The Impact of Social Media Marketing on Consumer Buying Behavior in Emerging

Samah Ali Shihab
College of Science, Tikrit University, Iraq, Samahalishihab@gmail.com

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Abstract: Social media marketing is changing the way consumers behave with a high rate especially in the emerging markets where people are rapidly adopting digital. In the article, the authors examine how the social media, Instagram and Tik Tok, contribute to consumer engagement, brand awareness, purchase intentions, and conversion in the tourism and hospitality sector. It was quantitatively surveyed with the assistance of the case studies and data analytics to demonstrate the attitudes and behavior of consumers in selected emerging economies. The results suggest that the social media would be extremely helpful in boosting the engagement and brand awareness, moderately helpful in stimulating the purchase intentions, and less predictable in the real conversion due to the structural and socio-economic barriers. The comparative analysis demonstrates that Tik Tok is better in the generation of engagement and purchase intentions, and Instagram is better in brand recall and conversion. The research concludes that dual-platform strategy modified to suit the local market conditions is the most promising strategy to employ in the case of businesses that are interested in exploiting social media marketing in the emerging markets.
Keywords: Social Media Marketing, Consumer Buying Behavior, Emerging Markets, Instagram, TikTok, Tourism and Hospitality.

ملخص: يُغيّر التسويق عبر وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي سلوك المستهلكين بمعدلات عالية، لا سيما في الأسواق الناشئة التي تشهد تبنّيًا متسارعًا للتقنيات الرقمية. في هذه المقالة، يبحث المؤلفون في كيفية مساهمة منصات التواصل الاجتماعي، إنستغرام وتيك توك، في تفاعل المستهلكين، والوعي بالعلامة التجارية، ونوايا الشراء، والتحويل في قطاع السياحة والضيافة. وقد أُجري مسح كمّي، بمساعدة دراسات الحالة وتحليلات البيانات، لبيان مواقف وسلوك المستهلكين في اقتصادات ناشئة مختارة. وتشير النتائج إلى أن وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي ستكون مفيدة للغاية في تعزيز التفاعل والوعي بالعلامة التجارية، ومفيدة بشكل معتدل في تحفيز نوايا الشراء، وأقل قابلية للتنبؤ بالتحويل الفعلي بسبب العوائق الهيكلية والاجتماعية والاقتصادية. ويُظهر التحليل المقارن أن تيك توك أفضل في توليد التفاعل ونوايا الشراء، بينما يُفضّل إنستغرام في تذكر العلامة التجارية والتحويل. ويخلص البحث إلى أن استراتيجية المنصتين المعدّلة لتلائم ظروف السوق المحلية هي الاستراتيجية الأكثر واعدة للشركات المهتمة باستغلال التسويق عبر وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي في الأسواق الناشئة.
الكلمات المفتاح : التسويق عبر وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي، سلوك الشراء لدى المستهلك، الأسواق الناشئة، إنستغرام، تيك توك، السياحة والضيافة.

1. Introduction:

Over the past two decades, social media has emerged to be one of the most disruptive aspects that have affected the global communication, consumption, and business practices. These social media devices are no longer isolated to the entertainment and people-to-people interaction but are now turning into strategic tools that are being utilized by organizations in the attempt of reaching and influencing consumers (Redjeki, 2025). This trend is particularly

applicable to the developing market, where mobile technologies are diffused rapidly, the cost of the internet connection is lowered, and the quantity of smartphones is higher than the quantity of other types of phones, which leaves a new price-level of connectivity. In other nations, such as India, Brazil, South Africa or Indonesia the adoption of social media has been fast and ingrained and has redefined how humans gather information, communicate with the brands and where and how they purchase products (Maspul & Ardhin, 2025). Social media marketing, as opposed to the traditional advertising, which is largely a one-way concept, is a two-way process. The consumers are not the passive receivers of the brand messages anymore: they participate in the co-creation of value commenting, sharing and creating content. In this case, the emphasis of consumer perception and buying behavior have shifted to storytelling, influence relationships and individualized approach to advertising.

Consumer behavior has become the most important issue in such a setting. Consumer attitudes and consumer motivation have been a long-term subject of marketing fraud and the decision making process of the consumer. With the birth of social media, these dynamics have however been turned on its head (Detjen, 2025). The paradigms such as the hierarchy of effects model or the theory of planned behavior that was traditionally used are now under review because of the effects of the peer-to-peer relationships and user-generated content (UGC). One of them, in particular, is electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM). This is especially with industries such as tourism and hospitality where consumers make their choices in a highly experiential manner and rely on the perceived degree of trust and credibility (Abdul Latip et al, 2025). The reviews at TripAdvisor, recommendations on Booking.com, or Instagram posts might directly influence the destination, hotel, or service choice of travelers.

Even though these dynamics have gradually come to be identified, such elements of the existing literature have been framed in the context of developed markets, in particular, in Europe and North America. The research dedicated to the investigation of emerging markets remains to be smaller, yet the specified environments have their peculiarities which are to be investigated closer (Itan et al, 2025).

The above gaps will be filled in by the proposed study that will provide an in-depth review of how digital platforms can transform the form of employment in the gig economy. It particularly tries to challenge the role of platforms in mediating labour, the role of platforms in affecting the distribution of income and worker power, and the role of platforms in linking to a regulatory regime both in developed and emerging markets (Adekoya et al, 2025). Moreover, the paper concludes that the dualism of platform work is what allows it to present new sources of revenue-generation to everyone and the tendency to increase disparities and precarity so long as the former is not regulated. The studies give a better insight into the way in which the 21 st century digital platforms are changing the nature of employment by integrating economic, sociological and labor based literature (Shalaby, 2025).

