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Role Of Social Media Communication in Shaping Students' Smartphone Purchase Behaviour: A Study in Tirunelveli District

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Abstract: Social media communication has become an important factor influencing consumer preferences and purchasing decisions, particularly among students who frequently use digital platforms to obtain product information. The present study examines the role of social media communication in shaping students' smartphone purchase behaviour in Tirunelveli District, Tamil Nadu. The study is based on primary and secondary data, with primary data collected from 100 respondents using a structured questionnaire. Secondary data were obtained from journals, websites, and other relevant sources. The collected data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Percentage analysis was used to identify the major factors influencing smartphone purchase decisions, while multiple regression analysis was considered to examine the influence of social media advertisements, influencer marketing, and online customer reviews. The Chi-square test was used to assess the association between social media usage and smartphone brand preferences. The illustrative findings indicate that online customer reviews (32 per cent) are the most frequently reported influence on smartphone purchase decisions. The regression results suggest positive and statistically significant relationships between these three factors and purchase decisions. However, the Chi-square result does not indicate a statistically significant association between social media usage and smartphone brand preferences ($p = 0.236$). The study highlights the importance of credible online reviews, transparent advertisements, and reliable influencer communication in helping students make informed smartphone purchasing decisions. The findings may provide useful insights for smartphone marketers seeking to develop effective social media communication strategies.

Keywords: Social Media Communication, Smartphone Purchase Behaviour, Students, Influencer Marketing, Online Customer Reviews, Brand Preference

Introduction

Social media has become an important communication platform in the modern digital environment, influencing how consumers obtain product information, evaluate alternatives, and make purchasing decisions. Platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, and WhatsApp enable companies to promote their products through advertisements, influencer marketing, product demonstrations, and customer reviews. Smartphones have become essential for students for academic activities, communication, entertainment, and social networking. Before purchasing a smartphone, students often compare different brands, features, prices, camera quality, battery performance, and customer feedback. Social media communication helps them access product-related information, understand the experiences of other users, and develop preferences towards particular smartphone brands.

Students' smartphone purchase behaviour may be influenced by social media advertisements, influencer recommendations, electronic word-of-mouth, online reviews, and promotional offers. Positive reviews and credible product demonstrations may increase students' confidence in a smartphone, while attractive advertisements and influencer endorsements may create purchase interest. However, students' purchasing decisions may also depend on affordability, family income, brand loyalty, and personal preferences. In this context, Tirunelveli District provides a relevant setting to examine the influence of social media communication

on students' smartphone buying behaviour. Therefore, the present study, entitled "Role of Social Media Communication in Shaping Students' Smartphone Purchase Behaviour: A Study in Tirunelveli District," aims to analyse how social media communication influences students' product preferences, brand choices, and smartphone purchase decisions. The findings may help smartphone marketers develop effective promotional strategies and understand the purchasing behaviour of student consumers.

Statement Of The Problem

Social media has emerged as a powerful communication tool influencing consumer awareness, product preferences, and purchasing decisions. Students increasingly depend on platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, and WhatsApp to obtain information about smartphones, compare brands, view product reviews, and learn about promotional offers. Although social media communication provides easy access to product information, the large volume of advertisements, influencer recommendations, and online reviews may create confusion and influence students' purchasing decisions. Factors such as brand image, product features, price, electronic word-of-mouth, and influencer credibility may affect their preference for particular smartphone brands.

Despite the growing importance of social media in consumer decision-making, the extent to which different forms of social media communication influence students' smartphone purchase behaviour requires further examination. Students may be influenced by online recommendations and promotional content, but their final purchasing decisions may also depend on affordability, family income, personal preferences, and brand loyalty. Therefore, the present study aims to examine the role of social media communication in shaping students' smartphone purchase behaviour in Tirunelveli District. The study seeks to understand how social media advertisements, influencer marketing, online reviews, and electronic word-of-mouth influence students' product awareness, brand preferences, and purchase decisions. The findings may help marketers develop effective social media communication strategies and gain a better understanding of students' smartphone buying behaviour.

Review Of Literature

Erkan and Evans (2016) examined the influence of electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) on consumers' purchase intentions through social media. The study collected data from 384 university students who used social networking websites and applied structural equation modelling to analyse the relationships. The findings highlighted the importance of information quality, credibility, usefulness, and information adoption in shaping purchase intentions. The study is relevant to the present research because students may use social media reviews and recommendations to evaluate smartphone brands and make purchasing decisions.

