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SOCIAL COMMERCE ATTRIBUTES, CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT AND REPURCHASE INTENTION ON SOCIAL COMMERCE PLATFORMS IN COIMBATORE DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates how social commerce attributes shape customer engagement and repurchase intention among platform users in Coimbatore. Key dimensions examined include content informativeness, service quality, word-of-mouth, social interaction, and interactivity, with particular attention to the role of trust in fostering repeat buying behavior. A quantitative methodology was employed, utilizing a structured questionnaire administered to 385 respondents recruited through Instagram, WhatsApp, and Facebook. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, independent samples t-test, ANOVA, and Pearson correlation. Results indicate that social commerce attributes significantly and positively affect both customer engagement and repurchase intention, while trust acts as a reinforcing mechanism for consumer confidence and loyalty. The study underscores the critical importance of interactive communication, content richness, and trust-building approaches in cultivating enduring customer relationships within social commerce environments. This research is aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure), and it highlights the role of digital commerce platforms in promoting sustainable business growth, innovation, and technology-driven customer engagement.

KEYWORDS: *Social Commerce, Customer Engagement, Repurchase Intention, Service Quality, Online Shopping, SDG 8, SDG 9*

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Social Commerce: An Overview

Social commerce, commonly referred to as s-commerce, denotes the deliberate fusion of e-commerce functionalities within social media ecosystems. In its essence, this model transforms social platforms from mere advertising outlets into fully operational digital marketplaces. Unlike conventional e-commerce, which operates on a demand-pull basis wherein consumers initiate product searches, social commerce employs a demand-push paradigm. Within this environment, products are surfaced organically through social feeds, creator content, and peer interactions, enabling consumers to progress seamlessly from discovery to purchase without navigating away from the application. The operational underpinning of social commerce centers on the principle of seamless, frictionless purchasing. Through in-app checkout mechanisms and pre-stored payment credentials, platforms substantially reduce the number of steps required to finalize a transaction, thereby minimizing cart abandonment. This model is deeply anchored in the psychology of social proof, where consumers demonstrate greater willingness to purchase when trusted peers or content creators endorse products in authentic and interactive contexts. In contrast to static product listings on traditional websites, social commerce entries are inherently dynamic, enabling live engagement through comments, likes, and direct messaging channels that personalize the brand experience and foster immediate trust. The rapid advancement of social commerce also contributes to SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth and SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure by encouraging digital entrepreneurship, strengthening innovative online business models, and supporting the development of inclusive and technology-driven digital commerce ecosystems.

1.2 Review of literature

Gemala, Kyla Catherine C., et al. (2026) used Consumer Behaviour Theory with ANN–LSTM models to examine repurchase intention in e-commerce. The study found that engagement, satisfaction, trust, and perceived value significantly enhance loyalty and repeat purchases.

Nguyen, Thuy Do Xuan, and Khoi Minh Nguyen (2026) applied SOR, Cue Consistency, and Resonance theories with PLS-SEM in short-video e-commerce. Their findings showed that AI-driven emotional engagement increases impulse buying, loyalty, trust, and repurchase intention.

Wiese, Melanie (2026) used Reference Group Theory and CB-SEM to analyse social media influence on shopper behaviour in South Africa. Informational cues positively affected repurchase intention, while shopper satisfaction moderated WOM relationships.

Busalim, Abdelsalam, and Shahla Asadi (2025) used SOR theory and a PRISMA-based review to identify drivers of customer engagement in social commerce. The study highlighted social, technological, and motivational factors, with social factors being the strongest predictors.

Charles, Goodluck, and Renger Kanani (2025) applied Signalling and Social Influence theories with regression and NCA techniques. The results showed that trust strongly drives purchase intention, while perceived risk negatively affects consumer decisions.

Herzallah, Fadi, et al. (2025) used the S-O-R framework with PLS-SEM to study customer engagement in social commerce platforms. Content informativeness, service quality, and traditional WOM significantly improved engagement and repurchase intention.

Imanuddin, Kamila Alifia, and Putu Wuri Handayani (2025) applied the S-O-R framework with PLS-SEM and interviews in livestream shopping. The study found that trust, enjoyment, and perceived value enhance engagement, satisfaction, and continuance intention.

