

**IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOR IN UGANDA: A case study
of Bugujju in Mukono Town Council**

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J21B33/005

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS IN PARTIAL
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF A DEGREE
OF BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN ACCOUNTING AND FINANCE OF
UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY**

September, 2023

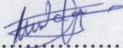


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DECLARATION

I declare that this is my original work and has not been presented in any other university or tertiary institution. It has been a result of independent work and where it is indebted to the work of others due acknowledgement has been made.

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APPROVAL

This dissertation has been submitted for examination with my authority and approval as the supervisor.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

My sincere appreciation and gratitude to my supervisor CPA Allen Kagume for her unending valuable guidance and support throughout the entire study period. Special thanks also goes to my family and siblings for the continuous financial support they rendered to me to carry out my research. And finally to my colleagues Karigirwa Hope, Arinaitwe Griffin, Divine Bagoso and Murungi Tracy for their worthy inputs during the study.

DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to my dad and mum Byoruganda Mwebesa and Nabwami Betty for their continuous commitment and sacrifices to see me through my graduate studies.

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to establish the impact of social media on consumer behavior in Uganda and a case study was conducted among individuals in Bugujju, Mukono Town council that shop through social media. The objectives of the study were to examine the impact of social media on consumer behavior, to identify factors that motivate consumers to shop through social media platforms and to find out the constraints within social media that impact consumer behavior and strategies on overcoming the constraints. A cross sectional research design was used in the study. The sample frame consisted of Individuals within Mukono Town council. Convenience sampling technique was used and the sample size was arrived at using Krejcie and Morgan's table of sample sizes. An online questionnaire was drafted with a targeted number of 40 respondents to collect primary data. Responses were collected from 37 respondents that filled in the online questionnaire. The data was statistically generated automatically with the help google forms in charts and graphs however the results were also interpreted using tables as well. The findings indicated that indeed social media has an impact on consumer behavior of the respondents. The study recognized the external and internal stimuli impact towards purchase of a product. Social media provides information on problems being faced by consumers and strategies or solutions to overcome the problems were provided in the study. Reviews and recommendations from others provide an avenue for soliciting and relaying feedback. The study concluded that indeed social media has enormous impact on consumer behavior amongst university students within Bugujju, Mukono Town council.

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 Introduction

This chapter consists of a study background, problem statement, research objectives and questions, significance of the study and lastly the scope of the study that was time scope, geographical scope and content scope.

In a research conducted by it showed that as of April 2023 the number of social media users was 4.8 billion users globally, in Africa there were 384 million social media users and Uganda as a country has 2.05 million social media users which was equated to 4.3% of the total population. (Digital 2023: Uganda — DataReportal – Global Digital Insights, 2023)

Social media has occupied an important position as a communication tool. It was all about facilitating people to express and share ideas, thoughts and opinions with others. People across the globe use social media to connect other people or organizations. The latest trend in marketing was the introduction of social media.

Social media has become an integral part of modern society, influencing various aspects of people's lives, including their purchasing behavior. In Uganda, a country known for its vibrant digital landscape and rapidly growing internet penetration, the impact of social media on consumer behavior has been significant (Kigozi, 2021). This introduction aimed to explore the profound influence that social media platforms have on the purchasing decisions and behaviors of Ugandan consumers.

Uganda has witnessed a remarkable increase in internet penetration over the past decade, thanks to advancements in technology and the availability of affordable smartphones (Telecom Infrastructure Company of Uganda, 2021). As a result, social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp, and YouTube have become ubiquitous in the daily lives of Ugandan consumers. These platforms provided individuals with new and accessible channels for communication, information sharing, and entertainment.

One of the most noticeable effects of social media on consumer behavior in Uganda was the transformation of the way individuals make purchasing decisions. Traditionally, consumers relied heavily on personal recommendations, advertisements, and offline shopping experiences. However, social media has disrupted this traditional paradigm by introducing new ways of discovering, evaluating, and purchasing products and services.

Social media platforms in Uganda serve as powerful tools for information dissemination, enabling consumers to access a wealth of product-related information, reviews, and recommendations. Consumers can now easily research products, compare prices, and read

reviews shared by their peers or influencers they follow (Okello, 2022). This ease of access to information has empowered consumers and equipped them with valuable insights that shape their purchasing decisions.

Furthermore, social media has given rise to the influencer marketing phenomenon in Uganda. Influencers, who are individuals with a substantial following on social media, have emerged as influential figures in shaping consumer preferences and behaviors. Ugandan consumers often look to these influencers for guidance, seeking recommendations on various products and services. The endorsements and product placements by these influencers on social media platforms can significantly impact consumer behavior, leading to increased sales for the brands they promote. (Naluyima, 2020)

Social media platforms have also revolutionized the way Ugandan consumers interact with brands and businesses. Companies have recognized the importance of establishing a strong online presence to engage with their target audience effectively. Social media provides a direct line of communication between brands and consumers, allowing for real-time interactions, customer feedback, and swift customer support. This personalized engagement has the potential to build brand loyalty and enhance the overall consumer experience (Kigozi, 2021).

Moreover, social media platforms have facilitated the growth of e-commerce in Uganda. With the convenience of online shopping, consumers can now browse and purchase products or services directly from their social media feeds. Many businesses have leveraged platforms like Facebook and Instagram to set up online stores, providing a seamless shopping experience for consumers. This accessibility to e-commerce has expanded the options available to consumers and has significantly influenced their purchasing decisions (Telecom Infrastructure Company of Uganda, 2021).

Despite the numerous benefits and positive impacts, it was important to acknowledge that social media also presents challenges and risks. The spread of misinformation, privacy concerns, and the potential for social media addiction are some of the downsides that need to be carefully addressed to ensure a healthy and responsible consumer behavior in Uganda's digital landscape.

Ultimately, social media has had a profound impact on consumer behavior in Uganda. The widespread adoption of social media platforms has revolutionized the way consumers discover, evaluate, and purchase products and services. From information access and influencer marketing to direct brand engagement and e-commerce, social media has reshaped the consumer journey. As Uganda continues to embrace digital technologies, understanding the dynamics between social media and consumer behavior becomes crucial for businesses and marketers to effectively tap into this influential medium

1.1 Background

Social media has emerged as a powerful tool that has shaped consumer behavior and influenced purchasing decisions globally. In recent years, the use of social media platforms has experienced significant growth in Uganda, with a large number of individuals actively engaging in various social media activities (Beukes & Botha, 2019). Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and WhatsApp have become integral parts of daily life for many Ugandan consumers, providing them with opportunities to connect, share, and access information. As a result, the impact of social media on consumer behavior has become a topic of considerable interest among researchers, marketers, and businesses operating in Uganda.

1.2 Problem Statement

Despite the growing use of social media in Uganda, there was a lack of comprehensive research on its impact on consumer behavior in the country. While studies conducted in other contexts have shown the influence of social media on consumer behavior (Beukes & Botha, 2019), it was important to understand the specific implications and dynamics within the Ugandan context. The unique cultural and socioeconomic factors in Mukono District may influence the nature and extent of social media's impact on consumer behavior, making it necessary to conduct localized research to bridge this knowledge gap.

