

The Impact Of Social Media Addiction On Consumer Engagement

Submitted by-

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Abstract:

Social media has become a big part of daily life for many people. While it helps connect people and share information, it can also lead to addiction. Social media addiction happens when people spend too much time online and feel stressed or anxious when they are not using it. This addiction can have a strong impact on how consumers engage with brands and products. People who are addicted to social media are often more active online. They like, share, and comment on posts more often. However, their engagement may not always be meaningful or loyal. They might quickly move from one brand to another because they are always looking for new and exciting content. This can make it harder for brands to build strong and lasting relationships with their customers. Also, addicted users may focus more on entertainment rather than making thoughtful buying decisions. This study highlights the need for companies to create content that not only grabs attention but also builds trust and real connections. Understanding how social media addiction affects consumer behavior can help brands design better marketing strategies and encourage healthier online habits.

Social media plays an important role in modern life, helping people stay connected, entertained, and informed. However, when people use social media too much, it can lead to addiction. Social media addiction happens when someone feels a strong need to be online all the time, often leading to stress, anxiety, and less control over their time. This addiction can deeply influence how consumers engage with brands and businesses online. Addicted users are usually more active — they like, share, and comment more often than others. While this high level of activity may seem positive for brands at first, it often results in shallow engagement. Many addicted users jump quickly from one brand or trend to another, making it difficult for businesses to build loyal relationships with them. Instead of focusing on long-term connections, these users are often seeking quick entertainment or emotional rewards. Their purchasing decisions may also be less thoughtful and more impulsive. This behavior challenges brands to rethink their marketing strategies.

Introduction:

Social media has changed the way people communicate, share information, and make decisions. Platforms like Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and Twitter are now deeply rooted in everyday life. People use them not just to connect with friends and family, but also to follow brands, discover new products, and stay updated with the latest trends. For businesses, social media offers a powerful way to reach and engage customers. However, there is a growing concern about the negative side of social media use, especially addiction. Social media addiction happens when a person feels an uncontrollable need to use these platforms, often spending excessive amounts of time online. This behavior can lead to emotional problems like anxiety, stress, and loneliness. It also changes how people interact with brands and products online. Since social media is a major tool for marketing today, understanding the impact of social media addiction on consumer engagement is very important.

Social media addiction is a form of behavioral addiction where users become overly dependent on online interactions for emotional satisfaction. Unlike traditional addictions such as those to drugs or alcohol, social media addiction is often harder to recognize because being online is seen as normal behavior. However, when someone

checks their phone constantly, feels anxious when offline, or spends more time scrolling than doing daily tasks, it can become a serious problem. Studies have shown that addicted users tend to engage with social media content more frequently. They like, share, comment, and repost much more than non-addicted users. At first glance, this might seem like a positive sign for brands — more engagement usually means more visibility. However, this kind of engagement is often shallow. Addicted users are more interested in quick entertainment rather than building meaningful relationships with brands.

Moreover, social media addiction can lead to impulsive buying behavior. Consumers who spend a lot of time on social media may make fast, emotional purchasing decisions without thinking carefully. They are easily influenced by flashy advertisements, influencer promotions, and viral trends. While this can boost short-term sales, it often results in low customer loyalty. Once the

excitement fades, these consumers may quickly lose interest and move on to the next trend or brand. This creates a challenge for businesses that aim to build long-lasting relationships with their customers.

Brands today must recognize that attention alone is not enough. To succeed, they must create deeper, more authentic interactions with their audiences. This could include providing valuable content, supporting social causes, creating genuine brand communities, and encouraging healthy online behavior. By understanding the connection between social media addiction and consumer engagement, companies can build smarter marketing strategies that not only attract attention but also encourage loyalty and trust. In a world where digital distractions are everywhere, building real, meaningful relationships with consumers has become more important than ever.

Literature Review:

Many studies have explored how social media addiction affects people's behaviors, especially in how they engage with brands online. Researchers agree that while social media platforms offer many opportunities for businesses, the addictive nature of these platforms creates new challenges in understanding consumer engagement.

Social media addiction is often described as a behavioral addiction where individuals feel a constant need to use social media, even when it causes problems in their daily lives (Andreassen, 2015). This addiction leads to emotional issues such as stress, anxiety, and a fear of missing out (FOMO). Studies show that people who are addicted to social media tend to spend more time online and engage more frequently with content (Kuss & Griffiths, 2017). However, this engagement is often superficial. Addicted users are more likely to like, comment, and share posts quickly without much thought or emotional connection to the brand (Turel & Serenko, 2012).