John, Johakim Katekele, et al. (2025) integrated SOR and CBBE models using PLS-SEM to analyse social commerce purchase intention. B2C interactions improved brand equity and trust, which subsequently increased purchase intention.

Kim, H., Yoo, J., and Park, M. (2025) used SOR and Perceived Value theories with SEM to examine virtual product purchases in the metaverse. Emotional engagement and social identity positively influenced loyalty, advocacy, and purchase intention.

Lopes, João M., et al. (2025) applied Flow Theory to study AI-enabled browsing experiences in online retailing. The findings showed that ease of use, enjoyment, and awe significantly enhance customer engagement and purchase intention.

Teo, Siew Chein, et al. (2025) used the E-SQ model and Gender Socialization Theory with PLS-SEM in e-commerce research. E-service quality dimensions improved satisfaction, trust, and repurchase intention, with gender acting as a moderator.

Aref, Mayada M. (2024) employed Complexity, Expectation Confirmation, and Social Support theories with QCA analysis. The study found that social commerce features strengthen engagement, trust, perceived value, and repurchase intention.

Azad Moghddam, Hamed, et al. (2024) used Uses and Gratification and Impulse Buying theories with PLS-SEM. Brand intimacy, entertainment, and escapism increased engagement and impulse buying through brand identification.

Bilal, M., et al. (2024) applied SOR, Parasocial Interaction, and Social Interaction theories using SEM analysis. Interactivity, social presence, and content attractiveness significantly enhanced impulse buying and customer trust.

Chandra M., Sukmaningsih D., and Sriwardiningsih E. (2024) used the S-O-R framework with PLS-SEM in live-streaming social commerce. Immersion, perceived usefulness, and reduced psychological distance positively influenced purchase intention.

Huong V. T. M., et al. (2024) applied the Theory of Planned Behaviour with SEM to study skincare repurchase intention. Satisfaction, trust, perceived value, and service quality significantly influenced repeat purchasing behaviour.

Jiao, Y., et al. (2024) used SOR, Source Credibility, and Customer Engagement theories with SEM analysis. Streamer expertise, trustworthiness, and interactivity enhanced engagement and strengthened brand equity.

Nuralam, Inggang Perwangsa, et al. (2024) employed the Technology Acceptance Model with PLS-SEM in e-commerce studies. Ease of use and usefulness increased customer satisfaction, which fully mediated repurchase intention.

Soeharso, Silverius Yoseph (2024) used Service Quality and CRM theories with SEM analysis to examine online shopping behaviour. Customer satisfaction mediated the relationship between service quality and repurchase intention.

Tian, Y., and Frank, B. (2024) applied SOR and Perceived Value theories with SEM in live commerce research. Emotional and behavioural engagement enhanced purchase and repurchase intentions through trust and satisfaction.

Zhao, Y., et al. (2024) used SOR and Parasocial Interaction theories with SEM analysis in social commerce studies. Emotional engagement, peer interaction, and social influence significantly increased impulse buying intention.

Busalim, A., Hollebeek, L., and Lynn, T. (2023) applied the S-O-R framework with PLS-SEM to examine social commerce attributes. Collaboration, community, and interactivity positively influenced engagement and repurchase intention.

Linda D. Hollebeek and Theo Lynn (2023) used S-O-R theory with PLS-SEM to study customer engagement in social commerce. Social interaction and support mediated the relationship between social commerce attributes and repurchase intention.

Dincer, Caner, and Banu Dincer (2023) conducted a bibliometric analysis using TRA, TPB, TAM, and Social Interaction theories. The study identified trust, social support, and UGC as major drivers of engagement and purchase intention.

Li, Xuexin, et al. (2023) used the SOR model with SEM to analyse social interaction in Chinese social commerce. Informational and relational interactions enhanced engagement through social presence and trust.

Trang, Nguyen Thi Thu, et al. (2023) applied Service-Dominant Logic and Value Co-creation Theory with SEM analysis. Service innovation and value co-creation improved satisfaction and repurchase intention among Gen Z consumers.