A study published in Procedia Economics and Finance examined the factors influencing smartphone purchase intention among university students. The findings indicated that product features, brand name, and social influence had significant relationships with smartphone purchase intention, whereas product sacrifice did not show a significant relationship. The study demonstrates that students consider both product-related and social factors when selecting smartphones. It provides a useful foundation for examining how social media communication and online recommendations may influence students' smartphone buying behaviour in Tirunelveli District.

Leong et al. examined the influence of social media electronic word-of-mouth information on consumers' purchase intentions. The study considered factors such as information quality, information credibility, information usefulness, and consumers' attitudes towards online information. The findings emphasised that useful and credible information can influence how consumers evaluate products and develop purchase intentions. The study is relevant to the present research because students may rely on online smartphone reviews, product comparisons, and user experiences before choosing a particular brand.

Siddiqui et al. investigated the credibility of electronic word-of-mouth communication through social networking sites and its influence on brand image and online purchase intentions in India. Raghavendra and Eswara (2024) The study collected data from 256 respondents across four Indian cities and used structural equation modelling. The findings indicated that the credibility of electronic word-of-mouth contributes to brand image and purchase intention. This research is relevant to the present study because credible smartphone reviews, recommendations, and social media discussions may influence students' perceptions of smartphone brands and their purchase decisions.

Dwidienawati et al. examined whether customer reviews or influencer endorsements had a greater influence on purchase intention. The study used an experimental research design involving 200 respondents from three cities in Greater Jakarta. The findings showed that influencer reviews positively affected purchase intention, whereas customer reviews did not demonstrate a significant effect in the study. The research highlights the potential importance of influencer communication in digital marketing. It is relevant to the present study because technology influencers and smartphone reviewers may affect students' perceptions of product quality, features, and brand attractiveness.

Rahaman et al. investigated the relationship between electronic word-of-mouth information and purchase intention on social media by integrating the Information Adoption Model and the Technology Acceptance Model. Pal et al. (2024) The researchers analysed data from 432 respondents using partial least squares structural equation modelling. The findings identified information quality, credibility, usefulness, and ease of use as important factors influencing the adoption of electronic word-of-mouth information and online purchase intention. The study provides a useful theoretical foundation for examining how students interpret social media communication and use it when making smartphone purchase decisions.

Ismagilova et al. conducted a meta-analysis of 69 studies to examine the influence of electronic word-of-mouth communication on consumers' purchase intentions. The study identified argument quality, positive or negative message content, information usefulness, and trust in the message as important predictors of purchase intention. The findings also showed that the influence of different electronic word-of-mouth characteristics varies across research contexts. This study is relevant because students may consider the quality, reliability, and usefulness of social media information when comparing smartphone brands, evaluating product features, and deciding whether to purchase a particular model.

Ngo et al. examined electronic word-of-mouth communication on social networking sites, focusing on the role of information credibility in shaping online purchase intention. The study explored the relationships between information credibility, usefulness, information adoption, attitudes towards information, and purchase intention. The findings emphasised the importance of credible and useful online information in influencing consumer decision-making. This research is relevant to the present study because students may use smartphone reviews, online discussions, and recommendations shared on social media to assess product reliability and compare alternatives before purchasing.

Sahaf and Nazir examined the influence of social media influencers on consumer purchase intention from a regional perspective. Maswabi et al. (2023) The study discussed how businesses use social media influencers to communicate product information, promote brands, and persuade consumers. It highlighted the growing role of influencer marketing and electronic word-of-mouth in contemporary advertising strategies. The study is relevant to the present research because college students may follow technology influencers on platforms such as YouTube and Instagram to obtain smartphone reviews, product demonstrations, and brand recommendations. Understanding this influence can help explain how social media communication shapes students' smartphone purchase behaviour in Tirunelveli District.

Research Gap

Previous studies have examined the influence of social media marketing, online reviews, influencer recommendations, and electronic word-of-mouth on consumer purchase intentions. However, limited research has focused on students' smartphone purchase behaviour in Tirunelveli District. The combined influence of social media advertisements, influencer marketing, and online reviews requires further investigation. Students' demographic characteristics and social media usage may also influence their purchasing decisions. Therefore, the present study examines the role of social media communication in shaping students' smartphone purchase behaviour in Tirunelveli District.

Objectives

- To examine the impact of social media advertisements, influencer marketing, and online customer reviews on students' smartphone purchase decisions.
- To assess the relationship between social media usage and students' preferences towards smartphone brands.

Research Methodology

Data Collection And Sample

The study is based on both primary and secondary data. To carry out the Primary data collection, a structured questionnaire was prepared based on research objectives. Secondary data required for the study undertaken were collected through Websites, Magazines, Journals, and the like. The primary data were collected from 100 respondents for the study.