Research also suggests that social media addiction changes how consumers make decisions. According to a study by Hormes (2016), addicted users often make impulsive purchases because they are easily influenced by emotional advertising, influencer promotions, and viral trends. This impulsive behavior can lead to temporary sales boosts but does not always result in loyal customers. Once the excitement of a trend or promotion wears off, these consumers often lose interest and move on to something new.

Other researchers have noted that social media addiction reduces the quality of engagement. Rather than building real relationships with brands, addicted consumers tend to seek instant rewards such as entertainment, social approval, or emotional comfort. This creates a challenge for marketers, who must work harder to build deeper, more meaningful connections with their audience.

Another important finding is that constant exposure to marketing content on social media can lead to "advertising fatigue" among addicted users. This means that consumers start ignoring or feeling annoyed by marketing messages because they are overwhelmed by the constant flood of information. As a result, businesses that rely heavily on traditional advertising methods may struggle to keep the attention of addicted users.

Recent studies also suggest that brands that promote healthy digital habits and authentic engagement are more successful with audiences affected by social media addiction. For example, brands that create communities, encourage user-generated content, and focus on shared values tend to build stronger loyalty over time.

In summary, the literature shows that while social media addiction leads to more frequent consumer engagement, the quality of this engagement is often lower. Addicted users are more impulsive, less loyal, and more easily distracted. Brands must recognize this reality and shift their strategies towards building trust, offering genuine value, and creating real emotional connections if they want to achieve lasting success in a world heavily shaped by social media.

Problem statement:

1. Social media has become a dominant tool for communication, marketing, and consumer engagement in today's digital world.
2. Excessive use of social media platforms has led to social media addiction, affecting users' psychological and behavioral patterns.
3. There is a growing concern that addiction-driven social media usage may impact the quality, depth, and authenticity of consumer engagement.
4. Consumers influenced by addiction might interact impulsively with brands, leading to superficial engagement rather than meaningful loyalty.
5. Despite heavy reliance on social media for marketing, there is limited research on how addictive behaviors affect consumer-brand relationships.
6. This study aims to explore the impact of social media addiction on various aspects of consumer engagement and provide insights for businesses to adapt to this changing behavior.

Objective of the study:

The study is designed with the following objectives:

1. To Investigate the Prevalence and Patterns of Social Media Addiction Among Consumers: - This objective aims to examine how widespread social media addiction is across different age groups, genders, and socio-economic backgrounds. It also seeks to understand the daily usage patterns, time spent, and platform preferences that contribute to addictive behaviors.
2. To Analyze the Influence of Social Media Addiction on Consumer Engagement Behaviors: - The study focuses on how addictive usage patterns affect consumer actions such as liking, commenting, sharing, following, and

purchasing decisions on social media platforms. It explores whether high engagement is a result of genuine brand interest or compulsive habits.

3. To Understand the Psychological Drivers Behind Addiction-Induced Consumer Engagement: -This objective delves into psychological factors like fear of missing out (FOMO), instant gratification, social validation needs, and parasocial relationships with influencers, which motivate consumers to repeatedly engage with brand content.

4. To Evaluate the Quality and Authenticity of Engagement Resulting from Social Media Addiction: - Beyond the quantity of interactions, the study aims to assess whether consumer engagement is deep and meaningful or shallow and impulsive. It examines if addiction-driven engagement translates into real brand loyalty and long-term customer relationships.

5. To Examine the Ethical Issues Related to Marketing Practices Targeting Addicted Consumers: -The study also investigates whether brands and marketers are responsibly addressing or unintentionally exploiting addictive behaviors. It looks at the ethical implications of strategies like endless scrolling, fear-based marketing, and hyper-targeted advertisements.

6. To Propose Recommendations for Promoting Healthy Consumer Engagement: - Based on the findings, the study intends to suggest practical strategies for brands and social media marketers to foster ethical, responsible, and sustainable engagement practices that prioritize consumer well-being along with businessness.

Methodology:

- The research will employ a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative methods to comprehensively investigate the impact of social media addiction on consumer engagement.

-The survey questionnaire will include items related to participants' perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors towards social media usage, utilizing validated scales to measure constructs such as time then spend von social media and at which content they engage the most.

