

A STUDY OF THE FACTORS IMPACTING ONLINE SHOPPING BEHAVIOR IN GUJARAT

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ABSTRACT

The scope of social e-commerce has grown over the years. Social e-commerce can be best explained if a consumer purchases products or services using a social network. Consumers can purchase online through social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube, Twitter, and LinkedIn. The usage of social media sites in online shopping has grown too much. Almost every individual utilizes these platforms for various purposes, and most of them use them to shop online because they are convenient and save time. These platforms offer multiple items to make it through the consumer's demands in many buying options. Therefore, a study was conducted to determine what factors influence consumers' decision-making through social e-commerce websites. In the present research, a structured questionnaire was designed, and 103 responses were gathered from the users of social media who were shopping online. Data collected were intended to identify the drivers of their online purchasing decisions. Based on the factor analysis, three variables were identified: trust in social media networking sites, Trust in friends' recommendations and reviews on SNSs, and Willingness to Pay for Services on SNSs, which impacted the online shopping behavior of consumers.

Keywords: Consumer Decision Making, Social E-Commerce, Social Media Platforms, Online Shopping, Purchase Decisions.

INTRODUCTION

Social commerce is the rising division of e-commerce that uses social networks and digital media to enable the transactions of businesses and customers: finding products, reviewing and rating, sharing and recommending, transacting, and conducting loyalty programs. In simple terms, social commerce taps into the wave of using social media platforms to market and sell products or services directly to the platforms users frequent daily. (LaFleur, 2023).

How Does Social Commerce Works?

Social commerce is the most popular among all social media sites, such as Facebook, Instagram, and Pinterest. Therefore, the retailers and the platforms can sell and market their products and services. It is a give-and-take measure to gain power and acceptance on most social platforms and to also tap into real customer relationships through networks. With this new and improved platform come powerful systems whereby businesses of all types and sizes are bombarding it. For the same reason, direct selling on the platform has brought within reach customers in unimaginably new ways. Through social commerce, the customer can reach his favorite brand or business on one of the social media sites through a click on the site relating to sponsored posts, banner ads, and direct product placement into shopping carts. Companies can offer special deals and specific coupon discount vouchers to the individuals in their list of social media followers. Further, the customer data accessed through the interface is analyzed through social commerce. (LaFleur, 2023)

Social commerce vs. E-commerce

Social commerce and e-commerce help businesses reach customers online and maximize their sales potential. There are, however, some minor differences between the two. E-commerce is the direct sale between a customer and a brand on an e-commerce site or storefront online. Social commerce allows customers to make direct purchases within their social media experience. This appeals to customers at micro-moments when they are

compelled to buy. Social commerce leverages platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok to reach potential shoppers and help them complete their transactions. The new practices or e-commerce processes that today have become known as the old ways include advertising and the result of conversion through a process that occurs in an online store, just like a search engine. In the case of Social Commerce, it is largely cheaper than e-commerce due to its branding absence of fixing and building website costs. However, there needs to be something else brands rely on to drive revenue. In e-commerce, companies push the customer to the website to purchase products. It is a very challenging task to shift the consumer to the website. In the present scenario, social commerce takes place through social media. (LaFleur, 2023).

LITERATURE REVIEW

(Taheri et al., 2024): This research has employed the stimulus-organism-response model to determine the factors that build customer engagement and trust for such platforms. In so doing, it draws on data collected from 819 customers of a leading Iranian e-commerce platform to investigate relationships between enabling antecedents such as website vividness, effort expectation, compulsion, and behavioral responses such as customer loyalty and trust in shaping postexperience outcomes for loyalty and experience satisfaction.

(Shamim, Azam, & Islam, 2024): This study explores the influence of Fashion Influencers on consumers' urge to buy impulsively in social commerce. The research gathered 452 responses from social media users in Pakistan using a Questionnaire. The impact of financial institutions on universal basic income (UBI) was analyzed using PLS-SEM. The findings indicate that trust in financial institutions' branded posts positively influences UBI. Additionally, the study shows that Influencer Credibility (IC), Message Credibility (MC), and Media Credibility (MeC) are vital factors contributing to trust in FIs' branded posts.

(He et al., 2024): Short video commerce has become increasingly prevalent, while the factors influencing customer engagement must be considered more. The study examined the relationship between social learning behavior and customers' attitudes based on atmospheric cues, how attitudes mediate engagement, and the moderating effect of relationship norms on this mediation.

