

THE SPONTANEOUS BUYING BEHAVIOURS OF CONSUMERS IN SOCIAL COMMERCE

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Abstract: *The customer's preferences, attitudes, and behaviour also changed from time to time. The pandemic has changed customer behaviour in various aspects. Particularly spending their maximum time on social commerce websites and it influences making an order significantly increased. Online shopping has become commonplace with easy payment and delivery options thanks to the internet's growing adoption. Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram are popular social media platforms; using a social commerce platform to understand customer engagement behaviour. Hence, the present study mainly focused on the spontaneous buying behaviours of consumers in social commerce. The primary data collection process focused on regular and frequent users of Facebook and other social commerce platforms, specifically targeting individuals aged 18 and above. Employing a survey technique, data was gathered from 383 respondents using convenience sampling methods, aiming for accessibility and ease of participation. The data was collected through a well-structured questionnaire designed to capture pertinent insights into the purchasing patterns and demographic profiles of the target audience, ensuring the reliability and validity of the findings. Using a correlation analysis and multiple regression analysis. The findings demonstrate in correlation analysis that there is no significant relationship between the demographic profile of the respondent and the purchasing patterns of customers.*

Keywords: COVID Pandemic, Customer Impulsive, Web Experience, Customer Engagement, Social Commerce

INTRODUCTION

In today's interconnected world, digital, mobile, and social media have seamlessly woven into the fabric of daily life for billions worldwide. The staggering statistics speak for themselves: with over 4.5 billion internet users and more than 3.8 billion social media users (Global Web Index, 2020), these platforms have become indispensable channels for communication, information dissemination, and community building (Evans & Krauthammer, 2011; Joo et al., 2020). One of the most significant evolutions in recent years is the rise of Social Commerce, which has revolutionised traditional e-commerce by fostering real-time interactions between consumers and businesses. This transformation has empowered customers to play an active role in shaping each other's purchasing decisions in a dynamic manner (Sohn & Kim, 2020).

On Social Commerce platforms, users are deeply engaged, sharing their shopping experiences, exchanging product insights, and seeking recommendations through robust rating and review mechanisms (Liu & Li, 2019; Zhang & Li, 2019). The infusion of Web 2.0 technology into Social

Commerce not only facilitates these interactions but also generates substantial economic value by fostering enhanced communication and collaboration among stakeholders (Zhang et al., 2022). Social Networking Sites (SNS) have emerged as formidable influencers in consumer behaviour (Wegmann et al., 2023; Xiang et al., 2022). As users casually navigate these platforms, they often find themselves compelled to make spontaneous purchases, a phenomenon commonly referred to as impulse buying (Han, 2023). The extensive utilisation of social media has added to the escalation of impulse buying behaviour among consumers (Johan et al., 2023).

Contemporary society places significant importance on consumerism, yet it's vital to acknowledge that excessive and unchecked purchasing can result in adverse outcomes. Social networking platforms play a pivotal role in magnifying the inclination towards impulsive buying among their user base (Pahlevan Sharif et al., 2022; She et al., 2021).

In essence, the intertwining of digital, mobile, and social media has ushered in a new era where individuals are not

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just passive consumers but active participants in shaping commercial transactions and influencing purchasing decisions. As these technologies continue to evolve, their impact on commerce and consumer behaviour is poised to deepen further, reshaping the landscape of global commerce in profound ways. India's social commerce sector is witnessing rapid growth, with predictions of substantial expansion in the coming years (Vohra & Bhardwaj, 2019). Market reports forecast significant growth, with an expected CAGR of 62.4% during 2022-2028 (Markets, 2022).

This study aims to investigate the spontaneous buying behaviours of consumers in social commerce. The paper's structure entails an extensive literature review highlighting existing research gaps (Section 2), elucidation of the data and research methodology (Section 3), presentation of outcomes and discussions (Section 4), and significant implications and concluding insights drawn from the findings (Section 5).

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The onset of the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic has reshaped consumer behaviour patterns, leading to a heightened preference for online shopping due to social distancing and stay-at-home measures (Eger et al., 2021). This surge in online shopping has highlighted the significance of social commerce, which integrates purchasing and vending activities within social media platforms, leveraging social media to facilitate transactions, foster interpersonal engagement, and encourage user-generated content participation (Liang & Turban, 2011; Zhang et al., 2019). However, alongside this shift towards online shopping, uncertainties in consumer demand and disruptions in the supply chain have impacted the e-commerce industry, affecting even major retailers who have observed shifts in shopping patterns and increased demand for essential items (Filimonau et al., 2021). Impulse buying, characterised by spontaneous, immediate, and unreflective purchasing behaviour, has been a prominent aspect of consumer behaviour, particularly in online shopping environments (Peck & Childers, 2006; Abdelsalam et al., 2020). Impulsiveness plays a significant role in online shopping, heightening the propensity for impulsive purchases (Zhang et al., 2006).