-Interviews will explore participants' perceptions of social media, their usage patterns, challenges encountered, and suggestions for improvement.

-Sampling for interviews will ensure representation from diverse students groups and perspectives within the higher education community.

- Qualitative data from interviews will be analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring themes, patterns, and insights related to social media addiction.

- Quantitative and qualitative findings will be integrated to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research problem.

Data Collection:

A structured questionnaire was developed to capture various aspects related to the impact of social media addiction on consumer engagement. The survey included questions about demographic information, social media usage habits, attitudes towards online advertisement, and factors influencing consumer behavior.

The survey was hosted on a reliable online survey platform and distributed to potential participants using convenience sampling methods. The survey link was shared across various online channels, including social media platforms, community groups, and google forms.

The number of responses received was monitored throughout the data collection period to ensure that the target sample size of 40 respondents was reached. Recruitment and promotion strategies were adjusted as needed to encourage more participation and achieve the desired response rate.

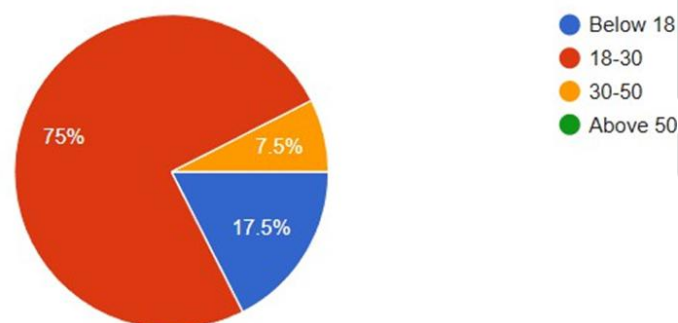
A predetermined data collection period was specified during which participants could respond to the survey. This helped create a sense of urgency and encouraged timely participation, ensuring that data collection was completed within the specified timeframe.

Once 40 responses were collected, the data was compiled and prepared for analysis. Data cleaning was performed to remove any incomplete or irrelevant responses and then the data was analysed using appropriate statistical techniques and methods to identify trends and addiction of social media affecting consumer engagement.

Data Analysis and Interpretation:

Age group

40 responses



INTERPRETATION-

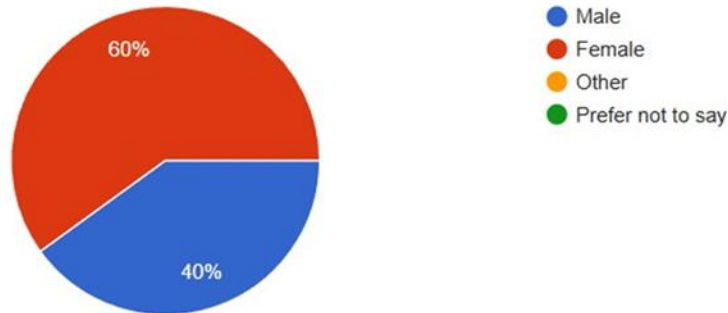
The majority of respondents are from the 18–30 age group, showing a youthful audience.

A significant portion also falls below 18, indicating young professionals' interest.

Very few participants are above 30-50, suggesting limited reach among older demographics.

Gender

40 responses



INTERPRETATION-

This suggests that social media addiction and its effects on engagement may be slightly more prevalent or observable among females.

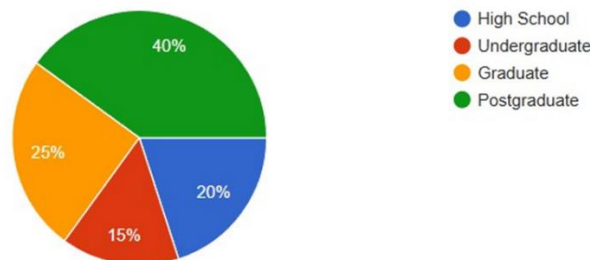
Females might demonstrate higher emotional or interactive engagement patterns on social media platforms compared to males.

The gender distribution highlights the importance of considering female behavior trends when analyzing social media-driven consumer actions.

Future strategies or interventions addressing social media addiction should especially focus on the female demographic while not neglecting male users.

