

Influence of Social Media Marketing on Consumer Buying Behavior in Cotabato City

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the influence of social media marketing on the purchasing behavior of Cotabato State University (CotSU) students, emphasizing the growing impact of platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok in shaping consumer decisions. As social media marketing becomes an integral tool for businesses to engage with consumers and build brand loyalty, understanding the varied ways in which consumers respond to ads, content, and endorsements has become increasingly important. A descriptive research design was employed to observe and assess the current influence of social media marketing without altering any variables, aiming to accurately capture how social media exposure shapes students' buying behavior. The study found that e-word of mouth, with a mean score of 4.37, had a notable impact on students' purchasing decisions, with recommendations from family, friends, and peers on social media playing a significant role. Online advertisements (mean score of 4.47) also strongly influenced purchasing behavior, with students preferring ads that were engaging, relevant, and well-targeted. Brand image emerged as the most influential factor (mean score of 4.42), followed by brand loyalty (mean score of 4.49), trust (mean score of 4.51), and purchase intention (mean score of 4.51). The study found a moderate correlation of 0.427 between social media marketing activities and consumer buying behavior, suggesting that while social media marketing plays a key role, other factors also contribute to purchasing decisions. Overall, the findings highlight the significant role social media marketing plays in shaping consumer behavior among CotSU students.

Keywords: Social media marketing, customer behavior, e-word-of-mouth, online advertisements, brand image, trust, loyalty, purchasing intention.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, social media has transformed from a basic communication tool into a powerful platform for marketing and consumer interaction. With the increasing popularity of platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok, businesses are now utilizing innovative strategies to capture consumer interest and strengthen brand loyalty. Social media marketing, which involves promoting products and services through these digital channels, has become a vital element in contemporary marketing approaches. According to Qenaj and Beqiri (2021), social media advertising significantly influences consumer interest and plays a crucial role in shaping purchasing behavior.

As social media continues to evolve, its influence on consumer behavior brings both opportunities and challenges for marketers. While these platforms offer broad visibility and real-time engagement, predicting how consumers will react to different forms of content—such as targeted advertisements, influencer endorsements, and peer recommendations—remains complex. The effectiveness of such marketing efforts often depends on how well they align with consumer trust, brand perception, and behavioral intentions.

This study adopts a descriptive research design to examine the influence of social media marketing on the purchasing behavior of students at Cotabato State University (CotSU). It specifically explores how

components of social media marketing electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM), online advertisements, and brand image are related to key aspects of consumer behavior, including brand loyalty, brand trust, and purchase intention. By providing a detailed description of these relationships, the study aims to offer valuable insights into how CotSU students respond to various forms of social media marketing.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Influence of Social Media Marketing on Consumer Behavior

Social media has become an integral part of consumers' daily lives, significantly shaping their interactions, preferences, and purchasing behavior. Particularly, social media marketing plays a crucial role in influencing the purchasing decisions of Cotabato State University (CotSU) students, who are actively engaged with brands through platforms such as Facebook and TikTok. College students are often exposed to various marketing strategies, including influencer marketing, targeted advertisements, and electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM), all of which have a profound impact on their purchasing choices. Bilgin (2015) argues that social media platforms are essential for brand engagement, as they serve as communication channels where users exchange their consumption habits, opinions, and experiences. Murugesan and SuganthaLakshmi (2020) define social media marketing (SMM) as the process of promoting a brand or business by engaging with current and potential customers through social media channels.

Gbadeyan and Arije (2019) highlight that social media advertising significantly influences consumer behavior, particularly in shaping their perceptions of products and services. Wibowo et al. (2020) suggest that well-tailored marketing content that aligns with consumer preferences strengthens the consumer-business relationship, which in turn affects purchasing decisions. Shankar et al. (as cited in Husain et al., 2021) acknowledge the growing impact of social media on consumer decision-making processes, further supported by Petrosyan (2024), who notes the global reach of social media, with 5.04 billion users as of January 2024, indicating its widespread influence on consumer behavior.

Social media also fosters interaction between consumers and brands, which enhances consumer trust and loyalty. Constantinides (2006) emphasizes that openness, collaboration, and customer interaction are fundamental to the new marketing model. To establish trust and maintain consumer interest, brands must engage in community-driven initiatives, respond promptly to inquiries, and create interactive content.

Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM)

E-WOM has emerged as a prominent and effective digital marketing tool. Hendrayati and Pamungkas (2020) assert that online reviews and recommendations significantly shape brand perception, making e-WOM a vital factor in consumer decision-making. Duan et al. (as cited in Severi et al., 2014) describe e-WOM as a virtual space where individuals share positive or negative product experiences, influencing potential customers. Gbadeyan and Arije (2019) emphasize the role of social media influencers in e-WOM, as they influence consumer trust and buying behavior through personal recommendations and sponsored content. This trend is particularly evident among CotSU students, who engage with influencer-driven marketing, especially when purchasing tech gadgets, fashion items, and beauty products.

Online Advertisement

Online advertisements directly affect customer engagement and purchasing decisions, making them an essential aspect of digital marketing. Mason et al. (2019) argue that influencer endorsements, advertising campaigns, and visually appealing content significantly impact consumer purchasing behavior. Similarly, Gbadeyan and Arije (2019) state that social media advertisements reshape consumer perceptions and can trigger impulsive purchases. Lee et al. (2020) found that persuasive content, particularly that which contains emotional or charitable messages, increases consumer engagement, though they also noted that overly informative advertisements might decrease engagement. Bajpal et al. (2020) stress the importance of

maintaining an active online presence and ensuring visibility across multiple platforms to improve the efficiency of advertisements. Han (2022) highlights TikTok's algorithm as an influential tool in shaping consumer behavior, as it tailors content based on user interests, thereby influencing purchasing decisions.

Brand Image

Brand image plays a significant role in shaping consumer attitudes and purchase intentions. Aaker (as cited in Severi et al., 2014) argues that a strong brand image enhances a company's distinctiveness, rationalizes purchasing decisions, and builds consumer trust. Mark et al. (as cited in Severi et al., 2014) further emphasize that a positive brand image strengthens customer loyalty and preference. These findings suggest that businesses should invest in social media branding strategies to establish a reputable and trustworthy brand. Hossain and Sakib (2020) found that university students' brand loyalty is influenced by the attractiveness and benefits of social media content, with consistent content, consumer interaction, and visual appeal all contributing to a positive brand image in online advertising. These findings are particularly relevant to CotSU students, who actively engage with brands on social media platforms.

Consumer Buying Behavior

Various factors, including psychological, social, and economic influences, shape consumer purchasing behavior. Muniady et al. (2021) suggest that student personalities play a more significant role in purchasing decisions than the economic climate. Bilgin (2015) further emphasizes that social media interactions reveal customer behavior, highlighting the connection between online activity and purchasing decisions. Altschwager et al. (as cited in Esmaeilpour & Mohseni, 2020) argue that brand-related marketing actions directly influence consumers' purchasing intentions.

Brand Loyalty

Brand loyalty refers to a consumer's consistent preference for a particular brand over time. Aakar (as cited in Severi et al., 2014) defines brand loyalty as the tendency of consumers to repurchase a preferred product, reducing their susceptibility to competing pricing strategies. Aakar (as cited in Severi et al., 2014) also highlights the importance of brand loyalty in fostering long-term consumer relationships. Hossain and Sakib (2020) indicate that social media marketing, particularly content relevance and consumer interaction, significantly enhances university students' brand loyalty. Additionally, Bagram and Khan (2020) identify perceived value, product quality, and features as the primary factors influencing consumer loyalty.

Brand Trust

Brand trust plays a crucial role in influencing consumer decisions, particularly in terms of quality and reliability perceptions. Ballester (2005) argues that consumers' trust in brands stems from their perceptions of a company's reliability and care for their well-being. Liu and Wang (2019) emphasize that brand trust has a significant impact on consumer attitudes, shaping their loyalty toward a specific brand.

Purchase Intention

Purchase intention refers to the likelihood that a consumer will purchase a product based on brand engagement, psychological factors, and external influences. Wibowo et al. (2020) argue that well-structured social media marketing strategies help strengthen the relationship between businesses and consumers, ultimately boosting purchase intentions and brand loyalty. Altschwager et al. (as cited in Esmaeilpour & Mohseni, 2020) also note that strategic brand-related marketing actions significantly affect consumer purchase decisions. Gbadeyan and Arije (2019) assert that social media advertising plays a key role in shaping consumer behavior, influencing both attitudes and purchase intentions. Their research reveals that social media advertising, particularly influencer-driven content, may trigger impulsive purchases, demonstrating the power of customized advertisements. Han (2022) also discusses how TikTok's

recommendation algorithm subtly influences users' purchasing intentions by personalizing content based on their interaction and preferences.

