

Exploring The Role Of Social Media In Shaping Consumer Perception Of Product Quality

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Abstract

The emergence of social media platforms has dramatically transformed how consumers perceive and evaluate product quality. This study investigates the role of social media in shaping consumer perception of product quality by analysing user-generated content, influencer endorsements, and brand engagement strategies. A quantitative research design was employed, and primary data were collected from 229 respondents through a structured questionnaire. The data were analysed using correlation and regression analysis to determine the strength and nature of the relationship between social media usage and perceived product quality.

The results revealed a statistically significant positive correlation between social media influence and consumer perception of product quality. Regression analysis further indicated that social media variables such as reviews, likes, shares, and influencer endorsements significantly predict consumer perception. The findings emphasize the growing importance of digital trust and peer validation in shaping quality perception, particularly among millennials and Gen Z consumers.

This research provides valuable insights for marketers aiming to build trust and credibility through digital platforms. By understanding the impact of social media content, businesses can strategically manage online communication to enhance consumer trust and drive purchase decisions. The study concludes that social media is not just a promotional tool but a vital factor in influencing product quality perception. It recommends that marketers invest in content authenticity, consumer engagement, and influencer partnerships to sustain positive consumer sentiment.

Keywords:

Socialmedia, Product quality perception, Consumer behaviour, Influencer marketing, Digital engagement.

Introduction

In the digital age, social media has emerged as a dominant force influencing consumer behaviour and perceptions. With platforms like Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and X (formerly Twitter) becoming integral parts of daily life, consumers rely increasingly on online interactions to form judgments about product quality. Unlike traditional marketing, where messages were one-way, social media allows for two-way communication, enabling consumers to interact with brands, review products, and share their experiences. This shift

has empowered consumers with more control and made word-of-mouth and peer reviews crucial in shaping opinions.

The perception of product quality, once solely influenced by advertising and personal experience, is now significantly shaped by online reviews, influencer endorsements, and brand presence on social media. These platforms have become trusted sources of product information, especially among younger demographics who often turn to social media before making purchase decisions. Visual content, user reviews, unboxing videos, and interactive posts contribute to the formation of a consumer's perception of a product's quality—sometimes even before physical interaction with the product itself.

This study aims to explore how social media content influences consumer perception of product quality. It seeks to understand the extent to which various social media factors—such as user reviews, brand engagement, and influencer recommendations—affect consumers' quality assessments. By examining responses from 229 participants and applying statistical tools like correlation and regression analysis, this research will offer insights into digital consumer psychology and provide actionable recommendations for businesses looking to build consumer trust through social media platforms.

Statement Of The Problem

With the increasing reliance on social media for product-related information, understanding how these platforms influence consumer perception has become crucial. Despite the abundance of digital content, there remains a gap in comprehending how various social media elements—like user reviews, influencer marketing, and engagement metrics—contribute to shaping perceived product quality. This is particularly relevant in a market saturated with competing products where consumer perception can significantly impact brand loyalty and purchase intent. The problem lies in identifying which aspects of social media most influence consumer judgment and whether this influence leads to a consistent perception of quality. This study seeks to address that gap by analyzing the correlation between social media usage and consumer perception of product quality among a diverse sample of users.

Objectives Of The Study

1. To examine the influence of social media content (reviews, posts, influencers) on consumer perception of product quality.
2. To analyse the relationship between social media engagement and trust in product quality.
3. To identify which social media factors are most predictive of consumer perception through statistical tools like correlation and regression.

Review Of Literature

1. Kapoor et al (2022)

In this study on digital media influence, Kapoor and colleagues found that consumer trust in product quality is significantly shaped by peer reviews and influencer credibility. Their findings highlight the need for authentic content on platforms like Instagram and YouTube. [DOI: 10.1016/j.chb.2022.107310]

2. Sivaramakrishnan & Mukherjee (2023)

This study revealed that video content, particularly unboxing and review videos, create stronger perceptions of product quality. They also noted that frequency of exposure correlates

with higher perceived value.
[DOI: 10.1016/j.jretconser.2023.103048]

3. **Alalwan (2023)**

Alalwan emphasized that social media influencers impact product perception more significantly than brand advertising. The perceived authenticity of influencers enhances consumer confidence in quality.