(Rudianto et al., 2024): Digital media development brought innovative changes and opportunities in the marketing context. Social media marketing would significantly reduce costs in the long run. Advertising on Instagram exemplifies cost-effective and impactful marketing compared to other search engine advertising options. This study explores the impact of Instagram advertisements on consumer interest in purchasing skincare products. Results show that Instagram ads significantly affect consumer purchase interest.

(B.Anjan Kumar, 2024): Instagram is the most sought-after online medium in the digital world. Instagram is used for fun, social networking, and digital marketing. Almost all brands are on the Instagram platform to cater to the needs and preferences of the present generation. These marketers present the features of products and highlight the offers to attract customers. With the technological advancement in mobile internet connectivity, customers' behavior towards social media platforms has increased. The study was intended to analyze and understand the awareness of Instagram purchases and the satisfaction levels of the customers.

The purpose of this research is to study how social media is affecting the workings of e-commerce; the advent of social media has changed the face of e-commerce and has made it more accessible. In the last decade, social media has gained radical attention from people around the globe; with the increasing use of social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube, almost everyone is using one or another social media to communicate. To promote and advertise the products instead of using older sources like TV or radio or spreading the word in the community social media provides greater ease and convenience. Social media is now spreading its roots in every aspect of life; it has overtaken our daily source of entertainment. Social media has so much hold on our lives; this increasing hold on us has caused major brands to understand online customer behavior and find efficient ways to use social media to their advantage. Brands are aware of the customer interactions and transparency of social media. This has completely changed the scenario of e-commerce. The brands are at an advantage to increase their customers with suitable marketing strategies, social media has helped maintain transparency between the brand and the customers, and it has helped the brands to communicate with their customers and understand their needs better. Along with that, social media has changed the way traditional e-commerce works. This paper closely studies the changes in e-commerce and the workings of social media commerce.

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(Savanid, Chadi, & Faiq, 2023): The high diffusion rate of social media has driven new retail business models. Organizational benefits from such interactions have been discussed, but little attention is devoted to consumer motivations. In this study, 108 Indonesian consumers participated in social commerce. Data analysis was done using the PLS method. The results have identified factors that affect consumer behavior, such as lifestyle, price value, facilitating conditions, and pragmatic considerations. Social influence, interestingly, came out to be important but negative, thus indicating that consumers may develop a completely different online identity.

(Tazeen & Mullick, 2023): The paper seeks to understand how social media platforms, such as Facebook and Instagram, impact consumers' buying behavior of green products. Data in this regard was collected from 201 participants in Delhi, India. The SEM model was developed to analyze the data. The results reveal that social media channels like Instagram and Facebook significantly influence green product purchasing behaviors. Social media channel usage by the participants was also sought in the study to determine how social media can affect the promotion of green products. It then emerges that the current social media users are more likely to be exposed to green products and thus develop an interest in using them.

(Amelia Rahma Safitri et al., 2023): This study was conducted to understand precisely how the promotional media of TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook affect the consumer purchasing decisions for Mixue Ice Cream & Tea. This is a quantitative research study using non-probability sampling. 100 respondents were targeted. From the analysis, it can be stated that independent variables, namely TikTok Media Promotion (X1), Instagram Media Promotion (X2), and Facebook Media Promotion (X3), affect the dependent variables of Purchase Decisions (Y).

(Setijanto et al., 2023): The COVID-19 pandemic drastically changed consumer behavior in Indonesia. The study explores the effectiveness of Instagram advertising on consumers' brand attitudes and purchase intentions. It took a quantitative approach, with 446 participants surveyed online. The findings indicate that entertainment and personalization positively influence millennials' attitudes toward Instagram advertising. Furthermore, it has been observed that consumers' attitudes toward Instagram advertising positively impact their perception of a brand and their purchase intentions.

(Sidek et al., n.d.): The study's objective was to find what factors may influence the purchase intention of online

Generation Z on Facebook and Instagram. This research is useful in two ways: it expands previous studies, and secondly, it provides meaningful insights to the concerned organizations, like marketers, on how they can improve the satisfaction of Generation Z as their customers. Perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, subjective norm, and media richness concerning online purchase intention effect of these factors were analyzed. Simple regression analyses reveal three positive and significant factors on online purchase intention.