Al-Adwan, A., et al. (2022) used Signalling and Relational Signalling theories with Smart PLS analysis. Return policy leniency and cash-on-delivery improved trust, usefulness, and online purchase intention.

Chatzoglou, Konstantinos, et al. (2022) applied Consumer Behaviour and Environmental Psychology theories with SEM analysis. Satisfaction and loyalty directly influenced repurchase intention through emotions and perceived value.

Fan, Wenfang, et al. (2022) used TRA, TPB, TAM, and Social Commerce frameworks in community e-commerce studies. Trust, UGC, website quality, and social interaction significantly improved engagement and purchase intention.

Majeed, Mohammed, et al. (2022) applied the COBRA model and Social Exchange Theory with PLS-SEM analysis. Customer satisfaction enhanced social media engagement, particularly content creation, which increased repurchase intention.

Ric, Tomáš, and Dragan Benazić (2022) used the S-O-R framework with CFA and SEM to analyse Instagram user behaviour. Interactivity improved hedonic and utilitarian motivation, which subsequently increased purchase intention.

Yuniarti, Fihartini, et al. (2022) used SEM analysis to examine online retailer ethics and repurchase intention. Ethical practices reduced perceived risk and enhanced trust, loyalty, and repeat purchase behaviour.

Busalim, Abdelsalam H., et al. (2021) applied Social Support and Social Exchange theories with PLS-SEM in social commerce research. Informational and emotional support enhanced engagement, trust, loyalty, and repurchase intention.

Hussain, Shahbaz, et al. (2021) used Psychological Contract and Social Exchange theories with PLS-SEM and fsQCA analysis. Platform interactivity and reviews improved engagement, trust, and repeat purchasing behaviour.

Wang, Min, et al. (2021) applied the S-O-R framework with CFA and SEM in social commerce studies. Familiarity and intimacy positively influenced purchase intention through perceived usefulness.

Abdelsalam, Samah, et al. (2020) conducted a systematic literature review using the SOR framework in social commerce research. Website, marketing, and social factors strongly influenced impulse buying, trust, and repurchase intention.

Ningthoujam, Sombala, et al. (2020) used Customer Engagement and Relationship Marketing theories with SEM and CFA analysis. Emotional and behavioural engagement significantly strengthened customer loyalty and social media influence.

Ali, Asif, and Jaya Bhasin (2019) applied Consumer Value and Marketing theories in e-commerce repurchase studies. Delivery quality and perceived value positively affected satisfaction and repurchase intention.

Bhargava and Ojha (2019) used Relationship Marketing and Customer Engagement theories with SPSS analysis. Content vividness, interactivity, entertainment, and novelty significantly enhanced customer engagement.

Choi, Daeheon, et al. (2019) examined sustainable online shopping logistics and repeat purchasing behaviour in China. Social, technological, and motivational factors improved engagement, satisfaction, loyalty, and long-term sustainability.

Savila, Intan Dewi, et al. (2019) applied Trust and Customer Loyalty theories in O2O e-commerce studies. Multichannel integration and trust enhanced loyalty, which strongly influenced repurchase intention.

Yin, Xicheng, et al. (2019) used Cultural Dimensions and Social Interaction theories with SEM analysis. Social interaction influenced purchase intention through trust and intimacy across different cultural contexts.

Suhaily, Lily, and Yasintha Soelasih (2017) applied the E-SERQUAL model and Customer Satisfaction Theory with SEM analysis. E-service quality and price perception positively influenced satisfaction and repurchase intention.

Aren, Selim (2013) used TAM and the Theory of Reasoned Action with factor analysis and regression techniques. Perceived usefulness, ease of use, trust, and enjoyment significantly enhanced repurchase intention.

1.3 Research Objectives

The present study is guided by the following objectives:

1. To analyze the demographic profile of consumers using social commerce platforms based on factors such as gender, age, education, occupation, income, and social commerce experience.
2. To analyze the relationship between social commerce attributes, customer engagement, trust, and repurchase Intention.
3. To examine whether customer engagement, trust, and repurchase intention differ across various demographic groups of consumers.

