

Leveraging Social Media Engagement Data for Predicting Consumer Buying Behaviour: A Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract: This study presents a systematic literature review to consolidate research on the link between consumers' social media engagement and buying behavior. The research from 2018-2024 focuses on key engagement metrics and their correlation with consumer purchase intention and buying behavior. Considering the increasing volume of available social media data, it has become increasingly essential for firms to understand how these interactions can shed light on consumer buying habits. In this paper, the research presents evidence that firms can harness information in consumers' social media interactions to derive valuable insights about their buying behavior. In the review, the paper proposes ways in which data resulting from social media engagement can be used to predict consumer-specific and less-specific buying behavior. The research also provides future research directions.

Keywords: Social Media Engagement, Consumer Buying Behavior, Social Media Metrics, Digital Consumer Behavior, Social Media Platforms, Online Marketing, Purchase Intention

1. Introduction

Social media's impact on customers is becoming increasingly apparent in the digital age. As a result, e-commerce and digital marketing are receiving an increasing portion of global investment (Steenkamp, 2020; Shankar et al., 2022). The most common way consumers alter their purchases is through digital platforms, enabling businesses to use top-notch content to maximize return on investment (Lopes & Casais, 2022; Makrides et al., 2020). Businesses use interaction data based on the timeliness and relevance of social interactions to stand out in today's environment (Appel et al., 2020; Ye et al., 2022; Cartwright et al., 2022). These encounters' usefulness as digital word-of-mouth sparked this research (Nisar et al., 2020). Studies show that social media involvement favors consumer decision-making, brand equity, and brand position, while there is significant variation in its practical uses (Wies et al., 2023). However, the fundamental causes of this association have yet to be well studied (Collado-Mateo et al., 2023; Karim et al., 2020).

The flow of information between consumers is a good predictor of their purchasing decisions (Petcharat & Leelasantham, 2021; Palalic et al., 2021). Thus, establishing a relationship between social media interactions and a customer's net promoter level can reveal how interactivity data corresponds to consumer spending (Rachmad., 2022; Agag et al., 2024). However, no previous review has examined the predictive value of social media-derived interactivity data (Abbasi et al., 2023; Li et al., 2020; Shahbaznezhad et al., 2021). By investigating the phenomenon of the predictive nature of social media engagement data, this study addresses this gap and comprehensively summarises previous literature in this study area. Finally, this systematic literature review provides implications for future research and practice.

1.1. Background and Rationale

Understanding social media data, consumer behavior, social networks, and their effects has piqued the curiosity of academics worldwide for several decades (Vrontis et al., 2021). Newer viewpoints are required because traditional corporate communication channels and interactions between companies and their customers are currently deemed insufficient (Shankar et al., 2022; Fraccastoro et al., 2021; Guerola-Navarro et al., 2024). Connecting social network user engagement measures to purchasing behavior is a significant difficulty (Saura et al., 2021; Bag et al., 2022; Kleinberg et al., 2024). Comprehensive artificial intelligence-based systems may also record and report human behavior, and further technological improvements are being made in this area (Sarker, 2022; Aggarwal et al., 2023; Nazar et al., 2021). Because consumers spend much time on social media, businesses can use AI systems or ERP software to learn about their preferences and routines (Dwivedi et al., 2021; Haleem et al., 2022). Descriptive statistics, normality tests, and regression approaches for sales and customer acquisition models are only a few of the statistical operations that social media platforms may do with sufficient and faultless performance (Garg et al., 2020; Zachlod et al., 2022; Choi et al., 2020). A

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succinct, methodical literature evaluation of the subject from a commercial standpoint is still lacking (Di et al., 2020; Giuggioli & Pellegrini, 2023).

This review will close the scholarly gap and address the managerial ramifications of social networking website use for organizations (Choi et al., 2020; Zhao et al., 2022; Gupta & Srivastava, 2024). In addition to becoming increasingly important, gathering data about customers and their preferences has become crucial for companies hoping to thrive and stay in business (Du et al., 2021; Varadarajan, 2020; Guerola-Navarro et al., 2024). To make forward-thinking judgments and keep a competitive edge, businesses should be aware of the trends currently dominating the sector (Smith & Ashby, 2020). For years, numerous studies and publications from marketing and other fields have tried to model the connection between social network involvement levels and customer purchasing behavior (Nadeem et al., 2021; Zheng et al., 2022). Determining state-of-the-art research and reviewing the entire corpus of scientific literature published on this topic is why we are interested in this study (Denche-Zamorano et al., 2024). This study thoroughly reviews the literature and addresses the methods or processes, study stages, scientific methods, potential research gaps, and potential clients. (Paul and others, 2021; Antons and others, 2023)

