“Assessing the effect of social commerce in shaping fashion purchase intent among working professionals”

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ASSESSING THE EFFECT OF SOCIAL COMMERCE IN SHAPING FASHION PURCHASE INTENT AMONG WORKING PROFESSIONALS

Abstract

Retailers are leveraging social commerce by integrating advanced social media features to drive customer engagement and create superior value. Thus, a present study is an attempt to analyze the impact of perceived ease of use, user engagement and technological factors on social commerce usage and to assess its contribution towards the purchase intention of the working professionals. 380 working women (from organized sectors including education, industry, health, government, banking, and IT) were targeted from Bengaluru city of India by adopting the snowball sampling method which was further analyzed using independent sample t-test, regression analysis, and Structural Equation Modelling. The results of the study show the effects of perceived ease of use (β = .434), user engagement (β = .517), and technological factors (β = .662) on social commerce usage (SCU) are studied, which mediates purchase intention (β = .689). These results indicate that SCU is one of the main factors affecting purchase intention (β = .751). This also show that there is significant influence of perceived ease of use, user engagement, and technological factors on social commerce usage that has ultimately led to their purchase intention among working professionals. Based on these findings, it is crucial to perfect social commerce strategies in order to improve consumer's engagement and encourage purchase behavior.

Keywords social media integration, digital customer engagement, organized sector workforce, e-commerce trends, India, perceived technological ease

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INTRODUCTION

Social commerce, the combination of social media and e-commerce, has transformed how people interact and purchase fashion products through personalized interactive shopping experiences. In fact, this shift is especially useful for working women product users in sectors such as IT, education, corporate industries, and media and communication looking for convenience, efficiency and reliability in their shopping journey.

These growing digital dependency demands investigation into how technological elements together with human behavior patterns affect purchase decisions. People who find digital interfaces simple to use experience better accessibility and enhanced user satisfaction while finding their way through systems with ease. User engagement builds brand trust by integrating review features and recommendation systems that productively affect consumer confidence towards brands. The adoption of technological aspects that enable improved security preventing fraudulent activities and personalized services along with easy payment methods power up digital market behaviors. The prior research has identified the various influences but lacks an adequate examination of how social commerce shapes their relationships while

affecting consumer purchase decisions. The lack of comprehensive understanding of social commerce framework results in a knowledge gap that restricts business effectiveness at maximizing consumer engagement through this platform. The present research examines how social commerce acts as a mediator among the associations between perceived ease of use, technology variables, and user engagement with purchase intention, and how this will enhance the customer experience at the same time as strengthening their brand relationship and increasing conversion rates in the online shopping space. Considering the relevance of filling this gap, this research intends to contribute with strategic insights to help fashion firms develop their digital presence, and design customer engagement strategies in order to develop a more efficient and customer oriented environmental social commerce.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Literature review examines social commerce literature, consumer behavior studies, and purchase intention studies. This paper shows how ease of use, perceived usefulness, trust and social influence working professionals' purchase decisions on fashion products. This research extends the knowledge of the impact of these variables on social commerce by integrating the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). Additionally, these insights provide additional insights regarding how the technological and psychological factors create purchase behavior, providing a strong framework of professionals' social media shopping intentions.

Technological Acceptance Model (TAM) (Davis, 1989), which is entirely based on the theory of reasoned action, has been widely used to forecast how popular and widely adopted realistic technologies will be. Perceived ease of use has been shown to be critical in widespread innovation diffusion, particularly in IT diffusion (Yuen et al., 2021). In addition to the theoretical support, there seem to be reasonable and intuitive reasons to believe that self-efficacy and evaluations of ease of use are closely related when it comes to the online shopping (Peters & Shoots-Reinhard, 2022). In online purchasing, the customers purchase through technology. In fact, their decision is entirely based on what they see, feel, influence by other users of the products. Social commerce will provide this user experience to the working professionals so that they can enjoy their shopping by experiencing the artificial intelligence through social commerce before they purchase (Cho & Son, 2019). Easy usage of technology and security measures always motivates the users purchase intention (Ying et al., 2021).

User engagement is a crucial aspect of social commerce, and understanding how working professionals engage with fashion brands through social media is vital for businesses to design effective engagement strategies (Wang & Huang, 2023). It tracks how frequently and for how long users engage with your website or apps or in the social media. This indicator indicates whether the customer discloses the cost of your offers, whether services or products, reviews, comments, feedbacks, likes received by the particular products (Ho et al., 2022). Social media platforms allow working professionals to connect with one another and with community members or other users with whom they share knowledge (Laitinen & Sivunen, 2020). The broad phrase for any interaction users has with the brand, website, product, or applications is user engagement (Davcik et al., 2022).

