

Influence of Social Media Marketing Activities on Consumer Purchase Decisions: An Empirical Study with Reference to Mysuru City

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Abstract

Social media has moved from being a supporting promotional channel to the place where many Indian consumers first meet a brand, compare offers and listen to other buyers. This study examines how five social media marketing activities — entertainment, interactivity, trendiness, customisation and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) — are associated with the purchase decisions of consumers in Mysuru city. Primary data were collected from 220 social media users, selected by convenience-cum-purposive sampling from among consumers who had already purchased a product after seeing it on social media, through a structured questionnaire, and analysed using percentage analysis, descriptive statistics, Cronbach's alpha, Pearson correlation, multiple regression, one-way ANOVA with post-hoc tests and chi-square test. All five activities showed a significant positive correlation with purchase decision. Together they explained 40.2 per cent of the variation in purchase decision ($R^2 = 0.402$), with eWOM emerging as the strongest predictor, followed by entertainment and trendiness, while interactivity and customisation were not significant once the other factors were controlled. Purchase decision differed significantly across age groups, but platform preference was independent of gender. The results suggest that marketers in tier-II cities may gain more from authentic customer reviews and engaging content than from heavily personalised messaging, although the cross-sectional design supports association rather than causation.

Keywords: *Social Media Marketing; Electronic Word-of-Mouth; Consumer Purchase Decision; Digital Marketing; Mysuru*

1. Introduction

Marketing management has always been about reaching the right customer with the right message at the right time. What has changed in the last decade is where that customer spends his or her time. Platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, Facebook and WhatsApp are no longer used only for keeping in touch with friends; they have become shop windows, review boards and customer-care desks rolled into one.

For marketers, this shift has created both an opportunity and a puzzle. Spending on social media advertising has grown sharply, yet firms often struggle to tell which activities actually move a consumer from scrolling to buying. Kim and Ko (2012) offered a useful way of breaking social media marketing into five activities — entertainment, interaction, trendiness, customisation and word-of-mouth — and this framework has since been tested in many countries. However, the studies reviewed here are largely from developed economies or concentrate on metropolitan or luxury-brand contexts. Tier-II cities such as Mysuru, where traditional retail is still strong but digital adoption is rising

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quickly, have received far less attention. The present study attempts to fill this space by examining how each of these activities is associated with the purchase decisions of consumers in Mysuru city.

2. Review of Literature

Mangold and Faulds (2009) described social media as a "hybrid" element of the promotion mix because it allows companies to talk to customers and, at the same time, allows customers to talk to one another. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) classified social media applications and cautioned firms that they no longer fully control the conversation about their brands. Building on this, Kim and Ko (2012), in their study of luxury fashion brands, found that entertainment, interaction, trendiness, customisation and word-of-mouth together improved value equity, relationship equity and brand equity, which in turn raised purchase intention.

Godey et al. (2016) extended the same framework across five luxury brands and confirmed that social media marketing efforts influence brand awareness and brand image, and through them consumer response. Erkan and Evans (2016) showed that the usefulness and credibility of eWOM information on social media significantly affect purchase intention, and that information shared by other consumers is often trusted more than brand-generated content. Yadav and Rahman (2017), working in the Indian e-commerce context, developed and validated a scale for perceived social media marketing activities and found interactivity, informativeness, personalisation, trendiness and word-of-mouth to be its key components.

Lou and Yuan (2019) examined influencer marketing and reported that the informative value and credibility of influencer posts build trust in branded content, which then shapes purchase intention. Appel et al. (2020) argued that the future of social media marketing will be shaped by omni-social presence, rising concerns about privacy and the growing importance of influencers. Dwivedi et al. (2021) brought together the views of several researchers and identified customer engagement, artificial intelligence and the "dark side" of social media as key areas for future research. Vrontis et al. (2021) and Leung, Gu and Palmatier (2022), through systematic reviews, concluded that the effectiveness of influencer communication depends heavily on perceived authenticity and the fit between the influencer and the brand.