1.3 Research Objectives

1. To examine the impact of social media on consumer behavior.
2. To identify the factors that motivates consumers to shop through social media platforms.
3. To find out the constraints within social media that impact consumer behavior and strategies on overcoming the constraints.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What is the impact of social media on consumer behavior?
2. What are the factors that motivate consumers to shop through social media platforms?
3. What are the constraints within social media that impact consumer behavior, and what strategies can be employed to overcome these constraints?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This research was significant for several reasons. First, it was to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on the impact of social media on consumer behavior, specifically in the Ugandan context. By conducting localized research, this study provided valuable insights into the specific implications and dynamics of social media usage on consumer behavior.

Furthermore, the findings of this study were to be useful for businesses and marketers operating. Understanding the influence of social media on consumer behavior enabled businesses to develop effective marketing strategies that cater to the preferences and behaviors of consumers. Additionally, policymakers and regulatory bodies can utilize the findings to create guidelines and policies that promote responsible and ethical use of social media platforms.

The study was greatly significant because in today's world social media has an important role in day to day activities of people. The study also revealed how social media affected buying decisions of general public and the factors that motivated general public to purchase through social media platforms.

Understanding Consumer Behavior: Consumer behavior was a complex and dynamic field of study. Conducting research on the impact of social media helped in unraveling the intricate relationship between social media platforms and consumer behavior (Qualman, 2019). It provides insights into how social media influences consumer decision-making, attitudes, preferences, and purchasing behaviors.

Strategic Marketing Insights: For marketers and businesses, understanding the impact of social media on consumer behavior was crucial for developing effective marketing strategies (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2020). Research findings can guide marketers in leveraging social media platforms to engage with their target audience, tailor their messaging, and enhance brand-consumer relationships (Qualman, 2019). It enables businesses to make informed decisions about resource allocation and social media marketing investments.

Enhanced Consumer Experience: The research helped in enhancing the overall consumer experience. By understanding how social media influenced consumer behavior, businesses can personalize their interactions, provide relevant content, and offer seamless customer support (Mangold & Faulds, 2019). This contributes to increased customer satisfaction, loyalty, and positive brand perceptions.

Informed Decision-Making: Research on the impact of social media on consumer behavior empowers consumers to make informed purchasing decisions (Kaur, Dhir, & Rajala, 2018). By understanding the role of social media in shaping consumer attitudes, preferences, and product perceptions, consumers can evaluate and compare products, access reviews, and make more confident choices (Hajli, 2019). It enables consumers to harness the potential of social media as a valuable source of information and recommendations.

Academic Advancements: The research contributes to the academic knowledge base on social media and consumer behavior. By conducting rigorous studies and analyzing empirical data, researchers expand theoretical frameworks and provide evidence-based insights (Hajli, 2019).

This research aids in advancing academic theories and models related to consumer behavior, digital marketing, and social media studies, thus enriching the academic literature in the field.

Industry and Policy Implications: Research on the impact of social media on consumer behavior has broader implications for industry practices and policy-making. Industry stakeholders can adapt their marketing strategies, customer engagement approaches, and data privacy policies based on the findings (Qualman, 2019). Policymakers can gain insights into potential regulatory measures to address concerns related to consumer privacy, data protection, and ethical considerations in the digital realm.

Above all, research on the impact of social media on consumer behavior was significant for marketers, businesses, consumers, academia, and policymakers. It helps in understanding consumer behavior, guiding strategic marketing decisions, enhancing consumer experiences, enabling informed decision-making, advancing academic knowledge, and informing industry practices and policies.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This research focuses on the impact of social media on consumer behavior in Uganda. It aimed to explore the influence of social media usage on consumer purchasing decisions, brand perceptions, and information seeking behaviors. The study encompassed various social media platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and WhatsApp, and targeted a diverse range of consumers across different age groups, genders, and socioeconomic backgrounds.

1.6.1 Time Scope

The study was conducted from March 2023 to August 2023 and the range of data considered was for the past five years, from 2017 to 2022. This time frame was used by the researcher to analyze trends and changes in consumer behavior influenced by social media.

1.6.2 Geographical Scope

The research was conducted in Bugujju, Mukono town council and the focus of the study will be on university students living in Bugujju.

1.6.3 Content Scope

The content scope was set in line with the objectives of the research in order to make the research more manageable.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

This chapter focuses on the literature review based on the research objectives enumerated in chapter one. The section was divided into three major parts; the first part looks at the impact of social media on consumer behavior; the second part looks how to assess the relationship between social media usage and consumer attitudes towards brands and products, the third section looks at finding out the constraints within social media that impact consumer behavior and strategies on overcoming the constraints and chapter summary.

2.2 Theoretical Review

Social media has emerged as a powerful force in shaping consumer behavior in recent years. The impact of social media on consumer behavior was multifaceted and has garnered significant attention from researchers and marketers alike. Numerous studies have explored the influence of social media on various aspects of consumer behavior, such as information search, purchase decision-making, brand engagement, and post-purchase behavior. Social media platforms provide consumers with easy access to vast amounts of information, product reviews, and peer recommendations, which significantly impact their decision-making process. The ability to interact with brands and fellow consumers in real-time has transformed the way individuals perceive and engage with products and services.

Additionally, social media enables users to express their identities and affiliations through the brands they choose to associate with, thereby influencing their purchasing decisions and brand loyalty. However, the impact of social media was not without its constraints and challenges. Factors such as information overload, fake news, privacy concerns, and social comparison can shape consumer behavior in both positive and negative ways. As social media continues to evolve and play an increasingly prominent role in consumers' lives, further research was needed to understand the complex dynamics between social media usage and consumer behavior, allowing marketers to develop effective strategies to engage and influence consumers in this digital landscape. (*Gomez, 2021*)

2.3 Theory of Buyer Behavior

The core concept present in the theory of buyer behavior was that purchasing behavior was, generally speaking, reliably repetitive and prone to establishing a familiar purchasing routine to save time and simplify the decision-making process. In answer to this, the theory seeks to identify the elements of that decision process and note any changes that occur, and whether those

things grew out of a commercial and social environment that any given brand could influence. According to this consumer behavior theory, a buyer's preferred choice of brand was informed by motives; alternative choices, or courses of action; and any decision mediators that match the motives with those alternatives, such as whether the buyer thinks coffee was better in the morning or the evening. Through understanding these mediators, the alternative brands on the market, and the brands the consumer was aware of, there's room to find a gap and make something that fills that gap. (*Ohio University, 2018*)

2.4 Impact of social media on consumer behavior

Builds product awareness, social media was a huge influence on consumers when they are attempting to build awareness about a particular product. When people face a problem, they start searching for a solution. But most of the times people do not know which product or service will solve their problems. (*How Does Social Media Influence Consumer Behavior? - Clootrack, 2023*)

Social Proof as a greater force of buying decisions, social media has resulted in the evolution of social proof as a greater force for buying decisions. Social proof has emerged due to the tendency of people imitating the behavior of people around them or people imitating people who have influence over them. Happy customers tend to go about praising the products with likes, shares, reviews, and comments on social media. Marketers are making the social space more transparent by sharing reviews, comments, likes, tweets, and pins of their happy customers to generate brand trust and increase conversion rate which has become an integral part of buyers and sellers.

