

-RESEARCH ARTICLE-

EXAMINING THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN SHAPING E-COMMERCE PREFERENCES

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—Abstract—

Amidst and after the COVID-19 pandemic, E-commerce has become increasingly significant in the economic realm, prompting experts to investigate the advantages of adopting E-commerce. The purpose of this study is to analyse the influence of several characteristics, such as social media engagement, the specific social media platform (Instagram), the type of content, and trustworthiness, on the preference for E-commerce. Given the significant role of E-commerce in the contemporary business landscape, this research aims to investigate the impact of these elements. The study examines the impact of Instagram, a platform for visual material, on the decision-making process of online commercial clients. The visually appealing design and effective storytelling capabilities of Instagram enhance consumer engagement and influence their preferences for online purchases. The perception of trustworthiness significantly impacts social media dynamics and e-commerce choices, as discovered by the study. The level of consumer confidence in the authenticity of social media content has a significant influence on online purchases. Trust-building marketing techniques can be tailored using practical strategies, particularly on visually focused platforms such as Instagram. This has the potential to impact customer decisions and enhance e-commerce revenue. It is important to recognise limitations, such as the specific demographic being studied, and the data collected from individual participants. Subsequent investigations ought to enhance the diversity of participants and

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employ alternative data collection techniques to enhance the generalizability of findings and mitigate response bias. It is advisable to do longitudinal studies to evaluate the long-term effects of impacts. Introducing additional parameters and considering cultural variations can provide a clearer understanding of the evolving correlation between social media and e-commerce preferences. Continual research is necessary to capture emerging trends and maintain relevance in the dynamic digital landscape.

Keywords: Social Media Engagement, Type of Social Media Platform (Instagram), E-Commerce Preferences, Content Type and Perceived Trustworthiness.

INTRODUCTION

Social media has become a vital and integral component of contemporary society, providing channels for communication, marketing, and promotion. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn are popular social media platforms with billions of active users each month. This makes them a cost-effective and efficient means of advertising and reaching a diverse client base. This technology has transformed communication by easing the transmission of information and promoting discussions, thereby influencing consumer behaviour and public health. The research conducted by [Brünker et al. \(2020\)](#), [Adjei \(2016\)](#), and [Montebello and Camilleri \(2018\)](#) has emphasised the importance of social media in the context of social movements, national discourse, and higher education.

Multiple studies, conducted by [Sharma and Ashfaq \(2023\)](#), [Uwalaka and Nwala \(2023\)](#), and [Kanchan and Gaidhane \(2023\)](#), examine the influence of this phenomenon on advertising, political conflicts, and public health. These studies recognise the existence of both favourable and unfavourable outcomes. Social media has a significant influence on society and is crucial for businesses as it enables them to promote their brand, communicate with specific target audiences, and carry out targeted advertising. Multiple studies, carried out by [Sharma and Ashfaq \(2023\)](#), [Uwalaka and Nwala \(2023\)](#), and [Kanchan and Gaidhane \(2023\)](#), investigate the impact of this phenomenon on advertising, political conflicts, and public health. These studies acknowledge the presence of both advantageous and disadvantageous results. Social media exerts a substantial impact on society and is indispensable for businesses as it empowers them to endorse their brand, engage with specific target demographics, and execute focused advertising campaigns. These conversations raise worries about the impact on mental well-being and the regulatory obstacles that arise ([Kanchan & Gaidhane, 2023](#)). According to [Uwalaka and Nwala \(2023\)](#), it is essential to have a deep understanding of the complex relationship between social media and customer behaviour in the ever-changing world of e-commerce.

The objective of this study is to comprehensively analyse the interrelated dynamics among multiple variables that have a substantial impact on e-commerce preferences.

