



**THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA REGARDING TRUST AND
PRIVACY ON CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOUR**

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ABSTRACT

The rapid growth of social media has significantly transformed the way consumers engage with brands and make purchasing decisions. This study explores the influence of social media on consumer buying behaviour, with a particular focus on the role of trust and privacy concerns in shaping consumer decisions. Adopting a mixed-methods approach, the research incorporates quantitative data from a survey of 150 respondents and qualitative insights from 10 in-depth interviews. The study examines key social media components, such as influencer marketing, user-generated content, and platform engagement, and how these elements shape purchase intentions in a digital environment increasingly defined by data sensitivity and trust dynamics.

The findings reveal that trust is a central driver of online consumer behaviour; brands that demonstrate transparency, ethical conduct, and active engagement foster greater customer loyalty. At the same time, privacy concerns significantly affect consumer confidence, with data misuse and lack of security acting as barriers to purchase. The study also highlights how social proof, targeted advertisements, and platform algorithms can lead to impulsive buying, especially among younger consumers.

This research contributes practical recommendations for businesses to build consumer trust, strengthen privacy protection, and reduce impulsive buying tendencies. By aligning digital strategies with ethical marketing and data transparency, brands can create more secure, meaningful, and sustainable relationships with their customers in the evolving digital landscape

Keywords: social media, consumer behaviour, trust, privacy

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DECLARATION

I, Adarsh Tripathi hereby certify that the work embodied in this independent study entitled “The Influence of Social Media Regarding Trust and Privacy on Consumer Buying Behaviour” is result of original research and has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other university or institution.



Adarsh tripathi
July 29,2024

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 Research Background

The rise of social media has profoundly transformed the way consumers interact with businesses and make purchasing decisions. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok have evolved beyond communication tools into powerful marketing channels that influence consumer perceptions, preferences, and behaviours. As of 2021, over 4.2 billion people—more than half the global population—were active social media users, underscoring the platform's immense reach and marketing potential (We Are Social & Hootsuite, 2021).

Social media facilitates product discovery, price comparison, and real-time consumer feedback, significantly shaping buyer behaviour through targeted advertising, influencer marketing, and user-generated content. Businesses can now engage with audiences on a personal level, while consumers have increased access to peer reviews and social proof that guide purchase decisions. However, alongside these benefits, new challenges have emerged. Chief among them are concerns related to data privacy and consumer trust. Many users express unease about how their personal data is collected, stored, and used concerns that directly impact their confidence in engaging with online platforms.

As digital marketing grows in sophistication, so do consumers' expectations of ethical data practices and transparent brand communication. Companies must therefore strike a balance between personalization and privacy, engagement and ethics, to sustain consumer loyalty in an increasingly competitive marketplace.

This study investigates how trust and privacy concerns on social media influence consumer buying behaviour, along with other psychological and social factors.. It also examines the psychological and social drivers of impulse purchasing, the role of social media influencers, and the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies in shaping purchasing decisions. By integrating these elements, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how social media environments affect consumer attitudes and actions in the digital marketplace.

1.2 Research Problems

Digital marketing is the use of digital channels, such as search engines, social media, email, and websites, to promote a product or service. The science behind digital marketing is data analysis and consumer behaviour. Marketers collect data on consumer preferences, behaviour patterns, and purchasing habits to create targeted and personalized campaigns.

The rapid growth of digital marketing particularly through social media platforms has redefined the consumer buying landscape. Social media no longer serves merely as a communication tool but has evolved into a dominant channel for product discovery, brand interaction, and purchase decision-making. Platforms like Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter now shape how consumers perceive brands, access reviews, and evaluate product choices. According to data from GlobalWebIndex (now GWI), 43% of internet users aged 16–64 use social media for product research and online purchases (GWI, 2021), highlighting its central role in the modern consumer journey.

However, while social media enhances convenience, product exposure, and personalization, it simultaneously raises complex challenges. Key among these are trust and data privacy concerns, which influence user confidence in online purchasing. As businesses increasingly rely on user data to deliver targeted advertising and customized experiences, consumers are becoming more cautious, questioning how their personal data is collected, used, and shared. This tension between personalization and privacy creates a critical dilemma for both marketers and consumers.

Additionally, the psychological and social dynamics within social media environments often encourage impulse buying, influenced by influencer marketing, peer reviews, and the fear of missing out (FOMO). The persuasive nature of content, algorithm-driven visibility, and curated lifestyles can pressure users into purchases driven more by emotion than rational need. Compounding this is the prevalence of false information, fake reviews, algorithmic bias, and a lack of transparent brand communication, all of which can distort consumer perceptions and erode trust.