1.2. Research Objectives

The study aims to investigate the trajectory and researchers' understanding of the association between social media engagement behavior and its potential to predict consumer buying behavior by conducting a systematic literature review. This research intends to outline content analysis in broad lines and, therefore, show how social media engagement-related sales are predicted through written textual data and how this characteristic has changed over time. This literature review constitutes a starting point and roadmap for researchers with varied views who want to delve deeper into these matters. The following research objectives help readers understand where this literature review research is situated and to which side it leads.

The study aims to accomplish two objectives in line with these research questions.

1. To examine the impact of different social media engagement metrics (e.g., likes, comments, shares, and retweets) on consumer purchase intention and buying behavior.
2. To assess the predictive power of social media engagement data in forecasting consumer purchase decisions.

2 Methodology

A systematic literature review (SLR) methodology was followed by the guidelines to present an accurate, comprehensive, objective, and fair representation of the phenomenon under study (Shaffril et al., 2021; Hiebl., 2023; Linnenluecke et al., 2020).

The table below shows the selection criteria and the article selection process employed by the researcher.

Table 1 Selection criteria and article selection

Table 1: Selection Criteria and article selection		
Filtering Criteria	Reject	Accept
Search Criteria		
Search engine: Scopus		
Search date: 18 th October 2024		
Search term: (“Social Media Engagement” OR “Online Marketing” OR “Social Media Platforms” OR “Social Media Metrics” AND (“Consumer Behaviour” OR “Purchase Intention” OR Digital Consumer Behaviour)		305
Subject Area: Business, Marketing, Management & Accounting		145
Document Type: Article		106
Content Screening: Full Record and Cited Reference		
Format: CSV		

Source: Author’s research, 2024

The first phase consisted of the data set. The first step of the data collection concerns the adoption of the Scopus database as the data source of this study because it is the most extensive database, which includes several types of papers and analysis tools, and Elsevier introduced it in November 2004. Thus, systematic research on Scopus was conducted and collected in October 2024.

For our search to select appropriate keywords, we reviewed previous bibliometric and literature reviews on key engagement metrics and their relationship with consumer purchase intention and buying patterns. We identified and selected the following keywords: “Social Media Engagement,” “Online Marketing,” Social Media Platforms, “Social Media Metrics,” “Consumer Behaviour,” “Purchase Intention,” and “Digital Consumer Behaviour.” The query yielded 305 documents, including articles, conference papers, book chapters, and conference reviews. In the next step, we identified the exclusion criteria; we filtered the research area considering articles published in the Scopus subject area of business, management, and accounting. Further, we considered only papers written in the English language. After retrieving the raw data, we continued with preliminary data analysis, removing duplicates and manually refining the data set. Finally, this phase of the data set results in 106 relevant scientific products consistent with prior samples in bibliometric studies. The researcher further finalized 25 articles for the review. The analysis covers the period from 2018 to 2024 because the number of publications related to the subject has been growing continuously and provides a comprehensive and up-to-date understanding of the research landscape (Halibas et al., 2023; Han et al., 2018).

The study employed bibliometric analysis techniques to analyze the structure of key engagement metrics and their relationship with consumer purchase intention and buying behavior. The study used the Scopus database since it is impartial and helpful (Merigó et al., 2015). Data obtained from Scopus or any other search engine is prone to erroneous bibliometric and bibliographic information from reporting the original manuscript in later manuscripts. Therefore, direct data processing without data screening risks inappropriate assessment (Goodell et al., 2021).