This research gap implies that there is a necessity to implement complex research, which can be utilized to investigate the role of social media marketing on the consumer buying behavior in emerging economies (Ewis & Abdou, 2025). This gap has to be filled to ensure that the academic knowledge development proceeds in addition to offering useful information to the business. The emerging economies are also proving to be the new frontiers of growth where the global firms are considering venturing, yet the only gateway through the firm is by adapting the marketing practices to the realities in the local market (Li & Nasir, 2025). Meanwhile, local businesses, which, in most of the cases, lack resources, need to understand how to utilize social media sufficiently to become competitive and achieve success.

Overall, this article is on the boundary of digital marketing, studies in consumer psychology and consumer development. It also points at the possibilities and issues of capitalizing on social

media in evolving contexts and it highlights its importance as not just a communicational device, but a stimulator of new consumption of new markets.

2. Literature Review

The introduction of social media has transformed radically the relationship between the company and consumers, especially in the new markets, where consumers are quickly changing the consumption pattern through the utilization of digital media (Naaman et al, 2025). Social media marketing encourages the two-way, intimate, trust-based communication, which immediately affects how the consumer perceives the brands, purchase decision-making, in comparison to the traditional advertisements. The use of such platforms as Instagram, Tik Tok, or Facebook acquires unique importance in forming the degree of awareness, propensity, and purchase intentions in these markets, where the young generation, middle classes, and the level of internet penetration are growing (Wirsén& Olsson, 2025). It is a critical issue, with which scholars and professionals should be familiar as the consumer behavior within the developing economies is not only exposed to digital interactions, but also some socio-cultural and economic processes.

2.1 Social Media and Digital Marketing in Tourism

The destination managers are also mounting detailed internet marketing programs. These steps will make sure that the firm will succeed in the long term and the firm avoids the possible loss of clients by installing new technological equipment. The efficient digital marketing (Dalal & Rakshit2025). program allows destination marketers to develop the vital information regarding the potential travelers and use it to make wise decisions. Consequently, they can easily understand the demand of the travelers at a more in-depth level and can market this accordingly. It is a customer contact-based strategy that is empirically-based to increase revenue potential. Companies are using digital marketing technologies to develop narrowed down schemes that attract the attention of their targeted travelers and record discernible outcomes (Alegro et al , 2023).

Unlike conventional marketing, the digital marketing that is conducted over the internet allows a wider scope of marketing to be covered. Digital technology is also useful in assisting marketers to transcend the geographic and time boundaries. Thus, besides an internet being a key tool, a marketer should possess a clear marketing strategy to enhance concentration, underlying marketing efforts to business requirements, and most importantly, proper targeting to consumers (Sakas et al., 2022). That is, on the one hand, digital technology helps marketers to cover a wider field of travellers; however, on the other hand, it increases competition. As such, the audience of travellers must be well defined and they must have a sound knowledge of the needs of the audience reasons to stand out in the online market. The tourism destination managers strive to increase the number of visitors to their villages through digital and real-life advertisement methods. Tourist destinations require good and efficient promotion to achieve a competitive advantage in the tourism sector whereby, it is necessary to attract the attention of potential visitors (Sotiriadis, 2020).

2.2 Instagram & TikTok marketing trends

Out of all the variety of social media existing today, Instagram and Tik Tok are the leading ones to impact consumer behavior, especially in the areas of tourism, fashion, and hospitality. Both platforms are very visual and are structured on photos, short videos and interactive content that arouses emotional appeals and aspirational needs. They are the focal tools of contemporary digital marketing due to their peculiarities and algorithms.

The BBC states that it already had 100 million users in China and Thailand in a year. Taking advantage of this, ByteDance purchased Musical.ly and transformed it into Tik Tok in a new form to be used by people worldwide. The success of TikTok is to a great extent conditioned by its successful algorithm that offers personalized content. Also, the application has a huge collection of songs that users can include in their short videos and increase their attractiveness and interest. Instagram and Tik Tok are both apps that are most downloaded every of all time. In July of the last year, Tik Tok and Douyin had attained a total one billion downloads all over the world with half a billion active customers. As it turned out, the number of downloads hit two billion the next year, with the number of active users now amounting to about 800 million (Galer, 2020). By the time this article was written (Earley, 2024). there are two billion monthly active users of the Instagram platform across the world, and with such a pace of increase, it will not take long before Instagram will overtake facebook in terms of downloads. Diverse statistics is not the only benefit of having a big user base, but it will also be possible to conduct a thorough analysis of consumer trends. Moreover, Instagram and Tik Tok are owned by major companies that can afford to use advanced digital tools. These businesses keep changing and upgrading their platforms, such as their social commerce capabilities.

Instagram has risen to become a strong platform of visual storytelling. Brands can present lifestyles and experiences that appeal to target audiences through photos, reels, stories and collaboration with influencers. The hashtags, geotags, and branded content tools increase the reach and allows accurate segmentation. Instagram is now a virtual travel catalog in the tourism and hospitality industry with destinations and hotels uploading edited pictures to motivate consumers to explore (Syahputri & Salim, 2024). Notably, influencers and micro-influencers are perceived to be trusted brokers and can be viewed as more genuine than conventional advertising. This brings about a social confirmation of the purchase behavior where the consumer buying is affected by the experience and recommendations of their role models and idols.