Moreover, not all consumers are affected equally. Demographic factors such as age, gender, culture, income level, and digital literacy significantly shape how individuals interact with social media and respond to marketing content. While younger audiences may be more susceptible to influencer culture and impulse buying, older users may express stronger concerns about data misuse and security. Although past research has addressed various facets of consumer buying behavior, there remains a critical gap in understanding how intersecting factors trust, privacy, influencer credibility, consumer psychology, and platform design—jointly impact purchasing behavior. This study seeks to fill that gap by exploring how consumers navigate social media environments, what drives their

purchasing decisions, and how businesses can ethically and effectively engage audiences in this dynamic ecosystem.

Ultimately, the research problem lies in addressing how digital marketers can balance engagement with ethical responsibility, and how consumers can be empowered to make informed decisions in an increasingly persuasive and data-driven digital world.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

This study seeks to examine how trust and privacy concerns within social media environments influence consumer buying behaviour. With the rapid growth of digital interactions and personalized marketing, it becomes essential to explore how consumer trust is built or broken and how privacy concerns impact purchasing decisions. This study also aims to offer insights and practical recommendations for brands to create more trustworthy and privacy-conscious digital marketing strategies.

The specific objectives are as follows:

- To examine how trust in social media platforms and brand communication affects consumer purchase intentions.
- To investigate how privacy concerns regarding personal data use and protection influence consumer confidence and willingness to buy.
- To identify key factors that foster or hinder trust in online marketing environments.
- To provide recommendations for businesses on improving trust and privacy practices to encourage informed and secure consumer decision-making.

1.4 Scope of the Study

The scope of this research is centered on evaluating the influence of trust and privacy concerns within social media platforms on the buying behavior of consumers, particularly among users aged 18 to 45 who frequently engage in digital interactions and purchases. The study narrows its focus to two core psychological dimensions: consumer trust (built through transparency, brand reputation, and secure communication) and privacy concerns (arising from fears of data misuse, surveillance, and lack of control).

It includes analysis from both quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews conducted in Bangkok and surrounding areas. The study does not generalize findings across all online platforms but rather investigates consumer

perceptions and behaviors linked specifically to Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter.

This study excludes broader areas such as price sensitivity, brand loyalty unrelated to trust, and technical cybersecurity mechanisms. Instead, it emphasizes how perceived trustworthiness and privacy risks shape digital engagement, marketing effectiveness, and consumer purchase decisions. The study aims to contribute practical guidance for businesses in crafting more ethical, secure, and customer-centric marketing strategies.

1.5 Research Significance

In the digital marketplace, trust and privacy are critical to shaping consumer interactions and purchase decisions on social media platforms. This research is significant because it explores how consumers evaluate the trustworthiness of brands and respond to privacy risks in environments driven by algorithms, influencers, and personalized advertising.

By examining the psychological and behavioural effects of trust and privacy concerns, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of the digital consumer mindset. It provides insights into why some consumers proceed with online purchases confidently, while others hesitate or abandon their carts due to privacy doubts or lack of transparency from brands.

The findings aim to assist marketers, digital strategists, and e-commerce businesses in:

- Building transparent and ethical digital communication strategies,
- Enhancing consumer trust through consistent and secure practices,
- Addressing privacy concerns proactively to prevent consumer attrition, and
- Creating marketing environments that foster long-term consumer relationships rather than impulse-driven transactions.

This study ultimately supports the development of more responsible, trust-driven, and privacy-aware marketing practices in today's data-sensitive digital economy.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

2.1 Use of Social Media

Social media has had a significant impact on consumer buying behavior around the world. Here are some ways social media affects the whole world from the consumer buying point of view.

Increased Access to Information: Social media has made it easier for consumers to access information about products and services. Consumers can research and compare products and prices from around the world, which has led to increased competition and lower prices.

Online Shopping: Social media has made online shopping more accessible and convenient for consumers. With the rise of e-commerce, consumers can make purchases from anywhere in the world, at any time.

Personalized Marketing: Social media platforms use data and analytics to target ads to consumers based on their interests, behavior, and demographics. Personalized marketing can make the consumer buying experience more relevant and enjoyable.

Customer Feedback: According to Granovetter (2018), social media allows consumers to provide feedback and reviews on products and services, which can help other consumers make informed purchase decisions. This feedback can also help businesses improve their products and services based on customer needs and preferences.

