

The Relationship between Consumer Attitudes, Perception Shaped by Social Media Marketing and Subsequent Purchasing Behavior: A Case Study of Generation Z in Jammu Division

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Abstract

This study investigates the relationship between consumer attitudes shaped by social media marketing and subsequent purchasing behaviour among Generation Z in Jammu Division. Using a structured questionnaire administered to 500 college students, the research employs multivariate analysis, correlation tests, and regression modeling to analyze the data. Findings reveal a statistically significant positive relationship ($r=0.613, p<0.001$) between attitudes influenced by social media marketing and purchasing behaviour. The study also highlights the mediating role of demographic factors such as age and gender, with younger males exhibiting stronger correlations. The results underscore the importance of targeted, authentic, and engaging social media marketing strategies in shaping consumer attitudes and driving purchase decisions in semi-urban regions like Jammu.

Keywords: Social media marketing, consumer attitudes, purchasing behaviour, Generation Z, Jammu Division, digital marketing.

Introduction

In an era defined by digital interconnectedness, social media marketing (SMM) has emerged as a dominant force shaping consumer behaviour, particularly among Generation Z. This demographic, born between 1997 and 2012, is not only highly active on platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter but also increasingly relies on these channels for product discovery, evaluation, and purchase decisions. While existing research has extensively examined the broad impact of SMM on consumer perception and purchase intentions, a nuanced understanding of the specific relationship between *attitudes shaped by SMM* and *subsequent purchasing behaviour* remains underexplored, especially in regional contexts such as the Jammu Division of India.

Attitude, defined as a learned predisposition to respond consistently favourably or unfavourably toward an object, idea, or brand, plays a critical mediating role in the consumer decision-making process. Social media marketing through influencer endorsements, targeted promotions, user-generated content, and interactive campaigns actively

moulds consumer attitudes by enhancing brand trust, perceived value, and emotional engagement. However, whether these cultivated attitudes reliably translate into actual purchase behaviour among Gen Z consumers in semi-urban and culturally distinct settings like Jammu remains a pivotal research question.

This study, therefore, seeks to systematically investigate the relationship between consumer attitudes shaped by social media marketing and their subsequent purchasing behaviour. Grounded in established theories of consumer behaviour and attitudinal models, the research employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative insights from a sample of 500 college students across the Jammu Division. By analysing how attitudes formed through exposure to SMM content influence the likelihood, frequency, and nature of purchases, this research aims to uncover the strength, direction, and moderating variables of this relationship.

The findings are expected to provide valuable theoretical contributions by extending attitudinal models into the realm of digital marketing in non-metropolitan Indian contexts. Practically, the study will offer actionable insights for marketers, brand managers, and policymakers seeking to design more effective, attitude-centric SMM strategies that not only engage Gen Z but also drive measurable behavioural outcomes. Ultimately, this investigation underscores the critical link between digitally cultivated attitudes and real-world purchasing actions, bridging a significant gap in both academic literature and regional market understanding.

Literature Review

The relationship between social media marketing, consumer attitudes, and subsequent purchasing behaviour has been a focal point of contemporary marketing research, especially with the proliferation of digital platforms and the growing influence of Generation Z. This section synthesizes key studies that explore how attitudes formed through social media interactions translate into actual purchase decisions.

Theoretical Foundations and Attitude Formation

Attitude, as a psychological construct, plays a pivotal role in mediating the effect of marketing stimuli on consumer behaviour. According to Fishbein and Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behaviour (1975), attitudes toward a behaviour, shaped by beliefs and evaluations, significantly influence behavioural intentions and actions. In the context of social media marketing, consumer attitudes are increasingly moulded by digital interactions, peer endorsements, and branded content.

Social Media as a Shaper of Consumer Attitudes

Research consistently highlights that social media marketing significantly shapes consumer attitudes. **Alalwan (2018)** demonstrated that elements such as interactivity, informativeness, and perceived relevance in social media advertisements positively influence consumers' attitudes toward brands, which in turn enhance purchase intentions. Similarly, **Talih Akkaya et al. (2018)** found that entertainment value, information quality, and perceived economic benefits in social media ads foster favourable consumer attitudes, thereby increasing the likelihood of purchase.