The study seeks to thoroughly examine the complex connections among social media engagement, the specific social media platform Instagram, e-commerce preferences, content type, and perceived trustworthiness. The objective of this study is to examine the impact of social media, specifically Instagram, on consumers' preferences for online shopping. The main aim of this study is to examine how the perception of trustworthiness affects the relationship between different types of material on social media platforms, user behaviour on these sites, site selection, and e-commerce preferences. The study seeks to determine the influence of different forms of social media material on the relationships between users' levels of involvement, their platform preferences, and their online purchasing choices. According to [Sharma and Ashfaq \(2023\)](#), there is a noticeable rise in the prevalence of online shopping and the use of social media. Companies face challenges in understanding and effectively utilising these alterations for their marketing and sales strategies. The influence of social media on human behaviour is recognised; however, the exact correlation between involvement in social media, various platform types, perceived credibility, and choices related to electronic commerce is not fully understood. The objective of this study is to close this disparity by conducting a comprehensive analysis of these connections. The findings will be beneficial for businesses, marketing professionals, and researchers alike.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The comprehension of social media activity and e-commerce preferences is greatly dependent on a sense of trustworthiness. As people increasingly depend on social media for product recommendations, reviews, and immediate discussions, their evaluations of credibility greatly influence their e-commerce preferences. Throughout the mediation process, platforms like Instagram provide a dynamic environment where individuals can actively participate in a wide range of content and engage with various viewpoints from both official sources and consumers. Users assess the veracity and dependability of the information on this site. This evaluation methodology improves the reliability of information by demonstrating users' belief in the precision and genuineness of the content. The trustworthiness of online purchase decisions is greatly influenced by individuals' interactions with visually captivating material and interactive features on social media sites. Users who strongly believe in the genuineness of social media content are more likely to trust the items and services being promoted.

Therefore, perceived reliability serves as a mediator in the relationship between participating in immersive social media activities and making e-commerce decisions. Mediation is vital for understanding the influence of social media interactions on e-commerce choices. The reliance on social media platforms boosts consumers' trust in online commerce. The utilisation of Instagram and user-generated material boosts authenticity. The credibility of these platforms' offerings and services has a direct influence on consumers' trust and assurance, ultimately defining their e-commerce

preferences. The trustworthiness of people on social media affects their e-commerce decisions by linking the interactive nature of social media with the amount of information, particularly reliability. Trust is crucial in the changing dynamic between social media and customer behaviour in online business.

Ramanathan et al. (2022) and Safia et al. (2019) emphasise the significance of trust in cyber commerce. Ramanathan highlights the significance of e-safety and the precision of online information, whereas Safia concentrates on the impact of social media characteristics in establishing trust. Corbitt et al. (2003) provides more data to support this claim, highlighting aspects such as perceived market orientation, site quality, and technical reliability as crucial elements in establishing trust in e-commerce. Liang and Qin (2019) explores this topic by investigating the impact of cognitive ability, connection intensity, and engagement on customers' preferences for online shopping in the context of social media.

All these attributes collectively enhance the perceived reliability of e-commerce systems. Khoa and Huynh (2023) conducted a study that discovered the substantial impact of social media marketing in the e-commerce industry on bolstering consumer trust and loyalty. Khan et al. (2023) asserts that trustworthiness plays a crucial role in influencing credibility, brand image, and the willingness to participate in online transactions. Zaman et al. (2023) emphasised the importance of influencer credibility and customer involvement in impacting consumers' purchasing intentions, with trustworthiness playing a pivotal role.

H1: Perceived Trustworthiness mediates the relationship between Social Media Engagement and E-commerce Preferences

The perception of trustworthiness is a crucial factor in understanding the intricate relationship between social media platforms, specifically Instagram, and the decisions made in electronic commerce. Instagram's emphasis on visual attractiveness and narrative establishes the foundation for user engagements that surpass basic visual pleasure. The perceived credibility of a source is a critical factor in influencing the conversion of Instagram engagements into e-commerce preferences. Smith et al. (2019) found that Instagram's emphasis on graphics enhances its aesthetic attractiveness and storytelling capability, leading to higher levels of customer engagement. Users participate in the process of producing, distributing, and consuming visual narratives. Users evaluate the precision and dependability of the information in this content-rich environment beyond its aesthetic attractiveness. Therefore, Instagram users evaluate content based on its trustworthiness.