(Herzallah et al., 2022): This study investigated the factors that affect purchasing through Instagram and will contribute to the growing community of Instagram Commerce. The explanation of how gender, age, and experience moderate the relationship among various variables is derived from the commitment-trust theory, technology acceptance model, and consumer decision-making theory. The PLS-SEM method was employed to analyze the research model. The key findings were that trust, attitude, perceived usefulness, and alternative evaluation significantly affected consumers' purchase intentions.

(Xian, Choy, & Wei, 2022): Social commerce is a rapidly developing form of e-commerce powered by social media influencers. The study investigates how consumers' engagement experiences affect community identification and their attachment to SMIs and how these factors influence consumer loyalty in S-commerce. The survey data from 411 S-commerce users via an online questionnaire were analyzed empirically with the PLS-SEM approach.

(Abdelsalam, Fahad, & Hussin, 2021): The rise of Web 2.0 applications and social media has given way to a new e-commerce frontier called social commerce. This paper aims to develop a few critical factors regarding customer engagement on social commerce platforms. The empirical survey results from the 203 respondents indicated that social interaction, technological factors interactivity, system quality and motivational factors, hedonic and utilitarian motivations, and perceived value are strong drivers of customer engagement. Perceived value and social interaction were influential factors in forming customer engagement behavior on social commerce platforms.

(Madzunya et al., 2021): social media have grown to the extent that it has become a major source of information among consumers online. As such, Instagram usage has gone up astronomically in South Africa. The paper discusses the impact of Instagram's conspicuous consumption behavior on the purchase intention of luxury goods. Results from a quantitative survey of 364 South African respondents showed the level of impact Instagram has on conspicuous consumptive behavior. The results were analyzed using SEM. The study found that while Instagram usage intensity affects conspicuous consumptive behavior, electronic word-of-mouth eWOM credibility does not.

(Wahyudin et al., 2021): The birth of Industrial Era 4.0 led to the development of Internet information technology, which completely replaced the business sector's marketing, transaction, and payment systems with online stores. Thus, it allows companies or enterprises to sell daily products, including retail, from a distance. This research was conducted to measure consumers' behavioral intention to use the online store channel to buy daily needs products to discover the influence of convenience and interactions on behavioral intentions. The result showed that consumers' ease and convenience during transactions, especially in payment and delivery service, positively and significantly affect their attitude and behavioral intention to use the online store channel to purchase daily needs products.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The primary objective was determining the factors influencing consumer decision-making using Social E-Commerce Websites. Non-probability Convenience sampling was used to collect data. The collected data was analyzed using primary and secondary data sources. For primary data, a structured questionnaire was framed, and data was collected using Google Forms. 120 forms were collected, of which only 103 samples were considered for the analysis. The collected data was then analyzed using SPSS and Excel. Secondary data was collected through various websites, blogs, articles, etc.

Analysis

Demographic Profile of the respondents (Table: 1)

