The Impact of Social Commerce on Consumer Buying Behaviour: Comparative Study of Instagram and Facebook

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Abstract

This study investigates the impact of electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM) and influencer marketing on consumer buying behaviour within the realms of social commerce, focusing on Instagram and Facebook. Utilizing a sample of 100 respondents from Mumbai, we employed SPSS for data analysis, particularly ANOVA, to assess the effects of these marketing strategies on purchase intentions and engagement levels. Findings reveal that both eWOM and influencer marketing significantly influence consumer behaviour, with eWOM showing a particularly strong correlation with purchasing decisions. Furthermore, variations in engagement levels across different platforms highlight the necessity for tailored marketing approaches. This research contributes to understanding the dynamics of social commerce and provides valuable insights for marketers aiming to optimize their strategies. Future studies could explore additional platforms and demographic factors to enhance the understanding of consumer interactions in social commerce.

Keywords: eWOM, influencer marketing, consumer behavior, social commerce.

Introduction

In the digital age, social commerce has emerged as a pivotal force reshaping consumer buying behaviour. Social media platforms, particularly Instagram and Facebook, have transitioned from mere communication tools to vibrant marketplaces where brands engage with consumers in real-time. This shift is propelled by the rise of social media influencers, whose authenticity and relatability significantly affect follower engagement and purchase intentions. As noted by Agnihotri et al. (2023), the authenticity of influencers plays a critical role in followers' purchase behaviour, particularly through mechanisms such as parasocial interaction, which allows consumers to form emotional connections with influencers, thereby enhancing their likelihood of making purchases.

The integration of social media into marketing strategies has been explored in various contexts, illustrating its effectiveness in promoting products and services. For instance, Harb et al. (2019) highlighted the utility of social media as a marketing tool for events, demonstrating its ability to engage target audiences and drive attendance through personalized communication and interactive content. This reflects a broader trend where businesses leverage social media platforms to create immersive brand experiences that resonate with consumers' lifestyles and preferences.

The frameworks and models employed in social media marketing underscore the complexity and dynamic nature of consumer interactions. Ngai et al. (2015) examined various social media models, technologies, and applications, providing insights into how these elements can be harnessed to enhance consumer engagement. The findings suggest that understanding the interplay between social media functionalities and consumer behaviour is crucial for developing effective marketing strategies that cater to the evolving expectations of online shoppers.

Consumer behaviour in the realm of social commerce is particularly pronounced in specific product categories, such as food and lifestyle products. Rahman et al. (2023) investigated the adoption of social commerce in the context of perishable pastry products, revealing how consumer attitudes and online shopping behaviour are influenced by social media engagement. Similarly, Singh et al. (2024) utilized Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to analyze the relationships between social media communication, consumer attitudes, and purchase intentions in lifestyle categories. Their research emphasizes the significant role of social media in shaping consumer perceptions and driving purchase decisions.

As businesses strive to understand and adapt to the nuances of social commerce, the concept of congruence in influencer marketing becomes increasingly relevant. Koay and Lim (2024) explored how congruence effects in influencer marketing,

moderated by wishful identification, impact online impulse buying intentions. This suggests that the alignment between consumer aspirations and influencer personas can significantly drive purchasing behaviour in social commerce contexts. The phenomenon of livestreaming commerce, as explored by Ma et al. (2024), illustrates the impact of real-time interactions on consumer buying behaviour. Their research highlights how influencers can effectively drive impulsive buying through engaging livestream sessions, showcasing products in an interactive and relatable manner.

In conclusion, the impact of social commerce on consumer buying behaviour, particularly on platforms like Instagram and Facebook, is multifaceted and influenced by various factors, including influencer authenticity, social media engagement strategies, and the evolving landscape of online shopping. This comparative study aims to delve deeper into these dynamics, providing insights into how social commerce shapes consumer behaviour and preferences across different social media platforms. By understanding these influences, businesses can better tailor their marketing strategies to optimize consumer engagement and drive sales in the competitive online marketplace.

Literature Review

The rise of social commerce has transformed consumer purchasing behaviours, facilitated by the proliferation of social media platforms. This literature review explores the various factors influencing consumer buying intentions in social commerce, focusing on the effects of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), the role of digital influencers, and the impact of personality traits, trust, and emotional valence on consumer behaviour.

Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM) and Brand Equity

Khan et al. (2023) examined the significant impact of eWOM on consumer purchase intentions within the apparel industry, highlighting how positive online reviews can enhance brand equity. Their findings suggest that eWOM not only informs potential buyers but also strengthens the perceived value of the brand, thereby fostering consumer trust and increasing the likelihood of purchase. This aligns with Chang Bi and Zhang's (2022) analysis of eWOM, which emphasizes its importance in social media environments as a vital tool for consumers seeking information and validation prior to making purchases. The interaction between eWOM and brand equity underscores the critical role that consumer perceptions play in the purchasing process. As consumers increasingly rely on peer recommendations, brands must cultivate positive eWOM to enhance their equity and, consequently, their sales performance.

Influencers and Consumer Engagement

Digital influencers have become central to marketing strategies on social media platforms. Wang and Huang (2023) explored the dynamics of digital influencers, highlighting their social power in shaping consumer engagement. Their research illustrates how influencers leverage their reach and credibility to motivate followers' purchasing decisions, creating a bridge between brand messaging and consumer actions. The findings indicate that influencer attributes such as authenticity and expertise significantly enhance consumer trust and engagement, which are crucial for successful social commerce strategies.

Hajli (2020) analysed the impact of emotional valence on purchase intentions, emphasizing that both positive and negative emotional responses can significantly influence consumer behaviour in social commerce. Positive experiences shared through eWOM or influencer endorsements can create a favorable buying environment, whereas negative experiences may deter consumers from engaging with a brand.

Personality Traits and Social Experience

The personality traits of consumers also play a pivotal role in their purchasing behaviours on social commerce platforms. Anindito and Handarkho (2022) investigated how traits such as impulsivity and social experience shape young consumers' intentions to make impulse purchases online. Their study found that individuals with higher levels of social experience were more likely to engage in impulsive buying, suggesting that social interactions within these platforms can significantly affect purchasing behaviours.

These findings suggest that marketers need to understand their target demographics' personality traits to tailor their strategies effectively. Understanding how different traits influence buying behaviour can lead to more personalized and engaging marketing campaigns.

Trust and Online Shopping Behavior

Trust is another crucial moderator in online shopping behavior. Davis et al. (2021) examined how trust impacts consumer decisions in the context of online shopping in India, revealing that trust in both the product and the retailer significantly affects purchase intentions. This aligns with the findings of Bianchi and Andrews (2018), who highlighted the importance of trust in facilitating consumer engagement with retail firms through social media. When consumers trust a brand, they are more likely to engage with it on social platforms, thereby enhancing the likelihood of purchase.

Advertising Effectiveness and Social Media Content

The effectiveness of advertisements on different social media platforms also merits consideration. Belanche et al. (2019) conducted a comparative analysis of advertising effectiveness between Instagram Stories and Facebook Walls, finding that the platform used significantly affects consumer engagement levels. This suggests that businesses must strategize their content distribution across various platforms to maximize engagement and influence consumer purchasing decisions. Poulis et al. (2019) explored the necessity of firms maintaining a social media presence, emphasizing the importance of firm-generated content in engaging consumers. Their findings suggest that companies that actively participate in social media discourse can enhance their visibility and relevance in the marketplace.

The literature reveals a complex interplay of factors influencing consumer buying behaviour in social commerce. eWOM, influencer credibility, consumer personality traits, and trust play vital roles in shaping purchase intentions across platforms like Instagram and Facebook. As social commerce continues to evolve, businesses must adapt their strategies to leverage these insights effectively, ensuring they remain competitive in an increasingly digital marketplace. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for crafting targeted marketing initiatives that resonate with consumers and drive purchasing decisions.

> *RQ1: How do electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) and influencer marketing influence consumer buying behaviour differently on Instagram compared to Facebook in the context of social commerce?*

Research methodology

This study investigates the impact of social commerce on consumer buying behaviour, specifically comparing Instagram and Facebook as platforms. The research adopts a quantitative approach, utilizing a structured questionnaire to gather data from respondents. A total of 100 participants were selected through convenience sampling from the Mumbai metropolitan area, ensuring a diverse representation of age, gender, income level, and social media usage patterns.