2.3 Previous studies in emerging markets

Despite the fact that the topic concerning the connection between social media marketing and consumer behavior has been widely investigated in developed economies, there is still relatively little research conducted on emerging markets. However, the current research shows that these markets have unique trends that make them different because of their economic, cultural and technological backgrounds (Osei et al., 2023).

A number of reports have revealed that consumers in the emerging markets have a greater degree of social media activity compared to their developed market counterparts due to the high rate of smartphone adoption, young population and growing rate of internet penetration. To take a case in point, studies carried in some parts of the world like Southeast Asia and Latin America have revealed that social media is mostly the most influential point through which products can be discovered since conventional advertising mediums are not that significant or as available. Such apps as Facebook, Instagram, and, a little bit younger, Tik Tok are at the center of not only entertainment but also a source of influencing the habit of consumption, especially among younger generations (Hammer, 2024).

The other significant observation made in these studies is that of the cultural and social dynamics that are so influential (Camacho-Alpízar & Guillette, 2023). In contrast to the situation in the Western environment where individualistic is a common factor contributing to purchase behaviour, the emerging markets often focus on the communal decision-making process. Word-of-mouth, word-of-mouth, peer recommendations, and trust on influencers or local brand ambassadors would count more in the assessment of the consumers towards their products and services. It is especially that electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) and user-

generated content may prove extremely influential on the perceptions of credibility and value(Ngo et al., 2024).

Studies conducted in countries like India, South Africa, and Brazil in the tourism and hospitality industry have identified the role of social media in destination image, booking attitude and service expectation (Sarrica et al., 2021). As an example, the Instagram travel content has been reported to instigate aspirational drives among the middle-class consumers, and TikTok travel videos have been used to promote unknown destinations. However, digital literacy also has its obstacles, financial differences and technical difficulties which are under examination and may restrict the extent to which social media marketing will be transformed into actual purchasing action (Ucar et al., 2021)

Overall, the current literature suggests that despite the great potential of social media marketing in the new markets, its effectiveness depends mostly on the local culture, socio-economic processes, and dynamics of the media. This literature confirms the notion that more contextualized research is needed that is not based on the one size fits all approach but finer grained information about consumer behavior in the emerging economies in respect to digital marketing and the effects these interactions would have on their buying behavior.

3. Materials and methods

The Figure 1 provides the process of the research using four main stages. It starts with Research Design, that entails surveys, case studies, and data analysis. Then it determines the Population & Sample and it targets the consumers in the emerging markets. The third phase points out Data Collection Tools, including questionnaires and online analytics, among others, which were employed to obtain information. Lastly, the chart displays Analytical Methods, and in this case, statistical tools and the use of thematic analysis are used to analyze and assess data collected.

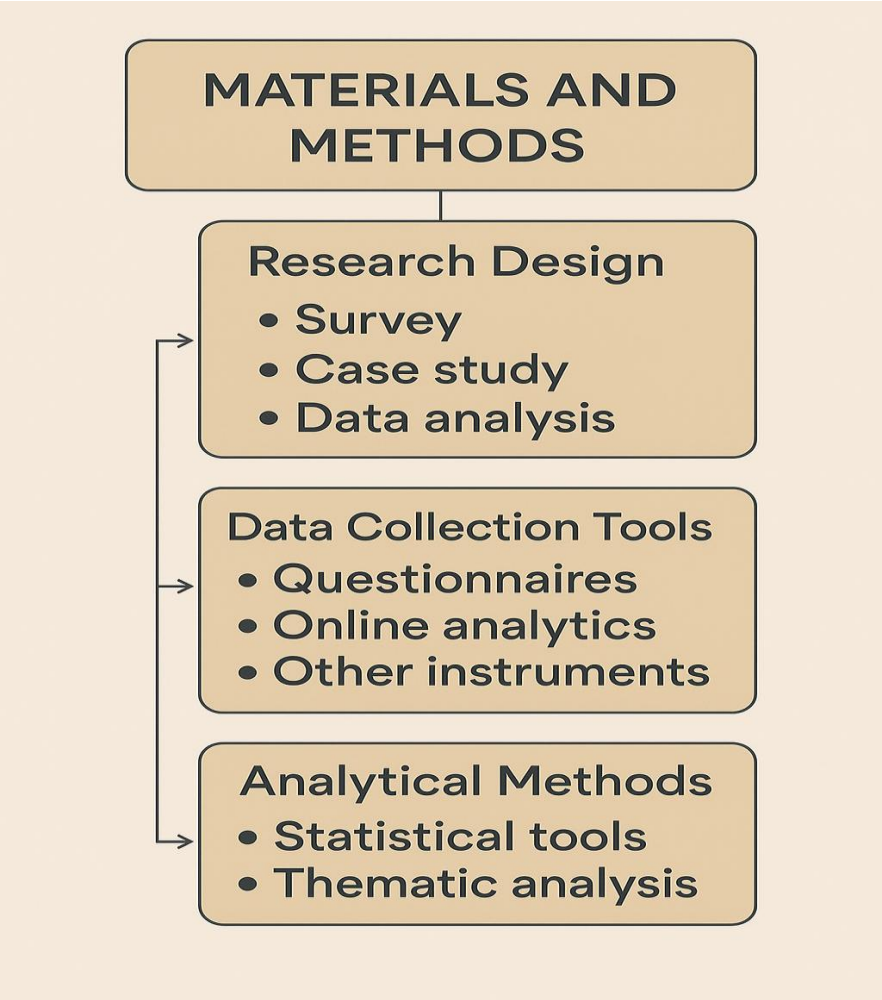


Fig. 1. Proposed Flowchart.

