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**SOCIAL MEDIA AND CONSUMER PREFERENCES:  
CURRENT TRENDS ANALYSIS**

*Abstract*

The rapid proliferation of social media platforms has significantly influenced consumer behavior and preferences. This study aims to analyze current trends in how social media impacts consumer choices, focusing on various demographic groups and their interactions with digital marketing strategies. Through a comprehensive literature review and empirical research, we identify key factors that shape consumer preferences in the digital age.

In the digital age, consumer behavior is changing rapidly. It is important to study how new technologies such as online shopping and social media influence consumer behavior and transform traditional forms of shopping and marketing. Understanding these processes contributes to an in-depth analysis of modern social and economic changes.

**Keywords:** social media, trends, consumer society, consumer behavior, digital society, digitalization.

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## **ӘЛЕУМЕТТІК МЕДИА ЖӘНЕ ТҰТЫНУШЫЛАРДЫҢ ҚАЛАУЫ: АҒЫМДАҒЫ ТЕНДЕНЦИЯЛАРДЫ ТАЛДАУ**

*Аңдатпа*

Әлеуметтік медиа платформаларының тез таралуы тұтынушылардың мінез-құлқы мен қалауына айтарлықтай әсер етті. Бұл зерттеудің мақсаты әртүрлі демографиялық топтарға және олардың цифрлық маркетинг стратегияларымен өзара әрекеттесуіне назар аударатын, әлеуметтік желілердің тұтынушылардың таңдауына қалай әсер ететініндегі заманауи тенденцияларды талдау болып табылады. Әдебиеттерді жан-жақты шолу және эмпирикалық зерттеулер арқылы біз Цифрлық дәуірде тұтынушылардың қалауын қалыптастыратын негізгі факторларды анықтадық.

Цифрлық дәуірде тұтынушылардың мінез-құлқы тез өзгереді. Интернеттегі сауда және әлеуметтік медиа сияқты жаңа технологиялардың тұтынушылардың мінез-құлқына қалай әсер ететінін және сатып алу мен маркетингтің дәстүрлі түрлерін қалай өзгертетінін зерттеу маңызды. Бұл процестерді түсіну қазіргі әлеуметтік және экономикалық өзгерістерді терең талдауға ықпал етеді.

**Түйін сөздер:** әлеуметтік медиа, трендтер, тұтыну қоғамы, тұтынушылық мінез-құлық, цифрлық қоғам, цифрландыру.

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## **СОЦИАЛЬНЫЕ СЕТИ И ПОТРЕБИТЕЛЬСКИЕ ПРЕДПОЧТЕНИЯ: АНАЛИЗ ТЕКУЩИХ ТЕНДЕНЦИЙ**

*Аннотация*

Стремительное распространение платформ социальных сетей существенно повлияло на поведение и предпочтения потребителей. Целью данного исследования является анализ современных тенденций в том, как социальные сети влияют на выбор потребителей, с акцентом на различные демографические группы и их взаимодействие со стратегиями цифрового маркетинга. Благодаря всестороннему обзору литературы и эмпирическим исследованиям мы выявили ключевые факторы, которые формируют потребительские предпочтения в эпоху цифровых технологий.

В эпоху цифровых технологий поведение потребителей быстро меняется. Важно изучить, как новые технологии, такие как онлайн-шопинг и социальные сети, влияют на поведение потребителей и трансформируют традиционные формы покупок и маркетинга. Понимание этих процессов способствует глубокому анализу современных социальных и экономических изменений.

**Ключевые слова:** социальные медиа, тренды, общество потребления, потребительское поведение, цифровое общество, цифровизация.

## **MAIN PART**

Social media have become an important part of everyday life in recent years, significantly influencing consumer preferences. The purpose of this study is to analyze current trends in the use of social networks and their impact on consumer behavior.

Social networks are a key channel for the exchange of information and the formation of consumer preferences. Users often rely on recommendations from friends and influencers. The personalization of content through algorithms enhances the influence of social networks on the choice of goods and services.