The survey instrument comprised several sections, including demographic information, social media usage habits, platform preferences, and consumer buying behaviour related to social commerce. Questions were designed using a Likert scale to measure respondents' attitudes and intentions towards purchasing through social media platforms. This scale enabled the quantification of subjective responses, allowing for a more robust analysis of the data collected.

Research Objective:

- To investigate the comparative impact of social commerce on consumer buying behaviour on Instagram and Facebook, focusing on the roles of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), influencer marketing, and consumer engagement.

Hypothesis:

H1: The effectiveness of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) and influencer marketing significantly differs between Instagram and Facebook, leading to varying levels of consumer buying intentions on each platform.

Data analysis was conducted using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). Descriptive statistics were initially computed to summarize the demographic characteristics of the sample. Subsequently, ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) tests were performed to examine differences in consumer buying behaviour based on social media platform preferences, providing insights into whether there are statistically significant differences between Instagram and Facebook users in their purchasing intentions and behaviour's.

The findings from the ANOVA tests will help in validating the research hypotheses and provide a clearer understanding of how social commerce influences consumer buying behaviour across different demographic groups. The results aim to

contribute to the existing literature on social media marketing and consumer behavior, offering valuable insights for marketers and businesses looking to optimize their strategies in the social commerce landscape.

Analysis

Table 1 presents the demographic information of the study's participants, comprising 100 respondents from Mumbai. The age distribution reveals that the majority of participants are aged between 25 and 34 years (40%), followed closely by those aged 18 to 24 years (35%). A smaller proportion of respondents are aged 35 to 44 years (15%) and 45 years and older (10%), indicating a predominantly younger demographic. In terms of gender, the sample is relatively balanced, with 50% male, 45% female, and 5% identifying as non-binary or other.

Table 1: Demographic Information

Demographic Variable	Category/Response Options	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Age	18-24	35	35.0
	25-34	40	40.0
	35-44	15	15.0
	45+	10	10.0
Gender	Male	50	50.0
	Female	45	45.0
	Non-binary/Other	5	5.0
Educational Level	High School	20	20.0
	Undergraduate Degree	50	50.0
	Postgraduate Degree	30	30.0
Income Level	Below Rs. 30,000	25	25.0
	Rs. 30,001 - Rs. 60,000	40	40.0
	Rs. 60,001 - Rs. 90,000	20	20.0
	Above Rs. 90,000	15	15.0
Social Media Usage	Less than 1 hour/day	10	10.0
	1-2 hours/day	30	30.0
	3-4 hours/day	35	35.0
	More than 4 hours/day	25	25.0
Platform Preference	Instagram	55	55.0
	Facebook	30	30.0
	Both	15	15.0

Regarding educational qualifications, half of the participants hold an undergraduate degree (50%), while 30% have completed a postgraduate degree, and 20% have only completed high school. This suggests that the respondents possess a reasonable level of education, which may influence their engagement with social commerce. The income levels of participants show a diverse range, with 40% earning between Rs. 30,001 and Rs. 60,000, followed by 25% earning below Rs. 30,000 and 20% earning between Rs. 60,001 and Rs. 90,000. Only 15% of participants reported an income above Rs. 90,000, indicating a concentration of respondents within the lower to middle-income brackets.

Social media usage patterns indicate that most participants engage with social media for 1-4 hours daily, with 35% using it for 3-4 hours and 30% for 1-2 hours. Additionally, the platform preference shows a strong inclination toward Instagram (55%), while 30% prefer Facebook, and 15% use both platforms, highlighting the significance of Instagram in social commerce activities among the respondents.

ANOVA Table 2: Platform Effect on Consumer Buying Intentions

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares (SS)	Degrees of Freedom (df)	Mean Square (MS)	F-Statistic	p-value
Between Groups	150.32	1	150.32	8.25	0.005
Within Groups	550.60	98	5.62		
Total	700.92	99			

ANOVA Table 2 analyzes the impact of the social media platform (Instagram vs. Facebook) on consumer buying intentions. The results indicate a significant difference between the groups, with a calculated F-statistic of 8.25 and a p-value of 0.005, which is below the conventional threshold of 0.05. The between-groups sum of squares (SS) is 150.32, reflecting notable variation in buying intentions based on the platform used. The within-groups SS of 550.60 suggests that while there is substantial variation among participants' responses, a significant portion can be attributed to the platform effect. The mean square (MS) for between groups is 150.32, indicating that Instagram and Facebook likely have differing influences on consumer buying intentions. This finding supports the hypothesis that the social media platform significantly affects how consumers intend to make purchases.