More recently, Kotler, Kartajaya and Setiawan (2021) placed social media at the centre of what they call Marketing 5.0, in which technology is used to create, communicate and deliver value across the customer journey. Kshetri et al. (2024) discussed how generative artificial intelligence is changing content creation and personalisation in marketing, while warning about issues of trust and misinformation. Hollebeek and Macky (2019) had earlier shown that digital content marketing builds consumer engagement and trust, which is a precondition for purchase. Taken together, the literature agrees that social media marketing matters, but it is less clear which specific activities carry the most weight with consumers in smaller Indian cities.

3. Research Gap

Most of the studies reviewed here are set in developed economies or in Indian metropolitan cities and frequently concentrate on luxury or fashion brands. Very few have examined the five-activity framework among general consumers in a tier-II city in Karnataka, and fewer still have looked at how age and gender shape the response to social media marketing. The present study addresses this gap with reference to Mysuru city.

Significance of the study: For marketers and local businesses in tier-II cities, the study shows which social media activities are most strongly associated with buying and which are not, helping them to allocate limited promotion budgets. For policymakers and trade bodies promoting digital marketing among small retailers, it provides district-level evidence on platform use. For academics, it extends the five-activity framework of Kim and Ko (2012) to general consumers in a tier-II city and reports the results by age group and gender.

4. Objectives of the Study

- To study the social media usage pattern and platform preference of consumers in Mysuru city.
- To measure consumer perception of five social media marketing activities — entertainment, interactivity, trendiness, customisation and eWOM.
- To examine the relationship between social media marketing activities and consumer purchase decision.

- To identify the social media marketing activities that significantly influence purchase decision.
- To find out whether purchase decision differs across age groups and whether platform preference is associated with gender.

5. Hypotheses of the Study

- **H01:** There is no significant relationship between social media marketing activities and consumer purchase decision.
- **H02:** Social media marketing activities have no significant influence on consumer purchase decision.
- **H03:** There is no significant difference in purchase decision across different age groups of consumers.
- **H04:** There is no significant association between gender and the most preferred social media platform.

The hypotheses follow the five-activity framework of Kim and Ko (2012), adapted for Indian e-commerce consumers by Yadav and Rahman (2017), under which each activity is expected to be positively associated with purchase decision (H01 and H02). H03 and H04 examine the demographic differences identified in the research gap.

6. Research Methodology

Research design: The study is descriptive and analytical in nature and is based mainly on primary data. Secondary data were drawn from journals, books, industry reports and websites.

Sample size and sampling: Since the population of social media users in Mysuru is large and not precisely known, the sample size was estimated using Cochran's formula, $n = Z^2pq / e^2$, at 95 per cent confidence ($Z = 1.96$), $p = q = 0.5$ and a margin of error of 7 per cent, which gives 196. A 7 per cent margin is wider than the conventional 5 per cent, which would require about 385 responses. Because respondents were not chosen at random, the formula is used only as a guide to the minimum sample size, and the 220 responses should not be taken as statistically representative of all social media users in Mysuru. To allow for incomplete responses, 240 questionnaires were distributed and 220 usable responses were retained. Respondents were selected through convenience-cum-purposive sampling from the four zones of Mysuru city; only those who had purchased at least one product after seeing it on social media during the previous six months were included.

Instrument: A structured questionnaire with 24 statements on a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree) was used, adapted from Kim and Ko (2012) and Yadav and Rahman (2017). Four statements each measured the five marketing activities and purchase decision. Because the items were adapted from established scales, content validity rests on those sources; reliability was assessed with Cronbach's alpha, and convergent and discriminant validity were not separately tested (see Limitations).