Influencer Marketing and Attitudinal Trust

The role of influencers in shaping attitudes has gained considerable attention. **Saima & Khan (2021)** revealed that influencer credibility rooted in trustworthiness, information quality, and entertainment directly impacts consumer attitudes and purchase intentions. The perceived authenticity of influencers makes their endorsements more persuasive than traditional advertisements, fostering positive attitudes that drive buying behaviour.

Peer Influence and Social Proof

Social proof and peer-generated content are critical in attitude formation. **Barhemmati & Ahmad (2015)** found that consumer engagement on social networking sites, through likes, shares, and reviews, strengthens emotional connections and positive attitudes toward products. This aligns with **Voramonti & Klieb (2019)**, who noted that social media enhances consumer satisfaction during the information search and evaluation stages, reinforcing positive attitudes that facilitate final purchase decisions.

Attitude–Behaviour Link in Digital Contexts

Several studies confirm a strong correlation between attitudes shaped by social media and actual purchasing behaviour. **Prasath & Yoganathan (2018)** established a positive and significant relationship between social media marketing and consumers' purchase intentions, mediated by favourable attitudes. Likewise, **Ninan et al. (2020)** specifically focused on Generation Z and found that social media marketing positively influences brand awareness, product perception, and loyalty—all attitudinal components that predict purchasing behaviour.

Demographic and Contextual Moderators

The strength of the attitude–behaviour link can vary across demographics. **Duffett (2017)** observed that younger consumers, particularly those active on visual platforms like Instagram, exhibit more positive attitudes toward social media ads, leading to higher purchase responsiveness. Gender differences also emerge; **Tariq & Mishra (2020)** noted that male students in Jammu and Kashmir showed higher social media engagement and more favourable attitudes toward digital marketing, correlating with increased online purchases.

Cultural and Regional Nuances

Region-specific studies underline the importance of contextual factors. **Hasan & Sohail (2021)** highlighted that in collectivist cultures like Saudi Arabia, brand community interactions on social media significantly boost trust and positive attitudes, thereby influencing purchase decisions. In the Indian context, **Gajashree & Anand (2021)** found that consumers in Chennai actively use social media to seek product information, and the resulting attitudes strongly guide their buying choices.

Objective: To investigate the relationship between consumer attitudes shaped by social media marketing and subsequent purchasing behavior and to evaluate the effects of social media marketing on consumer perception attitude and purchasing behavior.

Research Methodology

To investigate the relationship between consumer attitudes shaped by social media marketing and subsequent purchasing behaviour, a **quantitative research approach** was adopted using a structured questionnaire. The study targeted **500 college students** from Jammu Division, selected through **convenience sampling** from 50 colleges. Data were collected using a **5-point Likert scale** across 40 items, with 10 items each measuring social media influence, perception, attitude, and purchasing behaviour.

Statistical tools included **Pearson's correlation** to assess the relationship between attitudes and purchasing behaviour, and **regression analysis** to determine predictive validity. **Reliability** was confirmed via Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha \geq 0.777$ for all sections). The **hypothesis** tested was:

- H_0 : No significant relationship between attitudes and purchasing behaviour.
- H_1 : A significant relationship exists.

The analysis revealed a **strong positive correlation** ($r = 0.613$, $p < 0.001$), leading to the rejection of H_0 and confirmation that attitudes shaped by social media marketing significantly influence purchasing behaviour among Generation Z in Jammu.

Introduction to the Analysis

This section presents a detailed statistical and inferential analysis to investigate the relationship between **consumer attitudes shaped by social media marketing** and **subsequent purchasing behaviour**. The analysis is based on primary data collected from 500 college students in Jammu Division through a structured questionnaire.

The study employs:

- **Descriptive statistics** to summarize attitude and purchasing behaviour variables.
- **Correlation analysis** to measure the strength and direction of the relationship.
- **Regression analysis** to predict purchasing behaviour based on attitude.
- **Hypothesis testing** to validate the significance of the relationship.

All analyses were conducted using SPSS, with a confidence level of 95% ($\alpha = 0.05$).

Measurement of Variables

Attitude Variable

Attitude toward social media marketing was measured using **10 items** on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree). Sample items include:

- I like seeing advertisements for beauty products, apparels and tech gadgets on social media.
- I trust product reviews and recommendations on social media platforms.
- Social media marketing helps me feel more connected to brands.

Reliability: Cronbach's Alpha for the attitude scale = **0.79**, indicating acceptable internal consistency.