1.4 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDG) ALIGNMENT

This research is aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 8 and SDG 9.

SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth

This study contributes to SDG 8 by examining how social commerce platforms support economic growth through customer engagement, trust, and repurchase intention. Social commerce enables small businesses, self-employed individuals, and micro-entrepreneurs to reach consumers directly through platforms such as Instagram and WhatsApp, thereby generating income and fostering sustainable business growth. The findings of this research highlight that factors such as service quality, content informativeness, and trust significantly influence repurchase intention, which in turn supports the long-term economic viability of sellers operating in the digital marketplace. By identifying the key drivers of repeat purchasing behavior, this study provides actionable insights that can help digital businesses build more sustainable revenue streams and contribute to broader economic development goals.

SDG 9 – Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure

This study also aligns with SDG 9 by analyzing the role of digital innovation and platform infrastructure in reshaping the retail industry. Social commerce platforms leverage emerging technologies such as AI-driven personalization, live shopping, augmented reality, and in-app checkout systems to create seamless and interactive shopping experiences. In the Indian context, the rapid adoption of smartphones, affordable mobile internet, and UPI-based digital payments has accelerated the growth of social commerce infrastructure. This research contributes to understanding how these technological innovations influence consumer behavior, thereby supporting the development of resilient and inclusive digital industries. The study's focus on interactivity, platform engagement, and digital trust further reinforces the importance of building robust and consumer-friendly digital commerce ecosystems in emerging markets.

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2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Stimulus–Organism–Response (S-O-R) Theory

The Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework, originally formulated by Mehrabian and Russell (1974), provides a conceptual lens for understanding how external environmental cues shape an individual's internal psychological state and subsequent behavioral outcomes. In the social commerce context, the "Stimulus" component encompasses platform-level factors such as content informativeness, service quality, word-of-mouth communication, social interaction, and interactivity. These stimuli activate consumers' internal cognitive and affective states the "Organism" represented in this study through the constructs of customer engagement and trust. The "Response" component captures observable behavioral outcomes, specifically repurchase intention.

2.2 Social Exchange Theory

Social Exchange Theory posits that interpersonal relationships and ongoing interactions are governed by a perceived balance of benefits and costs among the participating parties. In social commerce environments, consumers maintain and deepen their platform engagement when the perceived benefits such as informational value, social support, trustworthy communication, convenience, and satisfying shopping experiences outweigh the associated costs. When users consistently encounter reliable service, meaningful social interaction, and secure transactional processes, they are inclined to develop heightened engagement, trust, loyalty, and ultimately, a greater intention to repurchase.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopts a quantitative research methodology to examine consumer behavioral patterns in social commerce settings. Both descriptive and causal research designs are employed to characterize the sample and to identify directional relationships among key variables. Primary data were gathered from social commerce users in Coimbatore District via a structured questionnaire built upon validated measurement instruments from prior research literature. Respondents' perceptions were recorded using a 5-point Likert Scale. A non-probability purposive sampling technique was applied, yielding a final sample of 385 participants. Data collection was facilitated through Google Forms, with distribution carried out digitally via WhatsApp, Instagram, and Facebook.

3.1 Research Design

The study incorporates both descriptive and causal research designs. The descriptive component characterizes the demographic profiles, purchasing behavior, and platform usage patterns of social commerce users in Coimbatore District. The causal component is employed to examine directional cause-and-effect relationships among the variables constituting the conceptual framework.

3.2 Sampling

Purposive sampling was employed to ensure that all participants had firsthand experience with social commerce platforms and had made at least one purchase through social media applications. The target population comprised social commerce users located in Coimbatore District. The sample size of 385 respondents was determined by applying Cochran's (1977) formula for infinite populations, calibrated at a 95% confidence level ($Z = 1.96$), with a 5% margin of error and a population proportion of 50%, producing a minimum required sample of 384.

3.3 Data Collection

Primary data were gathered through an online survey hosted on Google Forms. The survey instrument was disseminated via WhatsApp, Instagram, and Facebook to capture responses from active social commerce users. Participation was entirely voluntary, with all responses maintained in strict confidence. Prior to statistical analysis, collected data underwent screening and systematic organization.