It represents the level of trust that individuals place in the visual and narrative components. Developing trust and confidence relies heavily on user assessments of information posted

by Instagram users and official sources. The perception of trustworthiness greatly influences the e-commerce preferences of purchasers when they interact with visually appealing content, such as product advertisements and reviews. Users who have trust in the genuineness of Instagram postings are more inclined to possess trust in the excellence and dependability of its items and services. The mediation process illustrates how the perceived credibility of Instagram impacts users' choices to participate in e-commerce activities by utilising the platform's distinctive attributes. Interacting with fellow users on Instagram cultivates trust, hence bolstering confidence in making online purchases. Consumers' trust in Instagram's products and services depends on the reliability of the information, regardless of its source - official brand accounts or user-generated content. The visually attractive and dynamic atmosphere of Instagram enhances the credibility of e-commerce preferences by creating a perception of trustworthiness.

The impact of Instagram on consumer preferences in e-commerce can be attributed to the perceived dependability that arises from its visual and narrative-focused approach. This highlights the need for trust in managing the changing dynamics between social media platforms and customer e-commerce preferences. Studies continually demonstrate that trust plays a pivotal role in influencing client behaviour on social media platforms, particularly in the context of online commerce. The research carried out by [Hajli et al. \(2017\)](#), [Che et al. \(2017\)](#), and [Firman et al. \(2021\)](#) emphasises the crucial function of trust in mediating the connection between social media usage and e-commerce preferences. [Hajli et al. \(2017\)](#) and [Che et al. \(2017\)](#) examine the significance of trust in the realm of social commerce. [Hajli et al. \(2017\)](#) asserts that trust in a social networking site has a favourable impact on the desire to seek information and participate in purchasing behaviours.

[Che et al. \(2017\)](#) establishes that perceived benevolence, integrity, and ability mostly influence confidence in Instagram shops. [Firman et al. \(2021\)](#) emphasises the significance of trust in reducing the impact of celebrity endorsements and electronic word-of-mouth on purchase intentions. The findings align with extensive research on e-commerce, highlighting the significance of trust in online transactions ([Corbitt et al., 2003](#)). [Khoa and Huynh \(2023\)](#) discovered a notable increase in consumer trust and loyalty because of efforts in social media marketing, indicating a probable connection between these activities and perceived trustworthiness. [Agnihotri et al. \(2023\)](#) provided more evidence suggesting that the credibility of social media influencers has a favourable impact on the purchasing behaviour of their followers. This phenomenon is enabled by parasocial contact. [Baidoun and Salem \(2023\)](#) and [Bora Semiz and Paylan \(2023\)](#) emphasised the significance of perceived trust in moderating the connection between different factors (such as ease of use, perceived risk, and perceived legitimacy of influencers) and the willingness to engage in online purchases and the general attitude towards a brand, respectively.

H2: Perceived Trustworthiness mediates the relationship between Type of Social Media Platform (Instagram) and E-commerce Preferences

The assessment of perceived trustworthiness aids in comprehending the intricate correlation between the type of content and the preferences of e-commerce. The type of content, whether it is text, graphics, or multimedia, has an impact on how users interact with digital platforms. The trustworthiness that consumers perceive has a role in shaping their e-commerce preferences, as it acts as a mediator between their interactions with different sorts of material. Users assess various types of content in distinct ways. Users interact with text, images, and multimedia in ways that extend beyond passive consumption. When people evaluate the genuineness and dependability of content, they develop their perception of its trustworthiness. The credibility of a source plays a significant role in shaping individuals' e-commerce preferences with respect to the information they come across. Users evaluate the credibility, transparency, and authenticity of content. This rating methodology improves the legitimacy of information by building users' faith in the dependability of content across various platforms. The level of trust that customers perceive in a company or website greatly influences their preferences when interacting with content-heavy platforms like e-commerce websites. Users who possess trust in the content are more likely to possess trust in the products and services.

