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Exploring Influential Determinants in Consumer Buying: An Analytical Framework

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Introduction: The shift to social commerce (SC) from the innovative online shopping model is reshaping consumer behavior in India, driven by the allure of social media platforms (SMPs). This study aims to identify pivotal factors influencing consumer purchasing decisions in this evolving landscape.
Objective: With a focus on India, the study seeks to explore and understand the factors impacting consumer choices within social commerce. Utilizing a formal questionnaire-based inquiry, 350 legitimate responses were analyzed through the Structural Equation Model (SEM).
Methods: The study employed a robust methodology, gathering 350 legitimate responses through a formal questionnaire. Structural Equation Model (SEM) analysis was then applied to assess the relationships between variables, emphasizing the influence of social assistance determinants on consumer purchasing decisions.
Results: Findings revealed significant predictions, indicating that social assistance determinants, including knowledge from social marketing and forums, strongly influence SC. Additionally, psychological and knowledge-based assistance significantly predict customer buying intentions through SMPs.
Conclusions: To enhance customer buying intent, administrators of SC platforms in India must prioritize the development of SC determinants and social assistance mechanisms. This study underscores the nuanced dynamics of consumer behavior in the evolving landscape of social commerce, providing valuable insights for industry stakeholders.

Keywords: Consumer buying; online shopping; social commerce (SC); social media platforms (SMPs); social assistance.

1. Introduction

The complicated interactions between a variety of factors that collectively influence people's decisions about buying goods and services result in consumer buying behavior. These factors, which are frequently referred to as determinants in consumer buying, encompass a broad spectrum of individuals, social, psychological and economic factors that have an impact on the intricate decision-making process [(1)]. Individual's determinants encompass a range of human characteristics, such as aging, habits, behavioural characteristics and views [(2)].

The impact of external forces on consumer choices is highlighted by social determinants of consumer behavior. Family, culture, peer groups and status in society all have a big impact on choices and desires [(3)].The intricacies of a person's mind are explored by psychological determinants, which are significant variables that impact customers buying choices [(4)]. Budgetary constraints, economic developments and buying power all have a direct impact on customers buying decisions [(5)].

Study [(6)] recommended that the marketers should give positive experiences to customers who buy electric cars. Study [(7)] provided the insights on seller's attitude towards assisting and recommending products to clients based on their interactions on social networking sites. The association between online buying intention, psychological and knowledge support, electronic word of mouth (eWOM) and interaction with retailers was found to be influenced by online trust.

Study [(8)] suggested that the consumer's buying intentions toward remanufactured products were positively influenced by prior knowledge and understanding of the product; negatively influenced by perceived risk and discomfort. The recommendations for enhancing consumer's desires to purchase remanufactured products were discussed, along with the consequences for manufacturing and product design. Study [(9)] examined the factors that influence household consumer's tendency to purchase energy-saving items from the viewpoints on the intellectual qualities and personality factors associated with technology. Study [(10)] provided a process-based approach that defines sustainable consumption as a 3 step process that includes buying, using, and disposing of goods and services from the viewpoint of consumer. Positive outcomes of consumer involvement, including loyalty, fulfilment, perceived value and intentions were noted. Study [(11)] suggested that the consumer's opinions of Direct-to-Consumer (DTC) brands were improved by their creativity and diversity in terms of their product offerings. Repurchase intentions were determined by a number of factors, including cost-effectiveness, innovativeness, social media participation, and product uniqueness.

Study [(12)] analyzed the different qualities of buyers who made use of offline retail services throughout the pandemic time. Participants were also questioned how frequently they would use both offline and online retail services after the pandemic, with the aim of analyzing the factors that would be used to select either offline or online retail channels. Study [(13)] suggested that banks should focus on minimizing the risk of credit cards for encouraging new customers. The important factors influencing consumer's intentions to use credit cards were perceived

utility, ease of use and social influence. Study [14] analyzed various factors that could affect young customer's decisions to purchase green products. The products must be advertised at a comparatively lower price and made easily available to attract large number of consumers. Study [15] aimed to identify the crucial factors influencing consumer's impulsive live streaming purchases. The study showed that Para social connection, virtual experience, scarcity persuasion, and price perception could stimulate cognitive and psychological reactions, which in turn trigger an impulse to buy. Study [16] demonstrated that the following factors could directly impact on customer's satisfaction when they shop online: privacy, availability of data, shipping, cost and quality. The involvement in online commerce was improved by developing and analyzing the relationship between various determinants and consumers satisfaction.

