

# THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING IN SHAPING CONSUMER PURCHASE BEHAVIOUR

**Smita Ravikumar Kuntay**

Assistant Professor  
Sydenham College of Commerce & Economics

## Abstract

*In the contemporary digital era, social media marketing has emerged as a powerful tool influencing consumer purchase behaviour. This study examines the role of social media marketing in shaping consumer decision-making processes, focusing on key factors such as advertisements, online reviews, and influencer marketing. A descriptive research design was adopted, and primary data was collected from 150 respondents using a structured questionnaire based on a Likert scale. The data was analysed using statistical tools including percentage analysis and Chi-square test through JAMOVI software. The findings reveal that social media marketing has a significant impact on consumer purchase behaviour. Among the various factors, online reviews were found to be the most influential, followed by social media advertisements and influencer marketing. The study also highlights that platforms such as Instagram and YouTube are the most preferred by consumers for product discovery and engagement. Furthermore, hypothesis testing confirms a statistically significant relationship between social media marketing and consumer buying decisions. The study concludes that social media has transformed the traditional marketing landscape into a more interactive and consumer-driven approach, making it essential for businesses to adopt effective digital marketing strategies.*

**Keywords:** Social Media Marketing, Consumer Purchase Behaviour, Digital Marketing

## INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary digital era, the proliferation of internet technologies has revolutionized the way businesses interact with consumers. Traditional marketing channels such as television, print media, and radio are gradually being supplemented and in some cases replaced by digital platforms, particularly social media. Social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter have transformed from mere communication tools into powerful marketing ecosystems. These platforms enable businesses to create brand awareness, engage with customers in real time, and influence consumer perceptions and purchase decisions. Consumers today are no longer passive recipients of marketing messages. Instead, they actively seek information, compare alternatives, read reviews, and rely on peer recommendations before making purchase decisions. Social media facilitates this process by providing a platform for information exchange, social interaction, and content sharing.

The increasing reliance on social media for product discovery and evaluation has made it imperative for marketers to understand its role in shaping consumer behaviour. This study aims to explore how social media marketing influences various stages of the consumer decision-making process, including awareness, interest, evaluation, and purchase.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

**Mangold and Faulds (2009)** identified social media as a hybrid element of the promotion mix, combining traditional marketing communication with user-generated content. Their study emphasizes that social media enables consumers to actively participate in brand communication through reviews, comments, and content sharing. The authors argue that this shift has transferred power from marketers to consumers, making peer influence a critical factor in shaping purchase decisions.

**Kaplan and Haenlein (2010)** defined social media as internet-based applications built on Web 2.0 that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content. Their study highlights the transformation of communication into an interactive, two-way process. They emphasized that social media facilitates direct engagement between firms and consumers, enhancing relationship building and influencing consumer behaviour.

**Hajli (2014)** examined the role of social media in building trust and its impact on consumer purchase intentions. The study found that online communities, forums, and user-generated content significantly enhance

trust among consumers. The research concludes that trust is a key determinant in online purchasing behaviour, as consumers rely heavily on peer recommendations and reviews available on social media platforms.

**Miles (2014)** analysed the influence of social media platforms on consumer decision-making using empirical methods such as factor analysis and structural equation modelling. The study reveals that social media significantly affects consumer perceptions, attitudes, and buying behaviour. It also highlights the psychological influence of digital content and online interactions.

**Saboo et al. (2015)** explored the role of social identity and brand attachment in the context of social media marketing. The study suggests that consumer engagement activities such as following brands, sharing content, and commenting enhance emotional connections with brands. The findings indicate that stronger brand attachment leads to increased purchase intentions and customer loyalty.

## RESEARCH GAPS

Despite extensive research on social media marketing and consumer behaviour, existing studies largely examine individual elements such as advertisements, influencer marketing, and online reviews in isolation, with limited focus on their combined impact on purchase decisions. Furthermore, most research is concentrated in developed economies, with insufficient empirical evidence from emerging markets like Mumbai, where socio-cultural and economic factors may influence consumer behaviour differently. Prior studies also tend to focus predominantly on younger demographics, overlooking diverse consumer groups such as working professionals, homemakers, and senior citizens. In addition, there is a lack of comparative analysis between social media marketing and traditional marketing approaches. Therefore, this study seeks to bridge these gaps by providing a comprehensive, empirical, and context-specific analysis of the role of social media marketing in shaping consumer purchase behaviour.