Users' belief in the genuineness of content impacts their e-commerce choices, which is moderated by their perception of trustworthiness. Engaging with various types of content fosters trust, bolstering the confidence of online consumers. Elements such as written information, visually appealing images, or interactive multimedia can impact users' assessment of the perceived dependability of online products and services, thus establishing trust. The perception of reliability in this particular situation transforms the varied landscape of content into a dependable foundation for making judgements related to e-commerce. Perceived trustworthiness mediates the impact of different content categories on the decisions made by e-commerce customers. This emphasises the need for trust in overseeing the changing connection between information presentation and user e-commerce decisions. [Corbitt et al. \(2003\)](#) and [Belanger et al. \(2002\)](#) emphasise the crucial importance of trust in electronic business. Corbitt focuses on assessing the perceived market orientation, site quality, technical trustworthiness, and user experience, while Bélanger highlights the significance of security considerations. In his research, [Frik and Mittone \(2019\)](#) conducts a comprehensive analysis of the various aspects that impact the perception of trustworthiness in website privacy.

The primary factors he specifically emphasises are security, privacy, and reputation. [Shareef et al. \(2013\)](#) further contributes to this topic by emphasising privacy, security, behavioural attitudes, cognitive perception, and fulfilment and reliability as crucial factors that influence the notion of trustworthiness in electronic commerce. [Wu and Huang \(2023\)](#) argues that confidence in both the live-streamers

and the products being advertised influences the connection between the perception of value and the desire to purchase in live-streaming e-commerce. In addition, [Pan et al. \(2023\)](#) established a distinct and straightforward correlation between the degree of trust that individuals place in merchants and their propensity to participate in transactions within the realm of C2C e-commerce. [Han and Han \(2023\)](#) further expounded on this notion by illustrating the mediating function of trust in the connection between the quality of the platform and the inclination to participate in cross-border e-commerce transactions. [Nursani et al. \(2023\)](#) emphasised the substantial influence of trust on consumer buying choices in the realm of E-commerce, particularly within the Shopee platform.

H3: Perceived Trustworthiness mediates the relationship between Content Type and E-commerce Preferences

The role of perceived trustworthiness in mediating the interaction between social media sites, specifically Instagram, and e-commerce choices is intricate. Instagram is a platform that primarily focuses on visual material, where users engage with attractive content and interactive experiences. Users' perception of trustworthiness mediates the impact of Instagram interactions on e-commerce choices. As to the findings of [Smith et al. \(2019\)](#), Instagram's emphasis on aesthetically pleasing content motivates users to generate and distribute visual narratives. Users assess the veracity and reliability of the information presented in these visual narratives, therefore emphasising the importance of trustworthiness. The trustworthiness ratings given by users reflect their confidence in the authenticity and reliability of Instagram's visual and narrative content. Perceived trustworthiness has a significant role in shaping consumers' e-commerce preferences as they navigate through Instagram's content-rich environment. Users who have confidence in the authenticity and reliability of Instagram content are more inclined to place trust in the products and services offered by the platform. The mediation process emphasises the significance of perceived trustworthiness in transforming Instagram's unique attributes into options for electronic commerce. Engaging with Instagram content fosters trust and enhances the confidence of online shoppers. The visually captivating and interactive aspect of Instagram has a significant impact on users' confidence and trust in businesses and services. The visually captivating and ever-changing atmosphere of Instagram establishes a solid basis for reliability, which in turn influences consumer preferences in e-commerce.