Study [17] aimed to determine the major determinants that influence consumer's "willingness to pay (WTP)" and "willingness to buy (WTB)" electric motorcycles (EM) using a questionnaire survey. The vendors should concentrate on providing their customers with excellent user experiences through product maintenance, repairs and consulting to attract more potential customers. Study [18] identified the attitudes and important factors influencing Millennial's online buying behaviour. The amount spent on online shopping was independent of the age of the consumers, but younger Millennial's could make these kinds of purchases more frequently than older Millennial's. The study offered some vital insights to managers for maintaining customer trust and boosting online sales. Study [19] provided insights on the reasons behind consumers buying habits of "sustainable cotton-made collegiate apparel (SCCA)". The study also suggested that businesses could create marketing plans and advertising initiatives to promote and encourage positive feelings toward SCCA within their target audience. Study [20] suggested that attitude, customer satisfaction, and perceived value had an impact on consumer's intentions to repurchase organic cosmetics. The customer's intention to repurchase was significantly influenced by their buying attitude. Additionally, the acquisition mind set was influenced by concerns about safety, the environment, and products.

The primary objective of this study was to investigate customers' buying intentions and their responses to SC-specific Social Networking Sites (SNSs). The proposed conceptual paradigm is based on social assistance (knowledge as well as psychological support) and "Social Learning Theory (SLT)".

2. Hypothesis And Study Model

In the pre-buying phase of Social Commerce (SC) setting, social learning takes two forms, based on SLT. Social support from existing SNS members are one part, and Social Commerce Constructs (SCCs) are the other. SCCs are online groups, forums and social ads. Consumer buying intention and decision are ultimately influenced by this social support. In order to investigate the impact of SCCs on social support and buying intention, this study presents a theoretical model of SC using SLT. The study model for this research is shown in Figure 1.

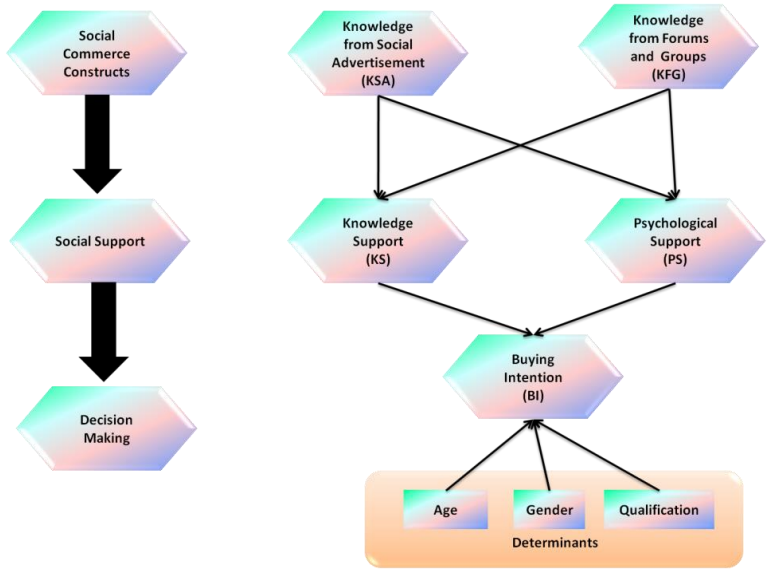

Figure 1. Proposed Study Model [Source: Author]

There are four hypotheses as follows:

H1 (a): Knowledge from social advertisement on SNSs has a good association with knowledge support.

H1 (b): Knowledge from social advertisement on SNSs has a good association with psychological support.

H2 (a): Knowledge from forums and groups on SNSs has a good association with knowledge support.

H2 (b): Knowledge from forums and groups on SNSs has a good association with psychological support.

H3: Knowledge support on SNSs has a good association with buying intention.

H4: Psychological support on SNSs has a good association with buying intention.

3. Methodology

Design and development of survey

A survey questionnaire was gathered in this study for evaluating the conceptual study model, which primarily looks at individual responses and analyses connections between model constructs. The Indian social media (SM) user population was the intended participant group for this study. It was mandatory for every member to own at least one social media account.