Tools of analysis: Percentage analysis, mean, standard deviation, Cronbach's alpha, Pearson correlation, multiple linear regression (with variance inflation factors), one-way ANOVA with Welch's test and Games–Howell post-hoc comparisons, and chi-square test with Cramér's V as effect size were applied at the 5 per cent level of significance; the analysis was carried out using SPSS (version 26). The VIF, Welch and Games–Howell values were computed from the correlation matrix and group statistics reported in Tables 4 and 6.

7. Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents (n = 220)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Per cent
Gender	Male	103	46.8
	Female	117	53.2
Age (years)	18-25	75	34.1
	26-35	72	32.7
	36-45	41	18.6
	Above 45	32	14.5
Occupation	Student	78	35.5

Variable	Category	Frequency	Per cent
	Salaried	72	32.7
	Self-employed / Business	40	18.2
	Homemaker	30	13.6
Monthly Family Income (₹)	Below 25,000	65	29.5
	25,001-50,000	71	32.3
	50,001-75,000	52	23.6
	Above 75,000	32	14.5
Daily Time on Social Media	Less than 1 hour	31	14.1
	1-2 hours	78	35.5
	2-3 hours	77	35.0
	More than 3 hours	34	15.5

Source: Primary Data

Table 1 shows that female respondents (53.2%) slightly outnumber male respondents. Two-thirds of the sample is below 36 years of age, and students and salaried employees together account for 68.2 per cent. Seven in ten respondents (70.5%) spend between one and three hours a day on social media, which indicates fairly heavy exposure to online marketing content.

Table 2: Most Preferred Platform for Product Information

Platform	Frequency	Per cent
Instagram	71	32.3
YouTube	46	20.9
Facebook	38	17.3
WhatsApp	51	23.2
Others	14	6.4
Total	220	100.0