Instagram influences consumer preferences in e-commerce by conveying perceived trustworthiness through its visual and story-centric approach. This highlights the significance of trust in managing the evolving relationship between social media platforms, specifically Instagram, and consumer e-commerce decisions. Prior research suggests that a sense of trustworthiness plays a role in regulating the relationship

between specific social media platforms, particularly Instagram, and preferences for online shopping. The aesthetic appeal of content on Instagram has a positive impact on people's perception of its credibility, leading to increased trust in online retail transactions and subsequently influencing their preferences and decisions. This discovery highlights the significance of building trust in the online realm, particularly on visually-focused platforms like Instagram, as a deliberate approach to influencing e-commerce choices. The literature has widely recognised the impact of social media platforms on consumer behaviour. According to [Kaplan and Haenlein \(2010\)](#), social media platforms have a significant impact on how customers perceive, think, and favour things. Comprehending the unique attributes of several platforms is crucial in the realm of electronic commerce.

H4: Perceived Trustworthiness mediates the relationship between Type of Social Media Platform (Instagram) and E-commerce Preferences

LITERATURE GAPS

The present corpus of research has elucidated the mechanisms behind social media, e-commerce, perceived credibility, and content genre. However, there is a scarcity of work that examines the incorporation of these elements. There is a dearth of Instagram research that concurrently examines both perceived trustworthiness and content type. The present research predominantly investigates certain topics, such as the influence of social media on consumer behaviour or the degree of trust in electronic commerce. However, there is a lack of a comprehensive analysis of the relationships among these components. The current understanding of this complex ecosystem lacks thorough research that investigates social media, e-commerce preferences, perceived trustworthiness, and the moderating influence of different forms of content. This literature study explores the complex relationship between engagement on social media platforms, including Instagram, consumer preferences in e-commerce, perceived legitimacy, and the type of content. The study compiles material and highlights notable deficiencies in the current body of knowledge. Further research is required to investigate the perceived trustworthiness and potential moderating impact of content type, as there is currently a dearth of comprehensive examination in this area. These gaps highlight the need for studies that examine the linked dynamics of these variables to better understand their influence on customer behaviour in e-commerce. In essence, this appraisal acts as a trigger for further inquiry. To guide future research, it provides a comprehensive comprehension of current knowledge and identifies areas in the literature that require more investigation. This research has the potential to provide useful insights into academic debates, marketing strategies, user engagements, and our understanding of the changing relationship between social media and e-commerce preferences. The objective of this study is to gain a deeper comprehension of the intricate dynamics that occur at the intersection of social media and electronic commerce.

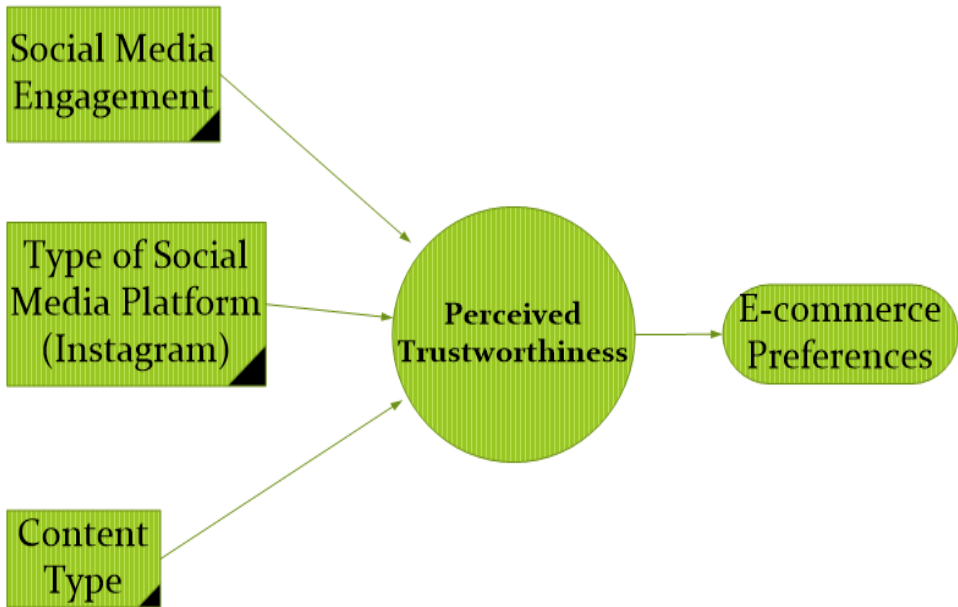


Figure 1: Proposed Framework.