Promotions, Discounts and Deals on Social Media, many social media users have signed up for social media groups/forums that they are interested in. When consumers see promotions, discounts, and deals on social media, it influences their buying behavior since social media was an inexpensive platform that gives brands instant reach to billions of active social media users. Brands should ensure that the target audience sees your products, likes them, and shares them on social media, which helps to influence consumer behavior.

Influencer Marketing, influencer marketing has emerged as a powerful tool on social media platforms, where influencers with large followings endorse products and services. Studies have shown that influencer endorsements on social media positively impact consumer attitudes, purchase intentions, and actual purchases (Biswas et al., 2019). Consumers trust influencers' recommendations and perceive them as reliable sources of information, leading to changes in their behavior.

Purchase Influence, social media platforms provide consumers with opportunities to discover new products or services through targeted advertisements, sponsored content, and promotional campaigns. These platforms can influence consumers' purchase decisions by creating awareness and generating interest to customers enticing them to purchase the produces online. (Nguyen et al, 2019)

For customer assistance, consumers use social media, you can get in touch with them by calling, writing, visiting, standing in line to see them in person. Consumers now prefer to communicate with brands via social media when they have a complaint or a concern about their service. (*Social Media's Impact on Consumer Behavior*, 2022)

Consumers gravitate to brands that are hospitable, humanized and relatable, and expect companies to interact with them in a meaningful way that goes beyond an advertisement or product listing. Taking steps, such as answering Facebook or Instagram inquiries, or even something as simple as responding to a tweet showing excitement about your product or service, can boost your brand's reputation and increase the likelihood of a consumer recommending you to others. Build a relationship with followers and customers to increase consumer satisfaction and bolster the likelihood of those coveted positive social media recommendations to peers.(Kowalewicz, 2022)

2.5 Factors that motivate consumers to shop through social media platforms

Social media platforms have become powerful channels for e-commerce, providing consumers with unique shopping experiences. Several factors motivate customers to shop on social media, including convenience, personalized recommendations, social proof, engaging content, influencer endorsements, interactive customer service, and the presence of gamification and rewards. These factors enhance the shopping journey, create a sense of trust, enable social comparison, and offer exclusive deals, ultimately driving consumer motivation to make purchases through social media platforms.

Convenience and Accessibility, social media platforms provide a convenient shopping experience as consumers can browse products, compare prices, and make purchases without leaving the platform. The seamless integration of e-commerce functionalities eliminates the need to visit separate websites or physical stores which helps save time and effort, making it attractive to customers. (Chen et al., 2021).

Personalized Recommendations, social media platforms leverage user data and algorithms to provide personalized product recommendations based on consumers' preferences, interests, and browsing history. These tailored recommendations enhance the shopping experience and

increase the chances of discovering relevant products through presenting consumers with tailored options and reducing the time spent searching for products.

Social Proof and Peer Influence, consumers are motivated to shop through social media platforms by the social proof provided through different user-generated content and peer influence. Positive reviews, ratings, and testimonials from friends, influencers, or online communities can instill confidence in consumers and influence their purchase decisions especially where recommendations are made by trusted source. (Wang et al., 2017).

Exclusive Deals and Promotions, many brands and retailers offer exclusive deals, discounts, and promotions to consumers through social media platforms. Limited-time offers or flash sales create a sense of urgency and FOMO (Fear of Missing Out), motivating consumers to make purchases which provide a sense of exclusivity and savings. (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2019).

Engaging Content and Interactive Features, social media platforms provide engaging content formats such as videos, live streams, interactive polls, and augmented reality (AR) experiences. These features captivate consumers and create a more immersive and enjoyable shopping experience. Consumers are motivated to shop through social media to visually explore products, discover new brands, and get inspiration from lifestyle-oriented content. (Lamberton & Stephen, 2016).

Influencer Marketing, influencer endorsements play a significant role in motivating consumers to shop through social media platforms. Consumers trust influencers' opinions and recommendations, and when influencers promote products or share their shopping experiences; it can positively influence consumer behavior for example Spice Diana being used as an influence of yatchet mineral water.

Seamless Social Comparison and Engagement, social media platforms enable consumers to compare themselves with others, including their purchases and possessions. Consumers may be motivated to shop through social media to keep up with their peers or showcase similar products or experiences, share their finds, seek feedback, and engage in conversations with friends and influencers. (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017).

Interactive Customer Service, social media platforms offer direct and interactive customer service channels. Influencer marketing campaigns feature influencers endorsing products, sharing their experiences, and providing recommendations. Consumers can seek assistance, ask

questions, or resolve issues in real-time, enhancing the overall shopping experience and increasing trust in the brand.

User-Generated Content, consumers are motivated to shop through social media platforms when they come across user-generated content such as product reviews, unboxing videos, or user experiences. Authentic and relatable content shared by fellow consumers can positively influence purchase decisions (Cheung et al., 2018).

Mobile Experience, with the widespread use of smartphones, social media platforms offer a seamless mobile shopping experience. Consumers can access social media apps anytime, anywhere, making it convenient for on-the-go shopping. The mobile-friendly interfaces and features of social media platforms contribute to the motivation to shop through these platforms.

2.6 The constraints within social media that impact consumer behavior.

Social media has become an integral part of our daily lives, shaping how we communicate, share information, and make decisions. However, it also presents various constraints that can impact consumer behavior. These constraints include limited attention span, information overload, filter bubbles and echo chambers, fake news and misinformation, social comparison, fear of missing out (FOMO), privacy concerns, online harassment and cyber bullying, addiction and compulsive behavior, influencer marketing, limited context and superficiality, disinhibition effect, impression management, and platform biases.

These constraints have profound effects on how individuals perceive, process, and engage with content on social media platforms. They can influence consumer decision-making, preferences, and behaviors in both positive and negative ways. Understanding these constraints is crucial for individuals, marketers, and researchers to navigate the social media landscape effectively and make informed decisions.

Limited attention span, social media platforms are designed to present users with a constant stream of content, often in a rapid-fire manner. As a result, users tend to have shorter attention spans, quickly scrolling through posts without fully engaging with them. This limited attention span can affect consumer behavior as users may overlook important details about products or services, leading to impulsive decisions or incomplete understanding of offerings (Krishnamurthy, 2020).

Information overload, social media platforms provide an overwhelming amount of information from various sources, making it challenging for users to filter and process the content effectively.

This overload can lead to cognitive overload and decision paralysis, where users may struggle to evaluate the credibility and relevance of the information. As a consequence, consumers may rely on heuristics or popular opinions rather than conducting thorough research, potentially influencing their purchasing decisions (Hargittai & Litt, 2019).

