

A STUDY ON SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING AND ITS IMPACT ON THE BUYING DECISION OF YOUTH

¹ Shiva Kumar M, ² Dr. Mahesh Kumar C A

¹PG Student, ² Assistant Professor

Department of Management Studies

Ballari Institute of Technology and Management, Ballari

shivukumar1901@gmail.com, maheshkumarpbi@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of social media marketing on the buying decisions of youth, with particular reference to Ballari city. The study is descriptive in nature and is based on primary data collected through a structured questionnaire administered to 100 young respondents who are active social media users, supplemented by secondary data drawn from journals, industry reports, and other published sources. The analysis covers the demographic profile of respondents, their social media usage pattern, and the influence of advertisements, influencer endorsements, discounts and promotional offers, content type, and peer recommendations on their purchasing decisions. The results show that the sample is dominated by postgraduate students in the 23-26 age group who are daily, Instagram-led social media users, and that advertisements, friends' recommendations, and influencer reviews are among the strongest drivers of attention, trust, and purchase behaviour, while discounts and promotional offers further reinforce buying decisions. The study concludes that social media marketing exerts a strong and largely positive influence on the purchasing decisions and lifestyle of youth, while also revealing a clear demand among young consumers for greater regulation to safeguard their interests, underscoring the need for brands to balance persuasive marketing with transparency and responsible advertising practices.

Keywords: Social Media Marketing, Youth, Buying Decision, Influencer Marketing, Digital Advertising, Consumer Behaviour, Brand Awareness.

I. INTRODUCTION

Social media has changed how people connect, obtain information, and make decisions about what to buy, making it an indispensable aspect of contemporary life. Social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, X (previously Twitter), Snapchat, and TikTok have given companies new ways to communicate with customers through interesting and interactive content. Consequently, social media marketing has become one of the most popular and successful digital marketing tactics.

Among the most frequent users of social media are young people, who spend a large part of their day using different platforms for commerce, education, entertainment, and communication. Young people are a major target group for marketers due to their high level of involvement. Through sponsored content, influencer partnerships, advertisements, and tailored marketing campaigns, businesses utilise social media to promote goods and services, and these tactics affect the awareness, preferences, attitudes, and buying habits of young customers.

Social media marketing has both beneficial and harmful effects on young people. Positively, it helps young people find educational and professional opportunities, promotes informed purchase decisions, facilitates access to product information, and stimulates entrepreneurship, while also enabling companies to interact directly with customers and build lasting relationships. On the other hand, overexposure to marketing content can contribute to problems with consumerism and self-esteem, promote impulsive purchasing, raise peer pressure, and establish unrealistic lifestyle expectations.

Social media can be broadly categorised into several types: social networking platforms such as Facebook and LinkedIn that connect individuals and enable knowledge-sharing; image- and video-sharing platforms

such as Instagram, Snapchat, and YouTube that emphasise visual storytelling; social review platforms such as Yelp and TripAdvisor that shape purchase decisions through peer feedback; and discussion platforms such as Reddit and Quora that provide access to community-generated information. Each of these formats offers marketers distinct opportunities to engage young consumers through content, advertising, and community-building.

Understanding how social media marketing affects young consumers has become crucial for firms, educators, policymakers, and researchers in the current digital era. The purpose of this study is to investigate how youth attitudes, purchase decisions, and general behaviour are impacted by social media marketing, and to determine what makes social media marketing effective and assess how it influences young people's purchasing decisions.

Industry Profile

Starting at USD 8.49 billion in 2026, the global social media market is set to witness notable growth, and is projected to reach USD 53.62 billion by 2035, expanding at a CAGR of 25.92 percent over the forecast period from 2026 to 2035. The market expanded significantly during 2025 due to rising smartphone penetration, increasing digital advertising adoption, and growing video-based content consumption worldwide. More than 5.4 billion people actively used social media platforms during 2025, representing approximately 66 percent of the global population, with mobile devices accounting for 91 percent of social media access globally. Video content represented 63 percent of user engagement activity, as short-form videos increased average viewing time by 28 percent, while social media advertisement services accounted for 81 percent of total market activity due to increasing brand investment in digital campaigns. Asia-Pacific contributed 43 percent of global social media users, reflecting the rapid expansion of internet accessibility across developing economies.