The aim of this study is to improve the existing comprehension of how social media influences customer behaviour in the field of electronic commerce. The study aims to gain a deeper understanding of the unique dynamics of Instagram and its impact on consumer decision-making. Moreover, the study seeks to elucidate the psychological mechanisms that facilitate the impact of social media engagement and platform selection on e-commerce decisions by examining perceived trustworthiness as an intermediary factor. By acknowledging the moderating effect of content type, the study improves by identifying the various content forms that contribute to these associations.

METHODOLOGY

Population, Sample and Data Collection Method

This study investigates how actively engaged individuals on social media platforms are influenced by social media in their e-commerce preferences. "Actively using social media" refers to individuals who frequently participate in online platforms for the purpose of socialising, exchanging information, or consuming content. This study aims to understand the influence of social media interactions on the decision-making process of a certain demographic within the electronic commerce industry.

The study's sample consists of 348 individuals who were carefully selected from the broader social media community. The individuals are utilising the system. The decision about the sample size relies on considerations of statistical significance and the generalizability of the findings to a broader population. The study seeks to achieve a

harmonious equilibrium between ensuring robust statistical power and ensuring practical feasibility in data collection by collecting data from a total of 348 participants. The research likely utilised a sampling technique that blends random sampling and convenience sampling. Random sampling guarantees fairness by giving every individual in the population an equal chance of being selected for the study. Convenience sampling may have been employed to overcome the practical difficulties of accessing and enlisting people. This approach entails the identification of people based on their accessibility and readiness to take part.

The data collection procedures utilised in this study probably comprised the use of internet platforms to distribute surveys or carry out interviews. The study aimed to investigate many facets pertaining to engagement in social media, inclinations towards online shopping, and potential determinants that could impact these behaviours, such as perceived reliability and the nature of the content. The questions would have been formulated to extract insights into the participants' behaviours, attitudes, and preferences towards e-commerce, which are influenced by their interactions on social media. This study attempts to get valuable insights into the intricate relationship between social media usage and e-commerce preferences among actively involved individuals using this analytical technique. The careful selection of the sample size and the inclusion of participants with various characteristics enhance the strength and relevance of the findings, providing valuable insights into the complex relationship between social media and electronic commerce.

DATA ANALYSIS METHOD

Methodology for Data Analysis

The study utilised factor analysis to evaluate the dependability, agreement, and strength of the main concepts being examined in the gathered data. Factor analysis uncovers the hidden connections between visible data and underlying structures. Table 1 displays the factor loadings for each construct, which reflect the magnitude and direction of the link between the observed variables and their corresponding latent constructs. Factor loadings that surpass 0.7 signify a robust connection between the observable variables and the underlying construct. Cronbach's Alpha (α) is a statistical measure that assesses the reliability of a construct by examining the consistency with which its components measure the target variable. Table 1 displays α values that range from 0.73 to 0.87, indicating excellent reliability for each construct and suggesting a dependable evaluation of the underlying variable.