Educational Level

40 responses



INTERPRETATION-

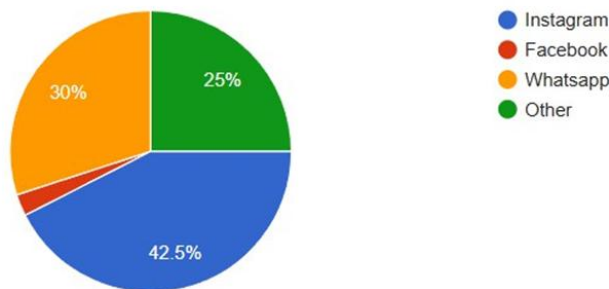
This suggests that social media addiction and engagement patterns are more closely studied or experienced among higher-educated individuals that is post graduates and graduates.

Higher-educated participants might show more conscious yet frequent engagement, blending professional and personal use.

Lower-educated users that is high school and undergraduates may engage more casually or emotionally, but still represent an important segment.

Which social media platform do you use most frequently?

40 responses



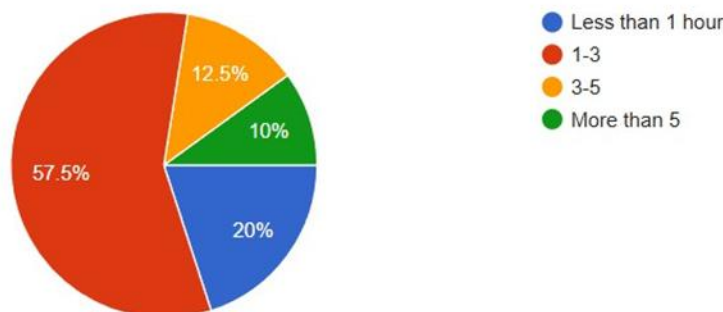
INTERPRETATION-

The most frequently used social media platforms among participants were Instagram and whatsapp. Instagram is popular for visual content and influencer engagement, especially among the younger, highly educated group. WhatsApp is widely used among participants for quick, personal communication and group discussions. It serves as a popular platform for both social and professional interactions, especially in regions where messaging apps dominate. Very least respondents use facebook.

Overall, the study highlights that higher-educated individuals prefer platforms offering both personal and professional engagement.

How many hours per day do you spend on social media?

40 responses



INTERPRETATION-

57.5% participants spend 1–3 hours per day on social media, suggesting light or moderate engagement.

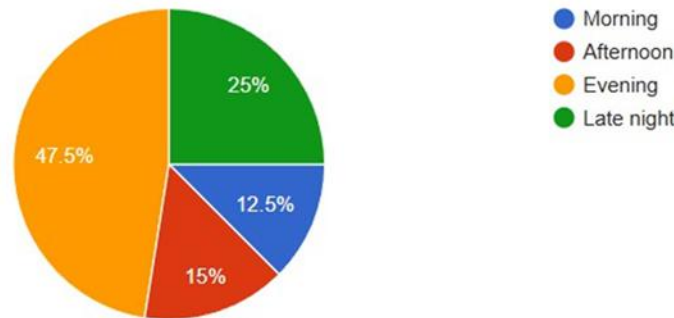
20% participants spend 3–5hours, indicating a moderate level of addiction or high engagement.

10% participants spend 5+ hours, showing a small but significant group that may be experiencing heavy social media addiction.

Overall, the data reflects a trend where the majority spend moderate time, but a notable portion (10%) might be over-engaged.

When do you typically use social media the most?

40 responses



INTERPRETATION-

15% participants most often use social media in the afternoon, indicating a high engagement during lunch breaks or work/study downtime.

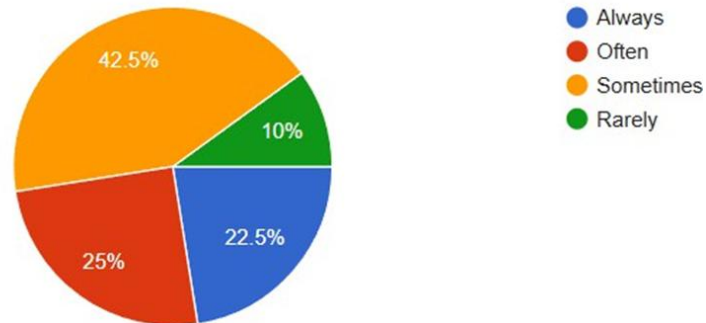
12.5% participants use social media in the morning, likely as part of their routine to catch up with news or connect with friends before the day starts.

47.5% participants primarily use social media in the evening, which could be after work or study hours when people are winding down.

