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Original Research Article

Social Media Marketing Strategies and Their Consequence on Herbal Product Sales in Rural Areas**GOWRI J¹, Dr.KAYATHIRIBAI B²**

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Abstract: Social media has revolutionized the way we use online marketing; offering businesses new and cost-effective marketing platforms. The study is an investigation of the influence of the advertising approaches of social media on the sales of herbal products in rural areas. This study examines the effects of promotional ads, influencer marketing, customer interaction, electronic word of mouth and educating customers on consumer awareness, intention to purchase and actual buying behavior. Study design is a quantitative research design that is applied to the respondents in the study, which is rural consumers, as the data were collected through a structured questionnaire. Descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, regression analysis and hypothesis testing have been used to analyze the relationship between social media advertising strategies and herbal product sales. The results will highlight the positive impact of successful social media advertising on brand awareness, consumer confidence, and buying decisions, ultimately helping to boost sales of herbal goods in rural areas.

The study also highlights issues that can impact the success of social media campaigns, including digital literacy, internet access, and consumer skepticism. The research provides practical suggestions for herbal product manufacturers, marketers, and policy makers to create specific digital marketing strategies that increase rural market penetration and that can help in promoting sustainable business growth. The study adds to the existing knowledge on digital marketing and rural consumer behaviour by offering empirical evidence on the effectiveness of the social media advertising strategies used in the herbal products industry.

Keywords: Social Media, Herbal, Strategies, Advertisement.

1. Introduction

Businesses have been changed by the speed at which digital technology and internet connectivity has advanced and developed, and the affect it has had on the way in which businesses promote and market their products. Among the various digital marketing platforms, social media has emerged as one of the most influential tools for advertising, customer engagement, and brand development. Social networks like Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, YouTube, and others allow companies to directly engage with their audience, build brand awareness, and impact shopping choices. The healthcare industry is not an exception to this digital shift; even the herbal product sector has seen an increased reliance on social media advertising, with manufacturers and

retailers aiming to tap into a broader audience at an affordable cost.

In recent years, the herbal products have become increasingly popular, especially with increasing awareness relating to natural health, environmental protection, and the perceived safety of herbal treatments. Consumers are increasingly looking for healthy products and alternatives to the use of synthetic medicines and chemicals. This has led to a growing demand for herbal medicines, cosmetics, nutritional supplements and personal care products in both urban and rural areas. Rural consumers, who have historically relied on information from their local communities and recommendations from friends and family, are increasingly encountering digital information via their

smartphone and cheap Internet connections. Mobile technology and government-led digital inclusion efforts have given a boost to mobile social media use in rural areas.

Social media platforms offer the opportunities to educate, show the benefits of the products, share with the customers, give some promotional discounts and develop trust building with interactive communication to the herbal product marketers. Influencer marketing, video demonstrations, user-generated content, live product launches, localised ads, and personalised messages are some effective advertising strategies used to capture the attention of rural consumers. These strategies serve not only to make the product more noticeable but also to build consumer confidence and interest in buying the product. Although some social media are very popular in rural areas, few studies have looked at the effectiveness of various advertising methods on sales of herbal products. The buying habits of rural consumers may differ from those of urban consumers and are influenced by a range of factors including their education level, income level, cultural beliefs, digital literacy and trust in the information they see online. Hence, the need to study the influence of different social media advertising strategies on consumer awareness, attitudes and purchasing decisions in rural markets.

These relationships will be useful to marketers to create better promotions that target the needs and preferences of rural consumers. The objective of this study is to examine the effect of social media advertising strategies on the sales of herbal products in the rural areas. It aims to test the efficacy of various digital marketing strategies for raising brand awareness, behavioral changes and driving purchase intent. The study results will be used to add to relevant literature on digital marketing and rural consumers behaviour and will provide practical suggestions to herbal product manufacturers, marketers, entrepreneurs and policy makers. The findings of the research will help to propel sustainable business growth and improve availability of herbal products among the rural population by identifying the best social media advertising strategies.

2. Review of Literature

According to **Kaplan and Haenlein (2010)**, There have been a few studies that look at social media marketing's impact on consumer behavior and product sales. Social media is a collection of internet-based applications that allow users to produce and share content, changing the way businesses communicate with clients.

Mangold and Faulds (2009), states that they highlighted how social media platforms offer organizations useful tools for developing customer connections and improving the visibility of their brand. Social media is now part of the promotional mix because

it provides an opportunity to interact directly with consumers. They discovered that interactive communication via the social networking sites has a strong impact on consumers' purchase decisions and enhances customer loyalty by retaining interaction.