Theoretical Frameworks

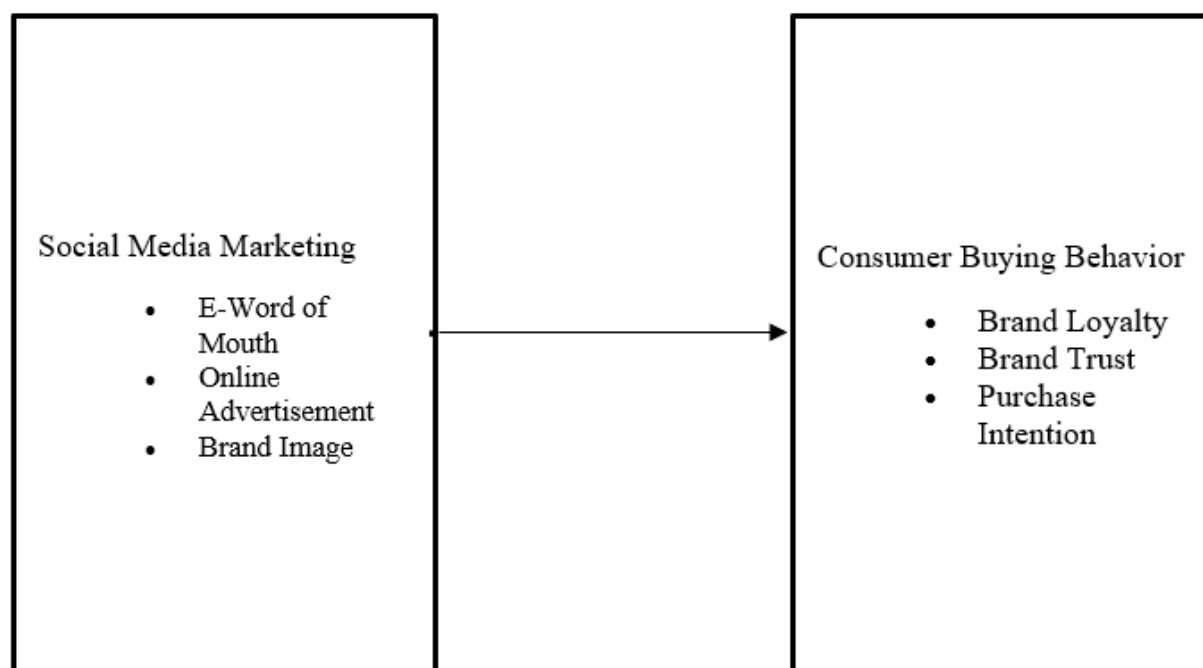
Chaffey's theory suggests that businesses can achieve financial success by fostering one-on-one interactions with customers on social media platforms, as these interactions help build long-term relationships. The Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen) posits that CotSU students' behaviors are influenced by their attitudes toward social media marketing, the subjective norms surrounding online engagement, and their perceived control over brand interactions. While intentions play a significant role in behavior, external factors may also directly influence actions, provided there is perceived behavioral control. Furthermore, the researchers recognize the importance of perceived usefulness and ease of use in determining students' acceptance of social media marketing, drawing from Davis's Technology Acceptance Model. This model illustrates how these perceived factors impact CotSU students' interactions with marketing content on social media platforms. Tajfel's Social Identity Theory, which examines the connection between personal and social identities, offers limited relevance to this study. However, it provides insight into how CotSU students perceive themselves both as individuals and as part of groups when interacting on social media. This theory helps explain how group membership and social dynamics influence students' responses to targeted social media marketing efforts.

Conceptual Framework

The purpose of this study is to determine the influence of social media marketing activities to the consumer buying behavior of CotSU students. The conceptual framework illustrates the relationship between the independent and dependent variables, which are central to understanding how specific social media marketing strategies influence consumer behavior.

Independent Variable

Dependent Variable



The framework investigates the influence of social media marketing, including e-word of mouth, online advertisements, and brand image, on consumer behavior in terms of brand loyalty, brand trust, and purchase intention. By analyzing these relationships, the study aims to identify how each social media marketing activity contributes to shaping the purchasing decisions of CotSU students.

Research Questions

To address the main objective of the study, the following research questions are posed:

1. What is the status of social media marketing in terms of:
 - Electronic Word-of-Mouth (e-WOM)
 - Online Advertisements
 - Brand Image
2. What is the status of consumer behavior in the context of social media marketing in terms of:
 - Brand Loyalty
 - Brand Trust
 - Purchase Intention
3. Is there a significant relationship between social media marketing activities (e.g., e-WOM, online advertisements, brand image) and the consumer buying behavior of CotSU students, particularly in terms of their loyalty, trust, and intention to purchase products or services?
4. To what extent do social media marketing activities influence the overall consumer buying behavior of CotSU students?