25% participants engage with social media during late night hours, possibly showing signs of social media addiction or the need for late-night entertainment.

Do you find yourself checking social media even when you don't have any specific reason?

40 responses



INTERPRETATION-

A majority of participants admitted to checking social media without any specific reason, indicating habitual usage patterns.

This behavior reflects a common symptom of social media addiction, where users are driven by habit rather than need.

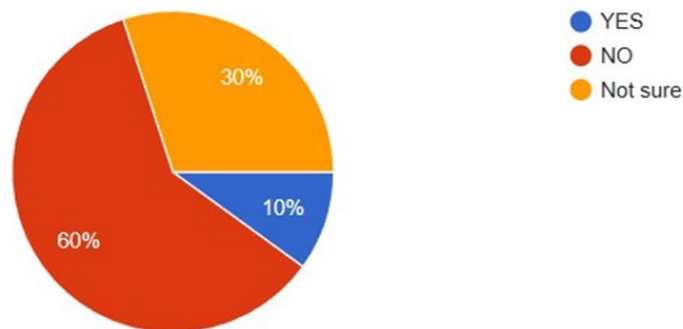
Frequent, purposeless checking suggests a deep psychological dependency and reduced self-control over digital habits.

Such behavior can lead to increased screen time, reduced productivity, and emotional fatigue.

Overall, the findings highlight the unconscious role social media plays in the daily lives of users

Do you experience discomfort or anxiety when you cannot access social media?

40 responses



INTERPRETATION-

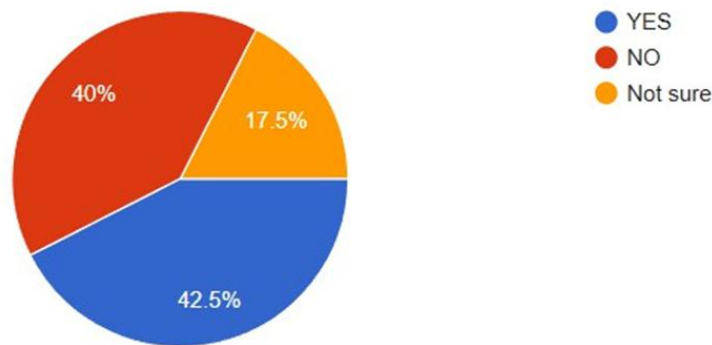
A significant portion of participants reported not feeling anxiety or discomfort while accessing social media.

This suggests that for many users, social media remains a positive and manageable part of their daily routine.

These users likely engage with content mindfully and maintain a healthy balance between online and offline life. Their behavior reflects a controlled usage pattern, reducing the risk of developing social media addiction. The findings indicate that not all frequent users experience negative emotional effects from social media engagement.

Do you feel that your social media usage interferes with your daily activity?

40 responses

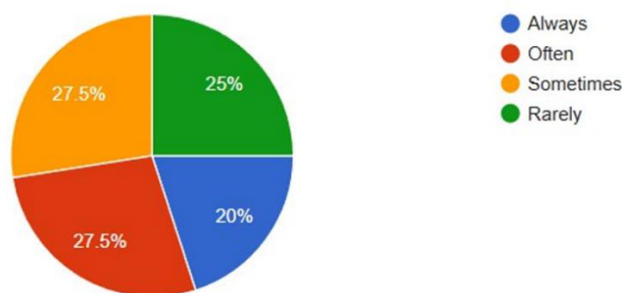


INTERPRETATION-

Many participants acknowledged that social media use interferes with their daily activities. This suggests that excessive engagement on social platforms can disrupt work, studies, and personal responsibilities. It highlights a tendency among users to prioritize social media over essential tasks, leading to reduced productivity. Such interference is a key indicator of problematic usage and developing addiction patterns. The study emphasizes the need for better time management and conscious social media habits among users

How often do you engage with advertisements on social media?

40 responses



INTERPRETATION-

A moderate number of participants reported engaging with advertisements on social media either occasionally or frequently.

This suggests that while users are mainly on social media for personal reasons, ads still capture their attention.

Engagement often happens through likes, shares, clicks, or even purchases influenced by targeted promotions.

