

ISSN: 2582-6433



# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL FOR LEGAL RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS

Open Access, Refereed Journal Multi Disciplinary  
Peer Reviewed 6th Edition

**VOLUME 2 ISSUE 7**

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# **THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN SHAPING CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR**

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LLM, II Semester III.(2022-23)

## ***1. Abstract.***

*Social networks have become an integral part of the lives of individuals. It has also been researched that social media has influenced the purchasing decisions of customers. Over the past few years, the rise of these social media has given marketing professionals a chance to reach their customers faster. Online campaigning and promotion of companies through social media use persuasive features from various multimedia channels. The marketing mix has become an important aspect of the social media phenomenon. Previous studies have shown that social media has enabled 25% of consumers to post on social media to provide others with information related to their purchase. Another study by Postill & Pink stated that social media played an important role in customers' purchasing decisions. Consumers use social media to gather complete information; 49% of people can decide on certain products and 60% of consumers prefer to share product information with others online.*

## ***2. Introduction***

The use of the Internet, social media, mobile applications and other digital communication technologies has become part of the daily lives of billions of people. For example, the current level of Internet use among adults is about 87% and approaches 100% for demographic groups such as adults with higher education and higher incomes. Young people – the next generation of mass consumers – have equally high standards. People are also spending more and more time on the Internet. In the UK, for example, the number of hours spent online by adults has more than doubled over the last ten years and now averages 20.5 hours per week. Social media is fueling some of this growth: worldwide, more than 2 billion people now use social media, and Facebook alone now has about 1 billion daily active users. Social media has been largely implemented as an effective mechanism that supports the marketing goals and strategies of firms, especially in aspects related to customer participation, customer relationship

management and communication. For example, social media can strategically improve two-way communication between businesses and customers and accordingly connect more customers with organizations. This will be in addition to the ability of social media to present content that is published visually, verbally or textually, or using a combination of textual, visual and verbal content. In various contexts, businesses have eagerly anticipated the use of social media in many aspects of their customer interactions, such as facilitating information retrieval, interactivity, promotion, and improving customer purchasing behavior. People are showing themselves more and more on social networks. This is done for many purposes, including their role as consumers as they search for information about products, buy and consume them, and communicate with others about their experiences. Marketers have responded to this fundamental shift by increasing their use of digital marketing channels. In fact, by 2017 about a third of global advertising spending will be on digital channels. In the future, consumer marketing will thus focus on the digital environment, especially social media and mobile devices. Consumer research therefore needs to explore and understand consumer behavior in the digital environment. This has been the case for the last decade, and further research has focused on digital consumer behavior issues. However, of course, more research is still emerging in the literature - especially given the ever-changing nature of social media and mobile environments in which consumers find themselves and interact with brands and each other. This article attempts to summarize recent developments on these issues in the consumer behavior and psychology literature, hoping to stimulate new relevant research.

### **3.The Origins of Social Media**

In 1979, computer scientists Tom Truscott and Jim Ellis from Duke University created the so-called Usenet, a worldwide discussion system that allowed Internet users to post public messages. However, the term Social Media that we know today originated almost 20 years before that, when Bruce and Susan Abelson founded “Open Diary” an early social networking site that brought together online diary writers into one community.

As the Internet increased its availability and popularity, new social networking sites such as MySpace (in 2003) and Facebook (in 2004) emerged. These platforms were the origin of the term “Social Media” and contributed to the prominence it has today.

Although MySpace and Facebook give us an idea about the implications of Social Media, in order to obtain a formal definition of the term, we must first analyse two concepts that are related to it: Web 2.0 and User Generated Content

## **.Definition of Social Media**

Based on the above clarifications of the meaning and origin of the terms Web 2.0 and UGC, we can now give a more detailed definition of what social media really is. Although there are different authors who have defined the term social media, we can highlight two commonly used ones: "Social media are interactive computer-mediated technologies that facilitate the creation and sharing of information, ideas, career interests, and more. forms of expression through virtual communities and social network services.

Kietzmann et al., 2011, *Business Horizons*, 54(3), 241-251

"Social media is a group of Internet applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and that enable the creation and exchange of user-generated content."<sup>1</sup>

## **Types of Social Media**

Within the general definition, there are different types of social media that need to be further distinguished. However, although there is no systematic way in which different social media applications can be categorized, it is important that any classification scheme takes into account the applications that may be in the pipeline.