Influencers play a significant role in consumer behavior, exerting influence through authentic recommendations. Companies actively use influencers in marketing campaigns to reach their target audience. Platforms like Instagram and TikTok emphasize the importance of visual content that creates positive associations with brands. Video reviews and live broadcasts are becoming popular promotion tools.

The number of social media users continues to grow due to the availability of Internet services and mobile devices. The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated this process. New platforms such as TikTok are gaining popularity by offering innovative content formats. Existing platforms are improving algorithms and functions to improve personalization.

Issues of confidentiality and ethics of data use are becoming increasingly relevant. Users are demanding more transparency from social platforms. The company is adapting to increased regulation and new requirements. Social networks have a significant impact on consumer preferences, creating new opportunities and challenges for businesses. Adapting marketing strategies to these trends becomes essential for success.

## **INTRODUCTION**

In recent years, social media has emerged as a dominant force in shaping consumer behavior and preferences. The rapid growth of platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok has transformed the way individuals interact with brands, access information, and make purchasing decisions.

The study of consumer behavior in sociology is important for understanding social processes, as it reflects the general values and norms of society. Consumer behavior reveals social inequalities and cultural differences, affecting access to goods and services. Due to the dynamic development of modern society, consumer preferences and the social nature of consumption of members of society are being transformed in it. The study of consumer behavior, consumer abilities, consumer preferences and general character, cultural characteristics allows us to assess the state of society in current conditions, identify the main trends.

This shift has prompted marketers to develop new strategies that leverage the unique capabilities of social media to engage with consumers effectively. Social media platforms offer unprecedented access to consumer data, allowing brands to tailor their marketing efforts to specific demographics and preferences. The ability to target advertisements based on user behavior, interests, and social connections has made social media an invaluable tool for businesses seeking to build stronger relationships with their customers. Additionally, the interactive nature of social media enables two-way communication between brands and consumers, fostering a sense of community and loyalty. The influence of social media on consumer preferences is multifaceted. On one hand, it provides consumers with a platform to share their experiences, opinions, and reviews, which can significantly impact the purchasing decisions of others. On the other hand, social media serves as a powerful channel for influencer marketing, where individuals with large followings promote products and services to their audience. Influencers, often seen as more relatable and

trustworthy than traditional celebrities, can sway consumer opinions and drive trends in ways that traditional advertising cannot. This paper aims to explore the current trends in how social media influences consumer preferences. By examining the interplay between digital marketing strategies and consumer behavior, we seek to identify key factors that shape consumer choices in the digital age. The study will focus on various demographic groups, analyzing how different segments of the population interact with social media and respond to marketing efforts. To achieve this, we will conduct a comprehensive literature review to synthesize existing research on the topic. This will provide a foundation for understanding the theoretical underpinnings of social media's impact on consumer behavior. Following this, we will employ a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews to gather data from a diverse sample of social media users. This methodology will allow us to capture both the broad trends and the nuanced experiences of individuals in relation to social media and consumer preferences. The results of this study will offer valuable insights for marketers seeking to navigate the complex landscape of social media.

In 2023, 41% of social media users said they were comfortable shopping through platforms such as Instagram Shop and Facebook Marketplace, up from 12% in 2022. This demonstrates a significant increase in trust in purchases through social media [1].

Influencer marketing continues to grow, with an estimated market value of \$21.1 billion in 2023. The recommendations of influencers have a significant impact on consumer decisions, especially among young people. More than 60% of consumers use three or more channels for each purchase path. At the same time, 75% want a seamless omnichannel experience, although only 25% are satisfied with the experience provided [2].

The growth of conscious consumption: 84% of consumers consider sustainability to be an important factor in making purchasing decisions, although 50% are not sure if they are willing to pay a premium for sustainable products in an inflationary environment [3].