Particular	Frequency	Contribution (%)
Gender		
Female	48	47%
Male	55	53%

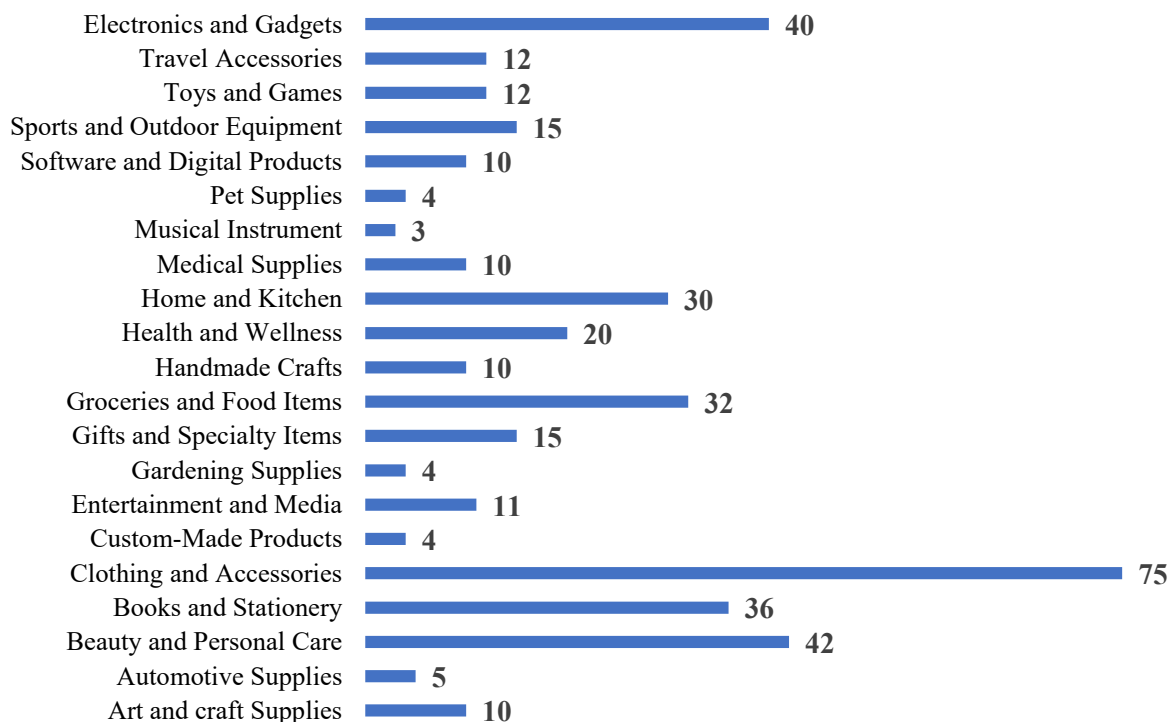
Age		
Less than 18 Years	2	2%
18 – 30 Years	49	48%
30 – 40 Years	34	33%
40 – 50 Years	13	13%
Above 50	5	5%
Income		
Less than 25,000	34	33%
25,000 - 49,999	35	34%
50,000 - 74,999	21	20%
75,000 - 99,999	6	6%
100,000 - 149,999	4	4%
150,000 or more	3	3%
Occupation		
Student	11	11%
Home Maker	5	5%
Entrepreneur/Businessman	14	14%
Professional	20	19%
Government Service	8	8%
Private Job	38	37%
Unemployed	3	3%
Retired	4	4%
Education/Qualification		
SSC	7	7%
HSC	13	13%
Bachelor's Degree	32	31%
Post Graduate	39	38%
Doctorate or Professional Degree	12	12%
Total	103	100%

The above table represents the demographic details of the respondents.

83% of respondents were satisfied with the products they bought online, while others were not. 57% of respondents use Instagram, 14% use YouTube, Facebook is used by 14%, 12% use LinkedIn, and the remaining 4% use Twitter. 48% of the respondents spent 15 – 30 minutes on social media, while 21% spent less than 15 min, 20% of the respondents spent 30 minutes to 1 hour, 8% of respondents spent 1 hour to 2 hours, and the remaining 3% spend more than 2 hours on social media platforms. When the respondents were asked how often they buy products online, 41% purchased products monthly, 29% quarterly, 10% weekly, and the remaining 1% daily, whereas 19% purchased products as and when required. It was revealed that 43% of the respondent's expressed agreement and trust in online social media platforms. 30% of respondents remained neutral, and 16% strongly agreed and trusted such platforms. On the other hand, 8% of respondents expressed disagreement and lack of trust in social media platforms, and 4% strongly disagreed and expressed distrust in these platforms. 44% of respondents trusted social media platforms more than traditional media, while 56% said no. It was found that only 33% of respondents were comfortable sharing their personal information online. In comparison, 21% are neutral about it, 18% are respondents who are somewhat uncomfortable sharing their personal information, and 15% are very uncomfortable sharing the information. The remaining 13% are very comfortable sharing information online. When the respondents were asked how frequently they use social media platforms to make purchases, it was found that 38% purchase a few times a month, 29% purchase rarely, 15% purchase several times in a week, 14% purchase once a week, 4% have never purchased using social commerce platforms, rest 1% respondents purchase products daily through social commerce platforms. It was found that 36% of the respondents occasionally purchase while they browse social