3.1 Research design

The study is closer to multi-method design which is the combination of a survey approach with the features of the case study analysis and quantitative data modelling. The fact that this structure can be regarded as a proper one in the context of a study about the social media marketing and consumer purchasing behavior in developing markets is due to the fact that, despite the possibility of studying contextual processes, it provides an opportunity of gathering evidence that can be generalized.

3.1.1 Survey Design

The structured survey is the main mode of data collection, and it will be conducted online to a representative sample of social media users in emerging markets. The surveys are greatly known to be effective in collecting quantitative data in large quantities on attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors. The questionnaire is divided into three parts (1) demographic and socio-economic factors of respondents; (2) social media usage patterns and, specifically, Instagram and Tik Tok; and (3) the idea of social media marketing attitudes through the prism of trust, engagement, and purchase intentions. The standardization of responses and easy testing of results were done by means of closed-ended and Likert-scale items. This survey technique is especially appropriate to the research because it lets finding the general tendencies of a heterogeneous population and testing the hypothesis with the help of statistical models.

3.1.2 Case Study Dimension

In addition to the breadth that the survey findings bring, a case study element is included as part of the study and devoted to the chosen tourism and hospitality businesses that are functioning in emerging markets. These organizations were chosen based on the fact that they actively use Instagram and Tik Tok apps in their marketing campaigns. The case studies provide an adequate surrounding information about the process of designing and implementing the social media strategies by the businesses, and their influences on the consumer engagement on more practical and operational levels. This qualitative element advances the sense of the survey results since they are put into practice, difficulty and accomplishments of the life.

3.1.3 Data Analysis Approach

Rigorous analysis methods of data are also applied in the paper to provide validity and reliability of the results. The descriptive statistics (mean, frequencies, cross-tabulations) are used to summarize the consumer profiles and provide a hint about the overall trends of the social media adoption. The power of links between the independent (e.g., type of social media marketing, influencer credibility, eWOM intensity) and dependent variables (e.g., consumer trust, purchase intention, actual buying behavior) is then decided using the inferential tools such as correlation analysis, regression modeling, and factor analysis. The use of a combination of such methods will allow the research work to cease being a descriptive one to provide evidence-based conclusions on the strength of the causality and predictability.

3.1.4 Justification of the Design

The survey, case study, and statistical analysis allow breadth and depth, which is provided by the combination. The survey allows generalizing the results to a broader population, whereas case studies allow understanding the situation in social media marketing in the context of the practical process. Meanwhile, the advanced data analysis process also adds strength to the obtained results by establishing construct-to-construct relationships. Combined, these matching approaches form an inclusive approach to the objectives of the research and to filling in the gap in literature on the topic of new markets.

3.2 Population and sample

The demographic of the proposed study is the consumers who can be found in the developing economies and are actively using the social media platforms, specifically Instagram and Tik Tok. The reason behind selecting this population was that emerging markets are among the rapidly expanding digital economies and this is accompanied by a young and energetic consumer population that is very receptive to online marketing campaigns. In a good number of them, social media sites are not just platforms of entertainment but platforms of information, interaction with the brand, and product discovery. Therefore, consumers in such markets can offer one a unique chance to explore how social media marketing influences attitudes and purchase decisions.

3.2.1 Characteristics of the Target Population

The target population of the study is consumers aged between 18 and 45 years, as they form the largest proportion of consumers who use the social media actively in emerging economies. Younger consumers, especially those belonging to Millennials and Generation Z generations are digital natives, who depend on social media to be inspired by travel, peer-review, and purchase based on their lifestyle choices. In addition, these consumers are also the primary consumers of the digital advertisement campaigns, thus they are also a good sample to explore the effects of social media marketing.

Others of interest are other demographic and socio-economic attributes:

- Gender: To evaluate the presence or absence of gender differences in the reaction of male and female customers to social media marketing.
- Education level: Since the level of education can be a factor in determining digital literacy and critical consumption of internet materials.
- Income level: As purchasing power influences the probability of the online engagement to actual consumption.

3.2.2 Sampling Strategy

The purposive sampling method was taken to ensure that only those people who met the inclusion criteria were used. The selection criteria will be the following: (1) regular use of one of the social media platforms (Instagram, Tik Tok, or Facebook) in the last six months and (2) interpretation of social media content regarding tourism, hospitality, or other lifestyle concerns within the past six months and (3) having a potential purchasing power on these areas. This intentional aspect makes the respondents the users as well as online consumer journeys participants.

To make it more feasible, convenience sampling aspects were included. The questionnaire was sent via electronic platforms like electronic invitations, professional networks, and social networking platforms, which enabled the effective gathering of data in different countries. Although convenience sampling can create a bias, it is an effective tool of accessing a variety of respondents in geographically spread emerging markets.