The evolution of the internet over the past ten years, from Web 1.0 (the age of e-commerce) to Web 2.0 (the era of social commerce), has had a significant impact on people's lives (Nacar & Ozdemir, 2022). People are more numerous and easily connected, making it possible for them to meet others from all parts of the world through the Internet and learn about each others' interests, customs, and cultures (Hu & Zhu, 2022). Web 2.0 and social media give users a user-friendly interface with rich material and obvious navigational hyperlinks as an immediate advertising tool to aid working professionals' decision-making processes and purchasing habits (Ahmad Shukri & Mustaffa, 2023). Due to the advancements in technological factors that make it easier to compare features, prices, and costs prior to making in-store purchases, working profes-

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sionals now have more freedom to shop whenever they want and from wherever they want. Through the Internet, these technologies are changing how people shop all around the world. The quality of the website plays a crucial role.

Social commerce is a combination of social media platforms and electronic commerce. It blends social media with an e-commerce experience. In short, social commerce provides a more uninterrupted purchasing experience by permitting brands to sell their products directly via social media platform (Lin & Wang, 2023). It supported by the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) given by Ajzen in 1991. As one's attitude towards the behavior buying through social commerce platforms, TPB indicates that purchase intention is determined. Previous studies revealed that such attitudes as convenience, peer influence and platform usability would make a positive effect on purchase intention of the professionals. The importance of TPB to social commerce thus implies its applicability to the phenomenon of how purchase intention is influenced by planned decision making in the virtual space (Ajzen, 1991). The relevance of TPB in social commerce underscores its utility in explaining how planned decision-making drives purchase intention in the digital space.

It allows purchasing through smart phones, tablets, laptops, and so on, merge with the nano- and microinfluencers, and creation of unique contents in social media platforms increase the leverage of the social commerce. The creation of user generated stories, and contents like reviews, feedbacks, recommendations, hashtags, helps to share its experiences to others (Kim & Chan-Olmsted, 2022). Here, the working professionals can compare the contents and comments, experiences and recommendation of various products in social commerce platforms because, the users of the product feels that their experiences are almost true (Liao et al., 2021).

Using social commerce with the widespread of technology, working professionals are able to access information about products and services from a wide range of sources, including online stores, social media platforms, and mobile apps. This has made it easier for working professionals to make informed purchasing decisions and has changed the way that businesses market their products and engage with working professionals (Herzallah et al., 2022). The phrase 'intention to buy' refers to desire or predisposition of a customer, to purchase a product or service. It is a measure of the likelihood that a customer will make a purchase in the future, based on their current attitudes, beliefs, and values (Mishra et al., 2021). There might be various internal and external factors for this, including personal preferences, past experiences, the assumed quality and value of the product or service, the marketing and advertising brought to the notice of the consumer, and the opinions of factors, such as friends, family, and influencers (Chopra et al., 2021). Ultimately, it is the intention to buy determines whether a consumer will make a purchase or not.

This study aims to investigate the importance of social commerce usage on the purchase decision of women in Bengaluru, India, where they work.

Based on the above critical evaluation of the literature, researchers proposed the following hypotheses:

H1: Perceived ease of use has an influence on social commerce usage among working professionals.

H2: User engagement significantly contributes to social commerce usage among working professionals.

H3: Technical factors have a significant impact on social commerce usage among working professionals.

H4: Social commerce significantly mediates the relationship between the perceived ease of use and their purchasing intention.

From the literature review, the following conceptual model has been developed, as indicated in Figure 1.

This model explains the importance of influencing factors of digital social media, which includes perceived ease of use, user engagement, and technological factors as the influences on the intention to buy a product, with the mediation of so-

Source: Developed by the Researcher.

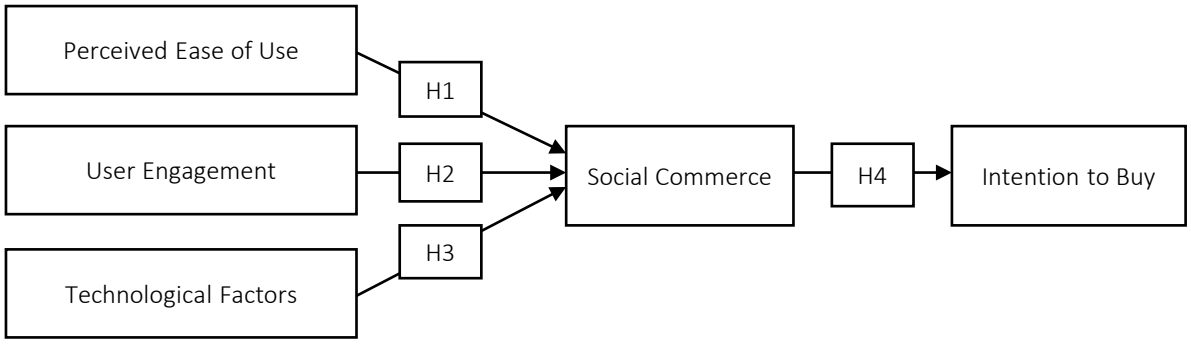

Figure 1. Conceptual model of the study

cial commerce. Social media platforms perform the function of attracting and engaging working professionals, while the ease of use of social commerce can improvise the probability and possibility of working professionals to purchase products through these platforms. Besides, it provides a unique environment for social interaction, which can contribute to an increase in user engagement by creating trust among professionals. Technical factors such as website design, user interface, and security features can significantly affect the adoption and usage of social commerce platforms among working professionals.