Table 2 Reviewed Articles

No	Common Themes	Authors	Findings	Possible different Results
1	Social Media Engagement Metrics and Consumer Buying Behavior	- Aw et al., 2021; Ratchford et al., 2022; Naeem., 2019; Paredes et al., 2021; Reviglio & Agosti., 2020; Gigerenzer., 2022 Sharma et al., 2023; Shahbaznezhad et al., 2021; Rachmad., 2022; Matharu et al., 2020;	- Consumers' online actions are valuable predictors of offline or future behavior - Social networking websites help foster responsiveness, awareness, assurance, reliability, and empathy. - The study highlights the importance of understanding consumer behavior and channel-related factors to effectively address webrooming behavior and improve business strategies - The findings reveal that e-commerce has significantly changed consumers' shopping habits and the retail industry's future. - The results showed the effects of knowledge engineering tasks and the quality of the machine learning classifier in predicting consumer behavior. - The study highlights the gap between favorable consumer attitudes and actual purchase behavior. - Different content formats and platforms impact passive and active engagement behavior. - The findings highlight that social commerce positively affects customer switching behavior, indicating that consumers are increasingly inclined to make purchases through social media channels. - Social media marketing significantly impacts both social commerce and customer switching behavior, demonstrating its pivotal role in influencing consumer decisions.	- The study highlights increasing concerns regarding algorithms' ability to overtly persuade and covertly manipulate users for the sake of engagement
2	Industries and Social Media Engagement Indicators	Moran et al., 2020; Aydin., 2020; Garg et al., 2020; Majeed et al., 2022; Ho et al., 2022;	- The results show positive relationships between interactivity cues and media richness content components on increasing consumer-brand engagement outcomes. - Calls to action (CTAs) enhance all four engagement behaviors (clicking, liking, commenting, and sharing). - Media richness, particularly visual imagery (photos and videos), strongly influences all engagement behaviors. - The findings highlight that social commerce positively affects customer switching behavior, indicating that consumers are increasingly inclined to make purchases through social media channels. - Social media marketing significantly impacts both social commerce and customer switching behavior, demonstrating its pivotal role in influencing consumer decisions. - The study provides valuable insights for e-commerce companies on leveraging social media marketing to enhance customer engagement, loyalty, and conversion rates. - By understanding these dynamics, businesses can better navigate the evolving digital marketplace and maintain a competitive edge in attracting and retaining customers. - The study highlights the importance of social media analytics in enhancing customer engagement and improving business performance. - The three dimensions of customer engagement significantly influence repurchase intention.	
3	Social Media Engagement Metrics	Sharma et al., 2023; Vander et al., 2020; Valsesia et al., 2020; Shawky et al., 2022; Bag et al., 2022; Panadero & Lipnevich., 2022; Naeem & Ozuem., 2021; Agarwal., 2020; Vrontis et al., 2021; Haenlein et al., 2020; Lee et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2021; Kim & Song., 2020; Nusairat et al., 2021; Tyrväinen et al., 2023	- Social media platforms furnish users with abundant information that is profitable for marketers - A set of metrics is essential in measuring social media user data to predict consumer purchasing behavior - Greater perceived influence impacts engagement with shared content, resulting in more favorable attitudes (likes) and a greater propensity to spread it (retweets). - The study found that social media can effectively increase informational and emotional support. - It identified social media measurement tools that assist social marketing practitioners in understanding different actors' interactions with social media content. - The findings highlight the importance of maintaining actors' levels of engagement and advancing their engagement to a higher level.	

3. Key Results

This section is divided into three themes:

- A. How do the differing social media engagement indicators influence consumer buying behavior?
- B. How do different industries experience differing social media engagement indicators?
- C. What general trends in consumer behavior regarding social media indicators can be identified?

A. Social Media Engagement Metrics and Consumer Buying Behavior

Consumers' online actions are valuable predictors of offline or future behavior (Aw et al., 2021; Ratchford et al., 2022; Naeem., 2019). Using data from social media platforms to uncover insights makes logical sense, as these are highly popular sites that capture real-world individuals' behavior in real-time. (Paredes et al., 2021; Reviglio & Agosti., 2020; Gigerenzer., 2022). The findings in this systematic literature review provide an in-depth understanding of user interaction on social media to predict consumer buying behavior (Abdelsalam et al., 2020; Mariani et al., 2022; Sharma et al., 2023). Of all the social media engagement indicators, comments are closely related to purchasing behavior and revenue; likes and shares also positively correlate with consumer behavior (Shahbaznezhad et al., 2021; Rachmad., 2022). Only a limited number of the studies reviewed explored the practical implications of these insights; like and share indicators were similarly associated with purchasing behavior in crisis and non-crisis stages for the travel and financial industries on social media platforms (Matharu et al., 2020; Anitha and Patil., 2022; Fadillah and Kusumawati., 2021).