The United States social media market also demonstrated strong growth during 2025, as businesses accelerated digital marketing investments and online consumer engagement strategies. More than 308 million people in the United States actively used social media platforms during 2025, representing 89 percent of the national internet population, with mobile-based access accounting for 94 percent of user activity. Video advertisements generated 58 percent of digital engagement as short-form content consumption increased by 31 percent, and retail businesses represented 29 percent of total social media advertising activity. Artificial intelligence-based recommendation systems improved advertisement targeting accuracy by 27 percent, while social commerce transactions increased by 24 percent across major platforms, underscoring the growing centrality of social media to modern marketing and retail.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Social media marketing and its influence on youth attitudes and purchasing behaviour have attracted extensive research attention in recent years, with studies examining the roles of influencer credibility, advertising exposure, peer recommendations, and platform-specific engagement. This study draws on this body of literature to inform the analysis of social media marketing's influence on the buying decisions of youth.

Ankit Kumar (2024) examined the increasingly dominant role of social media marketing within the advertising industry and its effect on youth consumer behaviour and buying decisions, concluding that the findings can help inform more responsible social media marketing and advertising practices aimed at young audiences.

Satyam Prakash (2025) explored the impact of social media marketing on the purchasing behaviour of young consumers aged 18-30 through a structured questionnaire, finding that attractive content, peer influence, and interactive brand presence on platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and

Snapchat significantly shape purchase choices, with trust, brand loyalty, and perceived authenticity playing a central role.

Pramesh Kumar Kesharwani (2022) examined the growth of the Indian advertising industry alongside the expansion of electronic media, observing that consumers are often unaware of the extent to which strategically designed advertisements influence their purchasing decisions.

Yogesh Singh (2026) investigated the influence of social media marketing on the purchasing habits of Gen Z and late Millennials, finding that peer-generated content, influencer credibility, and visual-centric platforms such as Instagram and TikTok significantly shape purchase intentions, with authenticity and interactive participation identified as key drivers of consumer behaviour.

Abhilasha Sinha (2025) reviewed research on adolescents' exposure to social media marketing, categorising its effects into changes in consumer behaviour, social dynamics, and psychological consequences, and noting that exposure to social media advertisements can carry both beneficial and detrimental effects for teenagers.

Shilpa Mary (2024) examined the multifaceted effects of social media on young people through case studies and secondary sources, finding a tension between the benefits of self-expression, community-building, and connectedness and the drawbacks of distraction, cyberbullying, and mental health concerns.

Dr. Prabisha A. T (2024) studied how marketing through Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram influences youth purchasing decisions in Calicut, Kerala, finding that Instagram was comparatively the most effective platform, followed by YouTube, and that time convenience and visual design were the strongest factors driving the effectiveness of social media marketing among youth.

Dr. S. Tamilarasi (2024) examined college-going students' exposure to product promotion on social media using the Uses and Gratification theory, finding a clear relationship between internet exposure, social media advertising, and reliance on social media for information about trending products.

Resmi R (2025) analysed the effect of social media marketing on the purchasing decisions of young Indian consumers using ANOVA, correlation, Chi-Square, and t-test analysis, finding that influencer recommendations play a particularly significant role in shaping buying decisions.

Charan M J (2021) studied how the rapid growth and adoption of social media platforms has influenced adolescent consumer purchasing decisions, examining how young digital consumers perceive social media influencers and the extent to which these influencers shape their purchase intentions and choices.

Dipanti Joshi (2018) investigated the extent of social networking's positive impact on Indian youth, observing that platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, WhatsApp, and LinkedIn have become inseparable from young people's daily lives, and highlighting the importance of youth given their role in shaping the future direction of society and culture.

Rashmi Anil Naik (2024) examined the effectiveness of influencer marketing among youth using secondary data from peer-reviewed articles and industry reports, finding that authenticity, content relevance, and audience connection are the key factors that make influencer marketing particularly effective with digitally native young consumers.

Sushma Rawath S (2019) studied the pattern of social media usage among Indian youth, finding that social media has become an integral part of daily life, carrying both positive and negative effects for young users.

Sudeepti (2019) examined how social networking platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter have become central to the lifestyle of young people, noting survey evidence that a large majority of individuals aged 15-24 access social networking sites at least once a week, spending an average of about an hour a day on these platforms.