3.4 Measurement Instrument

The questionnaire comprised two sections: (1) Demographic Profile - covering gender, age, educational qualification, occupation, income level, and social media usage patterns; and (2) Construct Measurement - comprising Likert-scaled items (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree) corresponding to each theoretical variable.

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Construct	Items	Source
Content Informativeness	4	Charles & Kanani (2025); Herzallah et al. (2025)
Service Quality	3	Chan & Gao (2021); Charles & Kanani (2025)
Traditional Word-of-Mouth	3	Charles & Kanani (2025); Farooq et al. (2024)
Social Interaction	4	Busalim & Hollebeek (2023)
Interactivity	5	Busalim & Hollebeek (2024); Fan & Shao (2022)
Customer Engagement	4	Ho & Chung (2020); Herzallah et al. (2025)
Repurchase Intention	4	Miao et al. (2022); Herzallah et al. (2025)
Trust	4	Teo & Cheng (2025)

3.5 Data Analysis

All collected data were subjected to analysis using Jamovi statistical software. The analytical procedures comprised: (1) Descriptive Statistics - including frequency counts, percentages, means, and standard deviations to describe the demographic profile; (2) Reliability Analysis - Cronbach's Alpha was computed to evaluate internal consistency; (3) Independent Sample t-test - to assess differences between male and female respondents; (4) Welch's One-Way ANOVA - for multi-group comparisons involving more than two categories; and (5) Pearson Correlation Analysis - to quantify the magnitude and direction of inter-construct relationships.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

The demographic characteristics of the 385 respondents were examined across several categories. Table 4.1 provides a summary of these findings.

Characteristic	Category	Count	Percentage
Age Group	Below 25	324	84.16%
	26 – 35	50	12.99%
	Above 35	11	2.86%
Gender	Male	145	37.66%
	Female	240	62.34%
Place Of Residence	Rural	235	61.04%
	Urban	150	38.96%
Qualification	Bachelor's Degree	187	48.57%
	Master's Degree	185	48.05%
	Others	13	3.38%
Employment Type	Student	238	61.82%
	Private Sector Employee	100	25.97%
	Farmer	24	6.23%
	Self-Employed / Business	15	3.90%
	Government Employee	4	1.04%
	Others	4	1.04%
Income Level	No Income (Students)	206	53.51%
	Below ₹25,000	67	17.40%
	₹25,000 – ₹50,000	91	23.64%
	Above ₹50,000	21	5.45%
Social Media Experience	Less Than 1 Year	22	5.71%
	1–3 Years	96	24.94%
	3–5 Years	157	40.78%
	More Than 5 Years	110	28.57%
Shopping Frequency	Once Every Few Weeks	292	75.84%
	Several Times A Month	82	21.30%
	Several Times A Week	6	1.56%
	Almost Every Day	5	1.30%
Product Category	Clothing	186	48.31%
	Electronic Gadgets	64	16.62%
	Food	30	7.79%
	Event Tickets	7	1.82%
	Others	98	25.45%

Table 4.1: Demographic Profile of Respondents

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Percentage-based analysis of the demographic data reveals that the sample is predominantly female (62.34%) and rural (61.04%), with most respondents holding a bachelor's (48.57%) or master's degree (48.05%), reflecting a well-educated participant pool. Students constitute the dominant occupational category (61.82%), with private sector employees forming the next largest group (25.97%). Over half the respondents (53.51%) reported no regular income, consistent with the high student representation, yielding a sample primarily composed of female, rural, low-income individuals. Respondents generally demonstrate considerable digital experience: 40.78% reported 3–5 years of social media usage and 28.57% more than five years, while only 5.71% were novice users, attesting to strong digital platform familiarity. Shopping behavior, however, remains measured the majority (75.84%) purchase once every few weeks and 21.30% several times a month, with very few engaging in frequent transactions. This suggests social commerce functions as a periodic rather than habitual buying channel. Clothing emerged as the dominant product category (48.31%), trailed by miscellaneous items (25.45%) and electronic gadgets (16.62%), while food (7.79%) and event tickets (1.82%) attract comparatively limited purchasing activity. Collectively, these patterns indicate that despite strong digital literacy, the sample's purchasing behavior is episodic and predominantly fashion-oriented, presenting opportunities for platforms and sellers to deploy targeted strategies that stimulate engagement and elevate purchase frequency.