B. Industries and Social Media Engagement Indicators

Different industries have different social media engagement indicators (Moran et al., 2020; Aydin., 2020; Garg et al., 2020). Studies have revealed that social media shares influence the travel and education industries, while the restaurant industry is influenced by comments that drive consumer behavior (Majeed et al., 2022; Obembe et al., 2021; Kengpol et al., 2022). The results from the financial industry were mixed, with some studies adopting comments as an engagement indicator and others using shares to gauge future consumer behavior (Vander et al., 2020; Eslami et al., 2022; Ho et al., 2022). Industries with more realistic product portrayals, such as restaurants, are more influenced by comments than likes, possibly because seeing positive comments about products helps to reduce consumers' perceived risk, which in turn increases the likelihood of purchase (Moran et al., 2020; Kim et al., 2021; Selensky & Carels., 2021). The financial industry, however, found multiple conflicting results across the different studies reviewed (Ali et al., 2020; Akomea-Frimpong et al., 2022; Ozili., 2021).

3.1. Social Media Engagement Metrics

Social media platforms furnish users with abundant information that is profitable for marketers (Sharma et al., 2023). A set of metrics is essential in measuring social media user data to predict consumer purchasing behavior (Vander et al., 2020; Valsesia et al., 2020). These metrics can be considered quantitative and qualitative, explaining user behavior more specifically (Hase & Bansal, 2020).

3.1.1. Quantitative Metrics. These metrics provide quantifiable data that marketers can utilize to evaluate and predict a user's purchasing decision.

Engagement Rates. Engagement rates are quantitative, referring to the trade-off between the number of people exposed to the posts and those who connect with them (Rossi et al., 2021). Additionally, engagement can be assessed by comparing each post's number of likes, comments, and reposts to the numerical value of a page's audience (Shawky et al., 2022). Marketers should pay attention to the most crucial index: the engagement rate (Argyris et al., 2020; Bag et al., 2022). They suggest that this focus should be divided into three indices. Comments are a valuable way for a person to give feedback, report any problems they encounter, or share their positive and negative experiences (Carless & Winstone, 2023; Panadero & Lipnevich., 2022)—sentiment Analysis. Using sentiment analysis, it can be determined whether a social media user tends to purchase a product or avail themselves of a service (Jain et al., 2021; Wankhade et al., 2022). In addition, opinions can be positive or negative, including organic reach for a brand, such as posts, videos, and photos.

3.1.2. Qualitative Metrics. Engagement metrics that are qualitative in nature include Consumer Commentary. Consumer commentary denotes consumers' favorable or adverse remarks about a product or service (Vander et al., 2020; Munaro et al., 2021). User-generated content (UGC) refers to shared social media content created by unpaid fans, loyalists, and followers. UGC can be crucial in consumer behavior, including brand recall, credibility perception, and familiarity (Naeem & Ozuem., 2021; Agarwal., 2020). Over the years, it has been seen as an influencer and brand positioning tool, with an emphasis on the growing significance of social media, particularly platforms like Instagram (Vrontis et al., 2021; Haenlein et al., 2020; Lee et al., 2022). Marketers have incorporated UGC into their advertising strategies, particularly in measurement and implementation (Zhang et al., 2021; Kim & Song., 2020). Generally, UGC can be characterized as relevant, useful, educational, entertaining, vibrant, and recent content, referred to at fortnightly, monthly, or annual intervals.

Relevance of Quantitative and Qualitative Metrics. Social media data-based market segmentation studies based on consumer behavior are being published. Social media reveals various types of consumer behavior. These behaviors also influence a consumer's purchasing decision. Marketers and business entities must differentiate the behaviors related to different consumer groups. This has necessitated more precise measures with definite samples for predicting social media impacts. Likewise, using preferred engagement metrics contributes to the influence of targeting. These numbers matter to the audiences businesses intend to influence with an effective marketing strategy. (Nusairat et al., 2021; Tyrväinen et al., 2023)

4. Implications and Future Research

4.1. Businesses can develop their marketing strategy by using the implications. Through engagement strategies, it may be possible to convince a customer to buy a product if they believe it to be low risk. Businesses must comprehend social media dynamics and how the consumer's role varies across platforms. Businesses can develop brand loyalty that eventually results in word-of-mouth by successfully interacting with customers. Knowing the customer is essential to forming this interaction and gives marketers the tools to gain sway. Marketers must be nimble and adaptable to the ever-evolving social media landscape.

4.2. The findings further indicate consumer behavior differences across platforms and how social media practices influence them. The study suggests that further investigation is necessary to verify and investigate the accuracy of the information presented. Future research should delve into consumer attitudes during an era of tech-savvy engagement. New consumer-led phenomena have become significant in marketing on their respective platforms. There is also the need for a deeper understanding to uncover consumers' attitudes and actions when purchasing limited tokens or special access to online services, using new payment methods, and allowing marketers more access to analyze and predict consumer behaviors.

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