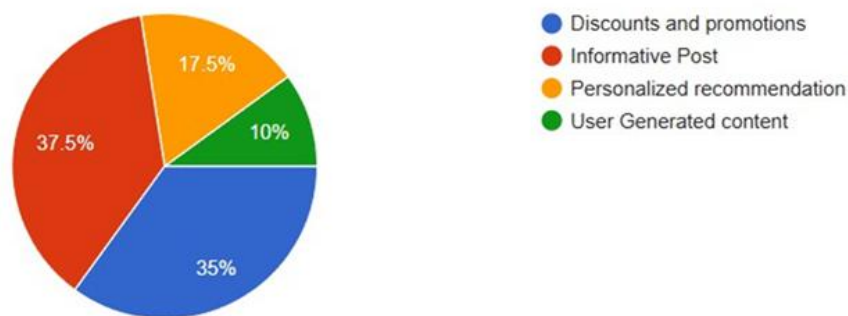
Frequent ad interaction may indicate the success of personalized marketing strategies on addicted or active users.

Overall, the study shows that social media advertisements play a significant role in influencing consumer behavior and engagement.

What type of content encourages you to engage with brands on social media?



40 responses



INTERPRETATION-

Most participants indicated that engaging content such as discounts, giveaways, relatable posts, and visually appealing ads drive their interaction with brands.

Emotional, entertaining, and informative content tends to create a stronger connection and increases the chances of active engagement.

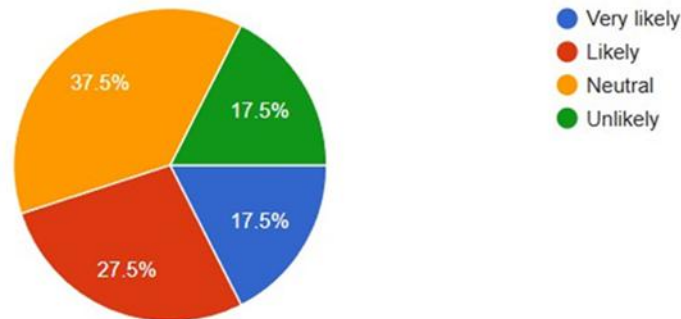
Authenticity and creativity in brand messaging were also highlighted as key factors attracting user attention.

This suggests that brands need to focus on personalized, value-driven content to effectively engage their audience.

Overall, content that feels relevant, rewarding, and relatable significantly boosts consumer-brand interaction on social media.

How likely are you to purchase a product or services based on social media recommendation?

40 responses



INTERPRETATION-

A significant number of participants reported purchasing products neutral based on social media recommendations.

This indicates that while social media influences buying decisions, most users are selective and not impulsive buyers.

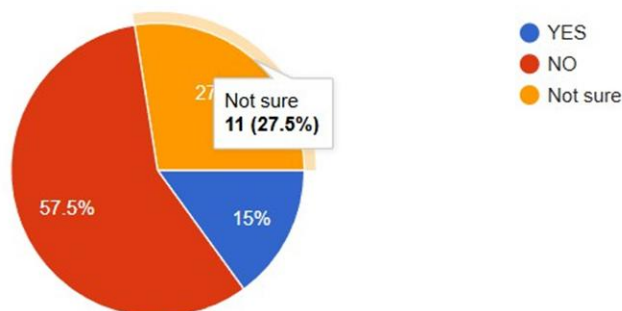
Recommendations from influencers, friends, or targeted ads play a crucial role in shaping consumer trust and interest.

Frequent purchases suggest a strong impact of social media marketing strategies on user behavior.

Overall, the study highlights social media as a powerful but measured driver of consumer purchasing decisions.

Do you feel excessive time spend on social media reduces your interest in brand advertisements?

40 responses



INTERPRETATION-

The majority of participants stated that spending excessive time on social media does not reduce their interest in brand advertisements.

This indicates that frequent exposure to ads does not necessarily lead to ad fatigue among many users.

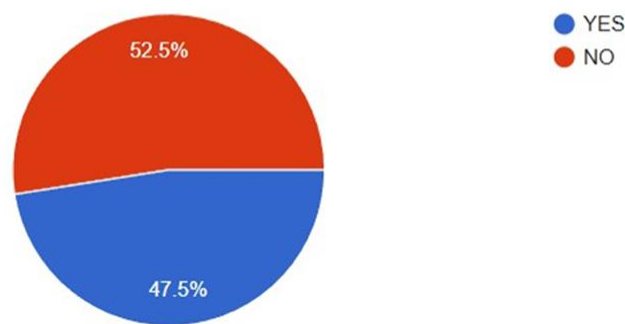
It suggests that well-targeted and engaging advertisements continue to capture consumer attention despite heavy usage.