## OBJECTIVES

To examine the role of social media marketing in influencing consumer purchase behaviour.

To analyse the impact of social media platforms, advertisements, and online reviews on consumers' buying decisions.

To compare the effectiveness of social media marketing with traditional marketing methods in shaping consumer preferences.

## HYPOTHESIS

H<sub>0</sub>: Social media marketing has no significant impact on consumer purchase behaviour.

H<sub>1</sub>: Social media marketing has a significant positive impact on consumer purchase behaviour.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study adopts a descriptive research design to examine the role of social media marketing in shaping consumer purchase behaviour. Both primary and secondary data have been utilized, wherein primary data was collected through a structured questionnaire based on a Likert scale, while secondary data was sourced from journals, books, and online publications. The study is based on a sample size of 150 respondents selected using a random sampling technique, representing diverse demographic groups such as students, professionals, homemakers, and others. The collected data has been analysed using statistical tools including percentage analysis & Chi-square test, to identify relationships, and the significance of social media marketing on consumer buying decisions.

## DATA ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION

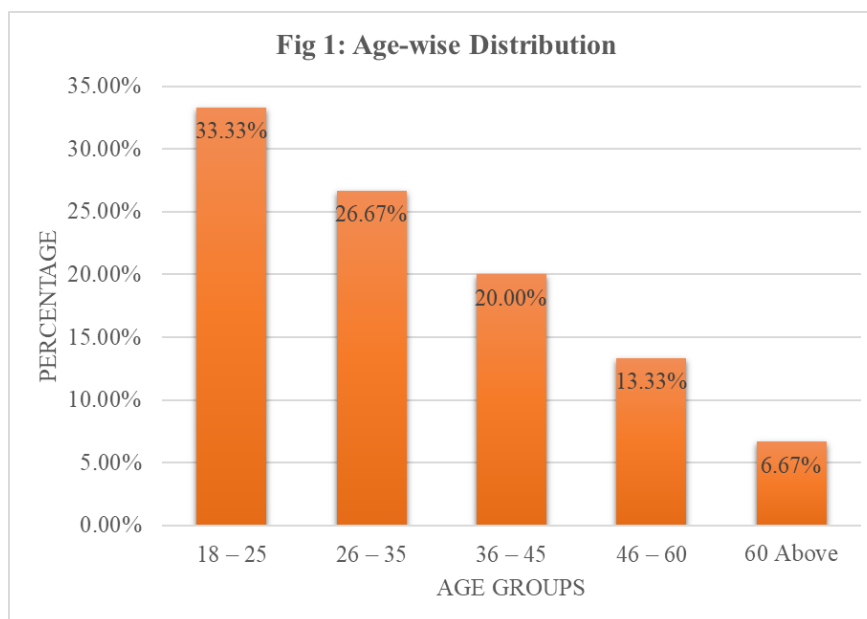
The data collected from 150 respondents to examine the role of social media marketing in shaping consumer purchase behaviour. The data has been analysed using statistical tools such as percentage analysis and Chi-square test through JAMOVI software. The findings are presented systematically with tables and interpretations to understand consumer perceptions and behaviour.

### Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 1: Age-wise Distribution

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage
18 – 25	50	33.33%
26 – 35	40	26.67%
36 – 45	30	20.00%
46 – 60	20	13.33%
60 Above	10	6.67%
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Primary Data