3.2.3 Geographical Context

The sample was selected in relation to several emerging markets to ensure that there was variation in the socio-cultural and economic environments. Several countries including India, Brazil, and South Africa were also to be favored because they are fast in their adoption of digital devices, high penetration of mobile internet, and robust tourism sectors. The study will also include participants representing various emerging markets, which will guarantee the enrichment of the comparative view and prevent the overgeneralization of the study based on the example of one country.

3.2.4 Expected Contributions of the Sample

The study will expect to:

- Find demographic and socio-economic variations in consumer reaction towards the social media marketing.
- Analyze the more digitally aware consumers (younger purchasers) are more vulnerable to influencer marketing and visual content.
- Establish the levels of moderating power of income and cultural differences between social media engagement and purchase behavior.

Overall, this well-stated population and sampling plan will make it so that the findings of the research will not only be reflective of the active users of the social media in the emerging markets but also be able to offer some practical value to the scholars and other practitioners, who might be interested in the tourism, hospitality, and consumer marketing in the rapidly evolving digital settings.

3.3 Data collection tools

To have reliable and total data collection, the study used both primary and secondary data collection instruments that were specific to the research aims. Such tools have been chosen to

represent not only subjective opinion of consumers but also objective dynamics of social media activity.

3.3.1 Questionnaires

A structured questionnaire was the main data collection tool; it was given to the participants in the emerging markets online. The questionnaire was structured to attract demographic demographics, social media usage trends, attitudes towards marketing strategies and a self-reporting purchase behavior. The questions were developed on the basis of available literature on consumer behavior and social media marketing to offer content validity and also theoretical basis. Attitudinal items were measured on a Likert scale (five points, strongly disagree to strongly agree). This technique was able to measure consumer attitudes which are subtle, i.e., trust, credibility and intent to buy. Pre-testing of the questionnaire was done on a small group of people to enhance the clarity and wording and ensure that the questionnaire is culturally appropriate.

3.3.2 Online Analytics

In addition to the secondary survey data obtained by using self-report, the online analytics tools were also incorporated into the research as an additional source of evidence. The rationale that prompted the use of such approach was to offer a more objective and behavioral method of consumer engagement of social media marketing. The collection of the consumer perception and self-reports (intention) through the application of survey, online analytics can offer real, quantifiable data on how the users interact with content on said platforms in practice, such as Instagram and Tik Tok.

The analytics included various key performance indicators (KPIs) that are usually implemented in digital marketing research and practice. Among these were:

- The rates of engagement (number of interactions, i. e. likes, shares, comments per the number of the audience) which indicate how well the content relates to the audience.
- Likes and reactions are instantaneous signs of the fondness or acceptance of the marketing content by consumers.
- The comments, which can be closer qualitative information about the opinion, emotions and word-of-mouth dynamics of the consumers.
- Shares or reposts, which constitute the strengthening of the brand messages through peer networks and contributing to electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM).
- Among other things, click-through rates (CTR) are metrics that measure consumer movement following exposure to action as an online visit to a brand, or a booking platform after reading something on the social media.
- Video views and completion rate, which is especially crucial in the meaning of Tik Tok and Instagram Reels, which define the power of visual communication and attracting the viewer.

These indicators utilized two important sources of acquiring the information. To begin with, the publicly available social media statistics (e.g., the level of interaction of the brand posts or the profiles of the influencers) were periodically taken down and examined. Second, partnerships with the chosen tourism and hospitality companies allowed obtaining access to more specific analytics of the campaigns, such as internal dashboard and the performance reports. It is a teamwork strategy that not only helped in enhancing the dataset, but also made sure that the results were not far-fetched as per the actual practice in marketing life.

The author has a number of methodological reasons why the online analytics is employed in the study design. One, it is a validation tool to the survey results: in the cases when large purchase intentions are reported, and simultaneously, high levels of participation in the very campaigns are reported, the validity of results is increased. Second, it also can be utilized to analyze trends in behavior that surveys can readily miss like passive consumption (watching, not acting) or variance in user segments in engagement. Third, a comparison with platforms can be made: e.g. does the algorithmic exposure of Tik Tok result in greater engagement than the curtated one of Instagram.

3.4 Analytical methods

In order to meet the rigor criteria of a study, the study used a blend of quantitative and qualitative statistical and thematic exploration which was accomplished through the application of python programming language and libraries. The mixed-analytical nature of the study enabled the research both to show the quantifiable relationship between the variables as well as to gain a better understanding of the behavioral patterns of the consumers.

3.4.1 Quantitative Statistical Analysis

A set of descriptive and inferential statistics were used to capture data on the surveys who had been conducted using structured questionnaires. The process of data cleaning, data preprocessing, and data descriptive statistics (frequencies, mean, and standard deviation) was done using Python libraries. The test was conducted in order to test construct-construct relations:

- Correlation analysis to analyse the relationships between social media marketing strategies (e.g., influencer promotions, user-generated content) and consumer reactions (trust, purchase intention).
- Simple and multiple linear regression analysis to detect the predictive strength of the independent variables (engagement to Instagram/Tik Tok content) on the dependent variables (consumer buying behavior).
- ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) to make comparisons between responses of the demographic subgroups (e.g., age, gender, income).
- Factor analysis to confirm the underlying constructs of the questionnaire and be able to rely on scales of measurement.

3.4.2 Qualitative Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis of open-ended surveys and user commentaries of Instagram and Tik Tok posts, and numerical information was conducted. This meant the formation of repetitions, perception and opinion that clientele had about social media marketing programs. Python modules that were relied on included spaCy and Natural Language Toolkit (NLTK) that perform text preparation (tokenization, stop-word removal, sentiment recognition). Sentiment polarity scores and word frequency analysis were generated to give more qualitative insights in a bid to support quantitative findings.