Filter bubbles and echo chambers, social media algorithms are designed to personalize users' feeds based on their previous interactions and preferences. While this customization aims to enhance user experience, it can inadvertently create filter bubbles and echo chambers. Users are often exposed to content that aligns with their existing beliefs, limiting their exposure to diverse perspectives. This can reinforce confirmation bias and hinder critical thinking, impacting consumer behavior as individuals may be less likely to consider alternative viewpoints or challenge their own beliefs (Pariser, 2018).

Fake news and misinformation, social media platforms have faced significant challenges in combating the spread of fake news and misinformation. False information can easily go viral and influence consumer behavior. Misleading content related to products, brands, or events can shape consumers' perceptions and decisions, leading to unintended consequences for both individuals and businesses (Vosoughi et al., 2018).

Social comparison, social media platforms often facilitate social comparisons, where users compare themselves to others in terms of achievements, appearance, or lifestyle. This constant exposure to carefully curated content from peers or influencers can create feelings of inadequacy or pressure to conform to certain standards. Consequently, consumer behavior may be influenced as individuals seek to replicate the experiences or possessions showcased by others, leading to aspiration purchasing or consumption patterns.

Fear of missing out (FOMO), social media feeds are filled with updates and posts documenting exciting experiences, events, or opportunities. This constant stream of FOMO-inducing content can trigger anxiety and a fear of being left out. Individuals may engage in impulsive purchasing behavior or make decisions based on the fear of missing out on enjoyable or exclusive experiences.

Privacy concerns, privacy have become a significant concern on social media platforms. Users may be hesitant to share personal information due to fears of data breaches, identity theft, or misuse of their data. This concern can impact consumer behavior as individuals may limit their engagement, interaction, or willingness to share personal preferences, leading to reduced effectiveness of targeted advertising or personalized recommendations.

Online harassment and cyber bullying, the anonymity and perceived distance on social media platforms can contribute to online harassment and cyber bullying. Negative experiences, such as

receiving hate messages or being subjected to online bullying, can affect users' psychological well-being and their perceptions of brands or products associated with those experiences. Such negative associations can influence consumer behavior, leading to avoidance of certain brands or reluctance to engage in online discussions (Kowalski et al., 2014).

Addiction and compulsive behavior, social media platforms are designed to be addictive, utilizing various psychological triggers to keep users engaged for longer periods. The constant availability of notifications, likes, and comments can create a compulsive behavior pattern, where individuals feel the need to constantly check their social media accounts. This addiction can have implications for consumer behavior, as individuals may prioritize social media engagement over other activities, leading to distractions or reduced time spent on actual purchasing decisions (Andreassen et al., 2017).

Influencer marketing, social media platforms have given rise to influencer marketing, where individuals with large followings endorse products or services. Influencers can shape consumer behavior through their recommendations, reviews, or product placements. However, the authenticity of these endorsements can be questionable, as some influencers may blur the line between genuine opinions and sponsored content. This can impact consumer behavior as individuals may make purchasing decisions based on perceived social proof rather than objective evaluation (Bucher & Fieseler, 2019).

Limited context and superficiality, social media interactions often lack the depth and nuance of face-to-face communication. Platforms often limit the amount of text or visual content that users can share, leading to superficial interactions. This limitation can affect consumer behavior as users may form judgments or make decisions based on incomplete information or shallow impressions, potentially overlooking critical factors that could influence their choices (Turel et al., 2021)

Impression management, social media users often engage in impression management, selectively presenting idealized versions of themselves and their lifestyles. This curated self-presentation can influence others' perceptions and shape consumer behavior. Individuals may feel pressure to project a certain image or conform to social expectations, potentially leading to conspicuous consumption or preference for products that enhance their online image.

Platform biases, social media platforms may introduce biases that influence the visibility and reach of certain content. Algorithms and policies implemented by these platforms can favor specific types of content or prioritize certain accounts or perspectives, potentially shaping consumer behavior by selectively exposing users to certain information or influencing their

perception of what is popular or relevant. These biases can affect the diversity of content users are exposed to and may impact decision-making processes (Hargittai et al., 2018).

2.6.1 Strategies that can be employed to overcome the constraints within social media that impact consumer behavior.

Overcoming the constraints within social media that impact consumer behavior requires thoughtful strategies. Several approaches can be employed to address these challenges. First, promoting media literacy among social media users is crucial. By educating individuals about critical thinking and fact-checking, they can navigate the abundance of content more effectively and make informed decisions. Diversifying content sources is also important, as it helps break filter bubbles and echo chambers, exposing users to diverse perspectives. Enhancing transparency by providing clearer explanations of algorithms and data usage policies helps users understand how their feeds are personalized and mitigates concerns about biases. Strengthening privacy measures and implementing digital well-being features also contribute to creating a safe and balanced online environment. Promoting responsible influencer marketing, designing user-friendly interfaces, fostering online community moderation, and supporting digital literacy programs are additional strategies that can empower users and positively impact their behavior on social media. By implementing these strategies, we can mitigate the constraints and optimize the social media experience for consumers. (Ghori et al., 2022)

Promote media literacy; encouraging media literacy among social media users is crucial. This involves educating individuals about critical thinking, fact-checking, and evaluating the credibility of information they encounter on social media platforms. By developing these skills, users can navigate the abundance of content more effectively and make informed decisions.

Diversify content sources, encouraging users to follow a wide range of sources and accounts with diverse perspectives can help break filter bubbles and echo chambers. By exposing themselves to different viewpoints and a variety of content, users can gain a more balanced and comprehensive understanding of various topics (Guess et al., 2019).

Enhance transparency; social media platforms can improve transparency by providing clearer explanations of their algorithms, data usage policies, and content ranking mechanisms. By being more transparent, platforms can help users understand how their feeds are personalized and address concerns about biases or manipulation (Bucher et al., 2020).

Strengthen privacy measures, social media platforms should prioritize user data protection, implement robust security measures, and offer clear privacy controls. By addressing privacy concerns and ensuring the security of user information, platforms can build trust and alleviate potential barriers to engagement.

Encourage critical thinking; promoting critical thinking skills among social media users is vital. This includes encouraging users to question and analyze the content they encounter, assess the credibility of sources, fact-check claims, and seek multiple perspectives before forming opinions or making purchasing decisions.

Foster digital resilience, online harassment and cyber bullying are significant challenges on social media platforms. By educating users about these issues and equipping them with strategies to cope with and report such incidents, platforms can help protect users from negative experiences that may impact their behavior and engagement (Cross et al., 2020).

Promote responsible influencer marketing, influencer marketing has become prevalent on social media. Platforms can encourage influencers to disclose sponsored content transparently and adhere to ethical guidelines. This transparency allows users to differentiate between genuine opinions and paid endorsements, empowering them to make more informed decisions.

Design user-friendly interfaces, social media platforms should strive to design user-friendly interfaces that promote meaningful interactions. This can include features that encourage in-depth discussions, provide more contexts for shared content, and prioritize quality over quantity. By enhancing the user experience, platforms can foster more meaningful engagement.

Implement digital well-being features, social media platforms can introduce features that promote healthy usage patterns. For example, they can provide tools for users to manage their online presence mindfully, set time limits on usage, and offer notifications for excessive usage. By prioritizing digital well-being, platforms can help users maintain a healthy balance in their social media interactions (Wegmann et al., 2020).