2. METHODOLOGY

In this section, the research design, sampling method, data collection process, measurement variables, as well as ethical considerations are provided in a structured framework.

2.1. Samples and data collection

Bengaluru holds this status of 'Silicon Valley of India', especially because Global Capability Centres (GCCs) host 36 percent of India's tech workforce (Nandini Singh, 2024). Because of this digital engagement environment, fashion buying behavior with social commerce in the context is an ideal environment to investigate. This study has been targeted towards women in the organized sector, especially those working in education, industry and healthcare, government, banking and IT since they have access to social commerce platforms and have money too. Social commerce is especially useful for fashion as many working ladies themselves do not have time for traditional shopping. Then, a snowball method survey of 380 working women of Bengaluru by personal administration of structured questionnaire was conducted targeting various outcomes to enable understanding of these factors. Attitudes towards social commerce adoption, influencing factors and purchase behaviors were measured by using the five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). In order to maintain ethical compliance, informed consent was obtained and the data were confidential and anonymous.

2.2. Participants description (sample profile)

The sample profile (see Table 1) shows the sample profile of 380 respondents. A large number of the respondents, 68.4% are between 30 and 39 years of age and 198 are female. Out of them a large number are educated with 137 of them being graduates and 228 of them being post-graduates. Most of them 226 are unmarried suggesting that it targets young people. Most respondents are from IT (131), education (97), media and communications (79), and corporate sector (73) as their profession. 197 respondents have annual income between Rs. 300000 to Rs. 500000, 96 are earning between Rs. 100000 to Rs. 300000 and the higher income earners Rs. 500000 and above are few (52). Of the 380 respondents, 224 came from urban areas and 96 from semi-urban area, 60, were from rural regions All in all, the study is representative of a fairly young, more educated and of a relatively low income, and encompasses both the rural and the urban population.

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Table 1. Demographic profile of the respondents

Source: First-hand survey data.

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age		
30 to 39 years	260	68.4
40 to 49 years	43	11.3
18 to 29 years	42	11.0
50 and above	35	9.21
Educational qualification		
Graduate	137	36.1
Post-graduate and above	126	33.2
PUC	77	20.3
Up to SSLC	40	10.5
Sector		
IT sector	131	34.5
Education sector	97	25.5
Corporate sector	73	19.2
Media & communication	79	20.8
Marital status		
Married	154	40.5
Unmarried	226	59.5
Income level		
Below Rs. 100000	35	9.2
Rs. 100001 to Rs. 300000	96	25.3
Rs. 300001 to Rs. 500000	197	51.8
Rs. 500001 and above	52	13.7
Area		
Rural	60	15.8
Urban	224	58.9
Semi-urban	96	25.3

Additionally, the respondents were asked about their familiarity with social commerce where, 216 respondents were somewhat familiar with it and remaining were highly familiar with it and major portion of the respondents use social media on a daily basis (196) and multiple times a day (184). Moreover, it was also observed that 228 respondents sometimes make purchases through social media platforms and 64 respondents do it frequently, whereas remaining respondents do it rarely. 136 respondents learn about social commerce through social media ads, 44 through recommendations from friends or family and 24 through personal research. Furthermore, 152 respondents use Instagram as a social commerce website(s) on social media. 52 working professionals bought from the social commerce platforms by considering customer reviews and ratings, 64 working professionals considered exclusive deals, discounts, and offers and 28 considered convenience of browsing as the reason to buy from social commerce platforms. Additionally, 76 respondents agreed influencer marketing and 52 of them considered personalized product recommendations to be one of the strategies that will attract them towards social commerce platforms. Further, fashion product purchase through social commerce, 202 respondents preferred to buy clothes, 63 respondents preferred foot ware, 115 are preferred accessories through social commerce.

2.3. Measurements: dependent variable, independent variables, mediator

The questionnaire was formulated based on previous research and observation the some of the variables are identified namely Perceived ease of use, User engagement, and technological factor as independent variables, social commerce as mediator and intention to buy as dependent variable for the study. The structured questionnaire is mainly divided into 3 parts, firstly, demographic profile such as age, gender, marital status, profession, family income and belonging area. Second part includes basic social commerce related questions, and final part consists of constructs used in the study as mentioned earlier These instruments are developed and the measurement variables have been considered from the following sources: Perceived Ease of Use (7 item scale) and User Engagement (9 item scale) was measured using the items from Davis (1989) and Yousafzai et al. (2007). Moreover, Technological Factors (8 item scale) was measured using the items from Aizstrauta et al. (2015), Venkatesh et al. (2003), and Wang et al. (2022). Social commerce usage (10 item scale) and Purchase Intention (5 item scale) was measured using the items from C. Dincer and B. Dincer (2023), Hu and Zhu (2022), Huang and Benyoucef (2017), and Jin and Muqaddam (2019). Here ease of use was measured using the statements highlighting user-friendliness, easy to navigate, fast and efficient experience, feeling safe, strong security measures, easy and secure payment systems, etc. Whereas user engagement was measured using likely to engage nature of the platform, number of followers, frequent visit to the social media pages, staying up-to-date, positive comments and likes, etc. Technological factors were measured using visually appealing and engaging features of social commerce platform, website design, consistency with the brand's image, accurate search function, clear and detailed product information

provided, fast and responsive performance, and website's product images, etc.