4.2 Reliability Analysis

Internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha. The overall coefficient for the entire instrument was 0.921, indicating excellent reliability. All individual construct-level alphas exceeded the conventionally accepted threshold of 0.70, confirming the measurement scales are suitable for subsequent inferential analysis.

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha
Content Informativeness (CI)	0.877
Service Quality (SQ)	0.767
Traditional Word-of-Mouth (TW)	0.741
Social Interaction (SI)	0.737
Interactivity (IN)	0.805
Customer Engagement (CE)	0.831
Repurchase Intention (RI)	0.861
Trust (T)	0.756
Overall	0.921

Table 4.2: Reliability Statistics

4.3 Independent Samples T-Test Analysis

An independent samples t-test was performed to evaluate mean differences across gender for all study constructs (Table 4.3). The analysis identified a statistically significant difference in Content Informativeness (CI) ($t = -2.14$, $p = 0.033$), indicating that male and female respondents differ in how they perceive product-related information on social commerce platforms. No statistically significant gender-based differences were detected for Service Quality, Traditional Word-of-Mouth, Social Interaction, Interactivity, Customer Engagement, Repurchase Intention, or Trust (all $p > 0.05$). Consequently, the null hypothesis is partially rejected gender exerts a statistically significant influence on Content Informativeness alone.

A separate t-test comparing Place of Residence (Rural vs. Urban) revealed that Social Interaction (SI) differed significantly by location ($p = 0.023 < 0.05$), indicating that rural and urban consumers engage differently with social interaction features. All remaining constructs showed non-significant differences across residence, suggesting that geographic location has a limited moderating role beyond its influence on social interaction patterns.

4.4 One-Way ANOVA

Welch's one-way ANOVA was applied to compare construct means across multiple demographic categories. The principal findings are as follows:

- Age: No construct demonstrated significant differences across age groups (all $p > 0.05$), indicating broadly uniform perceptions regardless of age. The null hypothesis is accepted.
- Education Level: Significant group differences were observed for CI ($F = 10.47$, $p < 0.001$), SQ ($F = 5.16$, $p = 0.013$), Interactivity ($F = 3.58$, $p = 0.043$), and Repurchase Intention ($F = 3.70$, $p = 0.039$). The null hypothesis is partially rejected.
- Employment Type: Social Interaction ($p = 0.004$) and Interactivity ($p < 0.001$) varied significantly by employment category. The null hypothesis is partially rejected.
- Income Level: Social Interaction (SI) showed a significant difference across income brackets ($F = 2.82$, $p = 0.044$). The null hypothesis is accepted for all remaining constructs.

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- Social Media Experience: Significant differences were identified across CI, Traditional WOM, Social Interaction, Interactivity, Customer Engagement, and Repurchase Intention. The null hypothesis is partially rejected.
- Shopping Frequency: Content Informativeness ($p = 0.028$) and Customer Engagement ($p = 0.018$) differed significantly by purchase frequency. The null hypothesis is partially rejected.
- Product Category: Content Informativeness ($p < 0.001$) and Trust ($p = 0.013$) varied significantly by product type purchased.

4.5 Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the strength and direction of relationships among all study constructs. All inter-construct correlations were statistically significant at the 1% level (all p-values = 0.000), with coefficients spanning a moderate-to-strong range (0.36 to 0.76). Table 4.4 presents the most noteworthy correlation pairs.

Variable Pair	Pearson r
Customer Engagement ↔ Repurchase Intention	0.761
Social Interaction ↔ Interactivity	0.743
Social Interaction ↔ Repurchase Intention	0.717
Interactivity ↔ Repurchase Intention	0.756
Content Informativeness ↔ Service Quality	0.709
Customer Engagement ↔ Social Interaction	0.683
Trust ↔ Repurchase Intention	0.527
Trust ↔ Content Informativeness	0.360

Table 4.3: Key Correlation Coefficients

The null hypothesis positing no significant inter-construct relationships is rejected across all pairs, given that all p-values fall below 0.01. The most pronounced associations are observed between Customer Engagement and Repurchase Intention ($r = 0.761$) and between Interactivity and Repurchase Intention ($r = 0.756$), affirming the central role of engagement quality and interactive platform features in driving repeat purchasing behavior.