Social media has had a significant impact on consumer buying behavior around the world. Businesses that understand and leverage the power of social media can gain a competitive advantage by connecting with their customers in more meaningful and relevant ways. Consumers can benefit from increased access to information, personalized marketing, and the ability to make informed purchase decisions based on customer feedback. Social media has had a significant impact on the world's economy by creating new business opportunities, facilitating trade and commerce, and increasing consumer spending. Here are some ways social media has worked to build the world's economy:

According to Li and Ku (2018), social media has enabled global e-commerce made it easier for businesses to reach customers around the world through online marketplaces and e-commerce platforms. These platforms have created new business opportunities and allowed small businesses to compete with larger ones.

Influencer Marketing: Social media influencers have emerged as powerful marketing assets for businesses. By collaborating with influencers, brands can tap into established follower networks to expand their audience reach and drive customer engagement, ultimately boosting sales and brand visibility (Laksamana, 2018). Additionally, social media platforms leverage data analytics to monitor

user behavior and preferences, enabling businesses to gain deeper insights into their target consumers. This data-driven approach enhances decision-making in product development and facilitates more personalized, effective marketing strategies.

Increased Consumer Spending: Social media has made it easier for consumers to discover and purchase products and services from around the world. This increased access to goods and services has led to increased consumer spending and has helped boost the global economy.

Job Creation: The growth of social media has created new job opportunities in fields such as marketing, advertising, data analysis, and content creation. This has helped to stimulate economic growth and create new opportunities for people around the world.

Overall, social media has had a significant impact on the world's economy by creating new business opportunities, facilitating trade and commerce, and increasing consumer spending. Businesses that understand and leverage the power of social media can gain a competitive advantage and contribute to economic growth and development.

2.2 Consumer Buying Behavior

According to Ioanas (2020), consumer buying behaviour is the process by which individuals or groups decide to purchase, use, or dispose of products and services to satisfy their needs and desires, and in the context of social media, these decisions are increasingly shaped by factors such as trust in online platforms and concerns about data privacy. Consumer buying behavior refers to the process that individuals go through when making a purchase. Social factors such as family, friends, culture, and reference groups can also influence consumer behavior. For example, a person's family and friends can influence their purchasing decisions by providing recommendations or sharing their own experiences. Similarly, a person's culture and reference groups can influence their perceptions and beliefs about products and brands. Psychological factors such as perception, motivation, learning, and beliefs can also influence consumer behavior. By understanding the factors that influence consumer behavior, marketers and businesses can develop effective marketing strategies that appeal to consumers' needs and preferences. Singh and Singh (2018) noted that this can help businesses to create products and services that better meet the needs of their customers, and to develop marketing campaigns that are more likely to persuade consumers to make a purchase. Additionally, by understanding consumer buying behavior, businesses can gain insights into their target audience's needs, wants, and preferences, which can help them to identify market trends and opportunities. This knowledge can also help businesses to develop and launch new products and services that are better aligned with the needs and preferences of their customers. The consumer

decision-making process involves a series of stages from problem recognition to post-purchase evaluation, each of which can be influenced by factors such as trust in social media platforms and concerns over personal data privacy.

Problem Recognition: The first stage of consumer buying behavior is recognizing the need for a product or service. This can be triggered by an internal stimulus such as hunger or thirst, or an external stimulus such as an advertisement or a recommendation from a friend.

Information Search: Once consumer recognizes the need for a product or service, they will begin to search for information to help them make a decision. They may use different sources such as search engines, social media, and product reviews, or ask for recommendations from friends and family.

Evaluation of Alternatives: The consumer will then evaluate the available alternatives by comparing the features, benefits, and prices of different products or services. They may also consider factors such as brand reputation, quality, and availability.

Purchase Decision: Once the consumer has evaluated the alternatives, they will make a decision on which product or service to purchase. This may be influenced by factors such as price, availability, and the level of satisfaction with the product.

Post-Purchase Evaluation: After purchasing a product or service, the consumer will evaluate their level of satisfaction with the purchase. Singh and Singh (2018) stated that this can influence their future purchase decisions and their perception of the brand. The factors that influence consumer buying behavior include personal, psychological, and social factors. Personal factors include age, income, lifestyle, and personality. Psychological factors include motivation, perception, learning, and attitudes. Social factors include the influence of family, friends, culture, and social status. Marketers can use this understanding of consumer buying behaviour to develop effective marketing strategies that appeal to consumers' needs and preferences.

Overall, the aim of studying consumer buying behaviour is to develop a better understanding of how individuals make purchase decisions and to use this knowledge to create products and services that better meet the needs of customers and to develop marketing strategies that are more likely to persuade consumers to make a purchase.