Foster online community moderation, social media platforms should invest in community moderation to curb the spread of fake news, hate speech, and harmful content. By actively monitoring and removing such content, platforms can create a safer and more trustworthy environment, which can positively impact user behavior (Bucher et al., 2020).

Collaborate with fact-checking organizations; social media platforms can establish partnerships with fact-checking organizations to combat the spread of misinformation. By providing users with access to verified information and labeling or reducing the visibility of false content, platforms can help users make more informed decisions.

Encourage user-generated content, platforms can actively promote user-generated content and amplify the voices of their users. By showcasing authentic experiences and opinions, platforms can counterbalance the influence of paid advertisements and influencer endorsements, allowing users to make more authentic and relatable connections (Bucher et al., 2020).

Facilitate offline interactions, social media platforms can incorporate features that encourage users to connect and interact offline. This can include organizing local events, facilitating meetups, or promoting offline communities related to users' interests. By fostering offline connections, platforms can enhance the overall user experience and build stronger relationships (Wegmann et al., 2020).

Support digital literacy programs, investing in digital literacy programs that educate individuals about the responsible use of social media can have long-term benefits. By teaching individuals about privacy, online etiquette, and the potential risks of social media, these programs can empower users to navigate the digital landscape effectively and make informed decisions (Bucher et al., 2020).

In summary, while these strategies provide a starting point, it's important to adapt them to specific contexts and consider the evolving nature of social media platforms and consumer behavior.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter described research methodology that guided this research study. It comprised the following; the research design, population, sample and sampling technique, data collection instruments, validity and reliability of the instrument, measurement levels, research procedure and data analysis.

The scope of the study included data collection through surveys and interviews, which provided insights into the patterns of social media usage among Ugandan consumers. Additionally, the study analyzed consumer attitudes towards brands and products in relation to their social media usage. The research was conducted in Mukono district, which ensured a representative sample of the population.

3.1 Research design

In the conducted study, the researcher used a case study. Case study research design was selected because different categories of respondents were to be studied. With a case study approach, a variety of quantitative data was collected through the use of questionnaires. Typically, data was collected and gathered from a variety of sources and used several different tools. Basically, these tools were questionnaires; where necessary and pertinent, documentary review and analysis were used.

3.2 Study Population

Sekaran (2018) defines population as the entire group of people, events or things that a researcher wishes to investigate. During this study, the researcher established the population of 15000 (fifteen thousand) according to Wikipedia and according to the Morgan tables a sample size of 375 respondents needed to be established but due to limited time and resources a population of 40 (forty) respondents was selected with a minimum sample size of 36 respondents.

3.3 Sample size determination

In order to obtain reliable and valid information, I used sample of individuals from Bugujju in Mukono town council and out of target population (40), a total of forty (36) respondents was derived from the following formula according to Kothari (2004), and were chosen to participate in the study of which forty (40) were respondents of Bugujju that use smartphones who were all contacted to obtain necessary information. Mainly, this formula was used because it is not only a

simplified formula of proportions but also because it considered the acceptable sampling error. In short, Yamane (1967) formula is a simplified formula to calculate sample sizes.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where; N = Target Population n = sample size e = level of significance

$$N = 40 \quad e = 5\%$$

$$n = \frac{40}{1 + 40 \left(\frac{5}{100}\right)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{40}{1.1}$$

$$n = 36.36 = 36 \text{ respondents}$$

3.4 Sampling Techniques

There is a large population size and due to limited time and resources required to conduct the research successfully, a purposive sampling technique was employed and 40(forty) respondents were selected to conduct the research. The study employed random sampling. Respondents within Bugujju were randomly chosen because they hail from various homesteads and were sent an online questionnaire from where they were. This method was essential due to time and cost constraints. Reliability was the overall measure of consistency, (Cooper & Schnidler, 2021). Self-administered questionnaires having both closed ended and open ended were circulated at the researcher's convenience. The sample frame was the study of only university students within Mukono.

3.5 Methods of data collection

The study used online questionnaires as instruments of data collection.

3.5.1 Questionnaire

A questionnaire is a reformulated written set of questions to which respondents record their answers, usually within rather closely defined alternatives. The questionnaire was equally used because the information had to be collected from large sample in a short period. The questionnaire was used as a tool in collection of data from respondents.

3.6 Data sources

The study mainly focused on primary data for its information.

3.6.1 Primary data

Primary data implies original data that has been collected specially for the purpose of mind. It means someone collected the data from the original source. And this data was obtained through use of questionnaires.

3.7 Data analysis techniques

Data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of information collected in a research (Mugenda et al. 2019). On the other hand, Blumberg, Cooper and Schindler (2021) defined data analysis as a process of gathering, modeling and transforming data with an aim of retrieving useful information, suggesting conclusions and supporting decision making. Mugenda et al. (2019) further a note that before data can be analyzed and presented it has to be organized. Organization involved putting the data into some systematic form. Statistical data was used to aid in data analysis. Descriptive statistics method was used in the study. Descriptive statistics was summarized by the use of frequencies and percentages. Tables and figures were adopted to give a clear understanding of the research interpretation for easy understanding of the phenomenon under study (Blumberg, Cooper & Schindler, 2021). Figures were be used to indicate the number of occurrence of responses to particular questions graphically.

3.8 Data Presentation

The data that was collected from the questionnaires and presented using graphs, charts and table that comprehended the information that was collected during the research.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter gives the research findings, data analysis and discussion. The data analysis was done in line with the objectives of the study since patterns were analyzed, interpreted and conclusions drawn from each aspect.

4.1 Rate of response

The study targeted 40 respondents drawn from the online questionnaires shared through the different social media platforms, 37 questionnaires returned were dully filled while 3 were not returned at all. Thus only 37 questionnaires were considered for analysis which was 92.5% success on data collection. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) 50% of the response rate is considered adequate, 60% good while above 70% was very good. Therefore, this assertion implied that the 92.5% response rate achieved was considered very good to conduct an analysis of which 25 were females and 12 males.

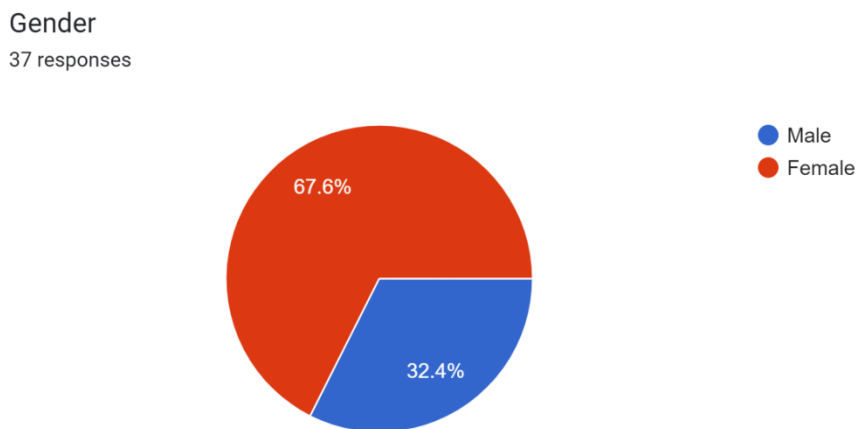


Figure 4.0.1

Table 4.1: Gender distribution of respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	12	32.4%
Female	25	67.6%
Total	37	100%

4.2 Reliability Analysis

Reliability is the overall consistency of a measure (Cooper & Schindler 2019). It is also the ability of research instruments to produce consistent and stable measurement. Cronbach's alpha is the most commonly used measure of consistency as it determines how all items on a test relates to all other items and the total test. It is usually expressed a coefficient between 0 and 1.00 and the higher the coefficient, the more reliable the test is. The result of the rest showed pre-purchase stage having 0.618, purchase stage 0.629. Therefore, the study was found out to be reliable and hence can be used for further investigation in future.