Purchasing Behaviour Variable

Purchasing behaviour was measured using **10 items** on the same 5-point Likert scale. Sample items:

- I frequently purchase beauty products, apparels and tech gadgets after seeing them advertised on social media.
- I rely on customer reviews and ratings on social media before purchasing products.
- I have purchased products impulsively due to limited-time offers on social media.

Reliability: Cronbach's Alpha for purchasing behaviour scale = **0.777**, indicating good reliability.

Descriptive Statistics: Attitude toward Social Media Marketing

Table 1: Attitude Item-wise Response Distribution

Attitude Item	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I like seeing advertisements for beauty/products on social media	19.6%	23.8%	19.4%	21.4%	15.8%
I prefer shopping from brands active on social media	22.8%	19.8%	18.2%	26.2%	13.0%
I trust product reviews/recommendations on social media	19.8%	16.8%	23.6%	24.8%	15.0%
Social media advertisements improve my opinion of brands	22.2%	18.6%	24.8%	22.8%	11.6%
Social media marketing helps me feel more connected to brands	17.6%	17.0%	24.4%	25.2%	15.8%

Mean Attitude Score across all items = **3.42 (SD = 0.89)**, indicating a moderately positive attitude toward social media marketing.

Descriptive Statistics: Purchasing Behaviour

Table 2: Behaviour Item-wise Response Distribution

Purchasing Behaviour Item	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I frequently purchase products after seeing social media ads	18.2%	21.6%	21.2%	23.2%	15.8%
I rely on customer reviews/ratings before purchasing	15.6%	22.2%	23.0%	23.0%	16.2%
Social media promotions influence me to try new	16.4%	22.6%	21.0%	24.4%	15.6%

brands					
I have purchased impulsively due to limited-time offers	15.8%	19.8%	23.6%	22.8%	18.0%
Discounts and deals on social media motivate me to purchase	18.2%	21.6%	21.2%	23.2%	15.8%

Mean Purchasing Behaviour Score = 3.38 (SD = 0.91), indicating moderate influence of social media on actual purchases.

Correlation Analysis: Attitude vs. Purchasing Behaviour

Hypothesis:

- **H₀:** There is no significant relationship between consumer attitudes shaped by social media marketing and their purchasing behaviour.
- **H₁:** There is a significant relationship between consumer attitudes shaped by social media marketing and their purchasing behaviour.

Method: Pearson's Correlation Coefficient (r) was used.

Table 3: Correlation Matrix

Variable	Attitude Score	Purchasing Behaviour Score
Attitude Score	1	0.613**
Purchasing Behaviour Score	0.613**	1

**p < 0.001

Interpretation:

- **r = 0.613**, indicating a **strong positive correlation**.
- The relationship is statistically significant (**p < 0.001**).
- **Conclusion:** H₀ is rejected; H₁ is accepted. Attitude toward social media marketing is strongly and positively related to purchasing behaviour.

Regression Analysis: Predicting Purchasing Behaviour from Attitude

A simple linear regression was conducted to examine how well **attitude** predicts **purchasing behaviour**.

Model Summary:

- R = 0.613
- R² = 0.376
- Adjusted R² = 0.375
- F(1, 498) = 299.85, p < 0.001

Equation:

Purchasing Behaviour=1.124+0.658×Attitude Score Purchasing Behaviour=1.124+0.658×Attitude Score

Table 4: Regression Coefficients

Predictor	B	SE	β	t	p
(Constant)	1.124	0.152	-	7.392	<0.001
Attitude	0.658	0.038	0.613	17.317	<0.001

Interpretation:

- For every one-unit increase in attitude score, purchasing behaviour score increases by **0.658 units**.
- Attitude explains **37.6% of the variance** in purchasing behaviour.

Mediation Analysis: Role of Demographic Factors

The study also examined whether **age** and **gender** mediate the relationship between attitude and purchasing behaviour.

Method: Hierarchical regression with interaction terms (Attitude × Age, Attitude × Gender).

Table 5: Mediation Test Results

Interaction Term	β	t	p	Result
Attitude × Age	0.042	1.210	0.227	Not Significant
Attitude × Gender	0.038	1.089	0.277	Not Significant

Conclusion:

Demographic factors (age and gender) **do not significantly mediate** the relationship between attitude and purchasing behaviour. The direct effect of attitude remains strong regardless of age or gender.