Data gathering and testing

The participants who were specifically targeted were Indian SNS users. The survey questionnaire was distributed online via social media groups, message groups, and fan pages

created by Indian brands. After taking around half a year to complete, 364 people answered the survey; of those, 350 valid answers could be used to analyze the data. The remaining 14 replies were excluded from the poll because they had more than 65 % of missing values. Table 1 displays the demographic information provided by the respondents.

Table 1. Respondent's demographic data [Source: Author]

Determinants	Classification	Count	Percentage (%)
Age	18-30	60	17,1
	30-45	123	35,1
	45-55	135	38,7
	55+	32	9,1
	Sum	350	100,00
Gender	Female	160	45,7
	Male	190	54,3
	Sum	350	100,0
Qualification	High School/Diploma	26	7,5
	UG	145	41,4
	PG	139	39,7
	PhD	40	11,4
	Sum	350	100,0

Analysis

The suggested structural model in the current study was estimated using structural equation modelling (SEM). Initially, the structural model's differentiation, convergence, and predictability were assessed using model fitness and construct validity methods. Subsequently, we used SEM estimation, a potent technique for testing the theoretical model and components factor analysis (CFA), to determine the stability, connections, and characteristics among the study constructs. In order to determine association and dependability, Cronbach's alpha was used. Table 2 displays the values of Cronbach's alpha.

Table 2. Statistical description, validity, reliability and factor loading [Source: Author]

Variables	Items	Loadings	Cronbach's alpha	AVE	CR
Knowledge from social advertisement	KSA-1	0,876	0,889	0,727	0,891
	KSA-1	0,875			
	KSA-3	0,837			
Knowledge from forums and groups	KFG-1	0,858	0,846	0,669	0,857
	KFG-2	0,836			
	KFG-3	0,787			
Knowledge support	KS-1	0,788	0,914	0,779	0,916
	KS-2	0,809			
	KS-3	0,815			
Psychological support	PS-1	0,852	0,918	0,716	0,911
	PS-2	0,859			
	PS-3	0,827			
Buying intention	BI-1	0,892	0,924	0,803	0,926

	BI-2	0,903			
	BI-3	0,985			

4. Results

Demographic data

The demographic details of the respondents are presented in Table 1. All respondents were asked closed-ended questions about their age, gender and degree of education. A sample of 350 respondents was confirmed to be valid for the survey questionnaire. 54,3 % of responders were men and 45,7 % were women. an age group comprising 30-55 received the bulk of responses (73,8 %), with the next two major age groups being 18–30 (17,1 %) and 55+ (9,1 %). 7,5 % of respondents held higher education certificates or diplomas, while 81,1 % of the respondents held undergraduate and graduate degrees, and 11,4 % held a PhD.

Assessment model

The proposed model was evaluated using discriminatory and convergence validity measures. To assess the validity of convergence, the following factors were assessed for each indicator: "factor loadings, Cronbach's alpha, average variance extracted (AVE), and composite reliability (CR)". By contrasting the values of the square roots of AVE with the inter-construct correlations, the discriminatory validity was assessed. Descriptive statistics and relationships between variables are displayed in Table 3.

Table 3. Correlation between constructs and descriptive statistics [Source: Author]

Variables	PS	BI	KSA	KFG	KS
PS	0,847				
BI	0,369***	0,897			
KSA	0,371***	0,355***	0,854		
KFG	0,475***	0,0742	0,190*	0,819	
KS	0,572***	0,467***	0,519***	0,423***	0,884

Note: Grade of significance: "*P<0,05, **P<0,01, ***P<0,001"

The estimated values and thresholds of CFA, which explains the overall goodness of fit of the suggested model, are displayed in Table 4. Every number falls inside the threshold indicates that the model fits the data well.

Table 4. The model's goodness of fit [Source: Author]

Measurement	Estimation	Threshold value	Analysis
DF	138	-	-
CMIN	201,735	-	-
CMIN/DF	1 462	Between 1 &3	Good
CFI	0,983	>0,96	Good
TLI	0,965	>0,96	Good
PClose	0,673	>0,1	Good
RMSEA	0,049	>0,07	Good
SRMR	0,044	<0,06	Good

Testing for hypothesis and structural model

After the validity, performance, and comprehensive analysis of the data and proposed model

were verified, "structural equation modelling (SEM)" was employed to investigate the relationship between the hypothesis and the data. Figure 2 and Table 5 displays the statistical outcomes of the suggested structural model. In our study, age, gender and qualification (education) are regarded as determinants.