Using SPSS 26 and SPSS AMOS 23 software, analysis was done to assess the study goals once the data set was verified. This analysis comprised percentage analysis, descriptive statistics, independent sample t-test, regression analysis, and SEM.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Measurement model assessment

To assess the reflective measurement models, four key parameters were evaluated: convergent validity, indicator reliability, discriminant validity, internal consistency (Hair et al., 2012, 2019; Hanafiah, 2020). The values of CR obtained by means of the study fell beyond the recommended threshold of 0.7, which means that the reliability is strong (Hair et al., 2014). Hair (2010) points out that a widely accepted means of measuring scale reliability; Cronbach's alpha should be greater than 0.7 to be considered satisfactory. The results exceeded 0.7 on all alpha coefficients. Furthermore, Table 1 shows the CR, and AVE for each construct, and noted that all AVE and CR thresholds were satisfied for each construct at 0.50 and 0.70, respectively. These results provide convergent and overall reliability evidence of the constructs.

Furthermore, Table 2 provides a comparable proof of discriminant validity in accordance with the suggestion made by Fornell and Larcker (1981). According to Gefen et al. (2000), for a construct to fulfil discriminant validity, the square root of AVE for each construct must be bigger than the intercorrelations with other constructs. Table 1 demonstrates that the square roots of AVE were bigger than the correlation coefficients for each pair of components. The findings support the discriminant validity of the measures.

The histogram was used to calculate the normality check. The data's presumed normality has been fulfilled for the perceived ease of use, user engagement, technological factors, social commerce usage, and purchase intention, as shown by the bell-shaped graphs and PP plot.

3.2. Descriptive analysis

Perceived Ease of Use: In order to measure the perceived ease of use, two major sub constructs were identified through relevant literatures and theories, i.e. simplicity (3 items) and security (4 items). As per the results, working professionals strongly perceive that they find social commerce platform easy to use for purchasing fashion products (M = 3.8947) in case of its simplicity. They also strongly agreed that they trust that their personal information will be kept secure (M = 3.6632). This indicates customer's positive perception on the perceived ease of use of social commerce platform.

User Engagement: Moreover, user engagement was measured using no. of followers (3 items), frequency of visit (3 items) and likes and comments (3 items). Under each subconstruct, they strongly agreed that are more likely to engage because they have a large community of followers (M = 3.7158), regularly checking helping them to stay up-to-date with their latest products and promotions (M = 3.6526) and making purchases if they see positive comments and likes on their social media posts (M = 3.8211).

Technological Factors: Measuring technology factors using website design (4 items) and website functionality and performance (4 items) showed that working professionals agree that it is visually appealing and engaging (M = 3.7263) and it provides clear and detailed product information (M = 3.7474).

Table 2. Construct validity

Source: Computed using AMOS.

Construct	CR	AVE	PEU	UE	TF	SC	IB
Perceived Ease of Use (PEU)	0.876	0.678	0.823				
User Engagement (UE)	0.778	0.666	0.811	0.816			
Technological Factor (TF)	0.890	0.654	0.809	0.809	0.809		
Social Commerce (SC)	0.910	0.711	0.712	0.789	0.711	0.843	
Intention to Buy (IB)	0.891	0.643	0.666	0.713	0.678	0.789	0.802

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Social Commerce: Social commerce was further measured using influencers (4 items), social media advertisement (3 items) and social trust (3 items). As per the descriptive statistics, respondents depicted that social commerce platform make the shopping experience for fashion products more enjoyable (M = 3.8737). They also perceive social media advertisements for fashion items as pertinent to their interests and requirements (M = 3.7263). Moreover, they believe that it has fair and transparent policies for returns and refunds (M = 3.5684).

Purchase Intention: Working professionals also agreed that they intend to purchase fashion products in the near future (M = 3.5158).

Influence of age: Considering age as an influencing factor, study found that customer aged within the range of 18 to 29 years depicted high Perceived Ease of Use (M = 3.9455), User Engagement (M = 3.9658), Technological Factors (M = 4.5641), and Purchase Intention (M = 3.6154). However, social commerce usage found to be high among the working professionals belonging to 30-39 years. Overall, Perceived Ease of Use (F = 19.705, p = .000), User Engagement (F = 16.799, p = .000), Social Commerce Usage (F = 16.111, p = .000), and Technological Factors (F = 12.483, p = .000) found to be significantly different among the varied age groups except for Purchase Intention.