Source: Primary Data

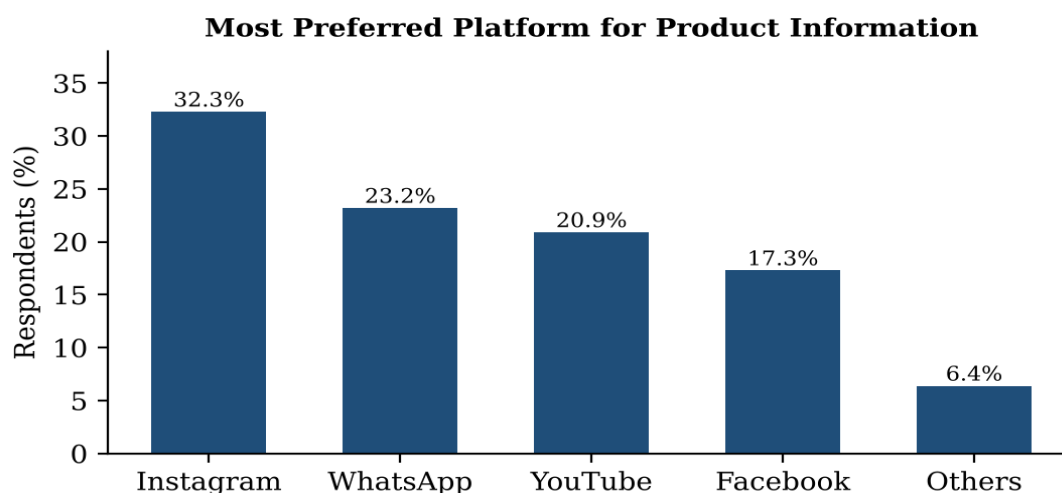


Figure 1: Most Preferred Platform for Product Information

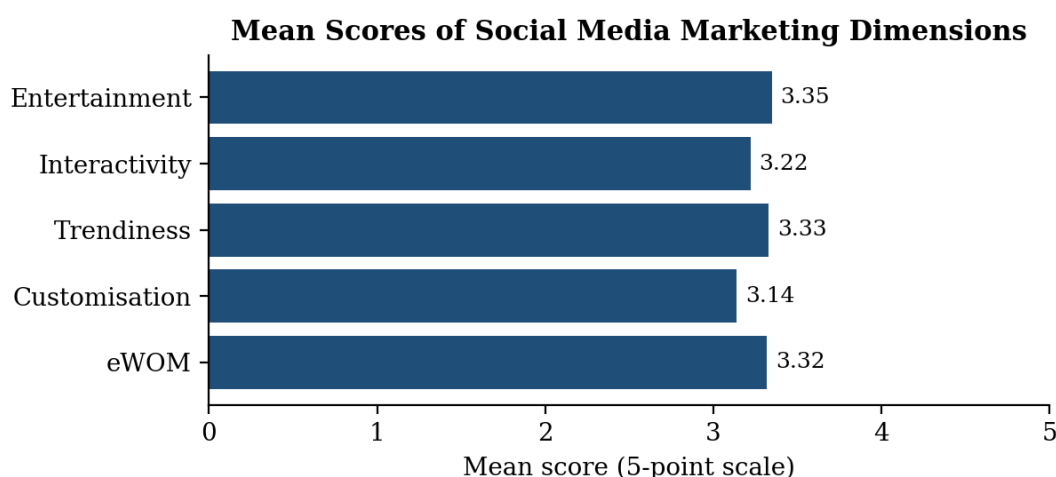
Source: Primary Data (Table data)

Instagram is the most preferred platform for product information (32.3%), followed by WhatsApp (23.2%) and YouTube (20.9%). The strong showing of WhatsApp is notable; it may reflect the use of WhatsApp catalogues, status updates and broadcast lists by local retailers, although this was not examined in the study.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics and Reliability of the Constructs

Construct	No. of Items	Mean	S.D.	Cronbach's α
Entertainment	4	3.35	0.84	0.798
Interactivity	4	3.22	0.81	0.771
Trendiness	4	3.33	0.80	0.796
Customisation	4	3.14	0.87	0.797
eWOM	4	3.32	0.79	0.758
Purchase Decision	4	3.44	0.85	0.812

Source: Primary Data

**Figure 2: Mean Scores of Social Media Marketing Dimensions**

Source: Primary Data (Table data)

All constructs have Cronbach's alpha values above 0.70, confirming acceptable internal consistency. Respondents rated entertainment (3.35), trendiness (3.33) and eWOM (3.32) highest, while customisation received the lowest score (3.14). This suggests that consumers enjoy and follow brand content but do not yet feel that it is truly tailored to them.

Table 4: Correlation between Social Media Marketing Activities and Purchase Decision

Variable	ENT	INT	TRD	CUS	eWOM	PD
Entertainment	1					
Interactivity	0.225**	1				
Trendiness	0.112	0.147*	1			
Customisation	0.189**	0.249**	0.138*	1		
eWOM	0.265**	0.406**	0.249**	0.298**	1	
Purchase Decision	0.382**	0.356**	0.274**	0.295**	0.555**	1

Source: Primary Data. ** Significant at 1% level; * Significant at 5% level

All five activities are positively and significantly correlated with purchase decision at the 1 per cent level. The strongest relationship is with eWOM ($r = 0.555$), followed by entertainment ($r = 0.382$) and interactivity ($r = 0.356$). Hence **H01 is rejected**. The correlations among the independent variables are moderate (below 0.41) and the variance inflation factors computed from them range from 1.07 to 1.34, well below the usual cut-off of 5 (or 2.5), so multicollinearity is not a concern for the regression analysis.