(Sohn & Kim, 2020) identify five key attributes—economy, necessity, reliability, interaction, and sales promotion—and demonstrate their significant influence on purchase intentions in social commerce. Their insights enable entrepreneurs to attract more customers and develop effective social commerce management strategies. (Wegmann et al., 2023) compare online compulsive buying-shopping disorder (OCBSD) and social-networks-

use disorder (SNUD) in clinical samples of women. They find differences between the two groups, with the OCBSD group being older, more often employed, and having higher materialistic values, while the SNUD group reported a higher frequency of viewing influencer posts. Despite these differences, both groups displayed similarities in general internet use, impulsivity, and chronic stress levels.

(Xiang et al., 2022) analyse the impact of social commerce on consumer behaviour, emphasising factors such as social capital, techno-stress, online impulse purchasing, and information overloading. Their study underscores the significant influence of social commerce on consumer behaviour, highlighting the roles of trust, information overload, and social interaction in shaping purchase intentions. (Han, 2023) explores the dynamics of social commerce, noting that features like the “checkout button” on social media platforms such as Instagram do not significantly boost impulse-buying behaviour. Instead, consumer trust and impulse-buying intentions are influenced by brand familiarity and social interactions, suggesting that well-known brands may be better suited for social commerce, and active social interaction is conducive to impulse-buying intentions.

(Pahlevan Sharif et al., 2022) suggest that heavy engagement in social networking may lead to online compulsive buying through mechanisms such as financial social comparison and materialism. They advocate for financial education and psychological interventions to mitigate the impact of heavy social networking on online compulsive buying among young adults. (Zhang et al., 2022) highlight the importance of trust in live streaming commerce, which is influenced by interactivity and technical affordances, impacting users' continuance intention. Different types of trust, such as trust in streamers, products, and genres, significantly impact customers' continuance intention in live streaming commerce.

Despite extensive research on social commerce and impulsive buying behaviour, certain gaps in the literature necessitate further exploration. Specifically, there is a notable absence of empirical studies investigating the direct impact of social presence on impulsive buying within the context of social commerce. While previous research acknowledges the role of social interactions and their influence on purchasing decisions, the direct correlation between social presence and impulsive buying remains unexplored. Drawing from existing research on customer impulsiveness and web experiences in social commerce, this study aims to explore the relationship between the spontaneous buying behaviours of consumers in social commerce.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study set out to explore and analyse the spontaneous buying behaviours of consumers in social commerce, employing primary data collection techniques. The survey targeted individuals aged 18 and above who were regular and active users of Facebook and other social commerce platforms. Through convenience sampling methods, a total of 383 respondents were enlisted for participation. To ensure the questionnaire's validity, a pilot study involving 70 social commerce users was conducted. Data for the study were collected between September 2023 and January 2024. Out of the 400 users initially interested in the survey, 383 successfully completed the online questionnaire, providing valid responses for analysis. The questionnaire

was thoughtfully structured into three sections: the first section focused on gathering socio-economic background information of the social commerce users, while the subsequent sections evaluated impulsive buying behaviour using a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5. Analysis of the collected data was carried out using SPSS 22.0, involving correlation and regression analyses. The objective was to uncover insights into spontaneous buying behaviours and identify potential correlations and influential factors within the realm of social commerce.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In Table 1, the demographic characteristics of the participating respondents are displayed.

Table 1: Respondent Demographic Information

Participant Profile (n=383)			
		Frequency	Percentage
Age	18-30 years	133	34.7
	31-40 years	181	47.3
	41-50 years	37	9.7
	Above 50 years	32	8.4
Gender	Male	192	50.1
	Female	191	49.9
Educational Qualification	School level	11	2.9
	Diploma	18	4.7
	UG Level	64	16.7
	PG Level	188	49.1
	Professionalist	102	26.6
Occupation	Student	79	20.6
	Professional	92	24.0
	Businessman	36	9.4
	Government Employed	45	11.7
	Non-Government	61	15.9
	Homemaker	41	10.7
	Others	29	7.6
Monthly Income	Below 10000	103	26.9
	10000-20000	90	23.5
	20001-30000	31	8.1
	30001-40000	20	5.2
	Above 40000	139	36.3
Internet Access	Less than 1year	25	6.5
	2-3 years	62	16.2
	4-5 years	16	4.2
	Above 5 years	280	73.1

Source: Primary data.

Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis is a statistical metric employed to gauge the intensity, extent, and orientation of the connection between two or more variables. This method evaluates the direction of change, potentially yielding positive or negative correlations. In terms of the number of scrutinised variables, it

can be categorised as simple, multiple, or partial correlation. The range of the simple correlation coefficient is from -1 to +1. A positive value signifies a favourable correlation, while a negative value indicates an adverse relationship. Since the correlation coefficient maintains symmetry, a cause-and-effect association should exist amid the variables (Table 2).

Correlation analysis result shows that the value close to 0 are linear and weak between the two variables, while the value close to 1 indicate a linear and strong relation between the variable. According to the correlation test results in above Table 2 shows that the spontaneous buying behaviours of consumers in social commerce like Age ($r = .275^{**}$, $p > .000$), Gender ($r = -.116^{*}$, $p > .000$), Educational qualification ($r = -.132^{**}$, $p < .000$), Occupation ($r = .139^{**}$, $p = >.000$), Monthly income ($r = .193^{**}$, $P > .000$), No. of family members ($r = -.094^{**}$, $p < .000$), and have degree of positive relationship with purchasing patterns of customers in social commerce. According to Cohen (1998) cited by Warokka et al. (2012, p. 12) the correlation coefficient (r) ranging from 0.10 to 0.29 may be regarded as indicating a low degree of correlation, r ranging from 0.30 to 0.49 may be considered a moderate degree of correlation, and r ranging from 0.50 to 1.00 may be regarded as a high degree of correlation.

Relationship between the Respondent's Demographic Profile the Spontaneous Buying Behaviours of Consumers in Social Commerce

The correlation has been interpreted to find out the relationship between the selected independent factors with the spontaneous buying behaviours of consumers in social

commerce which is considered as the dependent factor variable and the result has been shown in below table. To examine the relationship between the impulsive purchasing patterns of customers and demographic factors the hypothesis stated as " H_0 : There is no significant relationship between the demographic profile of the respondent and impulsive purchasing patterns of customers. The subsequent table distinctly indicates that the purchasing behaviours of customers in social commerce, as evidenced by the sample's age, gender, educational qualification, state, occupation, monthly income, number of family members, and place of residence, exhibit significant positive correlations at the 0.01 and 0.05 significance levels.

In this study, the utilisation of Multiple Regression Analysis was employed to elucidate the connection between customer engagement in social commerce. The study's focal point is the impulsive purchasing patterns exhibited by customers within the realm of social commerce, serving as the dependent variable and maintaining a constant presence in the model. Meanwhile, the independent variables, employed as predictors, are consistently integrated into the model system.

The Table 3 represents a concise overview of the model, furnishing insights into the regression lines' capacity to elucidate the complete variance observed in the dependent variables.

Table 3: Summary of the Regression Model

Model Summary										
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.424	.180	.160	11.69001	.180	9.078	9	373	.000	2.414

a. Predictors: (Constant), Place of Residence, Nature of Occupation, No. of Family Members, Educational Qualification, Gender, Marital Status, Occupation, Monthly Income, Age.

b. Dependent Variable: Customers engagement in social commerce.

The results of the multiple regression analysis are shown in the above table. The predicted variables combined explained about 42.4% of the total variance in the respondent's engagement behaviour in social commerce. Incorporating the factor of impulsive purchasing patterns of customers resulted in an elevation of the R^2 coefficient to 0.180. The analysis of variance for the comprehensive model, encompassing all variables, yielded an F value of (9, 373) = 9.078, indicating significance at a level of $P < 0.001$.

Table 4 provides an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), while Table 5 illustrates the manner in which the regression equation elucidates the fluctuations in the response variable. The outcome signifies a notable significance in the connection between the independent and dependent variables. Therefore, the regression model statistically predicts the outcome variables. The table showcases the regression coefficients and collinearity metrics inherent to the model.

Table 4: ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	11165.118	9	1240.569	9.078	.000 ^b
	Residual	50972.835	373	136.656		
	Total	62137.953	382			

a. Dependent Variable: Customers engagement in social commerce.

b. Predictors: (Constant), Place of Residence, Nature of Occupation, No. of Family Members, Educational Qualification, Gender, Marital Status, Occupation, Monthly Income, Age.