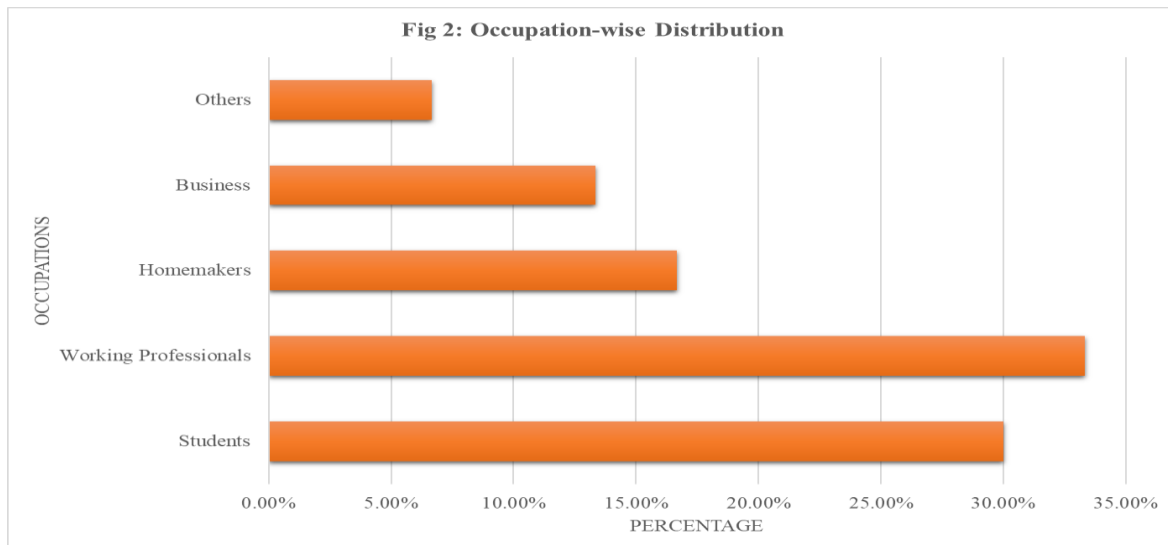
**Interpretation:**

The majority of respondents (33.33%) belong to the age group of 18–25, indicating that younger individuals are more active users of social media platforms.

**Occupation-wise Distribution**  
**Table 2: Occupation-wise Distribution**

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Students	45	30.00%
Working Professionals	50	33.33%
Homemakers	25	16.67%
Business	20	13.33%
Others	10	6.67%
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Primary Data



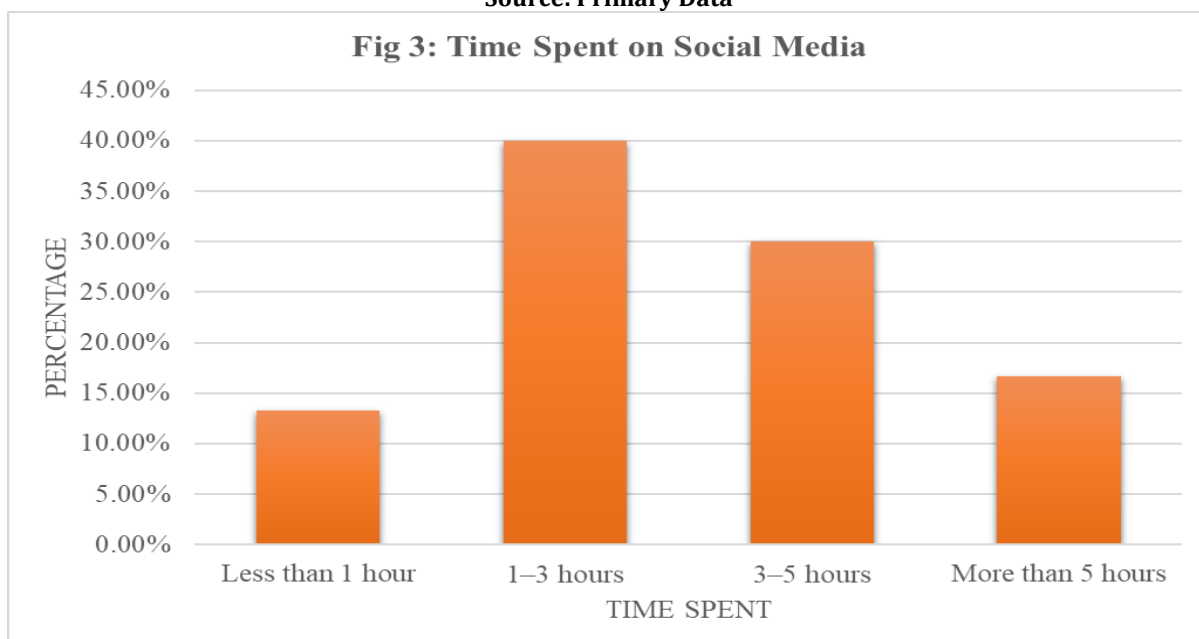
**Interpretation:**

Working professionals and students form the majority, suggesting a digitally active and economically relevant sample.