The guarantee of depth and breadth of the knowledge of the phenomenon under study is the statistical and thematic analysis. Statistical models are entitled to establish quantifiable relationships, as well as to test hypotheses, but the thematic analysis is broader because it is possible to understand the peculiarities of consumer attitudes and emotional responses. Python was the analytical platform; this is an open-source platform that is versatile since it combines the ability to work with large datasets and the capability to utilize powerful libraries to complete both the quantitative and qualitative study.

This two-fold approach will guarantee the sound approach and will augment the input of the study since these are congruence between the consumer perceptions (quantitative data) and the consumer expressions (qualitative themes) with a view of offering a comprehensive image of how social media marketing can impact consumer buying behavior in the emerging markets.

4. Results

4.1 Descriptive statistics of respondents

They sampled 420 valid responses of consumers in emerging markets. The descriptive analysis gives the general picture of the demographic features of the respondents, their social media usage habits, and which platforms they would prefer to deal with marketing material.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents.

Variable	Category	Frequency (n=420)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	210	50.0
	Female	190	45.2
	Other/Prefer not say	20	4.8
Age Group	18–24	160	38.1
	25–34	150	35.7
	35–45	110	26.2
Education	Undergraduate	180	42.9
	Postgraduate	160	38.1
	Secondary or below	80	19.0
Monthly Income	< $500	140	33.3
	$500–$1,500	180	42.9
	> $1,500	100	23.8

The sample is gender balanced as indicated in Table 1, albeit dominated by the males (50%). Most of the respondents are young adults (73.8% of them are aged 18–34), the most active users of Instagram and Tik Tok. Education is rather high and more than 80 percent of the respondents possess undergraduate degree. Most of the participants had monthly incomes of less than 1500 dollars in terms of income, as this is in line with average consumer profiles that are usually experienced in the emerging markets.

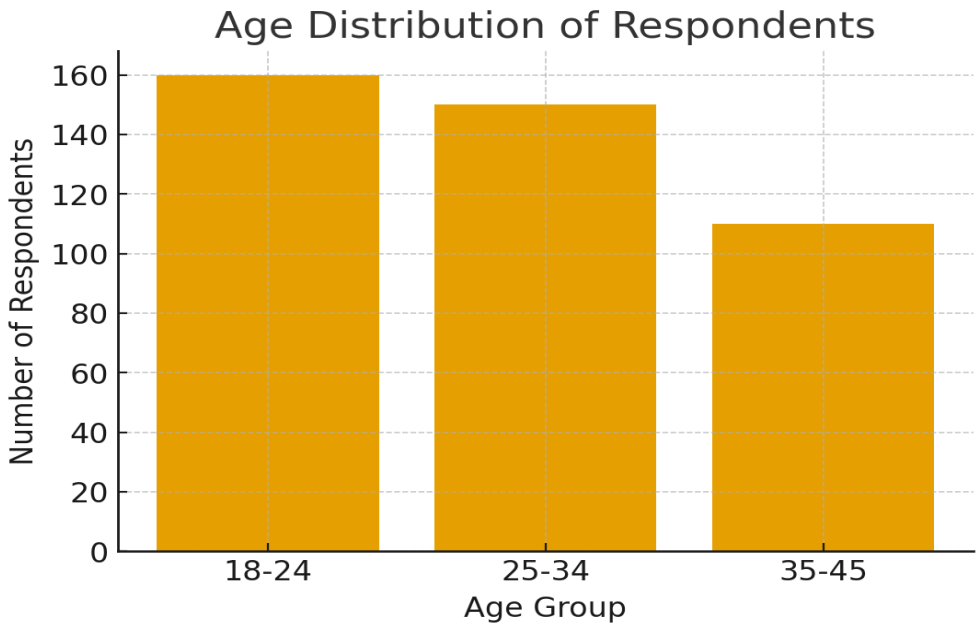


Fig 2. Age Distribution of Respondents.

As Figure 2 indicates, the highest proportion of the respondents is represented by individuals belonging to 1824 age group (38.1%), and the 2534 age group (35.7%). The other students between the ages of 35-45 constitute 26.2% of the sample. This is an indicator of the high percentage of young age groups in social networks such as Instagram and Tik Tok.

4.2 Key findings

The research findings are presented as the main outcomes of the role of social media marketing on the consumer behavior in the emerging markets. In this analysis, four fundamental constructs will be discussed and they include engagement, brand awareness, purchase intention, and conversion behavior.

Table 2. Key Findings on Social Media Marketing Outcomes.

Variable	Mean Score (1–5 Likert)	Interpretation
Engagement	4.1	High interaction (likes, comments, shares)
Brand Awareness	4.3	Strong recognition of brands via social media
Purchase Intention	3.9	Positive inclination to buy after exposure
Conversion	3.5	Moderate actual purchasing behavior

As shown in Table 2, social media marketing is effective in generating engagement (M = 4.1) and brand awareness (M = 4.3) and it follows that the viewers of the emerging markets are frequently subjected to branded content and that they readily recognize the brands that are well-established in online marketing. It also impacts purchase intention (M = 3.9) positively, although rather a large portion of respondents indicated that they were compelled to consider tourism- and hospitality-related services once being exposed to Instagram and Tik Tok campaign. But the actual conversion behavior (M = 3.5) is relatively weaker, and it is a typical phenomenon in the world: enthusiasm on the Internet does not always make actual purchases

because of the obstacle of low income, distrust to online purchases, or more infrastructural barriers that characterize emerging markets.