To create such a classification scheme, Kaplan & Haenlein (2010) rely on a set of theories in the field of media research (social presence, media richness) and social processes (self-presentation, self-disclosure), two key elements of Social Media. If we combine these dimensions, we obtain the classification of social media that we visualized in In terms of social presence and media richness, collaborative projects such as Wikipedia and blogs score the lowest because they are often text-based and allow only relatively simple exchange. . Content communities such as YouTube and social networking sites score slightly higher due to their ability to share images and videos in addition to text communication. At the highest level are virtual gaming and social worlds such as World of Warcraft, which seek to replicate all dimensions of face-to-face interaction in a virtual environment.

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<https://www.abacademies.org/articles/exploring-the-role-of-social-media-in-shaping-consumer-buying-behavior-a-factor-analysis-approach-9691.html>

In terms of self-presentation and self-disclosure, blogs score higher than collaborative projects because they are usually targeted at very specific users. Similarly, social networking sites have more self-disclosure than content communities. Finally, virtual social worlds involve a higher level of self-disclosure than virtual game worlds, which have strict rules that users must follow.<sup>2</sup>

## **Impacts of Social Media on Customers<sup>1</sup>.**

A platform where customers can express their opinions and ideas and share their information through reviews with many people.

2. Provides a medium for effective communication with others.
3. Social media platforms are a time and cost effective method.
4. It is used as a branding tool<sup>5</sup>. It provides users with various options.

Social media is used as a tool by a company to promote its products online to its customers. Various platforms help in achieving the goals of companies in providing brand awareness. From Facebook to LinkedIn, there are virtually any number of ways companies can share product information and communicate indirectly with customers. Social media improves customer service by giving customers the ability to share opinions that require immediate feedback. Social media provides a unique opportunity by providing electronic word-of-mouth to a wide audience, fostering consumer-to-consumer communication, and promoting a company's brand awareness through a vast social network.

## **4.From Traditional Consumer Behaviour to Online Consumer Behaviour**

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.abacademies.org/articles/exploring-the-role-of-social-media-in-shaping-consumer-buying-behavior-a-factor-analysis-approach-9691.html>

With the rise of the Internet and the increasing number of companies offering their products online, shopping has experimented with a shift towards online stores. The online sector has been slowly increasing its market share over the last two decades. The total has increased from less than 5 percent in the late 1990s to about 12 percent in 2019, according to the Commerce Department.

Katawetawaraks and Wang (2011) conducted a study to provide insight into online shopping decision making by comparing offline and online consumer decision making and identifying the factors that motivate online customers to purchase a product or service online. As a result of this study, it was found that marketing communication is processed differently offline than online and therefore has an impact on consumer decision making. Many models have been presented by different authors on the subject of online consumer behavior, but the most relevant model was proposed in 2012 by two management professors from India, UjwalaDange and Vinay Kumar: The FFF Model.

The FFF model of online consumer behavior is an improved version of the traditional model by Kotler & Keller (2012). This model takes into account the internal and external factors that influence online consumer buying behavior before proceeding to discuss the main filter elements that a customer uses when choosing an online store. Finally, it deals with the revised filtered buying behavior that leads to the final selection process.<sup>3</sup>

#### ***4.1. Consumer digital culture***

*The study of consumer digital culture takes a fairly deep look at the digital environment in which consumers live. A key aspect of this work is understanding how consumer identities and the concept of I relate to digital worlds [12]. Belk extended his previous work on the "extended self" to include the digital environment that consumers now live in, an important part of the theory's development as it addresses concepts such as consumers' ability to have more of themselves because of multiple online identities. Belk also offers many areas for future research. Other studies on this topic have investigated more specific phenomena. McQuarrie focused on fashion blogs as a way to document the "megaphone effect", an opportunity for ordinary consumers to reach a wide audience through social media [13]. This is an important*

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.abacademies.org/articles/exploring-the-role-of-social-media-in-shaping-consumer-buying-behavior-a-factor-analysis-approach-9691.html>

effect, and they discussed how bloggers build audiences and accumulate social (or cultural) capital by demonstrating good taste. This is true in certain contexts, but it is important to understand consumer social content creation behavior in general, as positive personality signaling is likely to be a common motivation to post certain things on sites like Facebook. Together, these articles make an important conceptual contribution to how we see consumers in the digital world, especially because of the broader understanding of what it means to be a consumer in today's digital world.