[DOI: 10.1108/JRIM-06-2022-0131]

4. **Nguyen & Nguyen (2022)**

Their research focused on online customer reviews and demonstrated that both positive and negative reviews significantly affect product credibility and trust, especially in e-commerce.

[DOI: 10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2022.102437]

5. **Chatterjee et al. (2023)**

The authors studied engagement metrics and found that likes, shares, and comments act as social proof, influencing the way users perceive the quality of unfamiliar products.

[DOI: 10.1016/j.techfore.2023.122184]

Analysis And Interpretation

Sample size: 229 respondents

Statistical Tools Used: Pearson Correlation and Simple Linear Regression

Variables Used:

- **Independent Variable (X):** Social Media Influence Score
- **Dependent Variable (Y):** Perception of Product Quality

1. Correlation Analysis

Variables	Pearson Correlation (r)	Significance (p-value)
Social Media Influence & Perception of Product Quality	0.670	0.000 (p < 0.01)

Interpretation:

- A Pearson correlation coefficient ($r = 0.670$) shows a **strong positive correlation** between Social Media Influence and Perceived Product Quality.
- The p-value is **< 0.01**, indicating the relationship is **statistically significant**.
- This implies that consumers who are more influenced by social media are more likely to perceive products as high quality.

2. Regression Analysis

Model Summary

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.670	0.448	0.445	0.692

ANOVA Table (Model Fit)

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	73.865	1	73.865	154.29	0.000 **
Residual	90.791	227	0.400		
Total	164.656	228			

Note: F(1, 227) = 154.29, p < 0.001 → Highly significant model.

Coefficients Table

Predictor (X)	Unstandardized Coefficient	Std.	t-	Sig. (p-
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	(B)	Error	value	value)
(Constant)	1.56	0.172	9.07	0.000 **
Social Media Influence	0.74	0.060	12.42	0.000 **

Regression Equation:
Perceived Product Quality (Y) = 1.56 + 0.74 × (Social Media Influence Score)

Interpretation of Regression Analysis:

- The **R² value of 0.448** implies that **44.8% of the variation** in consumer perception of product quality is explained by the social media influence score.
- The regression model is **statistically significant (p < 0.001)**, indicating a strong and reliable predictive relationship.
- The **slope coefficient (B = 0.74)** suggests that for **every 1 unit increase** in the Social Media Influence Score, **Perceived Product Quality increases by 0.74 units**.
- The high **t-value (12.42)** further confirms the strength and significance of this relationship.

FINDINGS

1. Social media significantly influences consumer perception of product quality.
2. Influencer recommendations are more impactful than traditional brand advertising.
3. Engagement metrics (likes, comments) act as digital social proof for quality.
4. Positive online reviews increase perceived value and credibility of products.
5. Regression shows that nearly 45% of quality perception is driven by social media.

Suggestions

1. Brands should collaborate with authentic influencers to improve credibility.
2. Encourage satisfied customers to leave honest reviews and ratings.
3. Invest in engaging visual content such as product demos or behind-the-scenes.
4. Use analytics tools to monitor engagement metrics and optimize strategies.
5. Respond actively to negative feedback to rebuild trust and signal quality assurance.

Conclusion

This study confirms that social media plays a crucial role in shaping consumer perception of product quality. With an increasingly digital-savvy population, consumers rely more on peer reviews, influencer endorsements, and interactive content to evaluate products before purchase. The findings from 229 respondents indicate a strong and statistically significant relationship between social media influence and product quality perception. Regression analysis revealed that almost half of the variance in perception can be attributed to social media exposure and interaction, particularly in the form of user-generated content and influencer credibility. As the digital ecosystem continues to evolve, businesses must adopt a consumer-centric approach on social platforms. They must maintain authenticity, promote transparency, and engage consistently with their audience to nurture trust and strengthen product reputation. By leveraging the right social media strategies, brands can effectively influence consumer perception and ultimately drive purchase decisions. The study concludes that in today's marketing landscape, social media is not just a promotional channel, but a key determinant of how product quality is perceived.

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