METHODS

Research Design

This study follows a quantitative research design to explore the influence of social media marketing on the purchasing behavior of students at Cotabato State University (CotSU). The design specifically utilizes a descriptive-correlational approach to quantify and analyze the relationships between social media marketing activities (e-WOM, online advertisements, and brand image) and consumer behavior outcomes (brand loyalty, brand trust, and purchase intention).

The descriptive aspect of the research involves the collection of quantitative data on the current state of social media marketing as perceived by the students. This includes measuring the frequency and influence of social media marketing activities such as electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM), online advertisements, and brand image. Additionally, the study will gather quantitative data on consumer behavior outcomes, including levels of brand loyalty, brand trust, and purchase intention among the respondents.

The correlational component of the study aims to examine the relationships between the independent variables (social media marketing activities) and the dependent variables (consumer behavior outcomes). Statistical techniques such as Pearson's correlation analysis was employed to assess the strength and direction of the relationships. This design allows the researcher to determine whether changes in social media marketing activities are associated with changes in consumer behavior outcomes, without manipulating any variables.

By focusing on measurable variables and using statistical analysis, this quantitative approach enables the study to provide clear, objective results that can be generalized to the broader population of CotSU students, providing valuable insights for businesses seeking to enhance their social media marketing strategies.

Locale of the Study

The study was conducted at Cotabato State University (CotSU), a higher education institution located in Cotabato City, Philippines. CotSU was chosen as the research site due to its diverse student population, which represents a wide range of social media users. This makes it an ideal setting to examine the impact of social media marketing on consumer behavior, particularly among young adults who are frequent users of platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok.

Research Respondents

Students that are enrolled at Cotabato State University (CotSU) are the respondents in this study. Students between the ages of 18 and 35 who are frequent users of social media websites like Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok compose the target demographic. Researchers surveyed 1500 students as a sample to find out how social media marketing influence their purchasing decisions.

Young individuals are more likely to utilize social media, hence these respondents were chosen as perfect study subjects for a study on the influence of social media marketing on consumer behavior.

Sampling Techniques

This study used non-probability sampling techniques, particularly the convenience sampling technique to collect data from Cotabato State University (CotSU). Convenience and accessibility of participants. With this method, students who are easily accessible and willing to participate in the study are chosen. Although this approach restricts the findings' capacity to be applied generally, it was suitable considering the time and resource limitations.

Research Instrument

The primary research instrument used for this study is an adopted questionnaire originally developed by Emad Abdulwhab Salem in his study on Assessing Consumer Behaviour within the Context of Social Media Marketing. The original questionnaire was reduced to guarantee that it was suitable to the study's objectives and the context of CotSU students. The three primary sections of the questionnaire are focused on customer behavior, social media marketing, and demographic profiles. The 34 questions on the survey are broken down as follows: 15 questions on customer behavior, 15 questions on social media marketing, and 4 questions on demographic characteristics.

RESULTS

Demographic profile

Table one presents the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of Gender, Age, Year level, and Department respondents are belonged. In terms of gender, majority of the respondents (72 percent) are female and 28 percent of them are male. No respondents identified as others. The majority of respondents (53%) were between the ages of 21 and 25, followed by those aged 18 to 20 (43%). Only a tiny percentage of participants were in the age ranges of 26–30 years (2%) and 31–35 years (2%). Third-year students made up the biggest percentage of responders (55%), followed by second-year students (27%), fourth-year students (11%), and first-year students (7%). 47 percent of the responders were from the College of Business and Public Administration (CBPA). Other departments were CTED (16%), CAFI (10%), CAS (5%), CFO (2%), CIS (1%), CETC (19%), and CTED (16%).

Table 1 Demographic Profile

N=1500

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	420	28%
Female	1,080	72%
Total	1500	100%
Age		
18-20	645	43%

21-25	795	53%
26-30	30	2%
31-35	30	2%
Total	1500	100%
Year Level		
1st year	105	7%
2nd year	405	27%
3rd year	825	55%
4th year	165	11%
Total	1500	100%
Department		
CBPA	705	47%
CIS	15	1%
CTED	240	16%
CAFI	150	10%
CETC	285	19%
CFO	30	2%
CAS	75	5%
Total	1500	100%

Status of Social Media Marketing in terms of: E-Word of Mouth

E-word of mouth had highly influence on CotSU students' purchasing decisions, with a mean score of 4.37 acknowledged that their opinions of products and services were significantly influenced by brand recommendations from friends, family, and peers on social media. This result lines up with that of Hendrayati and Pamungkas, who highlighted the significant impact that online reviews and suggestions have on customer decision-making and brand perception.