Table 5(a): Model Summary and ANOVA of Regression

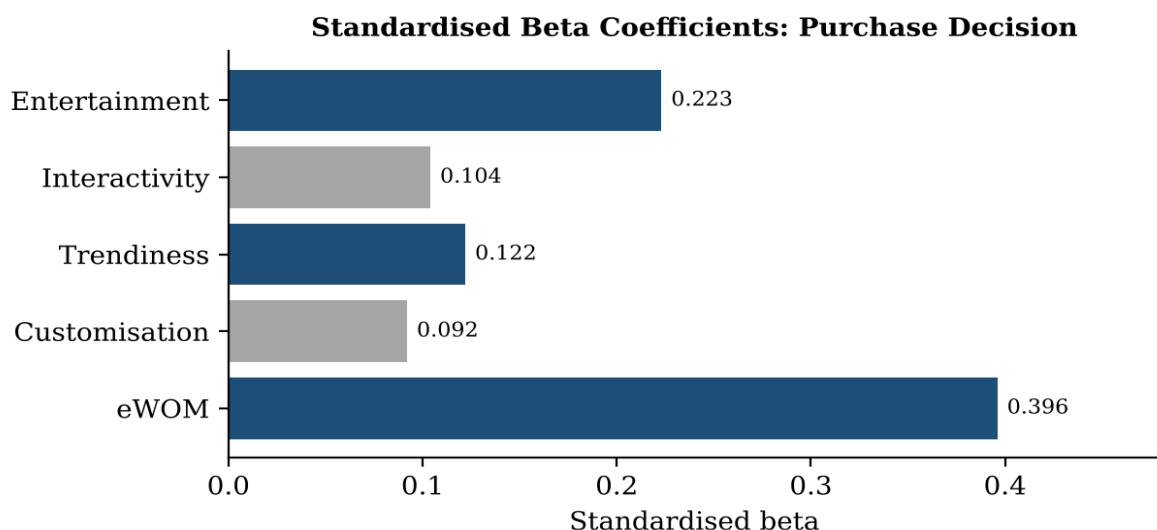
R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error	F (5, 214)	Sig.
0.634	0.402	0.388	0.665	28.81	<0.001

Source: Primary Data

Table 5(b): Regression Coefficients — Dependent Variable: Purchase Decision

Predictor	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	0.207	0.296	—	0.70	0.486
Entertainment	0.225	0.056	0.223	4.01	<0.001
Interactivity	0.108	0.062	0.104	1.76	0.079
Trendiness	0.129	0.058	0.122	2.23	0.027
Customisation	0.090	0.055	0.092	1.62	0.106
eWOM	0.427	0.066	0.396	6.47	<0.001

Source: Primary Data

**Figure 3: Standardised Beta Coefficients (dark bars significant at 5% level)**

Source: Primary Data (Table data)

The regression model is significant ($F = 28.81$, $p < 0.001$) and the five activities together explain 40.2 per cent of the variation in purchase decision. eWOM has the largest influence ($\beta = 0.396$), followed by entertainment ($\beta = 0.223$) and trendiness ($\beta = 0.122$). Interactivity ($p = 0.079$) and customisation ($p = 0.106$) are not significant when the other activities are held constant, although both are significantly correlated with purchase decision (Table 4); only their unique contribution is non-significant. **H02** is therefore rejected for eWOM, entertainment and trendiness, and not rejected for interactivity and customisation.

Table 6: One-way ANOVA — Purchase Decision across Age Groups

Age Group	N	Mean	S.D.
18-25	75	3.49	0.83
26-35	72	3.61	0.77
36-45	41	3.42	0.75
Above 45	32	2.94	1.01

Source: Primary Data

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	10.329	3	3.443	5.028	0.002
Within Groups	147.905	216	0.685		
Total	158.234	219			

Source: Primary Data

The F value of 5.028 ($p = 0.002$) shows that purchase decision differs significantly across age groups; therefore **H03 is rejected**. Because the standard deviation of the above-45 group (1.01) is larger than that of the other groups (0.75–0.83), Welch's test was also applied and confirms the result ($F(3, 93.2) = 3.75, p = 0.014$). Games–Howell post-hoc comparisons show that consumers above 45 years score significantly lower than those aged 18–25 ($p = 0.044$) and 26–35 ($p = 0.009$), but not significantly lower than those aged 36–45 ($p = 0.123$); no other pair differs significantly ($p > 0.5$). Consumers aged 26–35 years show the highest mean score (3.61), while those above 45 years show the lowest (2.94), which may indicate that older consumers are more cautious about buying on the basis of social media content, although the reasons were not examined in this study.