**Social Media Usage Pattern**  
**Table 3: Time Spent on social media**

Time Spent	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 1 hour	20	13.33%
1–3 hours	60	40.00%
3–5 hours	45	30.00%
More than 5 hours	25	16.67%
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Primary Data



**Interpretation:**

A significant proportion (70%) spends more than one hour daily on social media, indicating high exposure to digital marketing content

**Impact of Social Media Marketing on Consumer Behaviour**

**Table 4: Influence of social media advertisements**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	10	6.67%
Disagree	15	10.00%
Neutral	20	13.33%
Agree	55	36.67%
Strongly Agree	50	33.33%
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Primary Data

**Interpretation:**

Approximately 70% respondents agree that social media advertisements influence their purchase decisions, indicating a strong impact of digital marketing.

**Table 5: Influence of Online Reviews**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	8	5.33%
Disagree	12	8.00%
Neutral	20	13.33%
Agree	60	40.00%
Strongly Agree	50	33.33%
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Primary Data

**Interpretation:**

A significant majority (73.33%) of respondents agree that online reviews influence their purchase decisions, indicating that consumer trust is strongly shaped by user-generated content.

**Table 6: Influence of influencers**

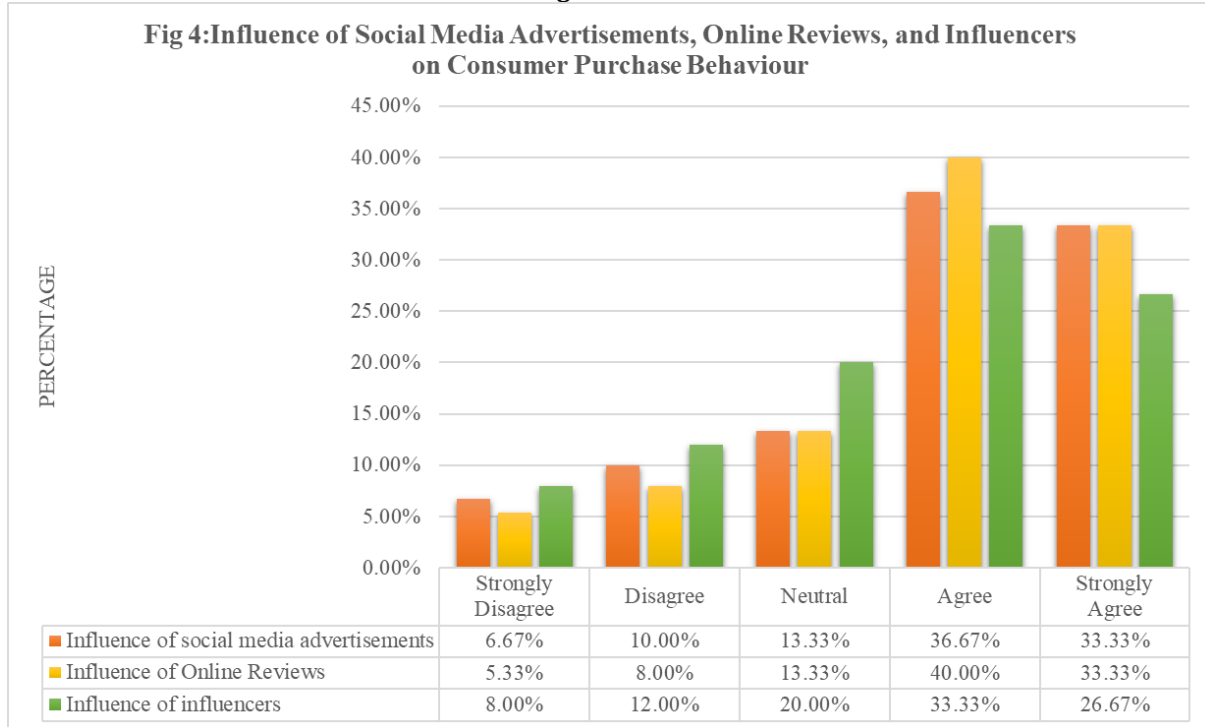
Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	12	8.00%
Disagree	18	12.00%
Neutral	30	20.00%
Agree	50	33.33%
Strongly Agree	40	26.67%
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Primary Data