Prof. Meena Mashru (2022) investigated the kinds of social media marketing messages that influence the cognitive, affective, and behavioural attitudinal components of young minds, using a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods, including a Likert-scale survey, to assess how far social media aids youth purchasing decisions.

S. Sumadevi (2023) examined the multifaceted impact of social media on youth, highlighting positive effects such as enhanced communication, access to information, and social activism, alongside the challenges young people face in navigating the digital environment.

Yashwith B Shetty (2024) analysed how social media influences internet marketing tactics, customer behaviour, and brand perception, emphasising the importance of influencer partnerships, real-time communication, and personalised advertising within a dynamic and fast-changing digital marketing landscape.

Pirakatheeswari P. (2024) assessed the impact of social media usage on the purchase decision process in the Indian context, finding that social media has become a key channel for reaching potential customers and that technology now empowers consumers to research, evaluate, and critique products before purchase.

Dasa Rahardjo (2024) examined the effects of social media influence and online shopping behaviour on consumer conduct and social identity within Indonesia's digital economy, using Structural Equation Modelling with Partial Least Squares on data from 280 respondents, and found that both factors substantially affect consumer behaviour and social identity.

While the reviewed studies confirm that social media marketing, in general, significantly influences youth attitudes and purchasing behaviour, comparatively few studies provide focused, region-based empirical evidence of this influence. This study seeks to address this gap by examining the impact of social media marketing on the buying decisions of youth in Ballari.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Statement of the Problem

The rapid growth of social media has transformed the way businesses market their products and services, making platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, and X powerful tools for influencing consumer behaviour. Young people are among the most active users of these platforms, making them a primary target for social media marketing campaigns. While social media marketing provides benefits such as access to information, entertainment, and product awareness, it may also influence the attitudes, purchasing decisions, lifestyle, self-esteem, and mental well-being of young people. Continuous exposure to advertisements, influencer promotions, and branded content can shape preferences and behaviours, sometimes leading to impulsive buying, unrealistic expectations, and excessive social media use. This study examines the impact of social media marketing on the buying decisions of youth in order to address this gap.

Need for the Study

Social media has become an integral part of the daily lives of young people, serving as a major source of communication, entertainment, education, and shopping. Businesses increasingly use social media marketing to promote products and services through advertisements, influencer endorsements, and personalised content, and as a result youth are continuously exposed to marketing messages that may influence their attitudes, preferences, purchasing decisions, and lifestyle choices. The need for this study arises from the growing influence of social media marketing on young consumers and the limited understanding of its overall effects: while social media marketing offers benefits such as increased

product awareness, access to information, and informed decision-making, it may also encourage impulsive buying, excessive consumerism, and unrealistic expectations.

Objectives of the Study

- To examine the influence of social media marketing on the behaviour of youth.
- To analyse the impact of social media marketing on the purchasing decisions of young consumers.
- To identify the social media platforms that most influence youth through marketing activities.
- To assess the positive and negative effects of social media marketing on the lifestyle and attitudes of youth.
- To study the role of influencers, online advertisements, and promotional campaigns in shaping the preferences of young consumers.

Scope of the Study

The study focuses on examining the impact of social media marketing on the attitudes, behaviour, and purchasing decisions of young people. It explores how marketing activities on popular social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and X (formerly Twitter) influence youth through advertisements, influencer promotions, sponsored content, and brand campaigns, and is geographically confined to Ballari.

Research Design and Data Collection

The study adopts a descriptive research design to investigate how social media marketing influences the buying decisions of youth, helping to understand how different social media marketing initiatives shape young consumers' attitudes, preferences, and purchasing decisions. Primary data were collected directly from respondents through a structured questionnaire, as unique, unprocessed data that had not previously been collected or interpreted by anyone else. Secondary data, consisting of pre-existing information gathered by other parties for other purposes, were drawn from published research, industry reports, and online sources relating to social media marketing and youth consumer behaviour.

Sampling Technique and Sample Size

A total of 100 respondents, comprising active social media-using youth in Ballari, were surveyed using a structured questionnaire to obtain reliable data on the impact of social media marketing on their buying decisions. The study was conducted over a period of 45 days and was geographically confined to Ballari.

Tools Used in the Analysis

The collected data were analysed using percentage analysis and presented through pie charts, with the underlying calculations organised and computed using advanced Microsoft Excel functions.