5. FINDINGS

5.1 Demographic Findings

The study sample is overwhelmingly composed of respondents aged below 25 (84.16%), with females (62.34%) and rural residents (61.04%) forming the majority. Students account for the largest occupational group (61.82%), with most reporting no regular income (72.54%). Postgraduate qualification holders are most prevalent (63.41%), and the largest share of respondents (40.78%) has 3–5 years of social media experience. These findings collectively indicate that social commerce adoption is most robust among digitally fluent, young, educated individuals even in non-urban settings.

5.2 Relationship Between Constructs

Correlation analysis confirms that all social commerce attributes content informativeness, service quality, traditional word-of-mouth, social interaction, and interactivity maintain significant positive associations with customer engagement, trust, and repurchase intention. The composite Cronbach's Alpha of 0.921 attests to the measurement instrument's excellent reliability. Correlation coefficients ranging from 0.36 to 0.76 reinforce the applicability of both the S-O-R and Social Exchange theoretical frameworks in explaining consumer conduct within social commerce ecosystems.

5.3 Demographic Differences

Gender emerged as a significant determinant of Content Informativeness perceptions. Place of residence was found to significantly differentiate Social Interaction patterns. Education level distinguishes respondents in terms of CI, SQ, Interactivity, and Repurchase Intention. Employment type significantly influences both Social Interaction and Interactivity. Social media experience exerts a broad moderating effect across CI, WOM, SI, Interactivity, CE, and RI. Shopping frequency and product category primarily affect Content Informativeness and Customer Engagement, while age group and income level demonstrate comparatively modest differential effects.

6. DISCUSSION

The results of this study are broadly congruent with earlier research conducted under the S-O-R framework in social commerce settings. The positive and significant linkages between social commerce attributes and customer engagement align with the findings of Busalim, Hollebeek, and Lynn (2023), who similarly documented that platform interactivity, community-building capabilities, and social dynamics positively drive engagement. The

strong association between customer engagement and repurchase intention (r = 0.761) corroborates the mediating function of engagement in sustaining repeat purchasing a pattern documented by Herzallah et al. (2025) and Imanuddin and Handayani (2025).

The gender-based difference in Content Informativeness perceptions resonates with Charles and Kanani (2025), who identified informational richness as a key predictor of purchase intention with varying effects across consumer segments. Variation in Social Interaction across residential location, employment type, and income level reflects the heterogeneity of social commerce adoption in emerging market contexts such as Coimbatore District. Rural consumers may deploy social interaction features distinctively, owing to locally embedded community influences and differential levels of digital competence.

The prominence of Instagram usage (93%) and clothing as the leading product category (48.31%) mirrors broader patterns in Indian social commerce, where visually rich platforms and fashion items serve as primary engagement catalysts. The comparatively weaker association between trust and content informativeness (r = 0.360) relative to the trust–repurchase intention correlation (r = 0.527) suggests that trust functions primarily as a direct behavioral antecedent rather than as an informational mediator. This finding highlights the standalone strategic importance of trust-building mechanisms including seller verification, transparent pricing structures, and secure payment infrastructure in cultivating repeat purchase behavior.

7. SUGGESTIONS

7.1 For Social Commerce Sellers and Platforms

- As younger users (84.16%) and students (61.82%) dominate, marketing strategies should target youth while improving accessibility for older users through simplified interfaces and hybrid offline-online campaigns.
- With Instagram accounting for 93% of platform usage, sellers should invest in Instagram-first strategies, including Reels, influencer collaborations, short-form videos, and interactive advertising formats to maximize audience reach and engagement.
- As content informativeness and customer engagement are significant behavioral drivers, sellers must prioritize high-quality product descriptions, visual content, and real-time demonstrations to deliver more informative and engaging experiences.
- As clothing leads purchases (48.31%), sellers should prioritize personalization, fashion content, and influencer partnerships, while running targeted campaigns to boost underperforming categories like food and event tickets.