**Interpretation:**

Approximately 60% respondents agree that influencers impact their buying behaviour, indicating a moderate but significant influence.

**Influence of Social Media Marketing Factors on Consumer Purchase Behaviour**



**Interpretation**

The above figure illustrates the influence of social media marketing factors—namely social media advertisements, online reviews, and influencers—on consumer purchase behaviour based on percentage distribution.

It is observed that a majority of respondents show a positive inclination towards social media marketing factors. In the case of social media advertisements, approximately 70% of respondents (Agree + Strongly Agree) indicated that advertisements influence their buying decisions. This highlights the effectiveness of promotional content on digital platforms.

Similarly, online reviews demonstrate the strongest impact among all factors, with around 73.33% respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that reviews affect their purchase behaviour. This indicates that consumers rely heavily on peer opinions and feedback before making decisions.

In terms of influencer marketing, about 60% of respondents expressed agreement, suggesting that influencers play a moderate yet significant role in shaping consumer preferences, particularly among digitally active users. On the other hand, a relatively small proportion of respondents expressed disagreement across all three factors, indicating that negative perception towards social media marketing is minimal.

Overall, the figure clearly shows that online reviews have the highest influence, followed by social media advertisements, and then influencers, confirming that social media marketing plays a crucial role in influencing consumer purchase behaviour.

**Platform Preferences**

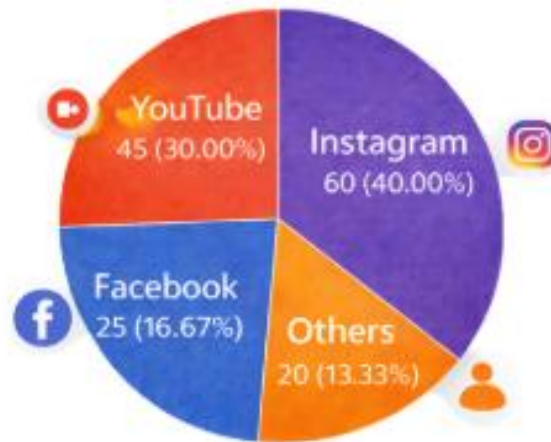
**Table 7: Platform Preferences**

Platform	Frequency	Percentage
Instagram	60	40.00%
YouTube	45	30.00%
Facebook	25	16.67%
Others	20	13.33%
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Primary Data

<https://www.gapinterdisciplinaries.org/>

**Fig 5: Distribution of Social Media Platforms Influencing Consumers**



**Interpretation:**

Instagram and YouTube are the most preferred platforms, indicating the importance of visual and video-based marketing.

**HYPOTHESIS TESTING**

Hypothesis Statement

- $H_0$ : Social media marketing has no significant impact on consumer purchase behaviour
- $H_1$ : Social media marketing has a significant impact on consumer purchase behaviour

Test	Value	df	p-value
Chi-Square ( $\chi^2$ )	58.32	4	0

Source: Authors Computation based on primary data

Since p-value (0.000) < 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected.

The test results indicate a statistically significant relationship between social media marketing and consumer purchase behaviour. Consumers are highly influenced by digital advertisements, reviews, and influencer content.

Thus, the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) is accepted, confirming that social media marketing significantly influences consumer buying behaviour.

**FINDINGS**

The analysis of data collected from 150 respondents reveals several important findings regarding the role of social media marketing in shaping consumer purchase behaviour.