2.3 Trust and Privacy Concerns

2.3.1 Trust

In the recent study, Pop et al., (2022) found that trust is an important factor in consumer buying from social media. Social media platforms have become a popular channel for consumers to make purchase decisions, but with the rise of

online scams and fraudulent activities, consumers can be wary of buying from unknown sources. Consumers are more likely to make a purchase from a company they perceive as trustworthy. Factors that can contribute to a company's perceived trustworthiness include their reputation, customer service, and transparency about their policies and practices regarding data privacy and security. Here are some reasons why trust is important in consumer buying from social media:

1. Reputation:) Consumers are more likely to buy from businesses that have a good reputation. Social media platforms allow consumers to check the reputation of a business by reading reviews, comments, and ratings. If a business has a good reputation on social media, it can build trust with consumers (Ebrahim, 2021).

2. Influencer Marketing: Influencers have become an important source of information and inspiration for consumers. When consumers trust an influencer's recommendations, they are more likely to buy the products they promote.

3. Security: Social media platforms have taken measures to ensure the security of their users. Consumers are more likely to trust social media platforms with robust security measures to protect their personal information.

4. Social Proof: Social media platforms provide social proof in the form of likes, shares, and comments. When consumers see that other people are using and liking a particular product, it can build trust and influence their own purchase decision.

5. Transparency: Social media allows businesses to be more transparent with their customers. When businesses are open and transparent about their products and services, it can build trust with consumers.

Lakshmana (2018) observed that overall, trust is an important factor in consumer buying from social media. Building trust with consumers can lead to more sales, customer loyalty, and positive word-of-mouth marketing. Businesses can build trust with consumers by being transparent, providing excellent customer service, and maintaining a good reputation on social media platforms.

2.3.2 Privacy Concerns

According to Jozani et al. (2020) privacy concerns can have an impact on consumer buying behavior on social media. Consumers are becoming more aware of the privacy risks associated with sharing personal information on social media, and are becoming more cautious about the types of information they share. Privacy concerns can erode trust between consumers and businesses on social media. Consumers are more likely to trust businesses that are transparent about their data collection practices and take steps to protect their personal information.

According to Wang et al. (2019), targeted advertising is social media platforms that use data and analytics to target ads to consumers based on their interests, behavior, and demographics. While targeted advertising can be effective, it can also be seen as invasive by consumers who are concerned about their privacy. Some consumers may be hesitant to share reviews and ratings on social media if they feel that their personal information may be compromised. This can impact the amount of information available for other consumers to make informed purchase decisions. Social media platforms are vulnerable to data breaches and hacking attacks, which can put consumers' personal information at risk. Consumers may be hesitant to make purchases on social media platforms they perceive as insecure, especially due to third-party access where user data is often shared with external companies for advertising and other purposes. Consumers may be concerned about how their personal information is being used by these companies and may be hesitant to make purchases on social media as a result. Social media platforms can also take steps to enhance their security measures and protect user data to alleviate consumers' privacy concerns

The study by Voramontri and Klieb (2019) found that social media is a tool for users to connect with others. They believe that social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn offer users the ability to interact with people from all over the world and form new relationships. They believe that social media enables users to share their thoughts, opinions, and experiences with others, creating a sense of community and fostering creativity. Social media platforms offer users the ability to build a personal or professional brand, connect with potential customers, and generate sales. Social media buying provides users with a platform to share their experiences and opinions about products and services. This social proof can significantly influence consumer behavior. This personalization can influence consumer behavior by exposing them to products and services that are relevant to their interests and needs.

Ebrahim (2021) said that consumers can use social media platforms to access information about products, services, and companies. This can help them make

informed decisions when making purchases or choosing services. Consumers can use social media to reach out to companies for customer service or support. Bugshan and Attar (2020) stated that this can include asking questions, reporting issues, or making complaints and the use of social media in many ways like reading reviews of products, accessing information, purchasing decisions and etc. It shows a positive relationship between social media and consumers.