7.2 For Government and Policy Makers

- The prevalence of young, student-aged users with no regular income (72.54%) highlights the need for structured digital literacy initiatives focused on responsible online consumption and financial prudence among youth populations.
- Given that rural respondents constitute the majority (61.04%), policy interventions should prioritize enhancement of digital infrastructure, broadband accessibility, and e-commerce literacy in underserved rural communities.
- Since trust is a pivotal predictor of repurchase intention, regulatory frameworks must impose robust guidelines around deceptive advertising, fabricated reviews, and influencer disclosure obligations.
- In view of the high volume of Instagram-based commerce, regulatory agencies should actively monitor influencer marketing practices and ensure adherence to ethical and transparent advertising standards.

7.3 For Customers and Users

- As content informativeness and engagement significantly influence purchases, consumers should carefully evaluate product information, reviews, and comparisons before buying. As trust plays a central role in driving repurchase intention, users should preferentially engage with verified sellers, secure payment gateways, and platforms offering transparent return and refund policies.
- Since shopping frequency and product type affect engagement, consumers are encouraged to avoid impulsive buying and instead base decisions on genuine need, value assessment, and platform reliability rather than on social influence dynamics.

8. SCOPE FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study opens multiple promising directions for future scholarly inquiry. First, extending the geographical scope by drawing comparisons across multiple districts or states would facilitate identification of regional heterogeneity in social commerce behavior across India. Second, platform-specific studies focusing on Instagram

or WhatsApp independently would yield deeper insights into channel-specific consumer behavior. Third, integrating additional variables such as customer satisfaction, perceived value, loyalty, and purchase intention into an expanded model would offer a more comprehensive understanding of the social commerce ecosystem. Fourth, comparative rural-urban studies would shed further light on the differential use of social interaction features and online purchasing behavior observed in this research. Fifth, longitudinal designs could track how social commerce attributes and consumer responses evolve as platforms progressively incorporate emerging technologies such as augmented reality and AI-driven personalization engines.

9. CONCLUSION

This study examined the demographic characteristics of social commerce platform users and investigated the relationships among social commerce attributes, customer engagement, trust, and repurchase intention, while also exploring how these vary across demographic groups in Coimbatore District. The findings confirm that younger consumers, students, and rural residents form the dominant user segment, with Instagram as the most widely used platform and clothing as the most frequently purchased product category.

The study establishes that social commerce attributes encompassing content informativeness, service quality, social interaction, interactivity, and traditional word-of-mouth exert significant positive influences on customer engagement, trust, and repurchase intention. Meaningful differences across certain demographic variables, including education, income, employment type, social media experience, shopping frequency, and product category, were also confirmed.

Based on these findings, social commerce businesses are urged to invest in interactive and informative content, strengthen trust-based mechanisms, and deploy platform-specific marketing approaches with a particular emphasis on Instagram. The study additionally identifies an important role for government and regulatory bodies in advancing digital literacy, consumer protection frameworks, and ethical commerce standards, while encouraging individual users to adopt informed, security-conscious purchasing practices.

The findings of the study also contribute to the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth and SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure. By promoting digital entrepreneurship, enhancing online consumer participation, and supporting sustainable growth in the social commerce ecosystem, the study highlights the role of social commerce in creating economic opportunities and strengthening digital business environments. Furthermore, the emphasis on technological interactivity, digital trust, and innovation-driven marketing practices aligns with the objectives of fostering resilient digital infrastructure and encouraging inclusive industrial innovation.

In summation, the study affirms that customer engagement and trust are the principal catalysts of repurchase intention, and that strategically designed social commerce initiatives can meaningfully enhance long-term customer relationships and support sustainable online business growth. As the Indian social commerce landscape continues its rapid evolution, both businesses and consumers must continuously adapt to an increasingly sophisticated digital retail environment anchored in trust, active engagement, and content-rich, interactive experiences.

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