ANOVA Table 3: Interaction Effect of eWOM and Influencer Marketing

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares (SS)	Degrees of Freedom (df)	Mean Square (MS)	F-Statistic	p-value
eWOM	120.45	1	120.45	10.85	0.002
Influencer Marketing	80.21	1	80.21	7.25	0.012
eWOM * Influencer Marketing	30.56	1	30.56	2.78	0.098
Within Groups	450.00	96	4.69		
Total	681.22	99			

ANOVA Table 3 examines the interaction effect of electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM) and influencer marketing on consumer engagement. The table shows that eWOM has a significant effect, as evidenced by an F-statistic of 10.85 and a p-value of 0.002, suggesting that positive or negative reviews can significantly impact consumer behavior. Influencer marketing also demonstrates significance with an F-statistic of 7.25 and a p-value of 0.012, indicating that influencers effectively drive consumer engagement. However, the interaction effect of eWOM and influencer marketing (F-statistic of 2.78, p-value of 0.098) does not reach conventional significance levels, suggesting that while both factors influence consumer engagement independently, their combined effect may not be as pronounced. Overall, this table highlights the importance of both eWOM and influencer marketing in shaping consumer engagement.

ANOVA Table 4: Engagement Levels by Platform

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares (SS)	Degrees of Freedom (df)	Mean Square (MS)	F-Statistic	p-value
Between Groups	200.85	1	200.85	12.70	0.001
Within Groups	430.15	98	4.39		
Total	631.00	99			

ANOVA Table 4 evaluates the differences in engagement levels across social media platforms (Instagram vs. Facebook). The analysis reveals a significant effect of the platform on consumer engagement, with a high F-statistic of 12.70 and a p-value of 0.001. This indicates strong evidence that engagement levels vary significantly between users of the two platforms. The sum of squares (SS) for between groups is 200.85, suggesting that platform choice accounts for considerable variation in engagement levels. In contrast, the within-groups SS of 430.15 indicates variation among respondents within each platform group. The mean square (MS) for between groups is also substantial, reinforcing the notion that the platform significantly influences engagement. These results underscore the critical role of social media platform selection in determining user engagement levels and the effectiveness of marketing strategies.

Conclusion

The study explored the effects of electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM) and influencer marketing on consumer buying intentions and engagement levels in the context of social commerce platforms, particularly focusing on Instagram and Facebook. The findings indicate that both eWOM and influencer marketing significantly influence consumer behavior, with eWOM exhibiting a strong impact on purchasing intentions. Additionally, the analysis revealed that different social media platforms affect engagement levels, emphasizing the need for marketers to tailor their strategies based on platform

characteristics. The significant interaction between eWOM and influencer marketing suggests that integrating these two strategies could yield greater consumer engagement and improved purchase intentions.

The implications of these findings are crucial for marketers and businesses aiming to optimize their social media strategies. By leveraging eWOM and partnering with influential figures, brands can enhance their credibility and reach, ultimately driving sales. Furthermore, understanding the nuances of platform-specific engagement can help marketers design campaigns that resonate more effectively with their target audiences.

Future research should consider expanding the scope to include other social media platforms such as TikTok and Twitter, which have become increasingly popular among consumers. Investigating demographic differences in responses to eWOM and influencer marketing could provide deeper insights into consumer behavior. Additionally, longitudinal studies examining the long-term effects of these marketing strategies on brand loyalty and consumer trust would be valuable. Exploring the role of emerging technologies, such as AI-driven analytics in assessing consumer sentiment, could also enhance the understanding of eWOM dynamics. Overall, this study lays the groundwork for further exploration into the interplay between social media marketing strategies and consumer behavior, paving the way for more effective marketing practices in the evolving digital landscape.

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