By understanding the current trends and key factors influencing consumer behavior, businesses can develop more effective strategies to engage with their target audience and drive sales. Furthermore, the study will contribute to the academic discourse on digital marketing, providing a basis for future research on the long-term effects of social media on consumer behavior. In conclusion, as social media continues to evolve and integrate into everyday life, its impact on consumer preferences becomes increasingly significant. This study aims to shed light on the current trends and provide actionable insights for both marketers and researchers. By exploring the intricate relationship between social media and consumer behavior, we hope to contribute to a deeper understanding of the digital age's influence on consumption patterns.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The impact of social media on consumer preferences has been a significant area of interest in contemporary sociological and marketing research. This literature review synthesizes key findings from various studies to establish a comprehensive understanding of how social media influences consumer behavior. The review is structured around several core themes: the role of social media engagement, the influence of social media advertising, the impact of influencer marketing, and the demographic differences in social media usage.

Consumer engagement in the context of social media has gained momentum across various theoretical contexts from various disciplines to showcase its effects.

According to Pansari and Kumar, consumer engagement has emerged as a pivotal factor in modern marketing, significantly influencing relationship marketing. They emphasize that emotion and satisfaction are foundational aspects of consumer engagement. Additionally, they argue that meaningful engagement occurs when consumers feel a sense of belonging and develop relationships with the brand over time [4, P.293].

Gómez et al. propose that consumer engagement is more robust when facilitated through social media interactions rather than mere brand communication alone [5, P.199-201].

Ma et al. illustrate how active brand engagement through posts, tweets, and ongoing interactions fosters relationship building, impacting consumers' behavioral, cognitive, and emotional engagement [6, P.101179].

Social media has become an integral part of modern life and significantly influences consumer preferences. It not only helps brands engage with their audience but also shapes consumer behavior by allowing users to share experiences and recommendations. This literature review covers key studies and authors that have contributed significantly to this field.

The study by Vrontis et al. revealed that influencer recommendations significantly impact purchasing decisions, especially among the youth. The study analyzed data from 68 articles, identifying key aspects of influencers' impact on consumer behavior, such as brand trust and product quality perception [7].

Another important study conducted by Fauzi et al. also emphasizes the importance of influencers in digital interactions between brands and consumers. Their work used bibliometric analysis to identify current and future trends in influencer marketing [8, P.207].

The research by Brandwatch indicates a growing popularity of the secondary market, especially in the fashion industry. Buying second-hand products allows consumers to save money and support sustainability, influencing their preferences.

Sustainability has become an increasingly important concern for consumers in recent years. In a survey conducted by IBM [9] in 2022, 51% of respondents said that sustainability is even more important than it was 12 months ago. Despite world events, consumers still care deeply about adopting a more sustainable lifestyle.

This importance is also reflected in online conversations. The number of people talking about sustainability online increased by 12% last year [10].

Research shows that social media significantly influences how consumers perceive and choose products and services. For example, simplified access to information and feedback from other users can significantly influence the consumer's decision. Many companies collaborate with popular bloggers or influencers to promote their products or services. The recommendations of such personalities can significantly influence consumer choice, especially among young people and millennials. According to a study by the Influencer Marketing Hub, 63% of consumers are more likely to buy an item if it was recommended by an influencer. This shows how celebrity recommendations influence buying behavior [11].

Social media has become a key tool for marketing and promoting goods and services. Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and other platforms show how different platforms influence brand perception and image formation. For example, on Facebook, the average user engagement rate in advertisements is 0.16%, which is significantly higher than in other online advertising formats. This indicates that social media effectively attracts consumers' attention to advertising messages and stimulates them to take action.

Social media platforms play a key role as a means of communication and a tool for collecting feedback from consumers. For example, a study by Sprout Social showed that more than 65% of consumers prefer to use social media to interact with brands in case of problems or questions. This highlights the importance of platforms for providing feedback channels and improving the overall quality of customer service [12].