4.3 Age of respondents

The chart in Figure 4.0.2 shows the age bracket of the respondents to this research

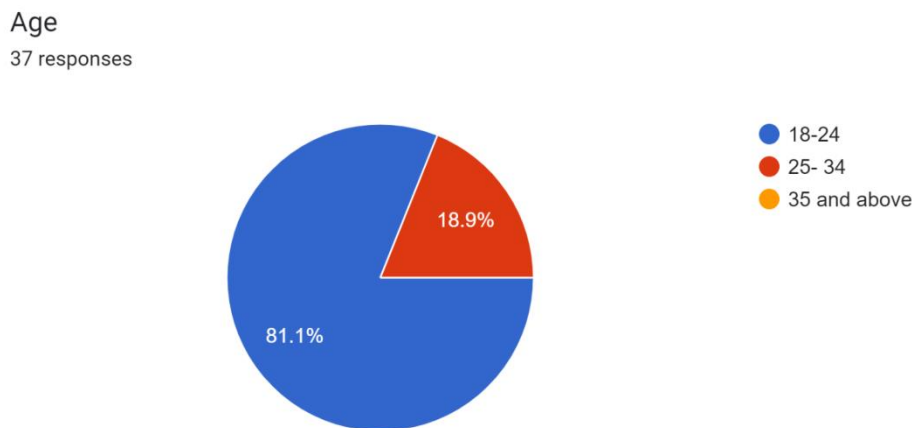


Figure 4.0.2

Table 4.2: Age bracket of respondents to the research.

Age	Frequency	Percentage
18-24	30	81.1%
25-34	7	18.9%
35 and above	0	0
Total	37	100%

The above summarizes the data collected from the field and it indicates that more respondents within the age bracket of 18-24 access more of social media compare to those the age brackets of 25-34, 35 and above due to increased literacy and technological development around the environment that necessitate use of social media.

4.4 Level of Education

The researcher required respondents to indicate their level of education by courses they are pursuing. It was revealed that majority of the students were pursuing Bachelor's Degree at 97% as shown in Figure 4.0.3 below

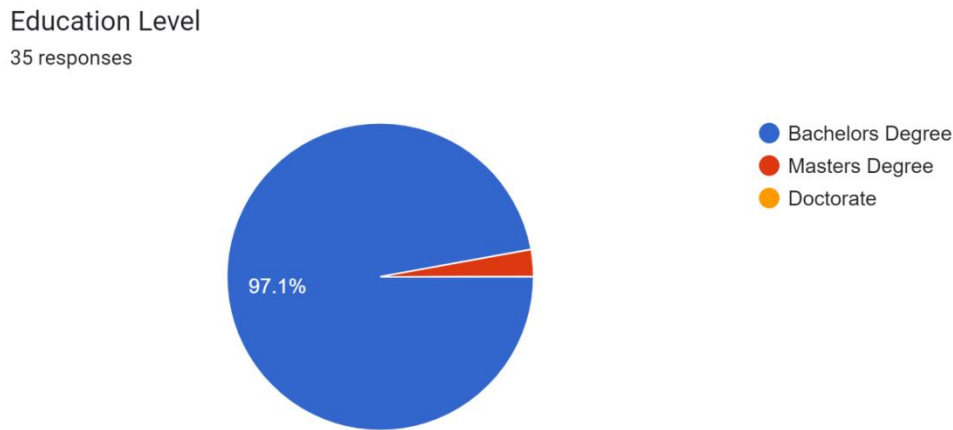


Figure 4.0.3

Since this research was targeting literates according the feedback collected it was noticed that the most of the respondents were pursuing bachelor's degree and a handful at master's degree this indicated a positive feedback on the literacy levels of respondents towards the research on social media implying they had knowledge to give right feedback.

4.5 Favorite Social Media Site(s)

The respondents were asked to indicate their favorite social media site. WhatsApp attracted 62.9, Tiktokhad 25%, Youtube 8.3% and Facebook 2.8% as indicated in Figure 4.0.4below;

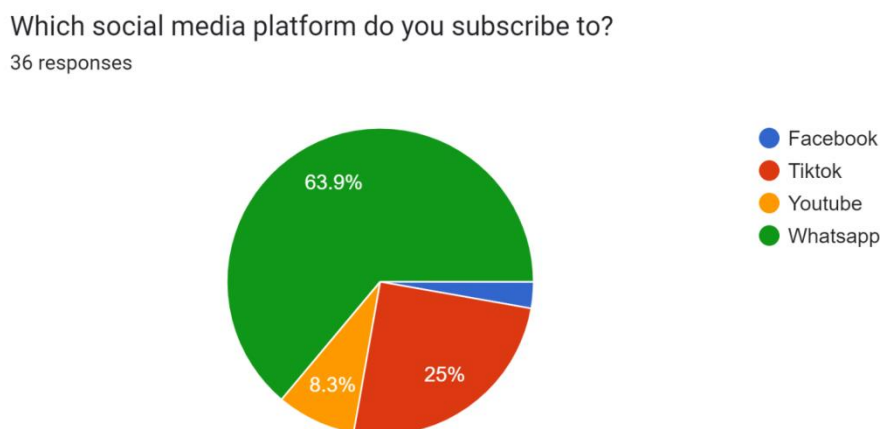


Figure 4.0.4

Table 4.3: Social media platforms subscribed to by respondents.

Social media Platform	Frequency	Percentage
Facebook	1	2.8%
Tiktok	9	25%
Youtube	3	8.3%
WhatsApp	23	63.9%
Total	36	100%

The above table provides statistical evidence that 23 out of the 36 respondents that filled the questionnaire on the section of social platforms used indicates that WhatsApp is the easiest and convenient way through which respondents carry out sales and purchase followed by Tiktok that had 9 respondents, Youtube with 3 respondents lastly Facebook with 1 respondent.

4.6 Purchased on social media

Here the respondents were asked if they have ever made any purchase through any of the above social media platforms where 23 were in favor of those that have purchased through social media as opposed to 14 that were not in favor of those that purchase through social media.

Have you ever made a purchase directly through a social media platform?

