starbucks Idea." High consumer involvement in the community is a result of the customers' sense of empowerment and ensuing social connection,through social media.

5. OBJECTIVES
-        Determine the factors that influence consumers buying decisions through online marketing(social media) as compared to offline marketing(billboards).
-        To determine why online marketing is more effective has a greater effect then offline marketing on consumers purchase behavior.

6. METHODOLOGY
Primary research will be conducted in this quantitative study, wherein an online questionnaire,on google forms will be sent out to 40 consumers of the multinational company starbucks in India, Mumbai. The questionnaire will specially ask questions as to why they rely upon social media to know more about their services or drinks. Thus the difference introduced in this research will help us understand how consumer behavior changes in terms of online and offline marketing.

The online questionnaire will be divided into four sections. The first section will ask some basic questions about how often do these consumers purchase drinks from starbucks in india. The second section will help us understand through which medium do customers gain information about the products of starbucks whether through, social media or through physical methods of marketing. The third section will be more specific to consumer purchase behavior through social media and physical media, asking why they prefer using these mediums. The last section of the questionnaire will be the main experiment wherein an instagram reelof starbucks is shown and a billboard advertisement of starbucks, and then questions will be asked to the participants whether or not they would choose to buy their service or not.

7. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1- Analysis of the population

Category	Classification	No.of respondents	Percentage
Age Group	Below 18 years	17	42.5%
	18-25	13	32.5%
	25-32	4	10%
	32-40	3	7.5%

	40 and above	3	7.5%
	Total	**40**	**100**
Occupation	Student	29	72.5%
	Teacher	2	5%
	Lawyer	1	2.5%
	Businessman	2	5%
	Doctor	1	2.5%
	Employee	5	12.5%
	Engineer	0	0%
	Total	**40**	**100**
Frequency of purchase	Often	14	35%
	Sometimes	14	35%
	Rarely	10	25%
	Occasionally	2	5%
	Total	**40**	**100**
Preferred drink at Starbucks	Tea	5	12.5%
	Coffee-cappuccino,latte, hot chocolate, espresso etc	26	65%
	Frappuccino	23	57.5%
	Cold brew	14	35%
	Ice shaken	6	15%
	Total	**74**	**100**

Source- Primary research

This table helps us understand that the majority of youngsters/teenagers are highly engaged with starbucks. This can be seen as 42.5% are below the age of 18 years, and 72.5% of them are students, which is higher as compared to teachers(5%) and employees(12.5%). The table also helps us understand the preferred choice of drink from starbucks according to these students, are Coffee based items although there were other preferred drinks to however 65% of the consumers preferred coffee based items, these included cappuccino, latte,hot chocolate, espresso etc, which is the greatest as compared to Frappuccino which was 57.5% and cold brew drinks which was 35%.

Table 2- Starbucks on Social Media

Category	Classification	No.of respondents	Percentage
Do you follow Starbucks on any social media platform ?	Yes	21	52.5%
	No	18	45%
	Maybe	1	2.5%
	Total	**40**	**100**
If you do follow them, on which of the following	Instagram	25	42.37%
	Facebook	6	10.17%

social media platforms do you follow them on?	Twitter	3	5.08%
	My Starbucks App	15	25.42%
	None of the above	10	16.95%
	Total	59	100

Source- Primary research

This table helps us understand how engaged these consumers are with Starbucks on social media. The results show that a greater percentage of the consumer, 52.5% follow Starbucks on various social media platforms, however 2.5% of them are still unsure of whether they follow them or not. The table also helps us understand that Instagram is the preferred social media platform, as 42.37% of the consumers follow them on Instagram, higher as compared to Facebook and Twitter which was 10.17% and 5.08% respectively.
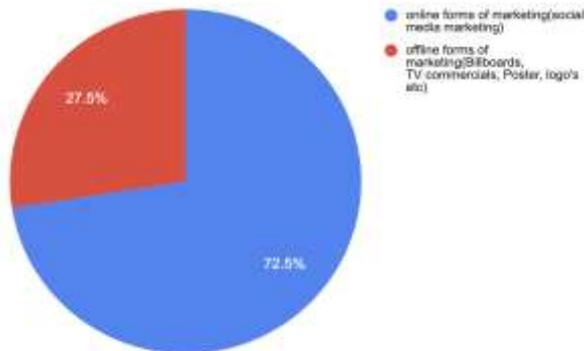
Figure 1- Shows which form of marketing convinces customers to buy a drink from Starbucks ?
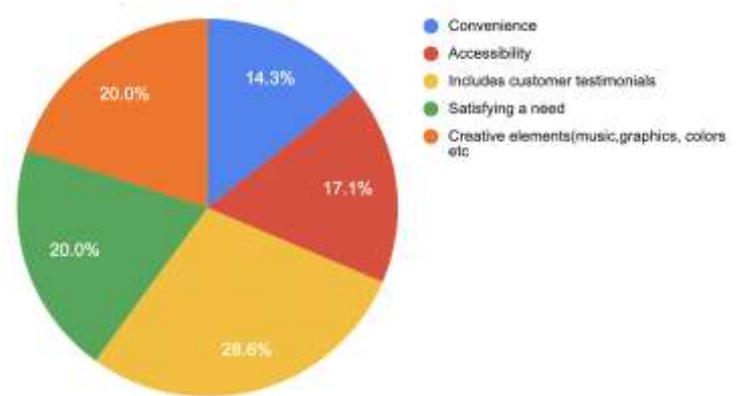

Figure 2 - Why online over offline ?