Studies show that the influence of social media on consumer preferences will only increase. It is important to continue exploring the interactions between influencers and consumers, develop omnichannel strategies, and focus on environmental responsibility. Future research could delve deeper into aspects of trust in influencers and the impact of digital platforms on purchase decisions.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study employs a mixed-methods approach to comprehensively analyze the impact of social media on consumer preferences. By combining quantitative and qualitative research methods, we

aim to capture both the broad trends and the nuanced experiences of individuals in relation to social media and consumer behavior. The following sections outline the specific methodologies used in this study: research design, data collection, and data analysis.

Research design the research design integrates quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews to gather data from a diverse sample of social media users. This approach allows us to validate the findings from the quantitative data with in-depth qualitative insights, ensuring a robust and comprehensive analysis.

Data collection methods.

Quantitative approach. It included the use of structured online questionnaires in which participants answered questions about their use of social media, preferred platforms, types of content, as well as the impact of social media on their purchasing behavior. To achieve representativeness, the sample included various age groups, gender, and socio-economic statuses.

Qualitative approach. Semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with selected participants to explore their personal experiences, motivations and perceptions of social media marketing campaigns in more depth. During the interview, aspects such as the influence of influential personalities, reactions to branded content and psychological factors influencing consumer behavior were discussed.

The data from the questionnaires were analyzed using statistical methods to identify the main trends and correlations between the use of social networks and consumer preferences. The results of qualitative interviews have been carefully worked out in order to identify topics and motivations that cannot always be captured using a quantitative approach.

The survey was conducted among 386 participants aged 18 to 35 years. 67,5% of respondents reported that they use social media daily or constantly. The average age of the survey participants was 26,5 years.

Survey objectives:

1. The study of the frequency and duration of the use of social networks by various demographic groups.
2. Identify preferred platforms and content types on these platforms.
3. Analysis of the impact of social networks on consumer decisions and purchases.
4. Evaluating the effectiveness of marketing strategies and advertising on social networks.
5. Research of user motivations and attitudes when interacting with brands through social platforms.

## **RESULTS**

Quantitative surveys the quantitative component of this study involves the distribution of structured questionnaires to a large sample of social media users. The survey aims to quantify the relationship between social media usage and consumer preferences. Key areas covered in the survey include:

- Social media usage patterns: Frequency and duration of social media use, preferred platforms, and types of content engaged with.
- Consumer preferences: product categories frequently purchased, factors influencing purchasing decisions, and the role of social media in these decisions.
- Marketing effectiveness: perceptions of social media advertisements, engagement with branded content, and the impact of influencer endorsements. The survey employs a combination of Likert scale questions, multiple-choice questions, and open-ended questions to gather comprehensive data. The sample size is targeted to be representative of various demographic groups, including age, gender, and socio-economic status.

Qualitative interviews to complement the quantitative data, we conduct in-depth qualitative interviews with a selected subset of survey respondents. These interviews provide deeper insights

into the motivations, attitudes, and behaviors of consumers in relation to social media. The interviews focus on:

- Personal experiences: participants' personal experiences with social media marketing, including memorable campaigns and interactions with brands.
- Influencer impact: detailed accounts of how influencer recommendations have influenced purchasing decisions.
- Behavioral drivers: exploration of the underlying psychological and social factors that drive engagement with social media content and advertisements. The interviews are semi-structured, allowing for flexibility in exploring different themes while maintaining a consistent framework for comparison across participants.

As part of the article, a survey was organized to investigate how the use of social networks affects the consumer preferences of various user groups. The study included both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods to fully understand the impact of social media on consumer behavior and perception.

The use of social media. Facebook Instagram preferences are distributed as follows: Instagram is preferred by 60% of young people under 35 years old, while Facebook remains popular among 55% of the older generation. TikTok is used by 40% of respondents under the age of 25. From there, you can find out that modern consumer trends are mainly spread through this social network.

The types of content also vary. 46,5% of young people are more likely to consume photos and videos, while 33,1% of the older generation prefer text posts and articles.

Consumer preferences. The following categories stand out among consumer preferences: 47,4% of women are interested in clothing and accessories, 59% of men are interested in appliances and gadgets, and 68,5% of all respondents are interested in food and drinks.