2.2 Advertising Social media marketing is the most economical way to promote any product. Creating a new profile and subscribing are free on almost all social networks. Awareness of the advertised brand increases as the company communicates with a wide audience. To get started, you need to create social media profiles and start interacting with them. Simply communicating with potential customers will increase brand awareness and start building a business reputation. Each message that is spread will be presented to a new group of people, which can lead to them becoming potential customers, and the more people who know about the business, the better. So we can say that social media advertising works well in terms of reaching a wide range of people, like a "word of mouth" effect. There is no doubt that simply creating a social media page will make a brand recognizable and if used regularly can create a large audience for a business. Social media advertising gives you a lot of control over your target audience. Digital advertising is a major topic in marketing literature, and with regard to consumer behavior, it deals with how consumers respond to various aspects of digital advertising. J.H.Schumann dealt with how to overcome negative reactions to personalization through normative reciprocity appeals (instead of utilitarian appeals) [14]. Lambrecht studied ad retargeting, where personalized recommendations are made based on previous browsing history when a consumer returns to a website [15]. There is a backlash to retargeting, but this will moderate as consumer preferences become more precise. He found that personalized website advertisements are received more favorably when consumers have a better perception of control over the personal information used for personalization, which is directly consistent with the psychological response literature and offers a theoretical way forward. X. Luo investigated the reasons for the popularity of advertising in group shopping (i.e., "daily transactions") and found that the main factor of popularity is social influence [16]. He studied responses to search engine ads and found that when consumers search for less popular keywords, it takes more time to find them. Puccinelli considered how emotions in content (e.g., TV shows) combined with ad energy levels affect consumer responses and found that the affective

*relationship between content and advertising matters, so that when consumers experience "decontamination" emotions (e.g., sadness, sadness), more difficult to watch a vigorous advertisement [17]. He looked at how digital media and search ads drive online shopping for retailers and found that digital ads are more effective at driving online consumer behavior than offline ads.*

## ***4.2. Impact of digital environments***

*In recent years, the topic of how the social media environment influences consumer behavior has been constantly emerging. It is interesting to see how various information and social characteristics of the social environment, such as the impact of other consumers' opinions or choices (e.g. bids in online auctions), or even the lives of friends through social networks, can influence subsequent behavior. For example, in terms of integral environmental consequences, Lamberton looked at learning from others in digital environments and identified how such observations can influence the decisions individuals make in these environments as well as the inferences they draw about others [18]. The researchers examined how the environment responded to how Facebook use affected self-control. They found that when in contact with close friends on Facebook, consumers subsequently showed lower levels of self-control when choosing, for example, healthy behaviors (e.g., choosing a healthier snack instead of an unhealthy option). However, this was only for people who knew their closest friends on Facebook. Consumer behavior in the mobile environment is becoming increasingly important as consumers use mobile devices more frequently. This is especially interesting in the context of shopping. In commerce, researchers have studied how consumers respond to mobile offers in brick-and-mortar stores and seen how mobile coupons can change the way consumers shop. In e-commerce, consumers are focusing on shopping on mobile devices (e.g. tablets) and especially how touching products (instead of clicking on them) can enhance their sense of belonging and giving. This is an interesting contribution because work on how consumers physically interact with mobile devices and how this affects decision making is scarce [19]. This is seen as showing a mobile ad – which is very small and has very little (if any) information – to consumers with brand attitudes and purchase intentions. They found that in many product categories, mobile media ads have no effect, but increase attitudes and intentions for high-involvement utilitarian products.”*

*2.4 Online WOM Consumers rely on information from social sources. A number of sub-topics have been discussed recently. Imagery in online surveys had a positive impact on consumer attitudes and hedonic product*

choices. S. Moore reviewed explanatory language in online surveys and found that what consumers attributed to actions or responses had an impact on perceived usefulness [20]. These businesses, often with little resources and staff, must grow quickly, implement new marketing channels and skills, and be innovative to keep budgets going [21]. He looked at negative WOM and found that using mitigating language when expressing negative opinions increased the credibility and attractiveness of the reviewer. T. Tang considered two kinds of neutral language, mixed (positive and negative) and indifferent, showing that neutral WOM increases the direct effect of positive and negative WOM on purchase when mixed. Another important topic discussed recently is the difference between online and offline WOM [22].