37 responses

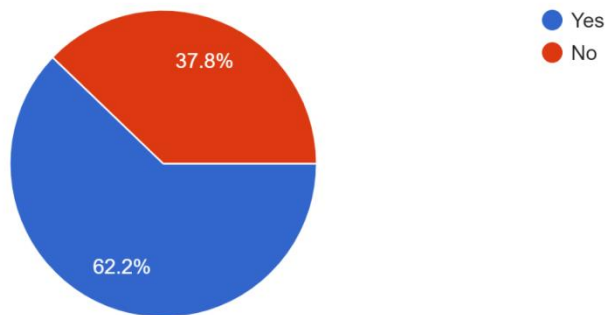


Figure 4.0. 5

Table 4.4: Summary of respondents that purchase through social media.

Social media Users	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	23	62.2%
No	14	37.8%
Total	37	100%

Because of the digital error in which we are living in you release that almost everyone has access to a social media platform that serves them their best interests and for that reason according to the statistics drawn from the research it shows those who use social media being more than those that don't use it.

4.7 Factors motivating consumers shop via social media

The researcher provided five statement options at this stage with an aim of establishing if indeed social media triggers shopping via social media. In all the statements, an over 90% agreement was recorded which shows that social media has a great influence on consumer product purchase. The study sought three factors that respondents were to grade in terms of influence towards shopping through social media and they ranged from strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree.

Kotler and Keller, (2019) notes that buyers conduct active information search in order to learn about the product before making or not making a purchase.

4.7.1 Convenience of shopping on social media

In the research that was conducted, it was identified that 11 respondents strongly agreed, 6 agreed, 11 remained neutrals about the factor, 5 disagreed and 2 strongly disagreed on the convenience of shopping on social media. This portrayed that the greatest percentage of respondents sided with the convenience of shopping on social media because it saves them the double costs of going to look for the product of their choice when they can access it on the internet.

Table 4.5 Respondents convenience of shopping on social media

convenience of shopping on social media	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	11	31.4%
Agree	6	17.2%
Neutral	11	31.4%
Disagree	5	14.3%
Strongly Disagree	2	5.7%
Total	35	100%

4.7.2 Recommendations and reviews from others

This research study looked at 5 respondents strongly agreed to above factor, then 10 just agreed, 8 were neutral about the issue, however 8 and 3 respondents disagree and strongly disagree respectively to the study variable. This showed that recommendations and reviews had a greater impact on consumer behavior because once one recommends a product or services it is assumed that they might have used it or they have knowledge about it.

Table 4.6 Summary of Recommendations and reviews from others

Recommendations and reviews from others	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	5	17.3%
Agree	10	34.5%
Neutral	8	27.6%
Disagree	3	10.3%
Strongly Disagree	3	10.3%
Total	29	100%

4.7.3 Limited offers and exclusive deals

Furthermore, respondents were interrogated on whether the factor of limited offers and deals influences or motivates shopping on social media and according to the findings gathered, 12 of the respondents were neutral, 8 were in agreement to the factor, 3 strongly agreed and 4 both disagreed and strongly disagreed. The response was nearly equal since the level of trust in the deals is still questionable because some deals are scam.

Table 4.7 Opinion on limited offers and exclusive deals

Opinion on limited offers and exclusive deals	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	3	9.7%
Agree	8	25.8%
Neutral	12	38.7%
Disagree	4	12.9%
Strongly Disagree	4	12.9%
Total	31	100%

However, all the above information is illustrated graphically in Figure 4.0.6

(5- strongly disagree, 4- disagree, 3- neutral, 2- agree, 1- strongly agree)

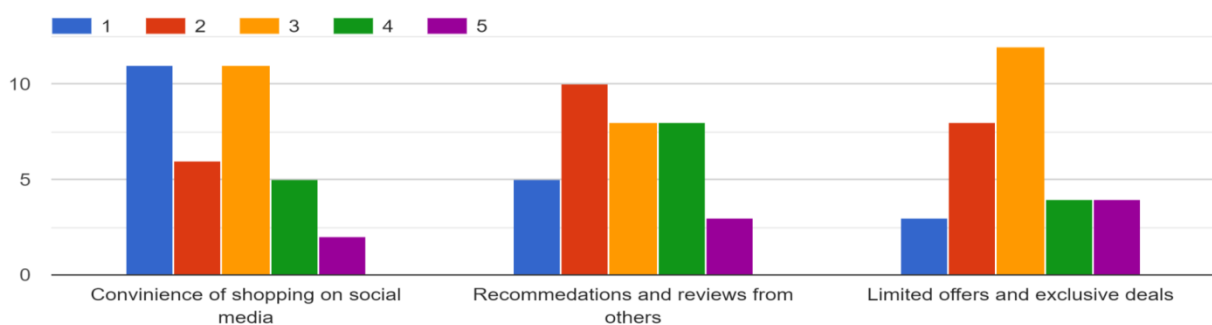


Figure 4.0.6

4.8 Strategies for overcoming constraints in social media shopping

This section of the research looked at possible solutions towards the hindrances related to social media and sampled three solutions to get reactions from the respondents we reached out to.

4.8.1 Provide detailed product description

By doing so this is intended to provide a realistic experience in a virtual mode of interaction with gadgets to acquire products through social media in accordance to the consumer's preference. And relation to the research conducted, 14 strongly agreed to suggestion, 8 agreed, 4 were neutral and 4 disagreed, then 3 strongly disagreed. Most respondents preferred being given detailed description of the product or service offered through social media to motivate them make informed decisions.

Table 4.8 Response statistics on provision of detailed product description

Provide detailed product description	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	14	42.4%
Agree	8	24.3%
Neutral	4	12.1%
Disagree	4	12.1%
Strongly Disagree	3	9.1%
Total	33	100%

4.8.2 Availing samples to compensate absence of physical stores

In the research conducted, 7 respondents strongly agreed to the strategy, 11 agreed, 8 were neutral, 4 disagreed and 5 strongly disagreed to the strategy which is meant to solve the issues that may rise when shopping through social media. With the data collected it verifies that respondents desired to confirm the authenticity of the product they are to order for.

Table 4.9 Summary of respondents on availing samples to compensate absence of physical stores

Availing samples to compensate absence of physical stores	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	7	20%
Agree	11	31.4%
Neutral	8	22.9%
Disagree	4	11.4%
Strongly Disagree	5	14.3%
Total	35	100%

4.8.3 Displaying relevant adverts

The study shows how relevant ads create an impulsive attitude towards a consumer in case they would like to try out the brand or product for the first time. But in the research conducted, 9 respondents strongly agree, 10 agree, 4 were neutral, 6 of the respondents disagreed to the display of ads and 3 strongly disagreed. Respondents were in high support of those selling their products on social media to display adverts relevant to the product or service they offer.