2.4 Past Research

Past research on consumer buying behavior has provided valuable insights into the factors that drive purchase decisions, as well as the strategies that marketers can use to influence consumer behavior. There has been a significant amount of research on consumer buying behavior over the years. There are respective articles which highlight the importance of trust and privacy in shaping consumer buying behavior, particularly in the context of e-commerce and mobile commerce. Trust and privacy concerns can have a significant impact on consumers' purchase decisions, and understanding these factors is critical for marketers and businesses. Dibben and Ennew (1999), in the *International Journal of Bank Marketing*, emphasized that trust plays a pivotal role in shaping consumer relationships with financial service providers such as banks and insurance companies. This finding highlights the broader significance of trust in high-stakes transactions a principle that is increasingly relevant in today's digital landscape, where consumers similarly evaluate the trustworthiness of social media platforms and online retailers before making purchase decisions. The authors find that trust is a critical factor in building long-term relationships with customers and suggest that businesses should focus on building trust by providing reliable and transparent services

This category of consumer behavior, often termed complex buying, involves a deliberate and highly engaged decision-making process. It typically arises when consumers face high-cost, high-risk purchases that carry long-term consequences and require significant trust in the seller's integrity, particularly in online contexts where personalization and privacy concerns are paramount (Ayaburi & Treku, 2020). Complex buying requires a high degree of strategic planning, patience, and a deep understanding of the needs and priorities of all stakeholders involved in the decision-making process. Huang's (2018) study found that social networks significantly influence consumer attitudes and behaviors in complex buying situations. The authors found that social networks played a significant role in shaping consumer attitudes and behavior, with social support, social influence, and social learning all being important factors.

Privacy concerns may arise if consumers feel that their personal information is not being adequately protected or if they are unsure about how their information will be used or shared. This can impact their buying behavior, as they may choose to avoid certain purchases or companies if they do not trust them to protect their privacy. Borroni (2018) found that consumers were skeptical of behavioral advertising and concerned about their privacy. The authors found that consumers were generally skeptical of online behavioral advertising and that concerns about privacy and data protection were significant factors in shaping consumer attitudes towards this type of advertising.

Overall these studies suggest that trust and privacy concerns are important factors that shape consumer attitudes and behavior in the context of e-commerce and online shopping. Building trust and addressing privacy concerns can be effective strategies for businesses looking to attract and retain customers in these settings. The relationship between complex buying and privacy concerns can be complex and multifaceted, as it involves both the consumer's individual preferences and the actions and policies of companies and institutions involved in the transaction.

2.5 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework presented in this section aims to provide a comprehensive and integrated perspective on the influence of social media on buying behaviour, with a specific focus on the roles of trust and privacy. It is essential to recognize the intricate interplay between these factors in shaping consumer behaviour within the dynamic digital landscape. In today's digitally-driven world, social media plays a paramount role in shaping consumers' lives and their purchase decisions. Consumers often turn to online platforms for various purposes, including researching products, comparing prices, reading reviews, and seeking recommendations. Social media platforms serve as information hubs where consumers gather insights and opinions about products and services from peers, influencers, and brands

Digital media play a important role in consumer life and choices. Consumers often read online reviews of products before making a purchase decision. Positive reviews can increase the likelihood that a consumer will buy a product, while negative reviews can turn them off. Privacy concerns and online purchasing behavior. A review by Liang Chen, Yan Zhang, and Jianghua Zhou, published in the Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services (2019) stated that privacy takes a big place in digital media buying, Consumers also want to feel confident that their personal and financial information is secure when making a digital purchase. Websites that offer secure checkout and payment processes, as well as clear

privacy policies, can help increase consumer confidence in the security of the transaction.