Social media provides a platform for organic brand discussions, where positive as well as negative feedback spread rapidly. This emphasizes how important it is for businesses to establish strong relationships with consumers in order to promote genuine interaction and positive brand advocacy.

Table 2.a E-Word of Mouth

N=1500

Statement	Mean	Description
1. The information given by my friends about brands on the social media and networking websites are very positive, valued and tells me about products and services of brands.	4.23	Highly Influential
2. I know someone on the social media and networking websites who had experiences with the brands of products and services.	4.18	Moderately Influential
3. Many of my friends and relatives recommended me and talked to me about purchasing some brand products they see on the social media and networking websites.	4.44	Highly Influential
4. I inspire and share with my friends and relatives when we give each other tips and advices about brand products or services on the social media and networking websites.	4.54	Highly Influential

5. When I receive key information or opinion from a friend about a brand on the social media and networking websites, I take it into account when I decide to purchase a product or services of the brand	4.46	Highly Influential
Grand Total	4.37	Highly Influential

Legends

Range of Mean	Description	Interpretation
4.20-5.00	Highly Influential	E-word of mouth is always manifested.
3.40-4.19	Moderately Influential	E-word of mouth is often times manifested.
2.60-3.39	Somewhat Influential	E-word of mouth is fairly manifested
1.80-2.59	Minimally Influential	E-word of mouth is rarely manifested.
1.00-1.79	Not Influential	E-word of mouth is not manifested at all.

Status of Social Media Marketing in terms of: Online Advertisement

Online advertisements were found to have a significant influence on CotSU students' purchasing decisions, with a mean score of 4.47. Respondents indicated that frequent exposure to advertisements helped raise their brand awareness. However, they also stressed the importance of engaging and relevant content in the advertisements. These findings are consistent with Gbadeyan and Arije's research, which highlights the direct impact of social media advertisements on consumers' attitudes and purchasing decisions.

The results further suggest that students prefer advertisements that are visually appealing and well-targeted. However, an excess of irrelevant or repetitive ads may reduce their effectiveness. To maximize impact on young consumers, marketers should focus on creating visually engaging, personalized, and strategically placed advertisements.

The data from Table 2.B supports this interpretation, with all statements related to online advertisements receiving high scores, particularly in areas such as ad frequency, relevance, and attractiveness. This reinforces the idea that well-designed and relevant online advertisements play a key role in shaping consumer behavior.

Table 2.b Online Advertisement

N=1500

Statement	Mean	Description
1.The advertisements on the social media and networking websites for brands and products I know are frequently and repeatedly seen.	4.45	Highly Influential
2.The advertisements on the social media and networking websites for brands and products I know meet my expectations.	4.49	Highly Influential
3.The advertisements on the social media and networking websites for brands and products I know are very attractive and encouraging	4.41	Highly Influential
4.The advertisements on the social media and networking websites for brands and products I know perform well in comparison to products or services not on such websites	4.51	Highly Influential

5.The advertisements on the social media and networking websites for brands and products I know are extensive and	4.50	Highly Influential
Grand Total	4.47	Highly Influential

Legends

Range of Mean	Description	Interpretation
4.20-5.00	Highly Influential	Online Advertisement is always manifested.
3.40-4.19	Moderately Influential	Online Advertisement is often times manifested.
2.60-3.39	Somewhat Influential	Online Advertisement is fairly manifested
1.80-2.59	Minimally Influential	Online Advertisement is rarely manifested.
1.00-1.79	Not Influential	Online Advertisement is not manifested at all.

Status of Social Media Marketing in terms of: Brand Image

With a mean score of 4.42, brand image emerged as the most influential of the three social media marketing elements studied. According to the respondents, their opinions were positively affected by businesses that had an engaging online presence, a strong visual identity, and alignment with personal values. This supports up Aaker (as cited in Severi et al.) and Hossain & Sakib, who highlighted that a positive brand image increases consumer loyalty and trust.

Brands have the opportunity to create emotionally engaging stories and engage with their audience through social media. Businesses may leave a lasting impression that encourages engagement and loyalty by utilizing relatable content, eye-catching visuals, and consistent message.