Hypotheses of the Study

Hypothesis 1:

H₀: Social media marketing has no significant impact on the buying decisions of youth.

H₁: Social media marketing has a significant impact on the buying decisions of youth.

Hypothesis 2:

H₀: There is no significant association between the demographic profile of youth respondents and their buying decisions influenced by social media marketing.

H₁: There is a significant association between the demographic profile of youth respondents and their buying decisions influenced by social media marketing.

Limitations of the Study

1. The study is limited to the selected sample of youth in Ballari and may not represent the views of all young people.

2. The research is conducted within Ballari and its findings may not be generalisable to other regions.
3. Due to time and resource constraints, the sample size and scope of the study may be limited.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This section presents the results of the survey of 100 youth respondents on the impact of social media marketing on their buying decisions, together with their interpretation.

4.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table IV.1: Age Distribution of Respondents

Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
15-18 years	0	0%
19-22 years	14	14%
23-26 years	86	86%
Above 26 years	0	0%
Total	100	100%

Table IV.2: Gender Distribution of Respondents

Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Male	53	53%
Female	47	47%
Total	100	100%

Table IV.3: Educational Qualification of Respondents

Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Higher Secondary	3	3%
Undergraduate	7	7%
Postgraduate	90	90%
Other	0	0%
Total	100	100%

Table IV.4: Occupation of Respondents

Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Student	78	78%
Employed	14	14%
Self-employed	8	8%
Unemployed	0	0%

Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Total	100	100%

Interpretation: 86 percent of respondents fall in the 23-26 age group and a further 14 percent in the 19-22 age group, placing the sample firmly within the young-adult segment, with no respondents in the 15-18 or above-26 categories. Gender representation is fairly balanced, with 53 percent male and 47 percent female respondents. The sample is highly educated, with 90 percent holding a postgraduate qualification, 7 percent undergraduate, and 3 percent higher secondary, and is dominated by students (78 percent), followed by the employed (14 percent) and self-employed (8 percent). Together, these results confirm that the study captures the views of a young, highly educated, and largely student-based social-media-native consumer base.

4.2 Social Media Usage Pattern

Table IV.5: Platform Used the Most

Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Instagram	95	95%
Facebook	0	0%
YouTube	5	5%
X (Twitter)	0	0%
Snapchat	0	0%
Total	100	100%

Table IV.6: Time Spent on Social Media Daily

Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Less than 1 hour	33	33%
1-2 hours	38	38%
3-4 hours	19	19%
More than 4 hours	10	10%
Total	100	100%

Interpretation: Instagram is overwhelmingly the dominant platform among respondents at 95 percent, with YouTube a distant second at 5 percent, while Facebook, X (Twitter), and Snapchat account for none of the sample's primary usage. Daily usage is moderate for most respondents, with 38 percent spending 1-2 hours and 33 percent spending under an hour on social media daily, while 19 percent spend 3-4 hours and 10 percent spend more than 4 hours. This pattern shows that a single visual, short-form platform carries the greatest weight in shaping social media engagement among the sample.

4.3 Advertising Awareness

Table IV.7: Frequency of Noticing Advertisements on Social Media

Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Always	66	66%
Often	23	23%
Sometimes	5	5%
Rarely	6	6%
Never	0	0%
Total	100	100%

Table IV.8: Social Media Advertisements Attract Attention

Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	43	43%
Agree	38	38%
Neutral	14	14%
Disagree	5	5%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Total	100	100%

Interpretation: 66 percent of respondents always notice advertisements on social media and a further 23 percent notice them often, with no respondent reporting that they never notice ads, confirming that social media advertisements enjoy very high visibility among youth. A combined 81 percent agree or strongly agree that these advertisements attract their attention, with only 14 percent neutral and 5 percent disagreeing, indicating that high visibility translates directly into engagement.

4.4 Influence on Buying Decisions and Purchase Behaviour

Table IV.9: Social Media Marketing Influences Buying Decisions

Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	38	38%
Agree	33	33%
Neutral	29	29%
Disagree	0	0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Total	100	100%

Table IV.10: Purchase of a Product After Seeing It Advertised on Social Media

Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
-------------	--------------------	------------

Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Always	43	43%
Often	28	28%
Sometimes	19	19%
Rarely	10	10%
Never	0	0%
Total	100	100%

Interpretation: A combined 71 percent of respondents agree or strongly agree that social media marketing influences their buying decisions, with the remaining 29 percent neutral and not a single respondent disagreeing. This translates directly into action: 43 percent have always purchased a product after seeing it advertised on social media and a further 28 percent have done so often, while only 10 percent rarely do so and no respondent never does, indicating that the vast majority of youth have made at least one purchase as a direct result of social media marketing.