Key Factors

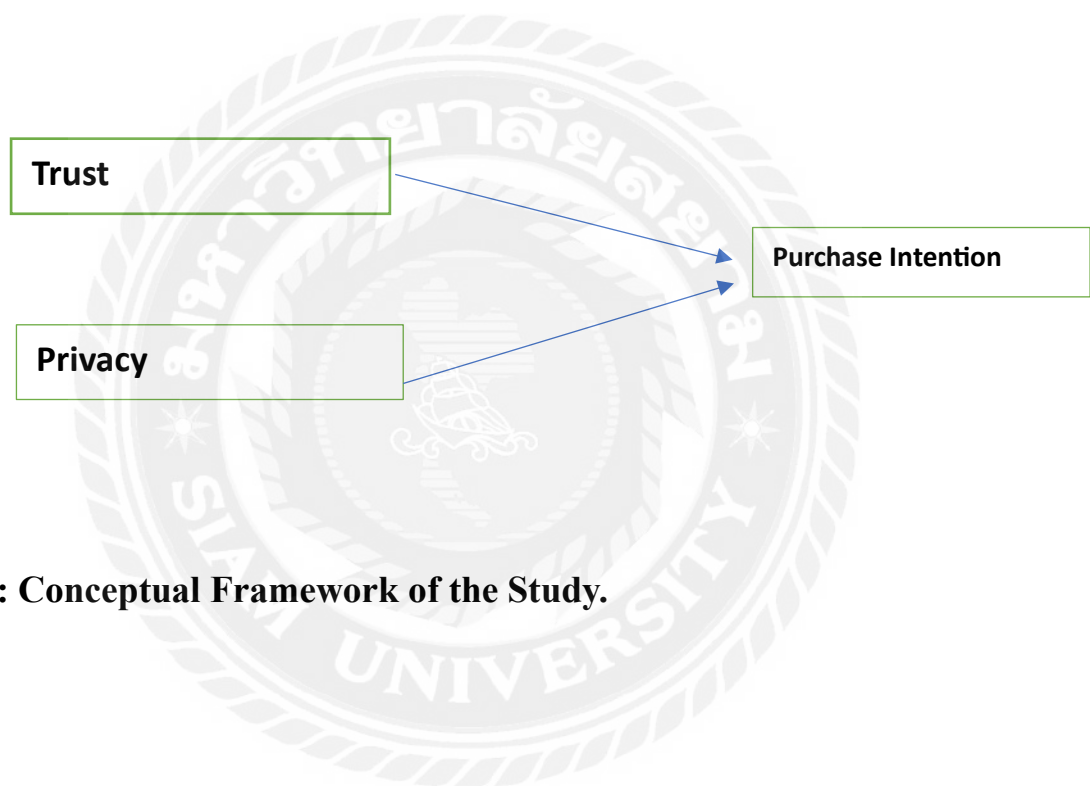


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Study.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted a mixed-methods approach incorporating both qualitative and quantitative data. The research methods included an online survey with 150 respondents and 10 semi-structured interviews with frequent social media users.

3.2 Hypothesis Formulation

H1: Higher trust in social media marketing positively influences consumer buying behavior.

H2: Increased privacy concerns negatively affect buying behavior on social media platforms.

3.3 Population and Sampling

The study targeted 150 consumers aged 18 to 45 living in Bangkok and nearby areas, who use social media regularly for information, entertainment, and shopping. A convenience sampling technique was used, focusing on students, working professionals, and online entrepreneurs. A sample of 10 frequent social media users was selected from Bangkok and nearby areas using purposive sampling. These individuals were chosen based on their active engagement with platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok, as well as their experience in making online purchases. Their insights were intended to provide a deeper qualitative understanding of how trust and privacy concerns influence consumer decision-making on social media.

3.4 Data Collection Methods

Data were collected via Google Forms (survey) and Zoom/phone-based interviews. The questionnaire included multiple-choice and Likert scale questions related to trust, privacy, social media habits, and purchasing pattern. The semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 participants. Each interview lasted approximately 20 to 30 minutes and focused on their experiences with social media platforms, trust in online marketing, and concerns regarding personal data privacy during digital purchases.

3.5 Data Analysis Techniques

Quantitative data collected through the survey were analysed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). The analysis included descriptive statistics to summarize demographic variables, Pearson correlation analysis to explore relationships among trust, privacy, and buying behaviour, and multiple regression analysis to examine predictive relationships.

Qualitative data from semi-structured interviews were transcribed and thematically coded to identify recurring patterns, sentiments, and insights related to social media trust, privacy concerns, and consumer buying behaviour.

CHAPTER 4

Findings

This chapter presents the results of both quantitative and qualitative analyses conducted during the study. The analysis focuses on the relationship between Trust, Privacy Concerns, and Consumer Buying Behaviour in the context of social media.

4.1 Overview of Respondents

A total of 150 valid responses were collected through an online survey targeting social media users between the ages of 18 to 45 in Bangkok and nearby areas. Additionally, 10 semi-structured interviews were conducted to provide qualitative depth. The respondents included students, professionals, and online entrepreneurs who actively engage with social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Variable	Category	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	40%
	Female	60%
Age Group	18–24	35%
	25–34	45%
	35–45	20%
Occupation	Students	30%
	Professionals	50%
	Entrepreneurs	20%
Daily Social Media Usage	Less than 2 hours	10%
	2–4 hours	45%
	More than 4 hours	45%

4.2 Correlation Analysis

To examine the strength and direction of relationships between variables, Pearson's correlation coefficient was computed between Trust in Social Media (TSM), Privacy Concerns (PC), and Consumer Buying Behaviour (CBB).