Table 2.c Brand Image

N=1500

Statement	Mean	Description
1.The brands and products on the social media and networking websites make me quickly to remember the logo image of the company and products	4.51	Highly Influential
2.The brands and products on the social media and networking websites encourage me to share any information about them with my friends and family for more publicity.	4.35	Highly Influential
3.The brands and products on the social media and networking websites are aligned with my values and beliefs, and make me feel a better lifestyle and self-steamed with more respect to myself on those websites.	4.37	Highly Influential
4.The brand and products on the social media and networking websites improve the reputation and image about the quality of those brands and products with very fashionable and nice look.	4.40	Highly Influential
5.The brand and products on the social media and networking websites provide good values to customers and make them to favorite those brands and products.	4.49	Highly Influential
Grand Total	4.42	Highly Influential

Legends

Range of Mean	Description	Interpretation
4.20-5.00	Highly Influential	Brand Image is always manifested.

3.40-4.19	Moderately Influential	Brand Image is often times manifested.
2.60-3.39	Somewhat Influential	Brand Image is fairly manifested
1.80-2.59	Minimally Influential	Brand Image is rarely manifested.
1.00-1.79	Not Influential	Brand Image is not manifested at all.

The status of consumer behavior in the context of social media marketing in terms of: Brand Loyalty

Brand loyalty among CotSU students was found to be highly influenced by social media marketing, with a mean score of 4.49. It suggests that even while CotSU students regularly interact with particular brands, they are open to switching brands. Many respondents are not completely committed to a single brand, especially when presented with alternatives, as seen by a lower brand-switching resistance score.

This result aligns with the findings of Hossain & Sakib, who highlighted the importance of consumer interaction and relevant social media content in building brand loyalty. In the same way, Mehmood Bagram & Khan stated that product attributes, perceived value, and perceived quality all have a big impact on consumer loyalty. These findings demonstrate how important engaging and high-quality social media content is to maintaining long-term brand relationships.

Table 3.a Brand Loyalty

N=1500

Statement	Mean	Description
1. I selected the brands and products on the social media and networking websites because I feel that they are the best choice for me among other brands and products.	4.45	Highly Influential
2. I would not switch to a competitor on the social media and networking websites or in the marketplace; even if I had a problem with the brand I am buying presently.	4.47	Highly Influential
3. I am committed to the brands and products on the social media and networking websites and I consider myself to be a loyal supporter of those brands and products.	4.57	Highly Influential
4. If I had to buy over again a similar brand or product then I will choose the same brands and products I know on the social media and networking websites.	4.49	Highly Influential
5. I intend to keep and continue buying from the same brands and products appearing on the social media and networking websites with the same services and products.	4.45	Highly Influential
Grand Total	4.49	Highly Influential

Legends

Range of Mean	Description	Interpretation
4.20-5.00	Highly Influential	Brand Loyalty is always manifested.
3.40-4.19	Moderately Influential	Brand Loyalty is often times manifested.
2.60-3.39	Somewhat Influential	Brand Loyalty is fairly manifested
1.80-2.59	Minimally Influential	Brand Loyalty is rarely manifested.
1.00-1.79	Not Influential	Brand Loyalty is not manifested at all.

The status of consumer behavior in the context of social media marketing in terms of: Brand Trust

With a mean score of 4.51, brand trust emerged as a key factor in decision-making regarding purchases. Respondents indicated that they are more likely to trust brands that fulfill their commitments, maintain transparency, and provide reliable information. This underscores the importance of trust in influencing consumer behavior.

Ballester's perspective, which asserts that brand trust is built on perceptions of reliability and a company's commitment to consumer welfare, aligns with these findings. Similarly, Liu and Wang emphasized the crucial role of trust in fostering long-term consumer relationships and brand loyalty. The results suggest that CotSU students are more inclined to engage with brands they deem trustworthy, highlighting the significance of authenticity in retaining consumer loyalty.

The responses in the table further validate this conclusion, with all items related to brand trust receiving high scores. Specifically, respondents expressed strong confidence in the products and manufacturers they encounter on social media, noting that these brands generally deliver on their promises and provide reliable, honest information. This reinforces the idea that brand trust is a highly influential factor in consumer decision-making.