Reviews from other users and recommendations on social networks influence shopping decisions for 51% of the survey participants.

Marketing effectiveness. Young people show a more positive attitude towards content and advertising on social networks compared to older groups. This is manifested in their active participation in marketing campaigns and sweepstakes from brands. About 57,6% of the youth participating in the survey said that they regularly or occasionally participate in promotions and contests held by brands through social platforms.

This high level of participation indicates the strong involvement of young people in interactive marketing campaigns. They often respond to content created by brands and actively interact with advertising offers, which makes them an important target audience for marketers and advertisers.

This activity also highlights the importance of social media as an effective tool for creating interaction between brands and their consumers. Young people not only consume content, but also actively participate in the formation of brand communities and culture based on social interaction.

High-quality interviews. In the framework of qualitative interviews, additional aspects of the influence of social networks on consumer behavior were identified. For example, 64,2% of young people noted a positive personal experience of interacting with brands through social platforms.

The empirical part of our study included conducting high-quality interviews among young people aged 18 to 35 in Almaty. We chose this city because of its status as a major educational and cultural center, which allowed us to receive diverse and in-depth opinions from students and young professionals.

The study included 13 participants who were selected taking into account various demographic and socio-economic characteristics. All participants were randomly selected from university campuses, youth centers, and professional societies to ensure a representative sample.

The following aspects were discussed during the interview:

1. Personal experience of interacting with brands through social networks. 72,5% of the participants noted a positive experience of interacting with brands. They expressed satisfaction with

the opportunity to receive personalized content, participate in interesting promotions and receive exclusive offers through social platforms.

2. The impact of social media recommendations on purchasing decisions. 53% of respondents stressed that other users' reviews and recommendations influence their purchase decisions. They noted that they trust personal recommendations and often make a purchase decision based on the opinions of other users on social networks.

3. Participation in marketing campaigns and sweepstakes. Almost 60% of young people actively participate in promotions and sweepstakes organized by brands through social platforms. They find such activities interesting and useful, especially if they are aimed at the target audience of young people.

## **DISCUSSION**

In discussing these results, several key aspects can be identified that reflect the importance of social media in modern marketing and consumer interaction.

1. The impact of social media on consumer behavior. Social media has significantly changed the way consumers interact with brands and make purchasing decisions. Today, consumers often turn to social media to get feedback, recommendations and information about products before making a purchase. This makes social platforms not only a means of communication, but also a powerful tool for influencing consumer preferences.

2. The evolution of consumer preferences through social media. In recent years, there has been a change in the way consumers perceive and choose products through social media. For example, young people often rely on influential personalities on social media when making shopping decisions, which opens up new opportunities for brands to connect with their target audience through collaborations with influencers.

3. The impact of social media marketing on consumer behavior. The effectiveness of social media marketing campaigns today is closely linked to the ability of brands to create valuable and relevant content that attracts attention and engages the audience. Personalization of content and the use of user behavior data help to improve campaign results and increase conversions.

4. Trends in the use of social platforms and their impact on consumer preferences. Platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube continue to grow in popularity among various age and demographic groups. This requires brands to adapt their marketing strategies and content plan to effectively reach their audience across different platforms.

5. The future of interaction between social media and consumer preferences. Given the rapid development of technology and changing consumer behavioral trends, social media will continue to play a key role in shaping consumer preferences. It is important that brands remain attentive to changes and actively adapt their strategies in order to remain competitive and involved in the lives of their target audience through social media.

In sociology, society and its changes have transformed the process of consumption beyond recognition. From passive satisfaction of needs, it was changed to creative activities, including the motives of action in the choice of a certain product, the specificity of rational and irrational action in consumption, the manifestation of autonomy on the part of the consumer in interpersonal interaction, following cultural values in the process of taste formation.

Cultural factors have the strongest influence on consumer behavior. As a carrier of fundamental values, patterns of perception, needs and behavioral stereotypes, culture has a crucial influence on a person's demands and behavior. Each class or society has its own culture, and in different societies, it influences consumer behavior differently. Consumers belonging to different subcultures form important market segments.