Firstly, it was found that a majority of respondents belong to the younger age group (18–25 years), indicating that youth are the most active users of social media platforms. Additionally, working professionals and students form a significant portion of the sample, suggesting that digitally active and economically relevant consumers are highly engaged with social media.

Secondly, the study highlights that a large proportion of respondents spend more than one hour daily on social media, which increases their exposure to digital marketing content. This frequent usage plays a crucial role in influencing their buying decisions.

Thirdly, social media advertisements were found to have a strong impact on consumer behaviour, with approximately 70% of respondents agreeing that advertisements influence their purchase decisions. This confirms the effectiveness of promotional strategies used on digital platforms.

Further, online reviews emerged as the most influential factor among all social media elements. Around 73.33% of respondents indicated that reviews significantly affect their purchase decisions, showing that consumers heavily rely on peer opinions and user-generated content.

Influencer marketing was also found to have a considerable impact, with about 60% of respondents agreeing that influencers affect their buying behaviour. However, its influence is comparatively lower than advertisements and online reviews.

The study also reveals that Instagram and YouTube are the most preferred platforms among respondents, highlighting the importance of visual and video-based content in modern marketing strategies.

Finally, the hypothesis testing using the Chi-square test confirms that social media marketing has a statistically significant impact on consumer purchase behaviour, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis and acceptance of the alternative hypothesis.

## SUGGESTIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Businesses should strengthen their presence on popular platforms like Instagram and YouTube to maximize consumer reach.
2. Marketers should focus on creating visually engaging content such as videos, reels, and interactive posts.
3. Companies should actively encourage and manage online reviews to build consumer trust and credibility.
4. Organizations should use targeted and personalized advertisements based on consumer preferences and behaviour.
5. Businesses should collaborate with credible influencers to enhance brand visibility and influence purchase decisions.
6. Companies should improve customer engagement through comments, messages, and interactive features.
7. A balanced integration of social media marketing and traditional marketing strategies should be adopted for better effectiveness.

## CONCLUSION

The present study concludes that social media marketing plays a significant role in shaping consumer purchase behaviour in the digital era. The findings reveal that factors such as social media advertisements, online reviews, and influencer marketing have a considerable impact on consumers' decision-making process. Among these, online reviews emerged as the most influential factor, followed by advertisements and influencers. The study also highlights that platforms like Instagram and YouTube are the most preferred channels for product discovery and engagement. Furthermore, the results of hypothesis testing confirm that there is a statistically significant relationship between social media marketing and consumer purchase behaviour. Overall, social media has transformed the traditional marketing landscape by making it more interactive, transparent, and consumer-driven, thereby becoming an essential tool for businesses to influence and attract consumers effectively.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Hajli, M. (2014). A study of the impact of social media on consumers. *International Journal of Market Research*, 56(3), 387–404.
- [2] Kaplan, A. M., & Haenlein, M. (2010). Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of social media. *Business Horizons*, 53(1), 59–68.
- [3] Kemp, S. (2019). Digital 2019: Global digital overview. *DataReportal*.
- [4] Mangold, W. G., & Faulds, D. J. (2009). Social media: The new hybrid element of the promotion mix. *Business Horizons*, 52(4), 357–365.
- [5] Miles, D. A. (2014). Social media and consumer behavior: A study of the impact of online platforms on purchasing decisions. *Journal of Marketing Development and Competitiveness*, 8(2), 10–19.
- [6] Saboo, A. R., Kumar, V., & Ramani, G. (2015). Evaluating the impact of social media activities on human brand sales. *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 33(3), 524–541.
- [7] Statista. (2019). Number of social media users worldwide from 2010 to 2021. *Statista Research Department*.
- [8] Tuten, T. L., & Solomon, M. R. (2017). *Social media marketing* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.

- [9] Vinai Panjakajornsak, & Lerrthaitrakul, W. (2014). Channels of electronic word-of-mouth affecting consumers' buying decision-making process. *Research Journal of Business Management*, 8(4), 367–378.
- [10] We Are Social & Hootsuite. (2019). *Digital 2019 report*.