Table 4.10 Summary displaying relevant adverts feedback from respondents

Displaying relevant adverts	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	9	28.2%
Agree	10	31.3%
Neutral	4	12.5%
Disagree	6	18.6%
Strongly Disagree	3	9.4%
Total	32	100%

Bar graphs summarized all the above strategies that were talked about towards overcoming constraints in social media shopping as in Figure 4.0.7

(5- strongly disagree, 4- disagree, 3- neutral, 2- agree, 1- strongly agree)

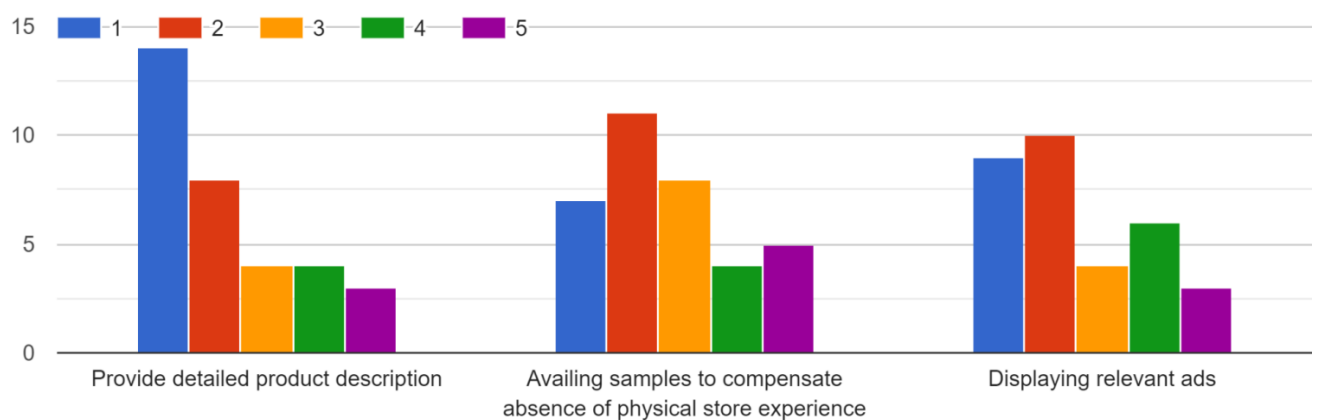


Figure 4.0.7

CHAPTER FIVE:

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter gives an entire summary of the study, draws conclusions and offer recommendations on the likely implications on the findings in the study.

5.2 Summary

The sole objective of this study was to establish the impact of social media on consumer behavior in Mukono district in Bugujju. Other objectives were to identify the factors that motivate consumers to shop through social media platforms as well as the constraints within social media that impact consumer behavior and the strategies on overcoming the constraints.

The sample size of the study was 37 derived from engagements through social media. Questionnaires were designed online and circulated to collect primary data from respondents across different social media platforms which was analyzed using excel and the researcher basically used descriptive statistics.

The male comprised of 12 (twelve) while the female was 25 (twenty-five). Majorly the respondents were pursuing Bachelor's Degree. The study indicated that a greater percentage of students accessed more than one social media platform that was WhatsApp 63.9%, Tiktok 25%, Youtube 8.3% and Facebook 2.8%. Then percentage share of those that had at one point in time made a purchase through social media was greater than of those that haven't in accordance to this research.

On the factors that motivate consumers shop via social media it was unanimously agreed that social brought about convenience when shopping, it also serves as a major basis of determining whether or not reviews and recommendations from past consumers influences the purchasing power of the consumer. The question comes in when determining whether the limited deals and offers have a hand in the way consumers perceive satisfaction or dissatisfaction but it turned out to be of a great deal towards shopping via social media.

5.3 Conclusion

On the general objective of establishing whether social media has any impact on consumer behavior, the findings herein agree to a large extent. Both external and internal stimuli are responsible for making a university student rely on social media to make consumption decisions. External stimuli include: advertisements, economic factors, social factors, cultural factors among others. Internal stimuli include but not limited to perception, motivation, attitude, recommendations and reviews.

On whether social media has an impact on consumer decision process, the study has a positive correlation in both on consumer behavior. At the beginning, social media acts as a key tool for information search in regards to products sought. During purchase, peer reviews and opinions determines what is to be bought and also pop up messages created a negative attitude towards a given product or brand. Convenience of shopping on social media can motivate you to desire or hate a product depending on their comments posted on social media sites. On post purchase, product feedback through reviews and recommendations was seen as either satisfaction or dissatisfaction. When satisfied, the consumer was to post it online either using text or other available icons thus becoming a brand or product ambassador. If not satisfied, the very consumer is at liberty to access the social media sites and air out the grievances either to the general public or the responsible firm for action.

And lastly on any other factors that might have an impact on students to use social media to make consumption decisions: limited offers and exclusive deals of social media were mentioned as key. The availability of smart phones, cost of internet and data, credibility of product information posted and the adequacy of social media made it easy for students to prefer social media as opposed to traditional and mass media. Therefore, social media has influence on consumer behavior amongst students' in Mukono district.

5.4 Recommendations

The researcher recommends the following based on the findings. Organizations operating in Mukono should establish sound social media departments and pages through which they can profile their customers and present targeted product advertisement to reach specified market niches. However, they should not rely on single sites but instead adopt several activesites to reach a wider customer base.

Furthermore, businesses in Mukono should find a way to regulate or totally block popup advertisements and messages of other companies from appearing in their sites since it is distasteful to their consumers. The government and as well helps to such advertisements through enactment of laws prescribing stiffer penalties for trespassing into other organizations social media sites or pages. Similar studies should be carried out in learning institutions outside Mukono as other factors may be in play apart from those found in Mukono.

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APPENDICES

IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

This questionnaire is on the Impact of Social Media on Consumer Behavior. Your valuable perspective and personal experience will play a crucial role in ensuring the success of our research. This research will comprise set of inquiries, and you have been selected as a potential participant for this research.

Your truthful and precise answers will greatly enhance the credibility and dependability of the study rest assured that the gathered data will be used solely for academic purposes, any information you provide will be handled with strict confidentiality.

Thank You

Taremwa Robert

Researcher UCU

PART A: BACKGROUND INFORMATION OF THE RESPONDENT

1. Gender

Male

Female

2. Age

18-24

25-34

35 and above

3. Education level

Bachelors Degree

Masters Degree

Doctorate

SECTION B: IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

4. Which social media platform do you subscribe to?

Facebook

Tiktok

Youtube

WhatsApp

5. Have you ever made a purchase directly through a social media platform?

Yes

No

SECTION C: FACTORS MOTIVATING CONSUMERS SHOP VIA SOCIAL MEDIA

	1	2	3	4	5
Convenience of shopping on social media					
Recommendations and reviews from others					
Limited offers and exclusive deals					

SECTION D: STRATEGIES FOR OVERCOMING CONSTRAINTS IN SOCIAL MEDIA SHOPPING

	1	2	3	4	5
Provide detailed product description					
Availing samples to compensate absence of physical store experience.					
Displaying relevant adverts					



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July 10th 2023

To whom it may concern

Name: TAREMWA ROBERT Reg. No. J214331005

A bachelor's student who is seeking permission from your office to collect data for his/her dissertation titled

"IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOR IN UGANDA: A CASE STUDY OF BUGUSJU IN MUKONO TOWN COUNCIL"

We shall be grateful if you could render assistance to him/her in collecting the necessary data for his/her dissertation

The Uganda Christian University School of Business thanks you in advance

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mukisa Simon Peter'.

Mukisa Simon Peter
Research coordinator