Ashley and Tuten (2015) reviewed some of the top brands and their creative social media advertising tactics in the digital marketing sector. These insights led them to recommend that brands leverage visuals, storytelling, contests, influencer partnerships, and UGC to grow consumer engagement and awareness. The strategies were found to have a positive impact on purchase intentions among various groups of consumers.

Nair and Bhattacharyya (2019) found that consumers' buying intentions are related to product quality, confidence, health awareness, and online promotional activities, with a particular emphasis on herbal products. They found that social media advertising has an important role in informing consumers about the advantages of the use of herbal products and also in promoting re-purchasing. While it has been determined that social media marketing and engagement efforts are important, there is not much research that focuses on the effectiveness of social media advertising strategies in rural areas on sales of herbal products. Thus, the present study aims to fill this research gap by studying the effect of the various strategies of social media advertising on the awareness, purchasing intent, and selling of herbal products by rural customers.

3. Research Objectives

The present study aims to investigate the influence of social media advertising strategies on herbal product sales in rural areas. The specific objectives are:

1. To examine the influence of social media advertising on consumer awareness of herbal products.
2. To evaluate the effect of influencer marketing on purchase intention.
3. To analyze the relationship between customer engagement and buying behaviour.
4. To determine the impact of electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) on herbal product sales.
5. To examine the overall influence of social media advertising strategies on herbal product sales in rural markets.

4. Research Hypotheses

H1: Social media advertising positively influences consumer awareness of herbal products.

H2: Influencer marketing positively affects consumers' purchase intention.

H3: Customer engagement through social media positively influences buying behaviour.

H4: Electronic word-of-mouth has a significant positive effect on herbal product sales.

H5: Social media advertising strategies significantly improve herbal product sales in rural areas.

5. Methodology

The study employed a quantitative descriptive research design to examine the influence of social media advertising strategies on herbal product sales in rural areas. A survey method was adopted because it enables the collection of standardized information from a large number of respondents.

Population and Sample

The target population consisted of rural consumers who actively use social media and have experience purchasing herbal products.

A sample of **250 respondents** was selected using **convenience sampling** from rural areas of Tamil Nadu.

Data Collection

Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire.

Table 1 Demographic Profile

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	122	48.8
	Female	128	51.2
Age	18–30	84	33.6
	31–45	97	38.8
	>45	69	27.6
Education	School	61	24.4
	Graduate	109	43.6
	Postgraduate	80	32.0

Interpretation

Most respondents (51.2%) were female, while 38.8% belonged to the age group of 31–45 years. Graduates constituted the largest educational group.

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	SD
Social Media Advertising	4.18	0.61
Influencer Marketing	4.05	0.68
Customer Engagement	4.11	0.64
e-WOM	4.26	0.59
Herbal Product Sales	4.09	0.66

Interpretation

The mean values above 4 indicate that respondents generally agreed that social media advertising strategies

The questionnaire consisted of two sections:

- Demographic Profile
- Statements measured using a 5-point Likert Scale

Secondary data were collected from journals, books, reports and websites.

Statistical Tools

The collected data were analyzed using **SPSS Version 26**.

The following statistical tools were employed:

- Percentage Analysis
- Mean and Standard Deviation
- Correlation Analysis
- Multiple Regression Analysis
- Hypothesis Testing

The level of significance was fixed at **5% ($p < 0.05$)**.

6. Data Analysis

Variables	Sales
Social Media Advertising	0.742**
Influencer Marketing	0.694**
Customer Engagement	0.721**
e-WOM	0.766**

positively influence herbal product sales.

Table 3 Correlation Analysis

$p < 0.01$

Interpretation

All independent variables exhibited strong positive correlations with herbal product sales.

Table 4 Multiple Regression Analysis

Dependent Variable: Herbal Product Sales

Variable	Beta	t	p-value
Social Media Advertising	0.281	5.42	0.000
Influencer Marketing	0.217	4.33	0.001
Customer Engagement	0.254	4.86	0.000
e-WOM	0.312	6.08	0.000

$R^2 = 0.683$

Adjusted $R^2 = 0.676$

$F = 132.45$

$p < 0.001$

Interpretation

The regression model explains **68.3%** of the variation in herbal product sales. Electronic word-of-mouth had the strongest influence, followed by social media advertising and customer engagement.