Influence of gender: Considering age as an influencing factor, study found that the female customer depicted high Perceived Ease of Use (M = 3.7196), User Engagement (M = 3.6937), Technological Factors (M = 4.3243) social commerce (M = 3.6539) and Purchase Intention (M = 3.5243). Overall, Perceived Ease of Use (F = 19.705, p = .000) and User Engagement (F = 16.799, p = .000) found to be significantly different between male and female except for social commerce usage, Purchase Intention and Technological Factors.

Influence of educational qualification: Considering marital status as an influencing factor, study found that the unmarried customer depicted high Perceived Ease of Use (M = 3.8780), User Engagement (M = 3.9365), Technological Factors (M = 4.3839), and Social Commerce (M = 3.8810). However, Purchase Intention found to be high among the married working professionals (M = 3.5111). Overall, Perceived Ease of Use (F = -3.042, p = .003), User Engagement (F = -5.097, p = .000), and Social Commerce Usage (F = -3.376, p = .001) found to be significantly different among varied marital status except for Purchase Intention and Technological Factors.

3.3. Structural equation model assessment

Statistical method Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) is used to study the complex relationships between observed and latent variables. It is a fusion of multiple regression with factor analysis in which researchers can test theoretical models, assess measurement reliability, and assess causal relationships. SEM gives us a complete tool for model validation and testing hypotheses. The direct effects are mentioned in Table 3.

Table 3 demonstrates the results of simple linear regression analysis. An attempt was made to assess the impact of Perceived Ease of Use (*H1*), User Engagement (*H2*), and Technological Factors (*H3*) on social commerce usage among working profes-

Table 3. The influence of perceived ease of use, user engagement and technological factors on social commerce usage

Source: Output of survey data using AMOS.

Hypothesis	Relationship	β	t-value	Sig.	R	R^2	F	P
H1	PEU → SCU	.434	9.369	.000	.434	.188	87.771	.000
H2	UE → SCU	.517	11.746	.000	.517	.267	137.962	.000
H3	TF → SCU	.662	17.180	.000	.662	.438	295.169	.000
Combined effect								
PEU → SCU		.121	2.850	.045	.674	.454	104.087	.000
UE → SCU		.171	3.198	.002				
TF → SCU		.498	10.978	.000				

Note: PEU = Perceived Ease of Use; SCU = Social Commerce Usage; UE = User Engagement; TF = Technological Factors.

Source: Output of survey data using AMOS.

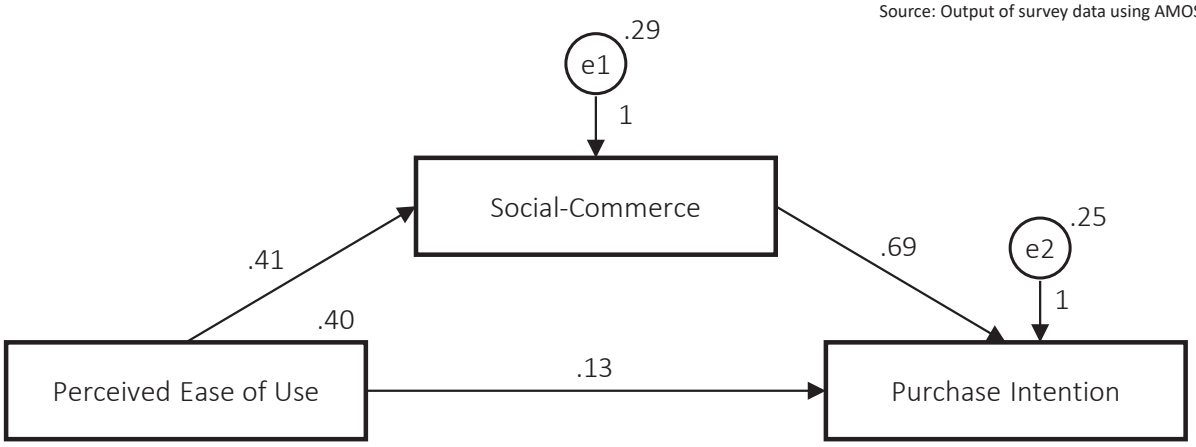

Figure 2. Mediating role of social commerce usage

sionals. Perceived Ease of Use, User Engagement and Technological Factors significantly influences social commerce usage among working professionals by 18.8% (R^2 = .188), 26.7% (R^2 = .267) and 43.8% (R^2 = .438), respectively. Further beta coefficient signified that 1 unit increase in perceived ease of use, user engagement and technological factors among working professionals contributes to 43.4%, 51.7%, and 66.2% increase in social commerce usage among working professionals, respectively. Overall, the model *H1*, *H2*, and *H3* found to be significant as the p-value is less than 0.001. Hence, it is proved that perceived ease of use, user engagement and technological factors among working professionals significantly influences social commerce usage leading to the acceptance of *H1*, *H2*, and *H3*. However, the combined effect of all the independent variables explains social commerce by 45.4% (R^2 = .454) and technological factors are the major contributor of social commerce usage (β = .498) compared to perceived ease of use (β = .121), and user engagement (β = .171).