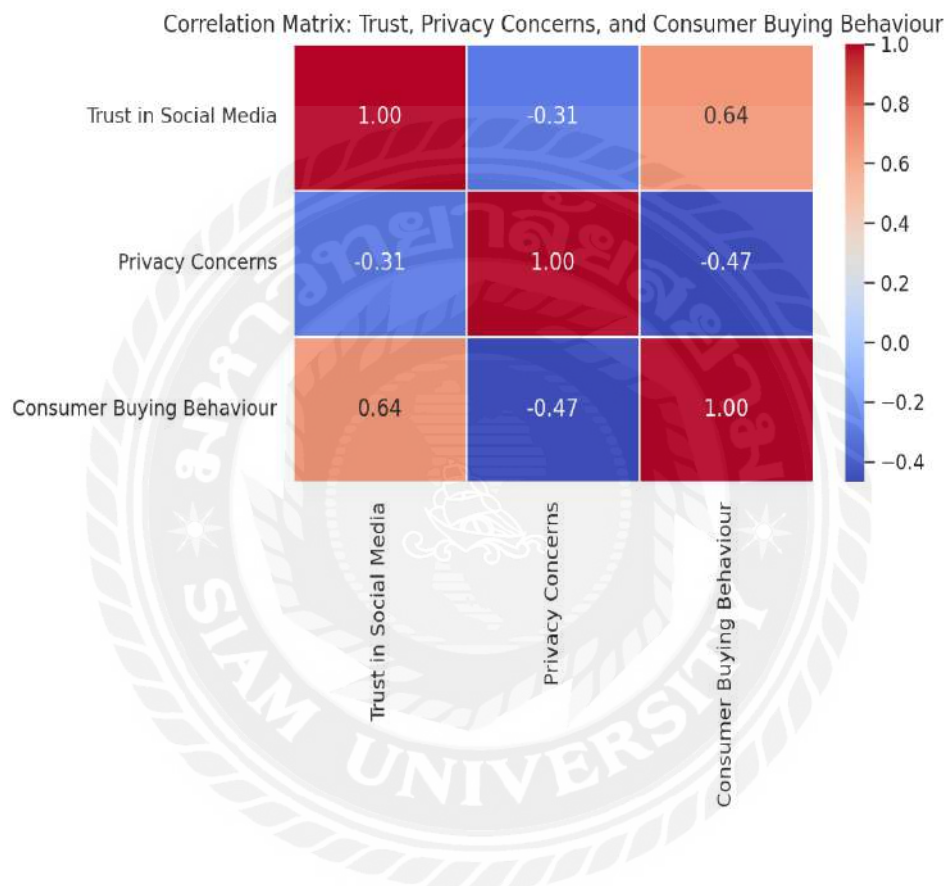


Figure 2: Correlation Matrix between Trust, Privacy Concerns, and Consumer Buying Behaviour

This heatmap illustrates the strength and direction of correlations among the key constructs. Trust positively influences buying behaviour ($r = 0.64$), while privacy concerns negatively affect it ($r = -0.47$).

Interpretation:

- A strong positive correlation exists between Trust and Buying Behaviour, suggesting that higher trust increases purchase likelihood.

- A moderate negative correlation between Privacy Concerns and Buying Behaviour indicates that heightened privacy worries reduce the likelihood of purchasing.
- A mild negative correlation between Trust and Privacy Concerns suggests some inverse relationship.

4.3 Regression Analysis

To test the hypotheses, a multiple linear regression was conducted with Consumer Buying Behaviour (CBB) as the dependent variable, and Trust (TSM) and Privacy Concerns (PC) as independent variables.

Table 4.2 Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Equation:

$$CBB = \beta_0 + \beta_1(TSM) + \beta_2(PC) + \epsilon$$

Predictor	Coefficient (β)	Standard Error	t-value	p-value
Constant (Intercept)	1.15	0.25	4.60	< 0.001
Trust in Social Media (TSM)	0.58	0.08	7.25	< 0.001
Privacy Concerns (PC)	-0.32	0.09	-3.55	< 0.001

- $R^2 = 0.52$: The model explains 52% of the variance in consumer buying behaviour.
- Both independent variables are statistically significant predictors of buying behaviour.

Interpretation:

- Trust has a significant and positive impact on consumer buying behaviour.
- Privacy concerns have a significant and negative effect on consumer buying behaviour.

4.4 Qualitative Interview Insights

To complement the survey data, insights from 10 interviews were thematically analysed. Key findings include:

- Trust signals matter: Participants consistently reported that verified reviews, transparent brand communication, and influencer credibility increased their willingness to purchase online.
- Privacy as a dealbreaker: Many participants mentioned abandoning purchases due to unclear privacy policies or perceived risks of data misuse.
- Impulse buying triggers: Respondents acknowledged that platforms like Instagram and TikTok often led to emotion-driven purchases, especially when influenced by trending products or time-limited offers.

