A conceptual model for usage and purchase intention in social commerce platforms

Dr. C. Thirumal Azhag$^{1}$, Sherlin Sofie S$^{2}$

$^{1}$Assistant professor, Department of Management Studies, Anna University, Trichy.
$^{2}$Student, Department of Management Studies, Anna University, Trichy.

Abstract

In the modern trend, social media platforms are the new venue for customers to purchase. Customers who have a positive experience in social media purchasing are likely to be satisfied. Customers visiting S-Commerce platforms make purchases based on their purchase intent. The primary objective of this study is to examine the variables that affect consumers' purchase intentions, which include trust, social influences, information quality, financial risk, product-related attributes (price, variety, availability, quality, feature, and reputation), perceived ease and variables related to S-Commerce platform use and engagement.

Keywords: S-Commerce, Social media Platforms, Purchase intention

Introduction

S-commerce refers to social commerce in which products or services are offered to customers directly via social media networks. Users increasingly engage with social media. Hence, businesses are looking for social commerce to reach their target audience as social marketing by using social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Pinterest to publicize a product or service and provide consumers with an easier way to purchase it. Purchase intent in social commerce refers to consumers' intentions and plans for purchase through social media or social commerce platforms. With the growing popularity of social media, many businesses have begun to make use of these platforms to sell products and services directly to consumers, rather than depending on traditional e-commerce platforms or brick-and-mortar storefronts. The key benefit of S-commerce is that it allows businesses to reach customers who prefer not to visit a specific website or store. Customers can share their purchases and special offers with their followers and friends.

Social Commerce Platforms

Facebook is developing a set of social commerce tools to assist brands. It allows customers to complete their purchases entirely within the Facebook app. Merchants can use Facebook Shops to create a personalized store from which customers can shop on Facebook and Instagram. Facebook Shops are designated areas on the site where customers can browse and make purchases. Customers can contact merchants via Instagram, Facebook Messenger, and WhatsApp through the messaging feature in Facebook shops.

WhatsApp is used as a commerce platform by companies to provide customer service and track the status of orders. Users can use the app to place orders and track their orders. Companies can also use the app to deliver personalized communications to their customers, such as sales or event reminders. Ultimately, WhatsApp can be an effective and efficient tool for businesses to communicate with their clients, provide support, and facilitate sales. Information providers must be mindful of privacy problems and verify that they comply with current laws and regulations.

Instagram is a medium for marketing and selling goods and services. Companies can list products on Instagram so that customers can browse and buy goods directly from the app. These listings might have descriptions of the photos and prices. Instagram influencers may help businesses promote their goods and services. Influencers can assist businesses in expanding their reach and gaining trust. Companies can advertise on Instagram to reach a larger audience and market their goods and services.

Twitter has also evolved as a commerce platform that promotes products and services and provides its followers with unique bargains and promotions. Companies can also use the platform to connect with potential customers by talking with them and responding to their questions. Companies can collaborate with Twitter influencers to advertise their products and services. Influencers may assist firms in reaching new audiences and establishing trust with their followers.

The primary objective of Pinterest is creativity. They offer shopable product pins and the visual search engine Lens. Users of Pinterest are given recommendations for shopable items along with a direct link to a retailer's checkout. According to research, 80% of Pinners start their purchase process with a visual search, compared to 58% of non-Pinners. By clicking to check out on the retailer's website, Pinners can find fantastic things that are related to a Pin's image.

Snapchat has not previously focused on social commerce; they have supported augmented reality (AR), which has interesting social commerce implications. Snapchat refers to its AR lenses as lenses. Users can capture selfies using the lens and experiment with makeup and sunglasses virtually. They may now try on any style of apparel. According to Snapchat, more than 170 million users interact with AR daily.

Purchase Intention

Customers on social media sites are willing to buy a product within a given time frame. The specific point at which thought becomes intent is determined by four stages:

Stage 1: Awareness

The customer becomes aware of the requirement to get a particular product. The consumer understands the need to buy. But they may not be ready to turn that need into intent.

Stage 2: Interest
The quest for information is the second stage of the customer purchasing journey. Before making their final decision, the consumer starts browsing for and gathering information about other items and services available on the market. Consumers have a variety of information sources at their disposal.