H4 attempted to assess the mediating role of social commerce usage between perceived ease of use and customer purchase intention. To test this hypothesis, SEM was implemented.

3.3.1. Mediation analysis

The mediating effect of social commerce in relationship between Perceived Ease of Use (PEoU) and Purchase Intention shown in Figure 2.

The values of the various goodness of fit indices revealed that the NFI is 0.916, the GFI is 0.922, the AGFI is 0.906, the normed Chi-squared is 25.323, and RMESA is 0.026. These numbers show that the results of the suggested model's validity are well within the accepted bounds. This attests to the fact that the proposed general structural model fits the existing data set correctly. By taking into account the standardized regression weight, the path coefficients demonstrate the direct relationship between the variables in the research. The results of direct effect revealed that perceived ease of use significantly affects social commerce usage (E = 0.410, p < .000**) and it slightly affects purchase intention (E = .135, p < 0.01**). The overall influence of perceived ease of use on customer's purchase intention was estimated at .417*** through social commerce usage. Moreover, social commerce usage mediates the relationship between perceived ease of use and purchase intention, as

Table 4. Mediating role of social commerce usage

Source: Output of survey data using AMOS.

Relationship			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label	Total effect	Direct effect	Indirect effect
SCU	←	PEU	.410	.044	9.381	***	HS	.417***	.135***	.282***
PI	←	PEU	.135	.045	3.008	.003	S			
PI	←	SCU	.689	.047	14.527	***	HS			

*Note: ****** = Highly significant. PEU = Perceived Ease of Use; SCU = Social Commerce Usage; UE = User Engagement; TF = Technological Factors.

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Source: Output of survey data using AMOS.

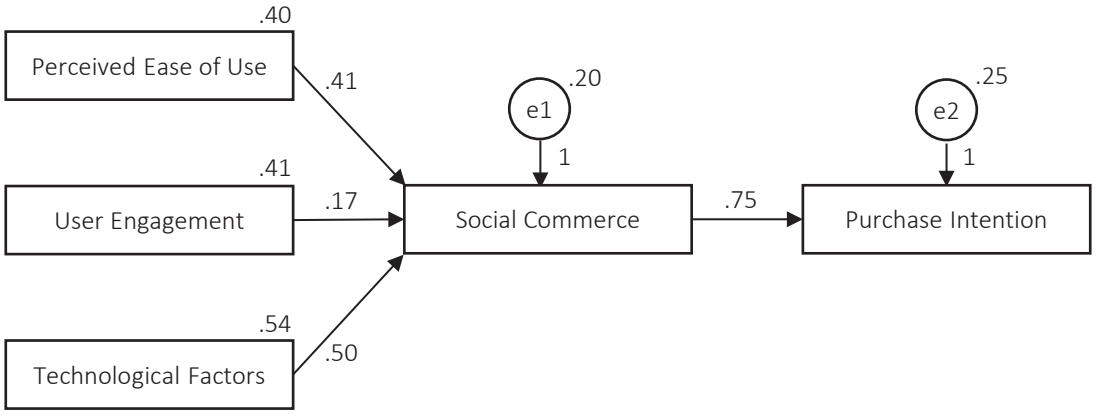

Figure 3. Overall tested model

indicated by indirect effects (E = .282***). This indirect effect found to great than the mere direct effect on perceived ease of use on the purchase intention (E = .135***). Hence, this study suggests that social commerce usage significantly enhances customer purchasing intention through perceived ease of use. Therefore, *H4* is accepted (see Table 4).

Finally, the overall tested model has been depicted in Table 4 and Figure 3.

Table 5. Results from the tested model

Relationship			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
SC	←	UE	.171	.036	4.794	***	HS
SC	←	PU	.121	.036	2.807	.005	S
SC	←	TF	.498	.031	16.143	***	HS
PI	←	SC	.751	.044	17.076	***	HS

Note: PEU = Perceived Ease of Use; SC = Social Commerce; UE = User Engagement; TF = Technological Factors.

The tested model (see Table 5) depicts that Perceived Ease of Use (E = .121, p < 0.01**), User Engagement (E = .171, p < 0.01**), and Technological Factors (E = .498, p < 0.01**) significantly influences social commerce usage among working professionals. Further social commerce usage demonstrated high and significant contribution towards the purchase intention (E = .751, p < 0.01**) of the working professionals.