Table 3.b Brand Trust

N=1500

Statement	Mean	Description
1.I usually trust the products I buy and I feel confident in the brands I see on the social media and networking websites.	4.50	Highly Influential
2.I usually trust the manufacturers of the products I buy and the brands on the social media and networking websites because they always honest and sincere in addressing my concerns	4.49	Highly Influential
3.I usually trust the individuals selling brand and products as they provide reliable information about the products and brands on the social media and networking websites.	4.52	Highly Influential
4.The brands on the social media and networking websites usually deliver what I expect and what I was promised	4.50	Highly Influential
5.The brands and products on the social media and networking websites will never disappoint me and will make more satisfied all times.	4.53	Highly Influential
Grand Total	4.51	Highly Influential

Legends

Range of Mean	Description	Interpretation
4.20-5.00	Highly Influential	Brand Trust is always manifested.
3.40-4.19	Moderately Influential	Brand Trust often times manifested.
2.60-3.39	Somewhat Influential	Brand Trust is fairly manifested
1.80-2.59	Minimally Influential	Brand Trust is rarely manifested.
1.00-1.79	Not Influential	Brand Trust is not manifested at all.

The status of consumer behavior in the context of social media marketing in terms of: Purchase Intention

Based on the results of my study, purchase intention emerged as the most influential factor among the three components. However, while CotSU students frequently engage with brands online, their interactions do not always translate into immediate purchases. Various factors such as cost, perceived necessity, and uncertainties may cause hesitation in their decision-making.

This finding aligns with Han's discussion on TikTok's recommendation system, which subtly influences consumer purchase decisions by offering personalized product suggestions based on user behavior. Moreover, Altschwager et al. (as cited in Esmaeilpour & Mohseni) found that while strategic brand marketing efforts can influence purchase intention, actual purchasing decisions are still significantly impacted by external factors, including perceived need and price.

To convert online engagement into actual purchases, brands should implement strategies that create a sense of urgency and build trust with consumers. One effective approach is to offer limited-time promotions, which can encourage quicker purchase decisions. Providing exclusive discounts to engaged customers is another method to reward active participation and incentivize purchases. Additionally, offering free samples or product trials allows potential customers to experience the product firsthand, boosting their confidence and increasing the likelihood of a purchase.

The data in Table 3.C supports this interpretation, with an overall mean score of 4.51 indicating that purchase intention is highly influenced by factors such as membership in brand communities on social media, previous online purchases, and future intentions to use social media to explore and buy brand products.

Table 3.c Purchase Intention

N=1500

Statement	Mean	Description
1.I intend to buy some of their brands because I am a member of those brands on the social media and networking websites.	4.53	Highly Influential
2.I have arranged via SNSs communication with the vendor to inspect and perform a trail test run of the product in person at the site of the vendor	4.51	Highly Influential
3.I have already bought the products or services of the brands online because I am a member of the brand on the social media and networking websites.	4.54	Highly Influential
4.I will frequently use the social media and networking sites in the future. To find the brands I plan to buy.	4.50	Highly Influential
5.I feel it is worthy for me to use the social media and networking websites in the future for purchasing some of the products or services of the brands.	4.47	Highly Influential
Grand Total	4.51	Highly Influential

Legends

Range of Mean	Description	Interpretation
4.20-5.00	Highly Influential	Purchase Intention is always manifested.
3.40-4.19	Moderately Influential	Purchase Intention is often times manifested.
2.60-3.39	Somewhat Influential	Purchase Intention is fairly manifested
1.80-2.59	Minimally Influential	Purchase Intention is rarely manifested.
1.00-1.79	Not Influential	Purchase Intention is not manifested at all.

Correlational Analysis Showing the relationship between the social media marketing activities (e.g., e-WOM, online advertisements, brand image) the consumer buying behavior of CotSU students, particularly in terms of their loyalty, trust, and intention to purchase products or services

Table 4

Correlational Analysis Showing the relationship between the social media marketing activities (e.g., intention to purchase, online advertisements, brand image) the consumer buying behavior of CotSU students, particularly in terms of their loyalty, trust, an intention to purchase products or services

social media marketing activities		consumer buying behavior		
		Loyalty	Trust	intention to purchase
e-WOM	Pearson Correlation	.397**	.339**	.362**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000
	N	1500	1500	1500
online advertisements	Pearson Correlation	.614**	.575**	.529**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000
	N	1500	1500	1500
brand image	Pearson Correlation	.477**	.394**	.404**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000
	N	1500	1500	1500

** Significant @ .01 Level

Full Model Regression Analysis Showing the extent of influence of social media marketing activities (e.g., e-WOM, online advertisements, brand image) to the overall consumer buying behavior of CotSU students, particularly in terms of their loyalty, trust, and intention to purchase products or services.