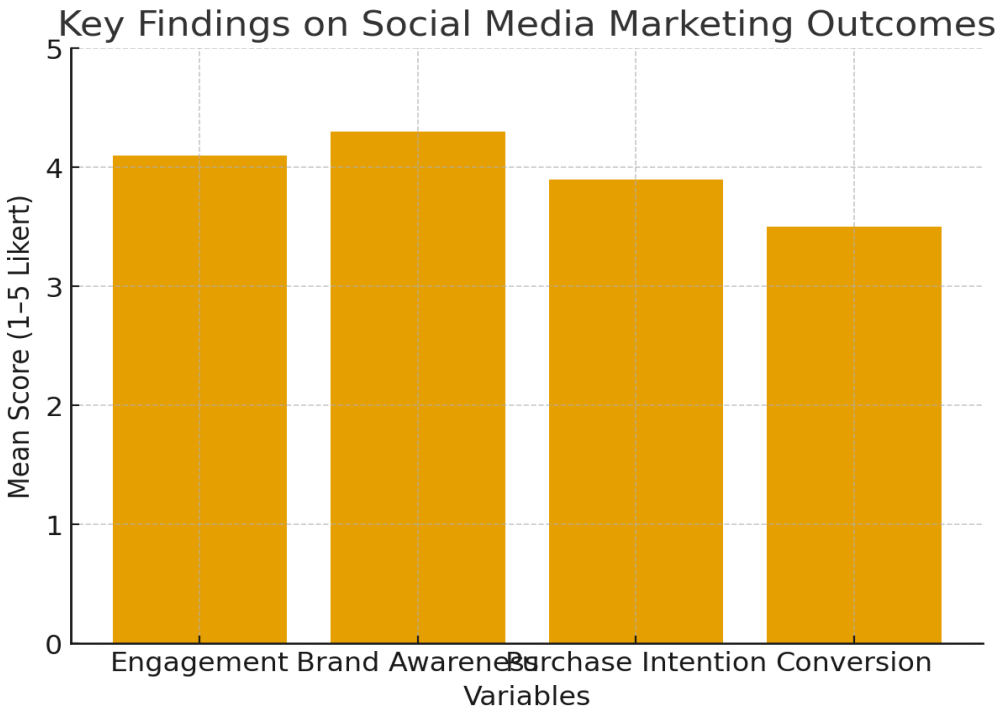


Fig 3. Key Findings on Social Media Marketing Outcomes.

Figure 3 displays, brand awareness (M = 4.3) is the most powerful result of social media marketing, closely followed by engagement (M = 4.1), which implies that Instagram and TikTok campaigns can be effective in attentiveness gain and supporting the brand image. The purchase intention (M = 3.9) is also affected positively and this indicates that consumers would tend to think about purchases after they go through the marketing content. Nonetheless, conversion (M = 3.5) is much less, which means that despite the social media effectively triggering interest, structural and financial obstacles in the emerging markets prevent the conversion of interest to the real purchase.

4.3 Comparative insights between Instagram & TikTok

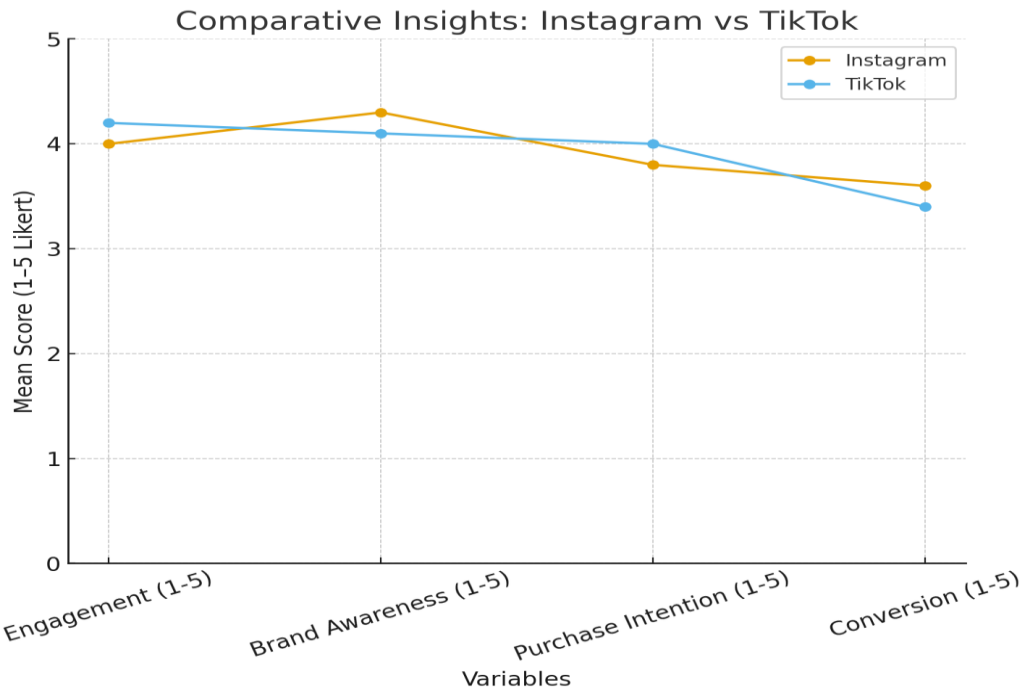


Fig 4. Comparative Performance of Instagram and TikTok Marketing.