commerce platforms, while 27% purchase rarely. 25% purchase frequently, 7% purchase frequently, and 6% purchase rarely while browsing social Commerce platforms. When the respondents were asked how often they engage with the sellers on social commerce platforms through comments, likes, or direct messages, 48% engaged occasionally, 29% engaged rarely, 13% never engaged, and 11% engaged frequently. 51% of the respondents purchased directly through a social media platform (e.g., Facebook Shop, Instagram Checkout), while 49% did not. It was found that most of the respondents have not purchased directly through social media platforms, whereas 31% of respondents have purchased directly through Instagram checkout, 11% have purchased through WhatsApp Channels/Groups, 8% through the Facebook shop, and the rest, 6%, have bought items through Instagram. When the respondents were asked how often they engage with content posted online before making any decision, it was found that 28% prefer reading them once a month, 22% prefer reading several times a week, 20% prefer reading the comments/reviews rarely, 8% have never read the reviews, and 6% prefer reading them daily. Most respondents prefer user-generated content on social media platforms, whereas 21% prefer reading product posts, 19% prefer brand promotions, 17% prefer sponsored advertisements, and the remaining 14% prefer influencer recommendations. 96% of the respondents use Smartphones to access social media platforms, while 4% use laptops/Computers. When the respondents were asked about the major factors that influence them to buy products online, it was found that the majority of them buy products online due to discounts offered to them, which were 25%. In comparison, 23% said offers, 19% bought online due to its cost/Price, 18% convenience, 8% delivery, and 6% trust. Most respondents spent ₹1,000 - ₹5,000, which is 45% while purchasing products through social E-Commerce platforms. Whereas 31% of respondents spent ₹500 - ₹1,000, 13% spent ₹5,000 - ₹10,000, 8% of them spent Less than ₹500 and 4% More than ₹10,000. It was found that 33% of them agreed that the advertisements had misled them, while 19% disagreed with it, 18% strongly agreed that the advertisements had misled them, and the remaining 15% said they strongly disagreed that the advertisements had misled them. 65% of the respondents have never experienced any issues while using social media platforms while making purchases, whereas 35% of respondents have faced problems while using social media platforms.

Which types of products do you prefer to purchase online

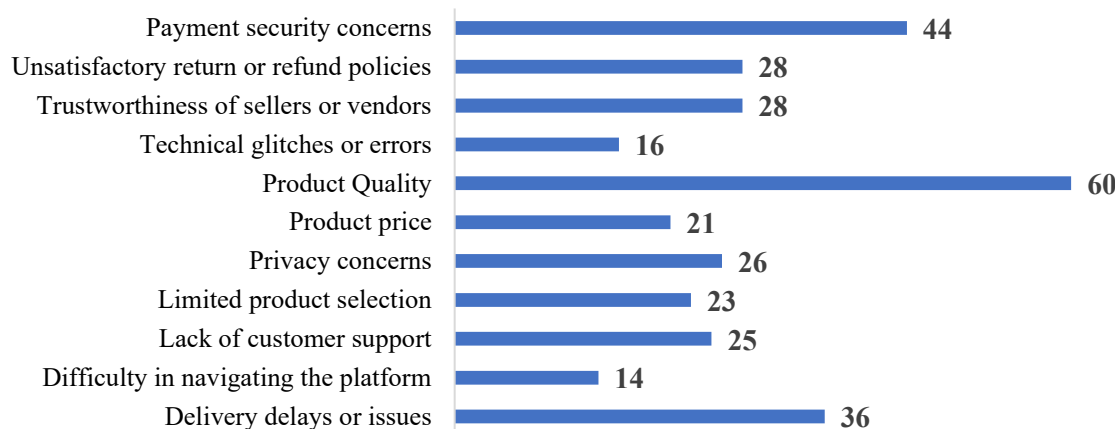


(Fig: 1)

The above table represents the products consumers prefer to buy online through Social E-Commerce websites/Platforms. The data shows that clothing and accessories are the most preferred products, followed by

beauty and personal care products, electronics, and gadgets. Musical instruments, pet supplies, gardening supplies, custom products, and automotive supplies are least preferred (Fig: 1). Most consumers have faced product quality issues, which stopped them from buying those products online, followed by payment or security concerns. The problems that consumers have least faced are difficulty navigating the platforms or technical glitches or errors (Fig: 2).

Concern or issue when using social commerce platforms for making purchases



(Fig: 2)

When the respondents were asked how likely they were to recommend the products they bought from social commerce platforms to their family and friends, 44% said they were able to do so, whereas 34% were neutral.