4.5 Influencer and Content Impact

Table IV.11: Influencers Affect Choice of Products or Brands

Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	24	24%
Agree	33	33%
Neutral	38	38%
Disagree	5	5%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Total	100	100%

Table IV.12: Type of Social Media Content that Influences Respondents the Most

Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Influencer reviews	29	29%
Brand advertisements	19	19%
Friends' recommendations	33	33%
Customer reviews	19	19%
Promotional videos	0	0%
Total	100	100%

Interpretation: 57 percent of respondents agree or strongly agree that influencers affect their choice of products or brands, though a notable 38 percent remain neutral, suggesting that influencer impact, while

real, is more moderate than for advertising in general. When asked which type of content influences them the most, friends' recommendations rank highest at 33 percent, followed by influencer reviews at 29 percent, with brand advertisements and customer reviews tied at 19 percent each and promotional videos registering no influence, indicating that peer trust remains the single strongest content-related driver among youth.

4.6 Promotional Offers and Product Learning

Table IV.13: Discounts and Promotional Offers Encourage Purchase

Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	38	38%
Agree	39	39%
Neutral	23	23%
Disagree	0	0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Total	100	100%

Table IV.14: Social Media Marketing Helps Learn About New Products and Services

Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	29	29%
Agree	52	52%
Neutral	19	19%
Disagree	0	0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Total	100	100%

Interpretation: A combined 77 percent of respondents agree or strongly agree that discounts and promotional offers on social media encourage them to buy products, with no respondent disagreeing. Social media's role as a discovery tool is even stronger: 81 percent agree or strongly agree that it helps them learn about new products and services, with only 19 percent neutral and, again, no disagreement, confirming that social media functions effectively both as a promotional channel and as a source of product information for youth.

4.7 Lifestyle Influence and Comparison Behaviour

Table IV.15: Social Media Marketing Influences Lifestyle and Preferences

Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	40	40%
Agree	35	35%
Neutral	20	20%

Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Disagree	5	5%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Total	100	100%

Table IV.16: Comparison of Products Online Before Purchase

Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Always	40	40%
Often	25	25%
Sometimes	30	30%
Rarely	5	5%
Never	0	0%
Total	100	100%

Interpretation: 75 percent of respondents agree or strongly agree that social media marketing influences their lifestyle and preferences beyond direct purchasing, with only 5 percent disagreeing, showing that its impact extends well beyond individual transactions. Consumers are also active researchers before buying: 40 percent always compare products online and 25 percent do so often, while 30 percent do so sometimes and only 5 percent rarely, with no respondent never comparing products, indicating that most youth combine marketing exposure with independent research before making a purchase decision.

4.8 Purchase Drivers and Overall Rating

Table IV.17: Main Reason for Purchasing Products Promoted on Social Media

Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Attractive advertisements	24	24%
Influencer recommendations	38	38%
Discounts and offers	19	19%
Brand reputation	19	19%
Product reviews	0	0%
Total	100	100%

Table IV.18: Overall Rating of the Impact of Social Media Marketing on Youth

Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Very Positive	33	33%
Positive	62	62%

Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Neutral	5	5%
Negative	0	0%
Very Negative	0	0%
Total	100	100%

Interpretation: Influencer recommendations are cited as the main reason for purchase by the largest share of respondents (38 percent), ahead of attractive advertisements (24 percent), and discounts and offers and brand reputation (19 percent each), underlining the weight influencers carry once a purchase decision is actually made, even though their general influence on brand choice was more moderate. Overall sentiment toward social media marketing is overwhelmingly positive: 62 percent rate its impact as "Positive" and 33 percent as "Very Positive," with only 5 percent neutral and not a single respondent rating it negatively.