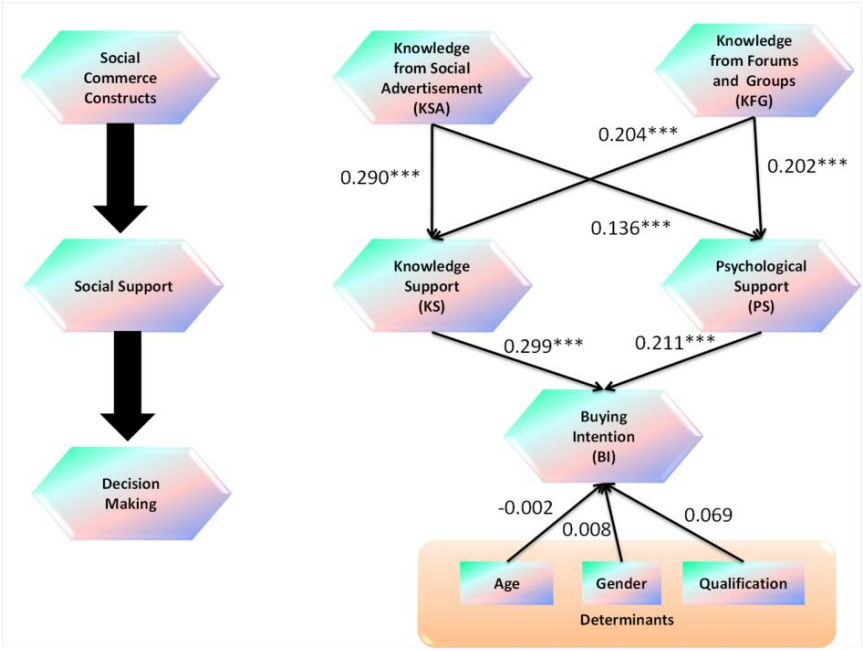

Figure 2. SEM Findings for the Hypothesis of the Proposed Study Model [Source: Author]

Note: Grade of significance: "*P<0,05, **P<0,01, ***P<0,001"

Table 5. Results of model path analysis [Source: Author]

Hypotheses	Path Coefficients	P-value	S.E	Results
H_1(a):KSA⟶KS	0,290	***	0,056	Accepted
H_1(b):KSA⟶PS	0,136	0,025	0,062	Accepted
H_2(a):KFG⟶KS	0,204	***	0,055	Accepted
H_2(b):KFG⟶PS	0,202	***	0,061	Accepted
H_3:KS⟶BI	0,299	***	0,072	Accepted
H_4:PS⟶BI	0,211	0,005	0,067	Accepted
Age ⟶BI	-0,002	0,994	0,079	Not Accepted
Gender ⟶BI	0,008	0,920	0,123	Not Accepted
Qualification ⟶BI	0,069	0,254	0,098	Not Accepted

Figure 2 illustrates the considerable and favourable impact of KSA on knowledge "(α = 0,290, p<0,001)" and psychological "(α = 0,136, p<0,050)" support. "H1 (a) and H1 (b) are accepting". In addition, KFG significantly and favourably impact knowledge (α = 0,204, p<0,001) and psychological "(α = 0,202, p<0,001)" support. "H2 (a) and H2 (b) are accepting". The results also show that consumer's buying intentions in India are positively influenced by knowledge "(α = 0,299, p<0,001)" and psychological "(α = 0,211, p<0,010)" support. Therefore, "H3 and H4 are accepting". Comparing the outcomes of knowledge and psychological support, it was discovered that knowledge support had a greater impact on

consumer's buying intention than psychological support.

5. Conclusion

This study's main goal was to look into how customers responded toward SC-specific SNSs and their buying intentions. Social support (knowledge and psychological support) and SLT form the foundation of the suggested conceptual model. Here, social support is used to assess the willingness of customers to use online groups for SC. Consumer perceptions of social support are significantly improved by KSA. KFC has a little greater impact on knowledge support than on psychological support. Since the development of web technology 2.0, customers now participate in online groups and forums to help others by creating content and sharing information on goods and services. Consumer connectivity offers social support through SNSs for making final decisions about buying. Only Indian SNS user's data could be gathered for this study to test the suggested model. Different regions of the world may have different online SC ecosystems and consumer views toward SNS use.

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