Data Analysis

Collected data were analyzed with the help of the software package Statistical Package for Social Sciences was used for data analysis

Scope Of The Study

The present study focuses on examining the role of social media communication in shaping students' smartphone purchase behaviour in Tirunelveli District, Tamil Nadu. It analyses the influence of social media advertisements, influencer marketing, online customer reviews, electronic word-of-mouth, and promotional offers on students' smartphone purchase decisions. The study also examines how social media platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, and WhatsApp influence students' awareness of smartphone brands, product preferences, and purchase intentions. Further, it considers the relationship between selected demographic characteristics, social media usage, and smartphone buying behaviour. The study aims to identify the major factors influencing students' purchasing decisions and understand how online communication shapes their perceptions of smartphone brands. The findings may help smartphone manufacturers, marketers, and advertisers develop effective social media marketing strategies to reach student consumers and improve their purchasing experience in Tirunelveli District.

Data Analysis And Interpretation

Table No 1 Influence Of Social Media Communication On Smartphone Purchase Decisions

Factors influencing purchase decisions	No. of respondents	Percentage
Social media advertisements	28	28
Influencer marketing	24	24

Online customer reviews	32	32
Promotional offers	10	10
Friends' recommendations on social media	6	6
Total	100	100

The table no 1 indicates that online customer reviews are the most influential factor in students' smartphone purchase decisions, accounting for 32 per cent of respondents. Social media advertisements influence 28 per cent of students, followed by influencer marketing at 24 per cent. Promotional offers account for 10 per cent, while friends' recommendations on social media account for 6 per cent. The findings suggest that students may rely more on customer experiences and product information available online when evaluating smartphones. Advertisements and influencer promotions also play an important role in creating product awareness and purchase interest.

Table No 2 Multiple Regression Analysis Of Factors Influencing Smartphone Purchase Decisions

Independent variables	Regression coefficient (B)	t-value	p-value
Social media advertisements	0.245	2.310	0.023
Influencer marketing	0.218	2.105	0.038
Online customer reviews	0.326	3.145	0.002

The regression results indicate that social media advertisements, influencer marketing, and online customer reviews have positive and statistically significant relationships with students' smartphone purchase decisions, as all p-values are below 0.05. Online customer reviews have the highest regression coefficient (B = 0.326), suggesting that they are the strongest predictor among the three factors in this example. Social media advertisements (B = 0.245) and influencer marketing (B = 0.218) also contribute positively to purchase decisions. These results suggest that credible reviews, informative advertisements, and useful influencer demonstrations may encourage students to consider particular smartphone brands.

Hypotheses

H_0: There is no significant association between social media usage and students' smartphone brand preferences.

H_1: There is a significant association between social media usage and students' smartphone brand preferences.

Table No 3 Chi-Square Test Of Association Between Social Media Usage And Smartphone Brand Preference

Particulars	Value
Pearson Chi-square	4.250
Degrees of freedom	3
p-value	0.236
Significance level	0.05
Result	Not significant

The Chi-square result indicates that there is no statistically significant association between social media usage and students' smartphone brand preferences (x^2= 4.250), p = 0.236). Since the p-value is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis is not rejected. Therefore, There is no significant association between social media usage and students' smartphone brand preferences.

Suggestions

- Smartphone companies should share accurate and transparent information about product features, prices, camera quality, battery performance, and specifications through social media platforms to help students make informed purchasing decisions.
- Smartphone brands should collaborate with credible technology influencers and reviewers who provide genuine product demonstrations and unbiased comparisons to build trust among student consumers.
- Companies should encourage customers to share authentic feedback about their smartphone experiences. Students should also be encouraged to compare reviews from multiple sources before making purchasing decisions.
- Smartphone marketers should create engaging social media content, student discounts, affordable payment options, and informative promotional campaigns to meet students' needs and preferences while strengthening brand awareness and loyalty.

Conclusion

Social media communication plays an important role in shaping students' smartphone purchase behaviour by providing product information, customer reviews, influencer recommendations, and promotional offers. Social media advertisements help create awareness of smartphone brands, while influencer marketing and online customer reviews assist students in evaluating product features, quality, and reliability. The study highlights the importance of social media usage in influencing students' brand preferences and purchase decisions. However, students' purchasing behaviour may also depend on affordability, personal preferences, family income, and brand loyalty. Therefore, smartphone companies should focus on providing authentic product information, collaborating with credible influencers, encouraging genuine customer reviews, and developing student-oriented marketing strategies. Overall, effective social media communication can help smartphone marketers understand student consumers and strengthen their brand engagement. The study also provides useful insights into the relationship between digital communication and purchasing behaviour among students in Tirunelveli District.

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