4.9 Regulation and Advocacy

Table IV.19: Need for Greater Regulation to Protect Young Consumers

Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	90	90%
No	6	6%
Not Sure	4	4%
Total	100	100%

Table IV.20: Likelihood of Recommending a Product Purchased Due to Social Media Marketing

Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Very likely	52	52%
Likely	43	43%
Neutral	5	5%
Unlikely	0	0%
Total	100	100%

Interpretation: Despite the overwhelmingly positive sentiment recorded elsewhere in the survey, 90 percent of respondents believe that social media marketing should be more regulated to protect young consumers, with only 6 percent disagreeing and 4 percent unsure, pointing to a clear demand for stronger safeguards even among an engaged and largely satisfied youth audience. Word-of-mouth potential is also high: 52 percent are very likely and 43 percent likely to recommend a product they purchased because of social media marketing, with only 5 percent neutral and no respondent unlikely to do so.

V. FINDINGS, SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

Findings

1. 86% of respondents are aged 23-26 and 14% are aged 19-22, placing the sample firmly within the young-adult segment, with no respondents recorded in the 15-18 or above-26 age groups.
2. Gender representation is fairly balanced, with 53% male and 47% female respondents.
3. The sample is highly educated: 90% are postgraduates, 7% are undergraduates, and 3% have higher secondary as their highest qualification.
4. 78% of respondents are students, while 14% are employed and 8% are self-employed.
5. Instagram is the dominant platform, used by 95% of respondents, followed by YouTube at 5%, while Facebook, X (Twitter), and Snapchat account for none of the sample's primary usage.
6. Daily social media usage is moderate for most respondents: 38% spend 1-2 hours and 33% spend under an hour daily, while 19% spend 3-4 hours and 10% spend more than 4 hours.
7. 66% of respondents always notice advertisements on social media and 23% notice them often, with no respondent reporting that they never notice ads.
8. A combined 81% agree or strongly agree that social media advertisements attract their attention, with only 14% neutral and 5% disagreeing.
9. A combined 71% agree or strongly agree that social media marketing influences their buying decisions, with the remaining 29% neutral and no respondent disagreeing.
10. 43% have always purchased a product after seeing it advertised on social media and 28% have done so often, while 19% do so sometimes and 10% rarely.
11. 57% agree or strongly agree that influencers affect their choice of products or brands, while 38% remain neutral and only 5% disagree.
12. Friends' recommendations are the content type that influences the most respondents (33%), followed by influencer reviews (29%), with brand advertisements and customer reviews tied at 19% each.
13. A combined 77% agree or strongly agree that discounts and promotional offers encourage them to buy products, with no respondent disagreeing.
14. 81% agree or strongly agree that social media marketing helps them learn about new products and services, with 19% neutral and no disagreement.
15. 75% agree or strongly agree that social media marketing influences their lifestyle and preferences, with only 5% disagreeing.
16. 40% always compare products online before purchase and 25% do so often, while 30% do so sometimes and 5% rarely.
17. Influencer recommendations are the main reason for purchase for 38% of respondents, ahead of attractive advertisements (24%), and discounts and offers and brand reputation (19% each).
18. 62% rate the overall impact of social media marketing on youth as "Positive" and 33% as "Very Positive," with only 5% neutral and none rating it negatively.
19. 90% of respondents believe social media marketing should be more regulated to protect young consumers, while only 6% disagree and 4% are unsure.
20. 52% are very likely and 43% are likely to recommend a product purchased because of social media marketing, with only 5% neutral and none unlikely.

Suggestions

1. Keep it real and transparent: Since friends' recommendations and influencers drive most decisions, brands should partner with authentic creators and clearly disclose paid promotions, which will build trust rather than erode it.

2. Focus on value, not just visibility: As youth already compare products online extensively, brands should emphasise genuine reviews, comparisons, and real benefits rather than pushing advertisements everywhere; discounts work best when the underlying product itself feels worth it.

3. Create educational guardrails: Given the high level of ad exposure, schools, colleges, and platforms should run digital literacy initiatives to help youth identify misleading advertisements, fake reviews, and manipulative marketing tactics.

4. Regulate with youth in mind: With 90% of respondents calling for more regulation, policymakers and platforms should set clearer rules on targeting, data use, and influencer marketing aimed at young audiences, including age-appropriate advertising and stricter checks on false claims.

5. Use social media as a discovery tool, not just a sales tool: Since a large majority of respondents say social media helps them discover new products, brands should focus on storytelling, lifestyle content, and community-building rather than hard-selling, which is what sustains a positive impact over time.