From the above study, it was found that there is significant impact of perceived ease of use, user engagement and technological factors on social commerce usage among working professionals. They are more likely to make a purchase through social commerce, by creating a positive user experience through ease of use, fast and reliable site performance, and clear product information, social commerce can effectively influence the purchase intention (Ying et al., 2021). The amount of time users wants to spend on social media platforms with a single click or see it, click it, buy it is largely determined by the content shared on their social pages. With the help of this mechanism, working professionals' journeys are made less difficult, transactions are completed more quickly, and working professionals feel more in control (Ho et al., 2022). The technical factors such as site performance, security, and the availability of payment options play a critical role in influencing the impact of social media on the purchasing of fashion products through social commerce (Hu & Zhu, 2022). By providing a fast, reliable, secure, and user-friendly platform (Shukri et al., 2020), social commerce platforms can increase the intention to buy and ultimately, the purchasing behavior of working professionals (Herzallah et al., 2022). The strong connections between working professionals or other users they interact with on social media can significantly affect their intentions to purchase from fashion brands. This is precisely how social commerce makes shopping far more participatory than traditional in-store and e-commerce methods (Herzallah et al., 2022). Therefore, e-commerce companies should provide an impetus to create engaging and meaningful content and leveraging social media to build strong relationships with their target audience. This can directly lead to an enormous increase in the sales and revenue.

CONCLUSION

The study examines the factors, which influence social commerce usage and the intention to purchase fashion products by working professional according to perceived ease of use, technological factors, and user engagement. The results show that these elements significantly increase the use of social commerce and have a positive impact on buying intentions. Therefore, such social commerce strategies should be refined in order to improve consumer engagement and further urge purchase behavior. User friendly, engaging and sophisticated technologically features of business-to-business social commerce platforms can have the greatest impact on the purchasing decisions. This shows that fashion retailers should focus on the development of engaging platform using advanced technological features and continuous user's involvement in their social commerce channels for stimulating purchase intentions. Moreover, the practical implication for the research is to provide practical guidance for fashion retailers and social commerce platforms who target working professionals as potential customers. User interfaces can, then, be improved by brands, the quality of online interactions can be made more engaging, and technological infrastructure can be strengthened in order to promote increased adoption of social commerce. Seamless navigation, personalized recommendations, robust security, and others may help increase professionals' active engagement, subsequently building up purchase intentions. Nevertheless, the findings of the study are not generalizable to other groups, like students or retirees, because of differing behavior. Additionally, the research confines its scope to just the fashion industry and so cannot be used to other markets. Further research, however, should be conducted with diverse demographics and industries to further validate these insights. Well, trust and satisfaction variables could both explain aspects of purchase intentions, when considering social commerce.

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APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE

PART I

Demographical profile

Sl. No	Variables	
1.	Name (optional)	
2.	Age	☐ 18 to 29 ☐ 30 to 39 ☐ 40 to 49 ☐ 50 and above
3.	Educational qualification	☐ Up to SSLC ☐ PUC ☐ Graduate ☐ Post-graduate and above
4.	Marital status	☐ Married ☐ Unmarried ☐ Widow ☐ Divorced
5.	Profession	☐ IT ☐ Education ☐ Corporate ☐ Media & communication
6.	Annual income	☐ Below Rs. 1,00,000 ☐ Rs. 1,00,000 to Rs. 3,00,000 ☐ Rs. 3,00,000 to Rs. 5,00,000 ☐ Rs. 5,00,000 and above
7.	Belonging area	☐ Rural ☐ Urban ☐ Semi-urban

PART II

Social commerce

1. How did you learn about social commerce? (use multiple responses)

Sl. No	Statements
1.	☐ Through social media ads
2.	☐ Through recommendations from friends or family
3.	☐ Through online articles or blogs
4.	☐ Through a search engine
5.	☐ Through personal research
6.	☐ Any other (specify)

2. How familiar you are with social commerce?

☐ Very familiar
☐ Somewhat familiar
☐ Not very familiar
☐ Not at all familiar

3. How frequently do you use social media?

☐ Multiple times in a day
☐ Daily
☐ A few times in a week
☐ Once in a week or less

4. How often do you make a purchase through social media platforms?

☐ Frequently
☐ Sometimes
☐ Rarely
☐ Never

5. Which social commerce website(s) on social media do you use? (use multiple responses)

☐ Facebook
☐ Instagram
☐ Twitter
☐ Pinterest
☐ LinkedIn
☐ Comment sold
☐ Snapchat
☐ Any other (specify)

6. What made you buy from the social commerce platforms?

Sl. No	Statements
1.	☐ Convenience of browsing
2.	☐ Customer reviews and ratings
3.	☐ Personalized recommendations and targeted advertising
4.	☐ Trustworthiness of the social commerce platform
5.	☐ Exclusive deals, discounts, and offers
6.	☐ Influencer marketing
7.	☐ Ease and security of payment options
8.	☐ Availability of customer service and support
9.	☐ Variety and quality of products
10.	☐ Social and interactive nature
11.	☐ Any other (please specify)

7. Do you agree that the following strategies will attract you towards social commerce platforms?

Sl. No	Strategies
1.	☐ Influencer marketing
2.	☐ User-generated contents
3.	☐ Gamification elements in the platforms
4.	☐ Target advertisements
5.	☐ Personalized product recommendations
6.	☐ Rewards and incentives offered by the platforms
7.	☐ Different modes of advertisement channels
8.	☐ Any other (please specify)

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8. What types of ads usually will you get in social commerce platforms?