Stage 3: Desire
Once the customer has obtained enough information to make an informed purchasing decision, they can assess the alternatives offered. At this stage, purchasing intentions have been decided.

Stage 4: Action
At the end of the customer journey, the customer purchases and consumes the product immediately or later. However, research indicates that there are some gaps between what a consumer intends to do as well as what they do. At this point, users should gather as much data as feasible about the details of the purchase decision, including the amount customers estimate to spend. It provides better satisfaction with their requirements.

Factors Influencing purchase intention
Several factors can influence a consumer's social commerce purchase intention, including social media platform design and features, user reviews and ratings, product presentation, and social influence from friends or influencers.

Trust
Consumers are more likely to purchase products or services from brands or businesses they trust. Various factors such as brand reputation, belief, attitude, customer feedback, recommendations from friends or family, and the perceived credibility of the brand help to create trust. When consumers trust a brand or business, they are more likely to perceive their products or services as high quality, reliable, and trustworthy, which leads to an increased purchase intention.

Attitude
A customer's attitude towards a product or service can impact their likelihood of purchasing it. Personal beliefs, past experiences, and cultural influences are the factors that affect customer attitude. A positive attitude towards a product or service creates high purchase intentions.

Social Influence

customers are influenced by the opinions and behavior of others, such as family members, friends, colleagues, or even online communities. Social influence can take various forms, such as:

1. Word-of-mouth: Recommendations from friends or family members can influence purchase decisions
2. Social media: Consumers often check social media for reviews and recommendations from other consumers before making a purchase.
3. Influencers: Social media influencers who endorse or recommend products can influence purchase intentions.
4. Group norms: People may conform to the behavior or expectations of a group they belong to, such as cultural or social norms.
5. Reference groups: Consumers may seek to emulate or identify with a particular group, such as celebrities or athletes.

Information Quality
Consumers often rely on the quality and accuracy of the information available to them when making purchase decisions. It includes information about the product or service itself, as well as information about the brand, pricing, and other relevant factors.

Financial Risk
The negative financial implications of a purchase decision influence the purchase intention. When a person receives a high level of financial risk associated with a particular purchase, they may be unwilling to purchase, even if they want or need the product or service. It can lead to a lower purchase intention.

Convenience
Convenience can have a significant influence on purchase intentions. In today's fast-paced world, people often value convenience and time-saving more than anything else. It refers to the ease of use, accessibility, and availability of products or services. When products or services are convenient, they can positively influence a consumer's purchase intention. Convenience plays an essential role in shaping consumer behavior and purchase intentions.

Product
Product-related factors can significantly influence purchase intention, and businesses need to consider these factors when developing their marketing strategies and product offerings. There are several product-related factors that can influence purchase intention, including:

1. Product quality: Consumers are more likely to buy products of high quality and meet their expectations.
2. Product features: The features of a product, such as design, functionality, and innovation, can also influence purchase intention. Consumers are more likely to purchase products that have unique features or provide additional benefits.
3. Price: Price is also a vital aspect that can influence purchase intention. Consumers are more likely to purchase products offered for good value.
4. Brand reputation: A brand's reputation can also influence purchase intentions. Customers are more inclined to purchase products from brands with a strong reputation and a known quality.
5. Packaging: The packaging of a product can also influence purchase intentions. Consumers are more likely to buy products that are attractive and fulfill their needs.
6. Availability: The availability of a product can also influence purchase intentions. Consumers are more likely to purchase products that are readily available and easily accessible.

**Perceived usefulness**

Perceived usefulness refers to the extent to which a product or service is perceived value to the consumer. When a customer experiences a product or service as valuable, they are more likely to purchase it. Other factors that impact perceived usefulness are marketing messages, word-of-mouth recommendations, and personal experiences. Businesses can increase their chances of attracting and retaining customers.

**Conceptual Model**

![Conceptual Model Diagram](image-url)
Conclusion

S-Commerce is one of the emerging trends in online purchasing and it plays a unique role in strengthening the usage and engagement of s-commerce platforms. To build customer purchase intention, the online business ought to overcome all the factors that influence the purchase intention. This paper may help to convert the customer’s purchase intention to buying decision in social commerce platforms that support online business to enhance sales and to increase the usage of social media platforms.

Reference