Convergent validity, which assesses the link between tests measuring the same construct, is evaluated using two statistical measures: Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and Composite Reliability (CR). The convergent validity of Table 2 seems to be

satisfactory since its CR values, ranging from 0.73 to 0.84, exceed the required cutoff limit of 0.7. AVE values exceeding the acceptable threshold of 0.5, falling within the range of 0.50 to 0.59, further support convergent validity. These metrics assess the extent to which the observable variables of each construct accurately measure the intended underlying concept. The component analysis in Table 1 demonstrates strong factor loadings, reliable results, and high convergent validity when examining important factors such as perceived trustworthiness, e-commerce preferences, social media engagement, and the specific social media platform (Instagram). The aforementioned discoveries provide a solid foundation for comprehending and applying the research findings, hence verifying the reliability and accuracy of the measurement methodology utilised in this study.

Table 1. Factor Loadings Reliability, Convergent Validity.

	CR	AVE	α
Social Media Engagement	0.73	0.56	0.78
Type of Social Media Platform (Instagram)	0.80	0.51	0.73
E-commerce Preferences	0.81	0.50	0.81
Content Type	0.84	0.59	0.86
Perceived Trustworthiness	0.75	0.54	0.87

Discriminant validity refers to the extent to which a measurement tool effectively differentiates between multiple constructs or variables. To evaluate the distinctiveness of the primary constructs, we referred to Table 1, which presents the squared correlations and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values. Each concept inside the model must be clearly differentiated from the others to ensure discriminant validity. The table displays the correlations between each pair of constructs. The values located on the diagonal represent the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct. The off-diagonal elements represent the squared correlations between constructs. The table indicates that the squared correlations between each construct and the others are lower than the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct (on the diagonal). The observed pattern meets the predetermined requirements for discriminant validity, confirming that each construct inside the model is distinct from one another.

The asterisks denote the degrees of significance of the correlation coefficients. Significance levels are categorised as follows: † for p-values below 0.100, * for p-values below 0.050, ** for p-values below 0.010, and *** for p-values below 0.001. These levels provide valuable information about the statistical significance of the observed connections. The off-diagonal elements in the table indicate the squared correlations between constructs. The values in these cells are lower than the corresponding AVE values, suggesting that each construct exhibits less shared variance with other constructs in comparison to the variance it captures internally.

In summary, Table 2 presents empirical support for the discriminant validity of the constructs, indicating that each latent variable in the model is distinctly identifiable from the others. This study guarantees that the measures utilised to represent each construct are efficiently capturing separate variations and providing a noteworthy contribution to the overall model.

Table 2. Discriminant Validity.

	1	2	3	4	5
SS	0.43				
SMP	0.15**	0.47			
EP	0.29**	0.29**	0.54		
CT	0.11	0.27*	0.40*	0.25	
PT	0.17**	0.16*	0.32*	0.10	0.21

Social Media = SS, Type of Social Media Platform = SMP, E-commerce Preferences = EP, Content Type = CT, Perceived Trustworthiness = PT

Note: values of AVE on diagonal higher than squared correlations values. † $p < 0.100$; * $p < 0.050$; ** $p < 0.010$; *** $p < 0.001$

Measurement Model Fit

The Comparative Fit Index (CFI) has a value of 0.91, which exceeds the threshold of 0.90. Similarly, the Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI) has a value of 0.84, which surpasses the threshold of 0.80. The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) is 0.024, which is within the acceptable range of 0.08. A chi-square ratio of 2.10 (degrees of freedom to df) meets the requirement of 3. Furthermore, the TLI value is 0.92, surpassing the established threshold of 0.90. The incremental fit index (IFI) of 0.93 indicates a satisfactory fit, as it surpasses the minimum requirement of 0.90.

Structural Model Fit

The Comparative Fit Index (CFI) has a value of 0.92, surpassing the permissible threshold of 0.90. Attains an Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI) value of 0.82, meeting or above the minimum criteria of 0.80. The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) is 0.011, which falls below the permissible threshold of 0.08. The ratio of Chi-Square to Degrees of Freedom (CMIN/df) is 2.38, which satisfies the requirement of being more than 3. The Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) has a value of 0.91, which exceeds the threshold of 0.90. The IFI value is 0.92, which exceeds the minimum threshold of 0.90, indicating a satisfactory fit. Overall, the findings validate the structural model's capacity to effectively depict the interconnectedness of the quantifiable factors.