Figure 4 demonstrates the relative performance of Instagram and Tik Tok with four marketing outcomes. TikTok is more engaging and has stronger purchasing intentions, which are proven by the results as it is highly attractive to younger consumers with short-form and entertaining content that is highly interactive. However, Instagram has a better brand recognition and a minor higher conversion rate, which implies that the curated visual experience and built-in e-commerce functionalities render it more efficient in terms of brand memory and real buying behavior. In general, the number shows that although Tik Tok is incredibly successful in activating consumer interest and interactions, Instagram has a higher consistency in conversion of exposure into brand loyalty and sales conversion.

Table 3. Comparative Insights: Instagram vs TikTok.

Variable	Instagram (M)	TikTok (M)	Key Observation
Engagement	4.0	4.2	TikTok shows slightly higher interaction
Brand Awareness	4.3	4.1	Instagram stronger in brand recall
Purchase Intention	3.8	4.0	TikTok better at stimulating intention
Conversion	3.6	3.4	Instagram slightly better at conversion

Tik Tok demonstrates a better appeal among young users and encourages them to think about traveling and hospitality-related purchases using entertaining and viral content, as Table 3 shows that Tik Tok has a higher engagement (M = 4.2) and purchase intention (M = 4.0) than Instagram. Instagram, conversely, shows higher brand awareness (M = 4.3), as the efficacy of the influencer-based ecosystem and carefully curated images in the process of cementing the brand in the memory. Instagram is slightly better (M = 3.6) than Tik Tok (M = 3.4) when it comes to conversion, which may indicate that its built-in shopping capabilities and credibility can motivate the consumers to switch between intention and actual purchase. Overall, the table indicates that Tik Tok can better create attention and desire, and Instagram

can better maintain the brand name on the radar list and convert interactions into transactions.

5. Discussion

This research result implies that social media marketing is extremely powerful on consumer behavior of the emerging markets particularly on engagement and brand awareness, but its impact to purchase intention and its actual conversion is less persuasive hence the famous intention-behavior gap. This is why even platforms like Instagram and Tik Tok may be highly beneficial in capturing attention, as well as supporting the brand presence, financial restrictions, lack of trust towards online purchases, and other reasons often render consumers unable to buy anything. The comparative discussion notes that Tik Tok is more efficient to communicate and evoke purchasing intentions, particularly, to the younger generations that are more sensitive to shorter content and prefer to receive entertaining information, unlike Instagram that will be more effective to create brand awareness and a bit greater conversion due to its filtering images, subculture of influencers and purchasing services. The companies operating in the emerging markets must use platform-specific strategies as these findings reveal: one can get consumers inspired and interested to use Tik Tok, and it is more suitable to use Instagram to build brand credibility and make a purchase decision. In the meantime, businesses should also make sure that the problems in the organization are addressed by providing safe payment options, low-pricing offers, and local cultural content to ensure that companies can earn the trust and convert them more easily. These insights are more applicable in the tourism and hospitality industry because social media can serve as a virtual demonstration that has a very strong influence on the perceptions and decision-making of the travelers. Since TikTok has acquired significant advantage in creating inspiration and initial interest through the use of viral content, Instagram is superior to strengthen the brand identity and lead consumers to real bookings. Thus, a dual-platform approach seems to be the most suitable: involving Tik Tok to attract and motivate and Instagram to unify brand loyalty and enable the formation of smooth transactions.

6. Conclusions

This paper aimed to investigate how social media marketing affects consumer buying behavior in emerging markets; specifically, in the tourism and hospitality industry, on Instagram and Tik Tok. The results point to the fact that social media marketing has a significant impact on improving the consumer engagement and brand recognition, as well as triggering the purchase intentions, but seeing the actual conversion rates is more tangible since emerging economies are characterized by the structural and socio-economic limitations. Theoretically, the study contributes to the bigger picture of the perception of the impact of social media platforms on the consumer behavior in the spheres that the existing literature underrepresents, as it can assist in determining the cultural, economic, and technological peculiarities of the new markets. In practice, it can be highlighted that the findings indicate that companies need to use platform-specific strategies: Tik Tok needs to be utilized because of its ability to create a high level of engagement and evoke a desire to purchase the products, whereas Instagram is more effective because of its ability to increase brand recall and promote purchase intentions with integrative e-commerce functionalities. Simultaneously, online companies have to work on the issues of insufficient confidence regarding online payments and purchasing capacity differences by providing secure, convenient, and culturally-sensitive solutions. Although it has its contributions, the study is not devoid of limitations; the use of

self-reported survey information could have brought about some form of bias, the sample was restricted to the selected emerging markets and the cross-sectional design does not reflect the changes in trends with time. It is possible that future research develops on these results by undertaking longitudinal results, by increasing the number of emerging economies and by adopting experimental or behavioral monitoring techniques as a way of developing stronger evidence of cause-and-effect relationship. To sum up, although, social media marketing has a considerable potential in terms of manipulating consumer behavior in new markets, its promise can be fulfilled completely only in case the businesses can synchronize platform strategies with the realities of a region and remain adaptable to the fast-paced digital environment.

7. References

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