Source- Primary research

Figure 1 and 2 helps us understand how social media influences the consumers purchasing behavior. Figure 1 shows that 72.5% of the respondents think that online forms of marketing, such as social media marketing, convince them to purchase a drink from starbucks.

On the other hand, Figure 2 shows us the possible factors as to why social media is the most appealing to them. These include satisfying a need, convenience, including customer testimonials and accessibility. The results show that 28.6% of respondents find social media more appealing since it gives them customer testimonials, which has the greatest impact on their purchasing behavior.

The next most important factors being that social media helps satisfy the needs, through various posts or reel, according to 20% of the respondents. They believe that because that post or reel fulfills their needs and gives them more in depth understanding about the product/service in a creative manner thus impacting their buying decision. In terms of creativity the figure also shows that 20% of the respondents are convinced to buy a product/service from social media due to the use of various creative elements such music,graphic,colors etc appeal to the consumer thus affecting their purchase decision.
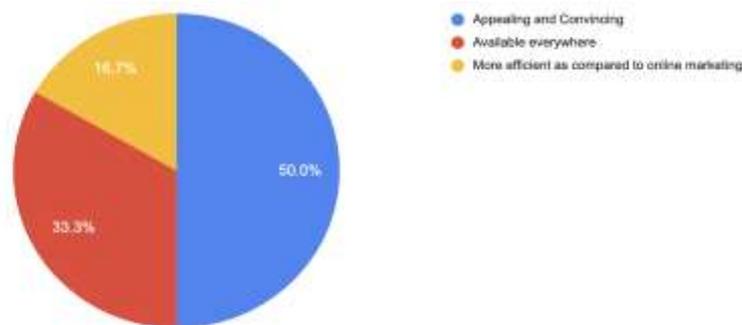

Figure 3- Why offline over online ?

Source- Primary research

Although respondents find social media more convincing than offline forms of marketing, there was still more than a quarter of the respondents which was 27.5%, as shown in figure 1, that shows that they find offline forms of marketing more convincing then online forms of marketing. Figure 3, outlines the possible factors as to why they find offline marketing more convincing, is because half of them,50%,find them to be more appealing and convincing, since these included better graphics,images, catchy taglines etc, when they were personally asked. On the other hand 33.3 percent of the respondents find it more appealing because they are available or viewed everywhere, thus they are then more attracted to it, and are therefore more likely to purchase that product or use that particular service.

The Experiment- Social media marketing vs offline forms of marketing
(Section 4 of the questionnaire)
The Instagram Reel- #SummersAtStarbucks
The first section of this experiment was a instagram reel which was posted on the starbucks India Instagram page posted on May 14,2022, wherein through the use of the reel starbucks had introduced various beverages that would have helped kept customer feel cool and comfortable during summer,thus naming it #SummersAtStarbucks.

In the reel starbucks had use of music and various graphics to present these drinks. They also spoke about how they can enhance their customer experience during summer. The questions were asked on whether they would purchase a drink from starbucks or not after looking at the reel. The results are shown in figure 4 and 5.

The Billboard- The new Java chip frappuccino
In the second section of this experiment the participants were shown the following billboard, followed by questions on their purchasing intentions of the new frappuccinos. The results are shown in figure 6 and 7.
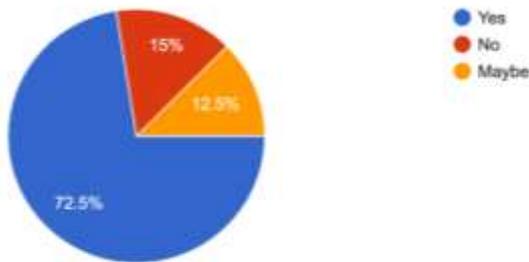

Figure 4 shows the percentage of people who are willing to buy a drink from starbucks during summer, after looking at the reel.
Source- Montanez, 2018

Figure 5- How does the reel impact consumers' buying decisions ?
Source-primary research

Figure 4 shows 72.5% of the respondents are convinced to buy a drink from starbucks during the summer after looking at the reel, whereas 15% are not convinced to buy and 12.5% are still unsure.

Figure 5 on the other hand outlines the possible factors that influence their buying decision. The results show that 60% of the respondents would prefer buying a drink from starbucks during summer due to the creative elements that were present in the reel, which had a greater appeal to them than the other factors.