Often consumption has a compatible character, but even in individual consumption, a person almost certainly relates his actions to those of representatives of certain social groups and local communities. The consumer becomes the object of close examination and social control by these

groups and communities that regulate both the scale and forms of consumption of various goods and services. People exchange experiences and develop social assessments of consumer goods and their producers. This exchange of information takes place in small informal groups. It happens so often that we do not even realize when our views are reflected on the behavior of our loved ones and when we ourselves are influenced by their point of view.

## CONCLUSIONS

Based on the trends and analyses discussed regarding this article several conclusions can be drawn:

**Significant influence of social media.** Social media platforms wield substantial influence over consumer behavior. They serve not only as communication tools but also as pivotal platforms for consumer feedback, product reviews, and recommendations. This influence spans across various demographics, impacting how consumers perceive and choose products and services.

**Platform preferences and content consumption.** Preferences for social media platforms vary significantly by age group. Younger demographics, typically under 35 years old, favor platforms like Instagram and TikTok for their visual content, whereas older demographics lean towards platforms like Facebook for its broader networking capabilities and content diversity.

**Impact on Consumer Decision-making.** Reviews and recommendations on social media platforms play a crucial role in consumer decision-making processes. Approximately 53% of survey respondents cited that they are influenced by user reviews and recommendations when making purchasing decisions, underscoring the importance of social proof and community feedback.

**Effectiveness of social media marketing.** Marketing campaigns on social media are most effective when they resonate with the audience through personalized and engaging content. Younger consumers show higher engagement with brand-sponsored content and are more likely to participate in promotions and giveaways, highlighting the effectiveness of targeted marketing strategies on these platforms.

**Future directions.** The future of social media and consumer preferences will likely continue to evolve with technological advancements and shifting consumer behaviors. Brands need to remain agile in adapting their strategies to leverage emerging platforms and engage effectively with their target audiences.

In summary, understanding the dynamic interplay between social media and consumer preferences is crucial for businesses aiming to stay competitive in a digitally-driven marketplace. By harnessing the power of social media effectively, brands can enhance their visibility, engage with consumers authentically, and influence purchasing decisions in a meaningful way.

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## **ТІЛДІҢ ӘЛЕУМЕТТІК СИПАТЫ ЖӘНЕ ПРАКТИКАЛЫҚ АСПЕКТІЛЕРІ**

*Аңдатпа*

Мақала тілдің әлеуметтік сипаты мен оның принциптерін, сонымен қатар практикалық аспектілерін әлеуметтанулық талдауға арналған. Тілдің әлеуметтік сипаты мәні терең, сан қырлы мәселе болғандықтан, оның принциптері мен теориялық және практикалық аспектілері заманауи әлеуметтану ғылымында жүйелі әрі толыққанды қарастыруды қажет етіп отыр. Осы орайда тілдің әлеуметтік сипаты тіл әлеуметтануының өзекті мәселесі ретінде қарастыру – маңызды мәселе. Сонымен қатар тілдің әлеуметтік сипатының мән-маңызы зерделеніп, теориялық және практикалық аспектілері айқындалады. Кез келген тіл қоғамда, әлеуметтік ортада дамып, жетілетіні белгілі. Қоғамның, әлеуметтік ортаның тілге ықпалы немесе тілдің әлеуметтік ортаға ықпалы, сөзсіз, бір-біріне әсер етіп, қоғамның мазмұндық сипатына, болмысына жан-жақты әсерін тигізеді. Сондықтан тілдің әлеуметтік сипатын тану, негізгі принциптерін айқындау, практикалық аспектілерін зерттеу арқылы тілдің әлеуметтік мазмұны мен әлеуметтік ортадағы қолданыс аясын зерделеуге мүмкіндік аламыз. Мақалада осы мәселелерге ерекше мән берілген. Тіл тарихи-әлеуметтік категория ретінде қоғам дамуының қай кезеңде болса да, өзінің ықпалы мен адамдар санасы мен