### **4.3. Online WOM**

is defined by the social and functional characteristics of the brand, while offline WOM is defined by the emotional characteristics of the brand, based on a large dataset of brand WOM online and offline settings. Taking a narrower but still important view, the researchers found differences between social media (e.g. Facebook) and offline (in-person) WOM transmission, indicating that consumers are less likely to transmit WOM on social media due to higher perceived social risk.

### **4.4. Behaviour of social network users in 2019**

The amount of time people spend on social media has increased again this year, albeit marginally. GlobalWebIndex reports that today the average user (in the world) spends 2 hours and 16 minutes on social platforms every day, and in 2018 this indicator was 2 hours and 15 minutes. This is about a third of the total time on the Internet and a seventh of the total time awake. It is worth noting that the amount of time spent on social media varies significantly between cultures – for example, in Japan, internet users spend only 36 minutes a day on social media. On the other side of the spectrum are Filipinos who are (just like last year) the most active on social media platforms. This year, the average in the Philippines is 4 hours and 12 minutes, an increase of 15 minutes per day (6%) compared to last year.

### **4.5. Growth of Instagram popularity**

A search for the term "social media" in any Internet search engine gives results: the popular "Facebook", "Twitter", "Instagram" and "YouTube", "Vkontakte" and others. Marketers around the world agree that Instagram will be the best platform for brands in 2019. Despite

*some management issues in 2018, Instagram has seen some serious success over the past 12 months. Back in June, the company announced that it had surpassed 1 billion "active accounts." Although it was later clarified that this number does not reflect the number of unique users, it is still impressive. The latest available advertising audience data shows that these high numbers are continuing in 2019, with the number of active users increasing by more than 4% in the last 3 months to 895 million worldwide. Instagram's audience may be half the size of Facebook's, but over the past three months, Instagram has added more than twice as many new users as Facebook. The platform grew its global advertising audience by 38 million new users in Q4 2018, while Facebook only grew by 18 million new users in the same period. However, Instagram's popularity among marketers is not only due to its growing user base, but also to the fact that the social network boasts a balanced audience profile. The ratio of men to women in Instagram's global audience is about 50:50, and while the average user is still younger than on Facebook, Instagram is more common in the 18- to 34-year-old audience than mastermind Zuckerberg (though the total number of users in that age is lower). During 2018, Instagram showed impressive growth worldwide and now the social network has gone global. Instagram ad viewership has surpassed Facebook ad audience in 20 countries and this number is expected to grow in 2019. The data presented shows global social media advertising revenue from 2015 to 2018. According to the source, in 2018 revenue will be 41 .6 billion US dollars. According to the source, revenue will be \$41.6 billion in 2018, up from \$17.89 billion in 2015 (Figure 3). According to 2017 estimates, Facebook and YouTube together account for nearly three-quarters of the social media advertising market. A recent study by the InternetAdvertising Bureau (IAB) shows that social media spending grew by 53% in the first half of 2018, with a total contribution of \$242.5 million.<sup>4</sup>*

## **5. Conclusion**

*So we believe that social media advertising, while not without its flaws, is still a great way to build brand loyalty in the digital economy, especially since it allows you to interact directly with potential customers on a regular basis. The demand for social networks: the information field of people and enterprises is greatly expanded, the costs of searching, exchanging and*

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.abacademies.org/articles/exploring-the-role-of-social-media-in-shaping-consumer-buying-behavior-a-factor-analysis-approach-9691.html>

storing information will be reduced, the role of information as a resource in the economic management system will be strengthened, it will help the enterprise to reach a larger number of consumers, increase the volume of income and increase the competitiveness of the enterprise . The application of marketing technologies makes it possible to carry out promotion and realization of common resources of enterprises, including goods and services, and to choose effective methods of promotion for each product. It also helps to increase the efficiency of their activities. The use of social media in marketing will increase brand loyalty, directly and regularly, to interact with potential customers in the digital economy, so many companies understand the importance and necessity of using social media in marketing.<sup>5</sup>

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