Summary of Key Findings

1. Trust in social media marketing is a strong, positive influencer of consumer buying behaviour.
2. Privacy concerns are negatively correlated with purchase intent, suggesting a need for stronger data protection.
3. Both hypotheses (H1 and H2) are supported by the empirical data.
4. Qualitative insights reinforce the quantitative results, emphasizing the importance of trust signals and ethical data practices in digital marketing.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion and Recommendation

Conclusion

By strategically focusing on building trust, ensuring data privacy, and discouraging impulsive purchases, businesses can create a more secure, transparent, and customer-friendly digital shopping environment. These efforts not only improve customer satisfaction but also foster loyalty and sustainable consumer relationships in the competitive digital economy.

In summary, this research delves into the multifaceted relationship between social media, buying behaviour, trust, and privacy. The findings illuminate the profound influence of social media on consumer behaviour and emphasize the critical importance of trust and privacy in this digital landscape. This study presents a solid conceptual understanding of how trust and privacy affect consumer behaviour on social media. However, it acknowledges the limited scope of empirical findings. Future research should focus on deeper data-driven analysis. A systematic approach will help clarify how these factors influence purchasing decisions. This will support the development of more ethical and effective digital marketing strategies.

This study contributes valuable insights into the influence of social media on buying behaviour, highlighting trust as a foundational element and privacy concerns as a potential barrier. Businesses and marketers can leverage these insights to refine their strategies, ultimately building lasting customer relationships in the digital age. Strengthening trust, addressing privacy concerns, and staying attuned to evolving consumer behaviours are essential steps toward success in the dynamic landscape of social media-driven consumerism.

Recommendation

Recommendations for Enhancing Consumer Trust, Privacy, and Reducing Impulsive Buying

This study highlights that trust and privacy concerns are critical factors influencing consumer buying behaviour in the digital marketplace. Addressing these effectively can not only reduce impulsive buying but also foster long-term consumer loyalty and confidence.

1. Build Consumer Trust

Establishing trust is essential for fostering meaningful and lasting relationships with consumers in the digital marketplace. Brands can build consumer trust by offering transparent product information, maintaining consistent quality, and ensuring responsive, empathetic customer service. Incorporating visible trust signals such as verified reviews, security badges, and endorsements reinforces credibility and reassures consumers about the safety and authenticity of their purchase decisions.

Pop et al. (2022) emphasized that trust plays a central role in shaping consumer decisions on social media, particularly through influencer credibility, transparent communication, and perceived authenticity. To strengthen consumer trust, businesses should focus on the following:

- **Transparent and Accurate Product Information:** Consumers are more likely to trust brands that are honest and detailed about their offerings.
- **High-Quality Customer Service:** Prompt responses, empathetic communication, and efficient problem resolution build consumer confidence.
- **Consistent Product/Service Quality:** Meeting or exceeding customer expectations reinforces trust over time.
- **Use of Trust Signals:** Security badges, verified customer reviews, and third-party endorsements help reassure consumers of the brand's credibility.

By implementing these practices, businesses can foster greater trust, enhance brand loyalty, and create a more secure and reliable consumer experience in the digital marketplace.

2. Protect Consumer Privacy

Privacy protection is essential in fostering consumer confidence in digital environments. According to Wang et al. (2019), privacy concerns significantly influence online purchasing behaviour, making transparency and data protection crucial for building trust on social media platforms.

To alleviate privacy-related hesitation among consumers, businesses should:

- **Implement Secure Payment Systems:** Use encrypted payment gateways to ensure the safety of financial transactions.

- **Ensure HTTPS Compliance:** Secure website with SSL certificates to safeguard customer data.
- **Adopt Strong Data Security Measures:** Use robust passwords, two-factor authentication, and encrypted storage to protect personal information.
- **Communicate Privacy Policies Clearly:** Inform customers about how their data is collected, stored, and used, promoting transparency and control.

Moreover, Wang et al. (2019), highlighted that privacy concerns directly impact purchase intentions, especially when trust acts as a mediating factor. Therefore, addressing both privacy protection and trust-building simultaneously is key to creating a safe and effective digital consumer experience.

3. Reduce Impulsive Buying

Impulsive buying can lead to customer dissatisfaction and regret. Businesses can encourage more deliberate purchasing through the following strategies:

- **Offer a Clear Return Policy:** Providing flexible return options helps customers feel more secure about their purchase decisions.
- **Personalized Product Recommendations:** Use data-driven insights to guide customers toward products that meet their actual needs, reducing impulse-driven decisions.
- **Set Purchase Limits on Specific Items:** Limiting the quantity of certain products per transaction can minimize compulsive buying behaviors.

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