Conclusion

This study, "A Study on Social Media Marketing and Its Impact on the Buying Decision of Youth," concludes that social media marketing has become a powerful tool that significantly influences the attitudes, lifestyles, and purchasing behaviour of young people. The findings reveal that platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, Snapchat, and X play an important role in creating brand awareness, shaping consumer preferences, and influencing buying decisions through digital advertisements, influencer marketing, and promotional campaigns, with Instagram in particular dominating youth engagement in the study area.

The research highlights that social media marketing offers several benefits, including easy access to product information, educational content, career opportunities, entrepreneurship, and improved communication between businesses and consumers. At the same time, it presents challenges such as excessive screen time, impulsive buying behaviour, privacy concerns, exposure to misleading advertisements, and the risk of unrealistic lifestyle expectations arising from constant social comparison.

Overall, youth in Ballari view the impact of social media marketing on their lives as strongly positive, and are highly likely to act on and recommend products discovered through it. At the same time, the near-universal call among respondents for stronger regulation signals that this positive relationship is accompanied by real concern about the unchecked influence of persuasive marketing on young consumers. Brands, educators, and policymakers therefore share a responsibility to ensure that social media marketing continues to inform and empower youth while guarding against exploitation of their attention and trust.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Websites

- www.google scholar.com
- www.shodhganga.in
- www.research scholar.in
- Previous books and academic records on social media marketing and consumer behaviour.

REFERENCES

- Kumar, A. (2024). A study on the impact of social media marketing on youth. *International Journal of Emerging Technologies and Innovative Research*, 11(4), JETIR2404141.
- Prakash, S. (2025). Impact of social media marketing on purchase behaviour of youth. *International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews*, 6(5), 18110-18114.

- Kesharwani, P. K. (2022). Impact of social media advertisement on youth. *Research Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 13(2). <https://doi.org/10.52711/2321-5828.2022.00016>
- Singh, Y. (2026). The effectiveness of social media marketing on youth buying decisions. *International Journal for Contemporary Practices*, 2(4). <https://doi.org/10.55041/ijcope.v2i4.698>
- Sinha, A. (2025). Impact on teens of social media marketing. *Journal of Management, Spirituality & Wellbeing*, 35(1). <https://doi.org/10.7492/4n8kbbk59>
- Mary, S. (2024). The impact of social media on youth. *International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts*, 12(3), IJCRT24A3189.
- Prabisha, A. T. (2024). Effectiveness of social media marketing among youth. *Research Journal*, 16(2).
- Tamilarasi, S. (2024). Impact of pervasive use of social media advertising on youth: A study on college going students in Tiruchirappalli district. *ShodhKosh*, 5(6), 331-338. <https://doi.org/10.29121/shodhkosh.v5.i6.2024.1683>
- Resmi, R. (2025). The effects of social media marketing on the buying behaviour of youth in India. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research in Global Excellence*, 6(2), 1521-1532.
- Charan, M. J. (2021). Impact of social media marketing strategies on adolescent consumer behavior. *Ilkogretim Online*, 20(5), 9252-9261. <https://doi.org/10.17051/ilkonline.2021.05.1010>
- Joshi, D. (2018). Positive impact of social media on youth: An empirical study in Ahmedabad city. *Research Journal*, 6(4), 469-474.
- Naik, R. A. (2024). The impact of influencer marketing on youth. *TIJER*, 11(8).
- Rawath, S. S. (2019). A study on impact of social media on youth. *Journal of Management*, 6(1), 89-96. <https://doi.org/10.34218/JOM.6.1.2019.010>
- Sudeepti. (2019). Influence of social media marketing communication on young consumers' attitude. *Research Journal*, 6(4).
- Mashru, M. (2022). Impact of social media marketing on young minds. *Research Journal*, 11(10).
- Sumadevi, S. (2023). Impact of social media on youth: Comprehensive analysis. *Research Journal*, 2(4).
- Shetty, Y. B. (2024). The impact of social media on internet marketing strategies. *Research Journal*, 12(3).
- Pirakatheeswari, P. (2024). Impact of usage of social media on purchase decision process. *Research Journal*.
- Rahardjo, D. (2024). Social media influence and online shopping behaviour on consumer conduct and social identity in Indonesia's digital economy. *Research Journal*.