Another reason was because 25% of the respondents thought that it helps satisfy their need for a refreshing drink during summer.
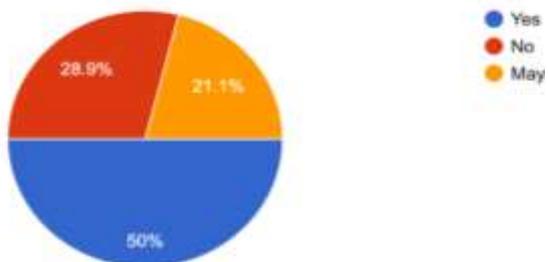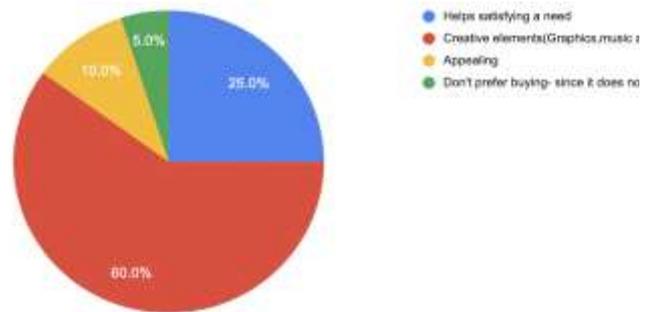

Figure 6- Graph shows the percentage of people who are willing to purchase the new Java chip Frappuccino from Starbucks, after having a look at the billboard ?
Source- Primary research

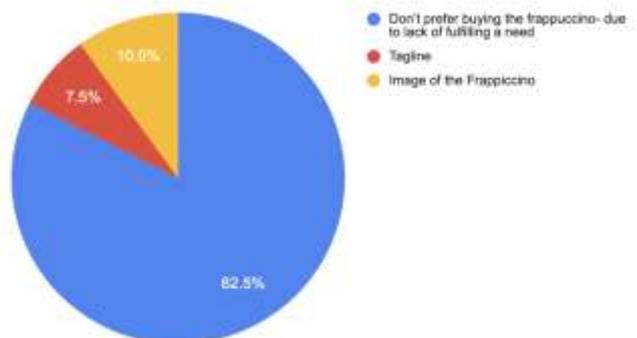**Figure 7- How does the real impact consumers buying decision**

Figure 6 shows that half of the participants are to some extent convinced to buy the new frappuccino, however there are still the other half of the participants who are not very convinced to buy the frappuccino,although 21.1% of them are still unsure about their decision.

Figure 7 however confirms this point and shows that the majority of the respondents,82.5% are not very satisfied with the billboard and are thus not very convinced to buy the new frappuccino from starbucks.

However the figure still shows that the use of tagline and image of the frappuccino has a decent impact on their buying decision. They also stated that the billboard doesn't address any need particularly.

8. CONCLUSION
The research aimed to investigate the factors that influence customer buying decisions through online forms of marketing (social media) by comparing it with offline forms of marketing(focussing upon billboards),by making use of the advertisements provided by the multinational company Starbucks. The research also aimed to investigate why individuals are more convinced to buy a drink through social media then through offline marketing.

The research was conducted to 40 customers of Starbucks in India, Mumbai, most of them being students who follow Satrabucks on various social media platforms. Data was collected through an online questionnaire on google forms.

The results of the research indicated that since social media marketing makes use of various creative elements(music, graphic and colors), customer testimonials and helps satisfy a need,which gives them a social proof, individuals are more convinced to purchase a drink from starbucks than through offline forms of marketing.

Therefore it can be concluded that social media marketing is more effective then offline marketing, since it gives customers a social proof and therefore it has a greater effect on consumers purchase behavior as compared to offline forms of marketing .

The strength of this research is that it was a well controlled experiment and the responses given by the consumer were honest and not biased.The questionnaire included elements of both social media and offline marketing, and wasn't biased to one

The limitations of the research however was that the sample size was very small as there were only 40 customers hence difficult to generalize the results , and many of them were students and less of individuals from different age groups hence low population validity. The research was also limited to only one company, such as Starbucks and ignored the importance of marketing for other companies.

Secondary data has not been collected for the research methodology. However, there are a lot more sources to collect the secondary data from, and a lot more analysis can be done through the secondary source of data collected. This could have then been compared with primary data and thus helped us test the validity of the factors that influence customers purchase behavior by social media.

9. FURTHER SCOPE OF INVESTIGATION
Another possible factor could have been looked at in this investigation is understanding the consumer purchase behavior through social media if the products are marketed by social media influencers. As consumers might purchase a product because it is being marketed by their favorite influencers thus impacting their buying decision.

The research could have been more specific by looking at the psychology aspect of the consumers, as done by Wong,2016 in his research, thus the effect of social media could have then been better explained . This would have then helped us gain a deeper understanding upon consumer behavior and how consumers make decisions.

In terms of offline marketing, apart from billboards other examples of offline marketing could have also been utilized in the experiment, such as posters of starbucks or TV commercials or Guerrilla marketing strategies , as these also impact the customers buying decision.

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