Sl. No	Strategies
1.	☐ Social media adds
2.	☐ Sponsored content
3.	☐ Banner ads
4.	☐ Native ads
5.	☐ Pop-up ads
6.	☐ Retargeting ads
7.	☐ Any other (please specify)

9. How do you select the online retailors before making a purchase through social commerce?

Sl. No	Statements
1.	☐ Brand image
2.	☐ Cross selling or suggestive selling
3.	☐ Integrated shopping solutions
4.	☐ Superior photos and images in the platforms
5.	☐ A fast guest check-out option
6.	☐ Reviews and ratings
7.	☐ Advanced navigation and search functions
8.	☐ Detailed product description
9.	☐ Any other (please specify)

PART II

Perceived Ease of Use

1. Kindly show your agreement level for the following statements

(scale: 1 to 5: 5 - strongly agree; 4 - agree; 3 - neutral; 2 - disagree; 1 - strongly disagree)

Sl. No	Statements	5	4	3	2	1
	A) Simple, easy and fast					
1	I find it easy to use for purchasing fashion products.					
2	It is user-friendly and easy to navigate.					
3	It makes shopping for fashion products a fast and efficient experience for me.					
	B) Secure					
1	I feel safe making purchases because they use encryption technology to protect my information.					
2	I am confident because I have strong security measures to protect my personal information.					
3	I trust that my personal information will be kept secure.					
4	I believe in secure payment systems that protect my financial information.					

User Engagement

2. Kindly show your agreement level for the following statements

(scale: 1 to 5: 5 - strongly agree; 4 - agree; 3 - neutral; 2 - disagree; 1 - strongly disagree)

Sl. No	Statements	5	4	3	2	1
	C) Followers					
1	I am more likely to engage because they have a large community of followers.					
2	It is perceived as more credible and trustworthy.					
3	The number of followers a fashion brand has on social media reflects their popularity and reputation in the industry.					

	D) Frequency of visit					
1	I frequently visit the social media pages of fashion brands I like.					
2	Regularly checking helps me stay up-to-date with their latest products and promotions.					
3	It influences my overall perception of the product.					
	E) Likes and comments					
1	I will make a purchase if I see positive comments and likes on their social media posts.					
2	I feel more connected to a fashion brand when I can interact through likes and comments on social media.					
3	The number of likes and comments on a fashion brand's social media post affects my likelihood of making a purchase.					

Technological Factors

3. Kindly show your agreement level for the following statements

(scale: 1 to 5: 5 - strongly agree; 4 - agree; 3 - neutral; 2 - disagree; 1 - strongly disagree)

Sl. No	Statements	5	4	3	2	1
	A) Website design					
1	It is visually appealing and engaging.					
2	It enhances my shopping experience.					
3	It is consistent with the brand's image and values.					
4	It makes me feel confident in making a purchase.					
	B) Website functionality and performance					
1	Its search function is accurate and efficient.					
2	It provides clear and detailed product information.					
3	Its performance is fast and responsive.					
4	The website's product images are high-quality and provide a good representation of the product.					

Social Commerce

4. Kindly show your agreement level for the following statements

(scale: 1 to 5: 5 - strongly agree; 4 - agree; 3 - neutral; 2 - disagree; 1 - strongly disagree)

Sl. No	Statements	5	4	3	2	1
	A) Influencers					
1	They make the shopping experience for fashion products more enjoyable.					
2	Their use and their recommendations make me more interested in the products.					
3	Their presence will add value to the shopping experience for fashion products.					
4	Because of them, it is easier for me to discover new fashion products.					
	B) Social media advertisement					
1	I perceive social media advertisements for fashion items as pertinent to my interests and requirements.					
2	It is more effective compared to traditional modes of advertising.					
3	It is informative and provides me with useful product information.					
	C) Social trust					
1	I believe that it has fair and transparent policies for returns and refunds.					
2	I trust that it will handle any issues or complaints I have in a timely and effective manner.					
3	I feel secure sharing my personal and payment information for purchases.					

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Purchase Intention

5. Kindly show your agreement level for the following statements

(scale: 1 to 5: 5 - strongly agree; 4 - agree; 3 - neutral; 2 - disagree; 1 - strongly disagree)

Sl. No	Statements	5	4	3	2	1
	A) Purchase intention					
1	I intend to purchase fashion products in the near future.					
2	I am willing to spend money on fashion products.					
3	I have a strong inclination to purchase fashion products.					
4	The promotions and discounts will increase my intention to buy.					
5	I am inclined to buy from social commerce websites or apps rather than traditional online stores or physical stores.					