



The Role of Social Media in Observing Consumer Behavior in Decision Making in Choosing Barbershop Services

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Abstract

This study aims to explore the role of social media in influencing consumer behavior in choosing barbershop services. Qualitative research methods are used with a focus on data collection through in-depth interviews and social media content analysis. Participants in this study were barbershop service consumers who actively use social media to search for information and recommend services. The results of this study reveal that social media has a significant role in shaping consumer perceptions of the quality of barbershop services, as well as influencing consumer decisions in choosing barbershop services. These findings highlight the importance of a strong online presence and a good reputation on social media for barbershop business owners. The practical implication of this study is the need for a digital marketing strategy that is integrated with reputation management to increase consumer appeal and trust in barbershop services.



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INTRODUCTION

This study explores the role of social media in influencing consumer behavior when choosing barbershop services. Social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok have evolved beyond tools for social interaction to become powerful channels for shaping consumer preferences and decisions regarding products and services. According to a study by McKinsey (2020), over 70% of consumers are more likely to purchase a product or use a service after encountering positive recommendations or reviews on social media. This highlights the significant impact of positive social media exposure on purchasing decisions.

Furthermore, research by Li et al. (2019) indicates that consumer behavior is often shaped by social interactions and recommendations from influencers or users with large followings. Such influence occurs not only directly through reviews or testimonials but also indirectly through self-identification with trends or lifestyles promoted on social media. In the context of barbershop services, social media enables potential customers to view before-and-after transformations, assess service quality, and receive recommendations from their communities or peers. Gupta et al. (2021)

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found that visual content and videos showcasing results play a critical role in attracting potential customers to specific barbershop services.

Despite these advantages, social media also presents challenges concerning the validity of information, such as fake testimonials or manipulated images. Kumar et al. (2018) emphasize the need to recognize that social media's influence is not always positive, as dishonest or misleading reviews can negatively affect the reputation of barbershop services.

This qualitative study aims to examine the impact of social media on consumer perceptions, preferences, and decisions when selecting barbershop services. It investigates how visual content and testimonials shape consumer perceptions, the role of influencers and high-profile social media users in forming consumer preferences, and how social interactions and recommendations influence decision-making. Additionally, it explores consumer perceptions of the honesty and reliability of social media information and whether the influence of social media differs among demographic groups in the context of choosing barbershop services. This research seeks to provide valuable insights into how social media affects consumer decision-making and its implications for marketing strategies and brand management in the barbershop industry.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach using a case study method to explore how social media influences consumer behavior at every stage of the decision-making process for selecting barbershop services. The research is conducted at barbershops that actively utilize social media for promotion, with participants consisting of barbershop customers who rely on platforms such as Instagram and TikTok to gather information before choosing a service.

Data is collected through in-depth interviews with barbershop customers and owners or marketing personnel, focusing on the role of social media in the processes of information search, alternative evaluation, and purchasing decisions. Observations are also conducted by monitoring the social media activities of barbershops, including their interactions with customers, promotional content, and customer reviews. Additionally, documentation is used to gather data on social media content, such as types of posts and engagement metrics like likes, comments, and shares.

The data is analyzed using thematic analysis, which involves reducing information from interviews, observations, and documentation, grouping data into categories such as the influence of visual content, trust in reviews, and the impact of recommendations, and drawing conclusions based on the main findings. This approach enables a comprehensive understanding of how social media shapes consumer behavior in choosing barbershop services.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The influence of visual content and testimonials on social media significantly shapes consumer perceptions of barbershop services. Eye-catching visuals, such as photos and videos showcasing haircut results, barbershop interiors, or styling processes, create an impression of professionalism and quality. Social media enables barbershops to establish branding and identity effectively, where consistent and appealing visuals contribute to a modern or trendy image. Positive testimonials and reviews serve as powerful social proof, boosting consumer trust and confidence. Additionally, direct interactions through comments, messages, or online events strengthen relationships between barbershops and their audience, enhancing perceptions of warmth and professionalism. Social media also facilitates rapid dissemination of promotions, discounts, or new services, shaping consumers' perception of value.

Influencers and high-follower social media users play a critical role in forming consumer preferences for barbershop services. As perceived authorities in style and trends, their endorsements

carry significant weight. Their expansive reach introduces barbershops to a broader audience, increasing brand visibility. Consumers trust influencers' opinions, and positive testimonials or experiences shared by them can build credibility. Collaborative campaigns with influencers, such as live reviews or promotional events, enhance exposure and reinforce positive perceptions. As trendsetters, influencers can popularize specific hairstyles, driving consumer interest in barbershops capable of replicating these styles.

Social interaction and recommendations from social media users also significantly impact consumer decision-making. Shared positive experiences, reviews, and visual testimonials act as compelling social proof, fostering trust. Interactions like likes, comments, and shares amplify perceived service quality and professionalism. Recommendations from respected users or peers strengthen a barbershop's reputation and credibility. Social media's networking capabilities connect consumers with like-minded individuals, encouraging confidence in trying recommended services. Viral or popular content further broadens exposure, attracting potential customers.

Consumer perceptions of the honesty and reliability of information on social media depend on several factors. The source of information heavily influences credibility; recommendations from authoritative users or experienced individuals are trusted more. Social proof, in the form of reviews or ratings, helps consumers evaluate reliability. Consistency between social media content and real-life experiences enhances trust. Transparency and responsiveness in addressing feedback and inquiries also play a crucial role. Personal experiences and a barbershop's established online reputation shape consumer confidence, making honesty and reliability vital for decision-making.

The influence of social media on consumer behavior varies across age groups and demographics. Different generations prefer different platforms, with younger generations favoring Instagram and TikTok and older ones leaning toward Facebook. Preferences for styles or trends showcased on social media also vary, with younger consumers drawn to trendy haircuts and older ones prioritizing service quality. Trust levels in social media recommendations differ, with younger consumers valuing influencer endorsements and older ones relying more on family or friends. Technological literacy further influences how consumers interact with social media content, with younger users more adept at navigating and evaluating options. Lastly, personal values and preferences affect consumer behavior, emphasizing the need for barbershops to tailor their social media strategies to diverse demographic characteristics to effectively attract and retain customers.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the crucial role of social media in influencing consumer behavior when choosing barbershop services. Through qualitative analysis, it is evident that social media platforms serve as primary channels for consumers to gather information about barbershops. Content such as reviews, testimonials, and before-and-after photos significantly shape consumer perceptions. The reputation and image cultivated by barbershops on social media play a pivotal role in decision-making processes, with establishments presenting a strong and appealing presence more likely to attract potential customers.

Social media also facilitates direct interaction between barbershops and prospective clients, where prompt and positive responses to inquiries or reviews enhance trust and consumer interest. Additionally, endorsements and collaborations with influencers substantially boost visibility and consumer confidence in a barbershop's services. The emotional appeal of engaging content and testimonials from satisfied customers further impacts consumer decisions, with openly shared positive experiences serving as strong motivators for new prospects.

Based on these findings, barbershops are encouraged to optimize their presence on relevant social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok. They should ensure that their

content is engaging, informative, and authentic, leveraging photos, videos, and customer reviews to build a compelling and positive image. Actively maintaining positive interactions with consumers by responding promptly and professionally can strengthen relationships and foster customer loyalty. Collaboration with influencers should also be considered to expand reach and establish trust among broader audiences. Regular monitoring and evaluation of social media activities and campaign outcomes are essential to refine strategies and ensure continued effectiveness in attracting and retaining customers.

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