Factor Analysis

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.925
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	2495.753
	df	231
	Sig.	0.000

Analysis:

As the KMO value is above 0.5, data for factor analysis is accepted. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity states that the data has a substantial correlation if the value is less than 0.05. Hence, based on our results, our data is reliable, and we can go ahead and do a factor analysis.

Rotated Component Matrix^a

	Component		
	1	2	3
A_1		.688	
A_2		.788	
A_3		.814	
A_4		.782	
A_5		.790	
A_6		.837	
A_7			.797
A_8			.853

A_9		.592	
A_10			.719
A_11	.786		
A_12	.816		
A_13	.865		
A_14	.752		
A_15	.805		
A_16	.835		
A_17	.842		
A_18	.732		
A_19	.844		
A_20	.839		
A_21	.861		
A_22	.802		

Component Transformation Matrix

Component	1	2	3
1	.773	.556	.304
2	-.625	.588	.514
3	.107	-.587	.802

Analysis:

Based on the factor analysis results, three factors impacted consumers' behaviors: trust in social media networking sites, Trust in friends' recommendations and reviews on SNSs, and Willingness to Pay for Services on SNSs.

FINDING

- 83% of the respondents were satisfied with the products they purchased online, thus leaving with an overall positive experience of online shopping.
- 48% of the respondents spend 15-30 minutes daily on social media platforms, whereas only 3% use it for more than 2 hours daily.
- 41% of the respondents purchase products online monthly, followed by 29% quarterly and 10% weekly.
- 43% agreed and trusted social media platforms, whereas 16% strongly agreed with this statement. On the other hand, 12% of the respondents disapprove and strongly disapprove of the statement about trusting social media platforms.
- Only 46% of the respondents are comfortable sharing personal information online, while 21% are neutral. The rest are not comfortable sharing information.
- Concerning products on social commerce platforms, 48% of the respondents mentioned viewing and sometimes commenting, liking, or even sending a direct message.
- 51% have directly purchased from social media, of which Instagram is first on the list with 31%.
- User-generated content, including reviews and customer photos, is highly regarded. The vast majority read reviews and comments to help them make purchase decisions.
- Three variables were identified: trust in social media networking sites, Trust in friends' recommendations and reviews on SNSs, and Willingness to Pay for Services on SNSs, which impacted consumers' online shopping behavior based on factor analysis

CONCLUSION

The research reveals an important insight into consumer behavior and attitude toward social commerce

platforms. One of the main platforms online shopping takes place on is Instagram, thereby proving its leading influence in the social commerce landscape. According to data, users spend average reasonable time over social media, most of whom have done month-on-month purchases. After all this positive engagement, remarkably, there are concerns about trust and privacy. While 43% of respondents trust social media firms, a good portion has fear or unease at sharing information online. Engagement with social commerce content is also very high since a large number of users occasionally interact with the posts related to products. Direct purchasing from social media platforms, such as Instagram, is very common. Reviews and ratings play an important role in purchasing a product. Genuine consumer feedback should be transparent. Price discounts and special offers become major drivers of online purchase decisions and thus establish effective promotional strategies that influence the behavior of consumers. However, the quality of the product and security concerns related to payment procedures still influence the online shopping experience. That is to say that whereas social commerce sites have been able to successfully penetrate the customers' buying behavior, it becomes a must to resolve the issues of trust, ensure desirable measures toward better privacy, and enhance user experience for developing growth and consumer satisfaction in such a dynamic marketplace.

FUTURE SCOPE

The scope of the research can be broadened in the future by including consumers from a wide variety of regions or countries to have an overall understanding of consumer behavior toward social commerce across different cultural and socioeconomic settings. Qualitative methods, such as interviews or focus group discussions, provide greater insight into consumer motivations, experiences, and concerns. It can be understood better by looking at socioeconomic status and psychological and technological factors. Comparative analyses across various social commerce platforms and demographic groups may indicate platform-specific trends and preferences. Finally, attention should be paid to how the resonance of multiple types of social commerce content impacts consumers' purchase decisions and behavior and how consumers interact across various platforms to generate insights into the nature of social commerce.

LIMITATIONS

The Study is based only the consumers residing in Gujarat. Due to time factor the study was limited to 103 Respondents only. Responses may be prone to responder biases.

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