Consumers may have adapted to constant advertising as a normal part of their social media experience.

Overall, the findings highlight an opportunity for brands to maintain and even strengthen engagement through consistent advertising efforts.

Do you actively follow brands or influencers on social media?

40 responses



INTERPRETATION-

The majority of participants do not actively follow brands or influencers on social media.

This suggests that while users engage with social media, they are not inclined to form long-term connections with brands or influencers.

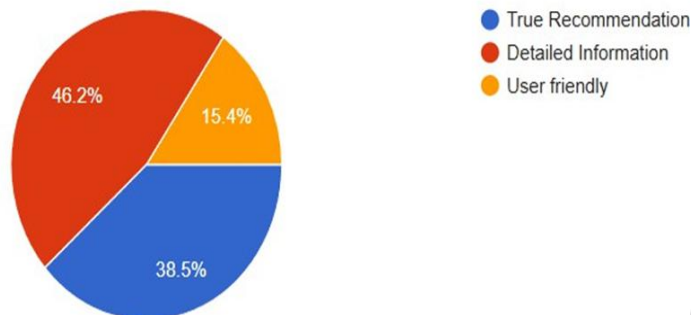
It may indicate a preference for personal or entertainment-focused content over promotional or influencer-driven posts.

Brands may need to rethink their social media strategies to build more authentic relationships that resonate with users.

Overall, the findings suggest that consumer engagement with brands and influencers is still low, and marketers need to find innovative ways to increase active following.

What motivates you most to engage with brands or influencers on social media?

39 responses



INTERPRETATION-

Participants reported that the top motivators for engaging with brands or influencers include authenticity, relevant content, and special offers such as discounts or giveaways.

Engaging content that feels genuine or provides value—whether through education, entertainment, or personal connection—tends to drive higher interaction.

Influencers who share relatable experiences or align with personal interests are also key drivers of engagement.

Exclusive promotions and limited-time offers encourage impulse engagement, especially among price-sensitive users.

Overall, the findings suggest that a combination of authenticity, relevance, and value-driven content is essential for fostering meaningful engagement with brands and influencer

FINDINGS:

- 1- Most adults age between 18-30 who were students use social media for 1-3 hours mostly in evening.
- 2- People were mostly engage in online advertisements and purchase products on online recommendation.
- 3- Mostly people are satisfied by the purchase made on online recommendation and they were influenced by discount and promotions and informative posts.
- 4- Social media addiction influencing the consumers to purchase product rapidly and spend more time on online advertisement.

Limitations:

1. Shallow Engagement

Consumers addicted to social media often like, comment, and share quickly without forming real emotional connections with brands. Their interactions are frequent but not always meaningful.

2. Low Brand Loyalty

Addicted users may jump from one brand to another easily. They are more interested in the latest trends than in building long-term relationships with a brand.

3. Impulsive Buying

Social media addiction can lead to quick, emotional purchases. While this may boost short-term sales, it does not guarantee that consumers will return or stay loyal.

4. Advertising Fatigue

Constant exposure to ads and promotions can overwhelm addicted users, causing them to ignore marketing messages or develop negative feelings toward brands.

5. Short Attention Span

People addicted to social media often have shorter attention spans, making it hard for brands to deliver deeper messages or storytelling that requires longer focus.

6. Emotional Instability

Addicted users often experience emotions like anxiety, loneliness, or FOMO (fear of missing out). These emotions can make their engagement with brands unpredictable and unstable.

Conclusion:

Social media addiction has a strong impact on the way consumers engage with brands online. While addicted users are very active — liking, sharing, and commenting often — their engagement is usually shallow and short-lived. They are easily attracted by trends and emotional content but may not stay loyal to any one brand for long. Their decisions are often impulsive, driven more by emotions than careful thinking. This makes it harder for businesses to build lasting and meaningful relationships with their customers.

In addition, addicted users can experience advertising fatigue, making them less responsive to traditional marketing efforts. Their short attention spans and emotional ups and downs also create challenges for brands trying to keep their interest.

To succeed in this environment, companies need to go beyond just grabbing attention. They must create real value, build trust, and form genuine connections with their audiences. By understanding the effects of social media addiction, businesses can design better strategies that not only attract customers but also encourage loyalty and long-term engagement.

In the future, promoting healthier social media habits and focusing on meaningful interactions will be key to building strong and lasting relationships between brands and consumers.

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