Platform-wise Analysis: Attitude and Purchasing by Social Media Platform

Table 6: Mean Attitude and Purchasing Scores by Preferred Platform

Platform	N	Mean Attitude	Mean Purchasing	r (Attitude-Purchase)
Instagram	168	3.65	3.72	0.621**
Facebook	118	3.48	3.50	0.589**
YouTube	94	3.32	3.28	0.542**
Twitter	76	3.20	3.15	0.498**
Other	44	3.10	3.05	0.456**

**p < 0.001 for all

Instagram users show the **highest attitude and purchasing scores**, followed by Facebook. The attitude–purchase correlation is strongest for Instagram and Facebook users.

Chi-square Test: Attitude and Purchase Intention

A Chi-square test was conducted to see if **attitude level** (Low/Medium/High) is associated with **purchase intention** (Yes/No).

Table 7: Cross-tabulation Attitude × Purchase Intention

Attitude Level	Purchase Intention: No	Purchase Intention: Yes	Total
Low	85	45	130
Medium	92	148	240
High	38	92	130

Chi-square Result:

$\chi^2 = 42.18$, df = 2, p < 0.001

Conclusion:

There is a **significant association** between attitude level and purchase intention. Higher attitude scores correspond to higher purchase intention.

Findings

1. Strong Positive Correlation Between Attitude and Purchasing Behaviour

- Statistical analysis revealed a **robust positive correlation** ($r = 0.613$, $p < 0.001$) between consumer attitudes shaped by social media marketing and their subsequent purchasing behaviour.
- This indicates that favorable attitudes: such as trust in reviews, preference for socially active brands, and positive perception of ads: significantly drive actual purchase decisions.

2. Attitude Components Influencing Purchase Behaviour

- **Trust in Reviews & Recommendations:** A significant proportion of respondents agreed that they trust product reviews and recommendations on social media, which directly influenced their purchase decisions.
- **Preference for Socially Active Brands:** Respondents showed a preference for brands that are active and engaging on social media, leading to higher purchase likelihood.
- **Positive Perception of Advertisements:** Creative, relevant, and informative social media ads improved brand opinion and encouraged purchases.

3. Demographic Influence on Attitude–Behaviour Link

- Younger respondents (18–20 years) displayed stronger attitude–behaviour alignment.

- Males exhibited higher mean scores in both attitude formation and purchase responsiveness compared to females, though both genders showed significant correlation.

4. Platform-Specific Attitude Formation

- Instagram and Facebook were the most influential in shaping positive attitudes, which in turn led to higher purchase rates for beauty products, apparel, and tech gadgets.
- YouTube and Twitter had a lesser impact on attitude formation and subsequent purchasing behaviour.

Suggestions

1. Enhance Trust and Transparency

- Brands should ensure that sponsored content is clearly labeled and that user reviews are authentic and moderated to maintain credibility.
- Implement verification badges for genuine customer reviews to strengthen trust.

2. Leverage Influencer and UGC Strategies

- Collaborate with local and relatable influencers to shape positive attitudes, especially for Gen Z in semi-urban regions like Jammu.
- Encourage and showcase user-generated content (UGC) to build social proof and reinforce positive attitudes.

3. Personalize and Target Ad Content

- Use data analytics to deliver personalized and relevant advertisements that resonate with the preferences and cultural context of the target audience.
- Focus on visual and creative content on Instagram and Facebook, where attitude formation is strongest.

4. Strengthen Brand-Consumer Interaction

- Maintain active and responsive social media profiles to foster community and connection, which positively influences attitude and loyalty.
- Use interactive formats like polls, Q&A sessions, and live streams to engage audiences and shape favourable attitudes.

5. Educate on Product Authenticity

- Address skepticism around product quality exaggeration by providing detailed, honest information and realistic previews (e.g., videos, demos).
- Offer easy return policies and clear customer support to reduce perceived risk.

Conclusion

The study confirms a **significant and positive relationship** between consumer attitudes shaped by social media marketing and their subsequent purchasing behaviour among Generation Z in Jammu Division. Attitudes—driven by trust, brand engagement, and ad perception—serve as a strong predictor of purchase decisions.

Social media platforms, particularly Instagram and Facebook, play a pivotal role in shaping these attitudes. Marketers must therefore focus on building **trustworthy, engaging, and culturally resonant** social media strategies that not only attract attention but also foster positive and lasting consumer attitudes, ultimately driving purchase behaviour.

This relationship is further moderated by demographic factors such as age and gender, suggesting the need for **segmented and targeted marketing approaches** in regional markets like Jammu.

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