Table 5: Regression Coefficients

Model		Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	47.621	7.243		6.574	.000
	Age	4.119	.966	.284	4.263	.000
	Gender	-1.430	1.382	-.056	-1.035	.301
	Educational Qualification	-2.119	.803	-.156	-2.639	.009
	Occupation	1.866	.387	.287	4.823	.000
	Marital Status	6.899	1.747	.249	3.949	.000
	Nature of Occupation	1.811	1.631	.067	1.111	.267
	Monthly Income	1.203	.485	.158	2.481	.014
	No of Family members	-.543	1.392	-.019	-.390	.697
	Place of Residence	-1.891	.771	-.137	-2.451	.015

a. Dependent Variable: Customers engagement in social commerce.

Age found to be significant predictor of the spontaneous buying behaviours of consumers in social commerce ($\beta = 4.119$, $t = 4.263$, $p < 0.001$). The stated hypothesis is validated that “Age is positively associated with the spontaneous buying behaviours of consumers in social commerce”. Gender is negatively associated with the spontaneous buying behaviours of consumers in social commerce and the regression coefficient is found to be significant predictor ($\beta = -1.430$, $t = -1.035$, $p < 0.001$). The stated hypothesis is validated that “Gender is positively associated with the spontaneous buying behaviours of consumers in social commerce”.

Educational qualification is negatively related to the impact of COVID-19 and customer engagement and the regression coefficient is found to be significant predictor ($\beta = -2.119$, $t = -2.639$, $p < 0.001$). The stated hypothesis is validated that “Education qualification is positively associated with the spontaneous buying behaviours of consumers in social commerce”. Occupation is positively associated with the spontaneous buying behaviours of consumers in social commerce and the regression coefficient is found to be significant predictor ($\beta = 1.866$, $t = 4.823$, $p < 0.001$). The stated hypothesis is validated that “Occupation is positively

associated with the spontaneous buying behaviours of consumers in social commerce”.

Marital Status found to be significant predictor of the spontaneous buying behaviours of consumers in social commerce ($\beta = 6.899$, $t = 3.949$, $p < 0.001$). Hypothesis is suggested that “Marital Status is positively associated the spontaneous buying behaviours of consumers in social commerce”. Nature of Occupation is positively associated with the spontaneous buying behaviours of consumers in social commerce and the regression coefficient is found to be significant predictor ($\beta = 1.811$, $t = 1.111$, $p < 0.005$). The stated hypothesis is validated that “Nature of Occupation is positively associated with the spontaneous buying behaviours of consumers in social commerce”.

Monthly income found to be significant predictor of the spontaneous buying behaviours of consumers in social commerce ($\beta = 1.203$, $t = 2.481$, $p < 0.001$). Hypothesis is validated that “Monthly Income is positively associated with the spontaneous buying behaviours of consumers in social commerce”. No. of Family Members is negatively associated with the spontaneous buying behaviours of consumers in social commerce and the regression coefficient is found to be not significant predictor ($\beta = -0.543$, $t = -0.390$, $p < 0.001$).

The stated hypothesis is not validated that “No. of Family Members is positively associated with the spontaneous buying behaviours of consumers in social commerce”.

Place of residence is negatively associated with the spontaneous buying behaviours of consumers in social commerce and the regression coefficient is found significant predictor ($\beta = -1.891$, $t = -2.451$, $p < 0.001$). The stated hypothesis is validated that “Place of residence is positively associated with the spontaneous buying behaviours of consumers in social commerce (Fig. 1).

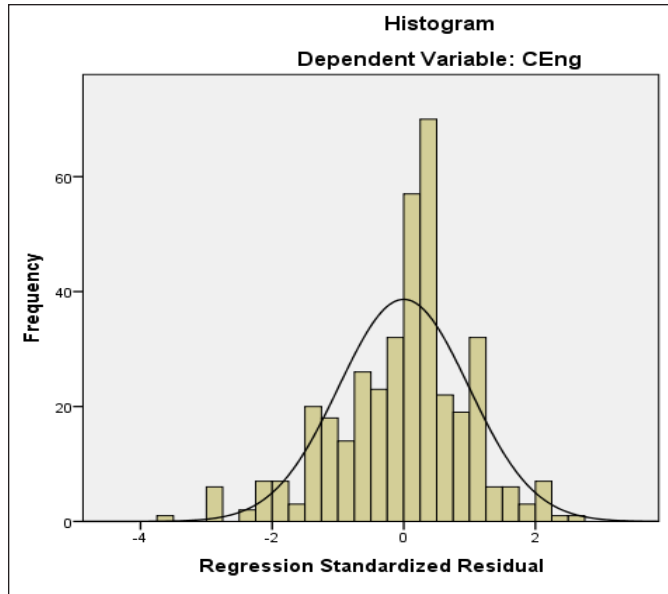


Fig. 1

In this context, our anticipation is directed towards observing the histogram of residuals, ideally mirroring the contour of the normal curve. This curve should be overlaid but not directly imposed upon the residuals. Additionally, we can examine how the distribution of these residuals interacts with the predictor variables within the model to ascertain the presence of any potential relationships.