The extent of influence of social media marketing activities to consumer buying behavior is .427. which means the 42.7 percent of consumer buying behavior is attributed by the social media marketing activities. The remaining 57.30 percent is attributed by other factors other than social media marketing activities.

Table 8

Full Model Regression Analysis Showing the extent of influence of social media marketing activities (e.g., e-WOM, online advertisements, brand image) to the overall consumer buying behavior of CotSU students, particularly in terms of their loyalty, trust, and intention to purchase products or services.

Full Model Regression	consumer buying behavior			
	Beta coefficient (β)	t	p-value (p)	Interpretation
social media marketing activities	.645	33.417	.000	Significant
$R^2=.427$; $F=1116.694$ $df(1)$; $p < .000$				

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This study explores the influence of social media marketing on the purchasing behavior of Cotabato State University (CotSU) students, considering the growing role of social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok in shaping consumer decisions. Social media marketing has evolved into a key tool for businesses to engage with consumers, build brand loyalty, and influence purchasing behavior. The study highlights the challenges businesses face in understanding and predicting consumer responses due to the varied ways people engage with content, ads, and endorsements on social media.

The study employed a descriptive research design to examine the impact of social media marketing on consumer buying behavior. This approach was chosen because it allows the researcher to observe, explain,

and assess the current influence of social media marketing without altering any variables. The goal was to accurately depict how social media marketing exposure shapes students' purchasing behavior.

The majority of respondents were female (72%) and aged 21 to 25 (53%). Most participants were third-year students (55%) from the College of Business and Public Administration (47%).

E-word of mouth had a notable impact on students' purchasing choices, with a mean score of 4.37. Respondents highlighted the influence of recommendations from family, friends, and peers on social media, consistent with past studies showing the role of online reviews and suggestions in shaping consumer decisions and brand perceptions.

Online advertisements had a significant effect on purchasing behavior, with a mean score of 4.47. Regular exposure to ads boosted brand awareness, though students preferred ads that were engaging, relevant, and well-targeted. Over-saturation and irrelevant ads were considered ineffective, underlining the need for tailored and visually appealing advertisements.

Brand image was the most influential factor among the social media marketing elements, with a mean score of 4.42. Students favored brands with a compelling online presence, strong visual identity, and values that matched their own, contributing to brand loyalty and trust.

Social media marketing also significantly affected brand loyalty, with a mean score of 4.49. Although students interacted with specific brands online, many were willing to switch brands due to alternative options, emphasizing the importance of engaging content to retain loyalty.

Brand trust was another critical factor in purchase decisions, with a mean score of 4.51. Students were more inclined to trust brands that were transparent, reliable, and kept their promises, highlighting the importance of authenticity and consistency in fostering consumer loyalty.

Purchase intention had the greatest influence, with a mean score of 4.51. Despite frequent online interactions with brands, actual purchases were influenced by external factors such as cost, necessity, and uncertainty. To boost conversions, brands should focus on creating urgency, offering discounts, and providing product trials.

The study found a moderate correlation between social media marketing activities and consumer buying behavior (0.427), suggesting that 42.7% of consumer purchasing behavior is influenced by social media marketing, with the remaining 57.3% shaped by other factors.

Overall, the study underscores the substantial role of social media marketing in influencing the purchasing decisions of CotSU students, with elements such as e-word of mouth, online advertisements, brand image, trust, and purchase intention all playing key roles in shaping consumer behavior.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study highlights the significant influence of social media marketing on the purchasing behavior of CotSU students. Key factors such as e-word of mouth, online advertisements, brand image, trust, and purchase intention were found to play crucial roles in shaping consumer decisions. The study demonstrates that social media marketing activities, especially recommendations from peers and engaging ads, have a notable impact on students' brand awareness, loyalty, and trust, which ultimately affect their purchase intentions.

However, while social media marketing plays an essential role, the findings also indicate that other external factors, such as cost and necessity, influence actual purchasing behavior. This suggests that while social media marketing can significantly impact students' perceptions and engagement with brands, brands must also consider these external factors to convert online engagement into actual purchases.

The moderate correlation between social media marketing activities and consumer buying behavior further emphasizes the importance of effective, personalized, and relevant content in driving consumer decisions. To maximize its impact, brands should focus on creating tailored and visually appealing content that aligns with students' values and preferences while maintaining transparency and trustworthiness.

Overall, the study affirms the importance of social media marketing in shaping modern consumer behavior, particularly among students, and provides valuable insights for brands looking to optimize their social media strategies.

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