Table 5 Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Result
H1	Supported
H2	Supported
H3	Supported
H4	Supported
H5	Supported

7. Discussion

The findings indicate that social media advertising strategies significantly influence herbal product sales in rural markets. Social media advertising improves product awareness and encourages consumers to seek additional information before making purchase decisions. These findings are consistent with the studies of Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), Mangold and Faulds (2009), and Ashley and Tuten (2015), who reported that social media enhances customer engagement and strengthens brand visibility. The positive influence of influencer marketing aligns with the findings of Jaisinghani (2023), demonstrating that trusted digital influencers increase consumers' confidence in herbal products. Furthermore,

electronic word-of-mouth emerged as the strongest predictor of sales, supporting the work of Soetjipto and Harwida (2025), who concluded that online reviews and customer experiences significantly affect purchasing decisions. Overall, the results confirm that interactive digital communication, localized promotional content, and consumer engagement play a vital role in increasing herbal product sales in rural areas.

8. Limitations of the Study

- The study was confined to selected rural areas of Tamil Nadu.

- Convenience sampling limits the generalizability of the findings.
- Only social media advertising variables were considered.
- Consumer perceptions may change over time.
- Self-reported responses may contain response bias.

9. Recommendations for Future Research

- Future studies may employ probability sampling techniques to improve representativeness.
- Comparative studies between rural and urban consumers may provide deeper insights.
- Future researchers can examine additional variables such as brand loyalty, customer satisfaction, and perceived value.
- Longitudinal studies can assess changes in consumer behaviour over time.
- Advanced analytical techniques such as Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) or machine learning approaches may be used to investigate complex relationships among variables.

Social Media Marketing and Advertising Strategies

As a result of social media marketing has emerged as one of the most effective ways in modern-day business marketing. It's when a brand or business leverages social networks to help advertise its products and services, cultivate brand recognition, connect with its customers and drive sales. Unlike the traditional advertising, social media marketing can give the companies the ability to create a two-way communication with their consumers so that they can have immediate feedback and build a relationship with consumers that goes beyond a single purchase. With the rise in internet connectivity, the use of smart phones and digital literacy, the use of social media marketing has been growing at a rapid rate, for both rural and urban markets.

Social media is an effective way to educate your target audience about the health benefits of herbs and helping you reach a larger audience, for herbal product companies. Social media marketing has undergone a dramatic change in how it promotes. In the past, companies used traditional mass media, like newspapers, radio, TV and print advertisements, to communicate with customers. But now, new social networking sites have made marketing a tactic that involves digital engagement. Now businesses can develop interactive content, post educational material, host product specs, and even engage consumers in comments, messaging and online

communities. This shift has allowed herbal product producers and distributors to deepen their connection with rural customers who are now turning to digital media to access information with their low-cost mobile phones and growing internet access. There are several social media platforms that are of great importance in the promotion of herbal products.

Facebook enables businesses to establish official pages, share promotional material, run targeted marketing campaigns, and communicate with customers via comments and live sessions. Instagram is all about visual marketing, with images, short videos, stories, and reels that can showcase the products and their benefits. In rural areas, WhatsApp has emerged as a strong communication and promotional medium, allowing businesses to deliver customers product catalogues, promotional offers, customer endorsements, and customized messages right to their fingertips. YouTube facilitates video marketing by giving companies the means to upload educational videos, product demonstrations, customer reviews and expert opinions, which help to establish consumer trust.

Herbal product companies can also expand their digital presence through other platforms, such as Telegram and local social networking apps. Herbal product companies have a number of advertising methods for attracting and keeping customers on social media. Content marketing is an effective way to communicate to consumers about the medicinal benefits, ingredients and proper use of herbal products. Healthcare professionals, wellness experts and local influencers are pushing herbal products on their followers, which has made influencer marketing a trend. Customer reviews and social media content provide a more authentic and trusted perspective, offering genuine experiences and positive results. Consumers are easily drawn to video marketing, whether it's live product demos or short informational videos, and they're great for giving them a good sense of how to use your product. Discounts, festival offers, referral programs, contests, and giveaways are also great ways to increase customer engagement and purchasing. Retargeting individuals' preferences and geographic location is a form of personalised advertising that allows companies to better target rural consumers. Social media advertising techniques play a vital role in raising the awareness of herbal merchandise in rural areas, enhancing patron interaction and effecting purchasing habits.

Herbal product companies can build trust with customers, broaden their market reach and enhance their sales performance by incorporating informative content, interactive communication and targeted promotional campaigns. Hence, social media marketing has become an essential part in the marketing plan of any herbal products business looking towards sustainable growth in rural market.