IMPLICATIONS

With the advancement of social media, impulse buying behaviour has become intertwined with social commerce, akin to its presence in offline and electronic commerce environments (Abdelsalam et al., 2019). In social commerce, customer repurchase intention can be influenced and sustained through two primary strategies. Firstly, e-vendors should actively promote drivers that encourage repurchase intention, such as excellent customer service, product quality, competitive pricing, and personalised offers, thereby enhancing customer loyalty. Secondly, e-vendors should

minimise the allure of alternative options from competitors (Fig. 2).

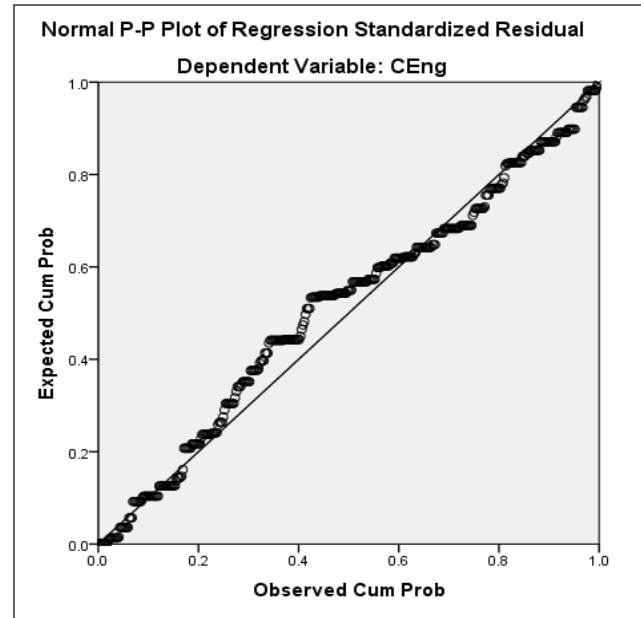


Fig. 2

By incorporating distinct and engaging social attributes into their social commerce platforms, companies can foster a sense of community and inclusivity among customers, thus bolstering the likelihood of customer loyalty to their brand. While online vendors cannot directly control customers’ perceptions and emotions, the social features of social commerce platforms offer a potent avenue for building relationships and trust with customers. Lina and Ahluwalia (2021) suggest that user engagement and satisfaction, coupled with personalised advertising tailored to their preferences, can spur impulse buying.

To maintain integrity in social commerce, practices such as false advertising, counterfeit products, and unclear endorsements must be eradicated, with platforms enforcing penalties to deter opportunistic behaviours. Encouraging genuine and honest interactions among customers can foster a reciprocal atmosphere (Xiang et al., 2022).

Marketers and businesses can leverage image-sharing capabilities on social commerce platforms to effectively promote their brands and products. By focusing on design elements and providing relevant and reliable information, they can cultivate consumer trust and confidence in their offerings. Visual appeal plays a pivotal role in attracting consumers to make purchases in social commerce. Therefore, marketers should craft visually appealing content and utilise image-sharing features to captivate customers and stimulate purchases.

CONCLUSION

In instances where users are deeply engaged and find joy and enthusiasm in their social media interactions, tailored advertisements that resonate with their inclinations can proficiently stimulate impulsive purchases. The continuous advancement of more interactive social technologies and the widespread adoption of online social networks have made socialisation a primary activity on the Internet. Major social platforms, boasting billions of users, continue to attract more users, while newer platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter gain increasing attention from internet users. This growing socialisation has given rise to the phenomenon of social commerce, with companies exploring the potential of online social networks for commerce and sales activities. However, despite the widespread acceptance of socialisation activities as entertainment, the incorporation of commerce elements has been relatively slow.

The ascendancy of social commerce has demonstrated its influence in engaging customers with this new phenomenon. This study systematically reviews the research on the spontaneous buying behaviours of consumers in social commerce, investigating and categorising the theories and factors that underpin these behaviours. The findings suggest that there is no significant relationship between the demographic profiles of the respondents and the spontaneous buying behaviours of consumers in social commerce. However, regression analysis indicates that factors such as age, occupation, marital status, nature of income, and the number of family members are positively associated with spontaneous buying behaviours in social commerce.

Finally, this research underscores the significance of both social engagement and tailored advertising in stimulating spontaneous purchasing behaviour within the realm of social commerce. The growing adoption of social commerce underscores its impact on customer behaviour, and the study provides valuable insights into the spontaneous buying behaviours of consumers in this domain.

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