Table 7: Chi-square Test — Gender and Preferred Platform

Gender	Instagram	YouTube	Facebook	WhatsApp	Others	Total
Male	31	24	22	19	7	103
Female	40	22	16	32	7	117

Source: Primary Data. $\chi^2 = 4.617$; $df = 4$; $p = 0.329$ (Not significant at 5% level); Cramér's $V = 0.145$ (small effect)

The chi-square value of 4.617 ($p = 0.329$) is not significant, so **H04 is not rejected**. Although women show a somewhat higher preference for Instagram and WhatsApp, platform preference is broadly independent of gender, and the association is weak (Cramér's $V = 0.145$).

8. Major Findings

- Instagram (32.3%) is the most preferred platform for product information, followed by WhatsApp (23.2%) and YouTube (20.9%); seven in ten respondents (70.5%) spend one to three hours a day on social media.
- All constructs are reliable (α between 0.758 and 0.812); entertainment, trendiness and eWOM receive the highest ratings, and customisation the lowest.
- All five marketing activities are positively and significantly associated with purchase decision, eWOM showing the strongest correlation ($r = 0.555$).
- The activities jointly explain 40.2 per cent of purchase decision; eWOM, entertainment and trendiness are significant predictors, whereas interactivity and customisation, although significantly correlated with purchase decision, do not add significantly once the other activities are controlled.
- Purchase decision varies significantly with age, being highest among 26–35 year-olds and lowest among consumers above 45 years, who differ significantly from the 18–25 and 26–35 groups; platform preference does not depend on gender.

9. Suggestions

- Firms should actively encourage genuine customer reviews, ratings, unboxing videos and testimonials, since eWOM is the strongest predictor of purchase decision in this study.
- Content should be entertaining and current — short videos, reels, contests and timely posts linked to festivals and local events in Mysuru may work better than plain advertisements.
- Personalised messaging may need to be made more meaningful; customisation did not add significantly to purchase decision once the other activities were controlled, so firms should use customer data carefully and transparently. This implication is tentative and needs to be tested in further studies.

- Local businesses may make better use of WhatsApp Business catalogues and Instagram shops, since Instagram and WhatsApp were the most preferred platforms among respondents.
- For consumers above 45 years, brands may build trust through clear product information, secure payment assurance and easy return policies.

10. Limitations and Scope for Further Research

The study is confined to Mysuru city and uses convenience-cum-purposive sampling, so the results may not apply to rural consumers or other regions. Only consumers who had already purchased a product after seeing it on social media were included, so purchase decision is restricted to existing buyers and the results cannot say what persuades non-buyers. The design is a single cross-sectional survey, and all variables come from one self-reported questionnaire at one point in time, so the findings show association rather than causation and may be affected by common-method bias. Convergent and discriminant validity of the adapted scales were not tested, and the post-hoc and variance-inflation values were computed from summary statistics. Future studies may cover rural and semi-urban consumers, compare product categories, include the role of influencers and AI-generated content, and use confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modelling to test the scales and mediating variables such as trust and brand image.

11. Conclusion

Social media has become an important part of the purchase journey of consumers in Mysuru city who buy through it. The study shows that what other consumers say about a product (eWOM), how enjoyable the brand's content is, and how up-to-date it appears are the activities most strongly associated with purchase decision, while interactivity and customisation, though positively correlated with it, add little once the other activities are taken into account. Consumers above 45 years respond less strongly than younger and middle-aged consumers, while men and women show similar platform preferences. As the sample consists only of existing social media buyers and the design is cross-sectional, the findings indicate association, not cause, and cannot be extended to non-buyers. For marketers, the lesson is that in a tier-II city, credibility and engaging content appear to be the most useful levers of social media marketing.

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