Influence of Social Media Advertising on Consumer Buying Behaviour

Social media advertising has become a powerful marketing tool that significantly influences consumer buying behaviour by providing information, creating brand awareness, encouraging customer interaction, and shaping purchasing decisions. Unlike traditional advertising, social media enables businesses to communicate directly with consumers through interactive content, personalized messages, videos, live demonstrations, and customer feedback. This two-way communication allows marketers to understand consumer preferences and develop advertising strategies that effectively address their needs. In the herbal products industry, social media advertising plays an important role in educating consumers about the health benefits, ingredients, quality, and safe usage of herbal products, thereby increasing confidence and encouraging purchase decisions. In rural areas, where access to digital technology and smartphones has expanded rapidly, social media platforms have become valuable sources of product information and consumer education.

One of the primary advantages of social media advertising is its ability to create and strengthen brand awareness. Brand awareness refers to the extent to which consumers recognize and remember a particular brand when making purchasing decisions. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and YouTube allow herbal product companies to reach a large number of potential customers through targeted advertisements, educational posts, promotional videos, and interactive campaigns. Frequent exposure to consistent brand messages helps consumers become familiar with herbal products and their benefits. Visual content, including images, reels, infographics, and product demonstration videos, improves message retention and enhances brand recognition. In rural markets, advertisements presented in local languages and featuring culturally relevant content are more effective in capturing consumer attention and increasing awareness of herbal brands.

Consumer engagement is another critical factor that determines the success of social media advertising. Engagement refers to the interaction between businesses and consumers through likes, comments, shares, direct messages, reviews, and online discussions. Active engagement enables herbal product businesses to build stronger relationships with customers by responding to their questions, addressing concerns, and providing personalized recommendations. Such interactions increase customer satisfaction and create a sense of connection between the brand and its consumers.

Trust is particularly important in the marketing of herbal products because consumers are often concerned about product quality, safety, authenticity, and effectiveness. Positive customer reviews, testimonials, expert

endorsements, influencer recommendations, and transparent communication help establish credibility and reduce perceived risk. Businesses that consistently provide accurate information and respond promptly to customer inquiries are more likely to gain consumer confidence and long-term loyalty.

Several factors influence consumers' purchase intentions and decision-making when exposed to social media advertising. These include the quality and relevance of advertising content, the credibility of the information source, product reviews, recommendations from influencers or satisfied customers, pricing strategies, promotional offers, and the perceived value of the product.

Educational content explaining the medicinal properties, ingredients, and scientific benefits of herbal products often encourages consumers to consider purchasing them. Emotional appeals, storytelling, and success stories further strengthen consumers' positive attitudes toward the brand. In rural areas, purchasing decisions are also influenced by cultural beliefs, family recommendations, local traditions, affordability, accessibility, and digital literacy. Personalized advertisements, localized content, and interactive communication significantly improve consumers' willingness to purchase herbal products.

Overall, social media advertising has transformed consumer buying behaviour by making product information more accessible, enhancing brand awareness, fostering consumer engagement, and building trust. For herbal product businesses operating in rural markets, effective social media advertising strategies not only increase consumer knowledge but also positively influence purchase intentions and sales performance. Therefore, understanding the relationship between social media advertising and consumer buying behaviour is essential for developing successful marketing strategies that meet the expectations of rural consumers and contribute to sustainable business growth.

10. Conclusion

The study concludes that the social media marketing is a formidable and effective advertising medium for marketing herbal products in rural areas. With the rise of smartphones, cheap internet and digital literacy, rural consumers have access to information relating to herbal products over platforms like Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp and YouTube. Several social media advertising strategies are crucial for brand awareness, consumer trust and purchase decisions, such as informative content, video demonstrations, customer testimonials, influencer marketing, promotional offers and personalized communication. These strategies not only improve consumer engagement but also help drive sales and customer loyalty and retention.

The research also features the rise in knowledge and interest in health of the rural consumers, resulting in increased demand for herbal products. But there are several things that still affect purchases, including product quality, price, the validity of information on the internet, cultural values, and recommendations from known people. Hence, the customer-centric social media marketing tactics to be employed in herbal product enterprises should be able to give proper information, local language and suit the needs and preferences of the rural consumers. Overall, the study shows that social media advertising plays a crucial role in the market performance of herbal products in rural communities and can be useful for marketers, businesspeople and policy makers aiming to support the market of rural herbal products effectively using digital marketing practices.

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