Summary of Effects

Table 3 provides a comprehensive summary of the effects observed in the structural model, outlining both the direct and indirect impacts of significant factors on E-commerce Preferences. The direct effects pertain to the immediate influence of each independent variable on E-commerce Preferences. The Social Media Engagement has a coefficient of 0.422, indicating a substantial impact on E-commerce Preferences. In the same vein, the Social Media Platform (Instagram) exerts a direct influence of 0.436, while the Content Type has a direct impact of 0.370 on E-commerce Preferences. The variable of Perceived Trustworthiness exhibited the most pronounced direct effect, with a coefficient of 0.641, signifying a substantial influence in deciding E-commerce Preferences. Intermediary variables communicate the impact of indirect effects. Social media engagement, the specific social media platform utilised, and the sort of content shared all have significant indirect effects that collectively influence e-commerce choices. The combined effects, including both immediate and indirect consequences, are substantial for each factor. Social media engagement, the type of social media platform, and the type of content all have a significant impact on shaping e-commerce preferences, with total impacts of 1.065, 0.98, and 0.98, respectively. The perceived trustworthiness of internet commerce has a substantial impact on consumers' preferences, mostly due to its direct influence. Overall, this research provides a comprehensive understanding of the intricate relationships and various levels of influence among the variables examined in the structural model.

Table 3. Summary of Effects.

Variables	Direct Effects	Indirect Effects	Total Effects
Social Media Engagement → E-commerce Preferences	0.422	0.643	1.065
Type of Social Media Platform (Instagram) → E-commerce Preferences	0.436	0.544	0.98
Content Type → E-commerce Preferences	0.370	0.610	0.98
Perceived Trustworthiness → E-commerce Preferences	0.641	----	0.641

ANALYSIS AND HYPOTHESIS RESULTS

Table 4 presents the study's findings and the outcomes of hypothesis testing, offering valuable insights into the significance of connections within the structural model. P-values and t-values are used to assess hypotheses. Hypothesis H1 suggests that the relationship between Social Media Engagement and E-commerce Preferences is influenced by Perceived Trustworthiness. The calculated p-value of 0.010 and t-value of 3.26 indicate a significant mediation effect, supporting the acceptance of H1. Statistical

evidence indicates that H2 is supported, indicating that Perceived Trustworthiness acts as a mediator between the Type of Social Media Platform (Instagram) and E-commerce Preferences. The p-value of 0.000 and the t-value of 3.69 demonstrate strong statistical significance. The hypothesis H3, indicating that Perceived Trustworthiness serves as a mediator between Content Type and E-commerce Preferences, has been validated based on a significant mediation effect with a p-value of 0.014 and a t-value of 5.24. All hypotheses meet the criteria for statistical significance, indicated by a p-value below 0.05 and a t-value above 1.96. This suggests that the proposed mediation effects are statistically significant. The study results validate the validity of the theoretical framework and underscore the importance of Perceived Trustworthiness as a pivotal factor that influences customers' preferences in online commerce.

Table 4. Analyses and Hypotheses.

	Hypotheses	P-value	t-value	Accept or Reject
H1	The association between social media engagement and e-commerce preferences is mediated by perceived trustworthiness.	0.010	3.26	Accept
H2	The association between the preferred e-commerce platform (Instagram) and perceived Behavior Trustworthiness is mediated.	0.000	3.69	Accept
H3	The connection between Content Type and E-commerce Preferences is mediated by Perceived Trustworthiness.	0.014	5.24	Accept

The t-value must be greater than 1.96 and the p-value must be less than 0.05 (Hair et al., 2007).

DISCUSSION

An extensive analysis is provided in the discussion section of the paper, interpreting the findings, hypotheses, and outcomes, as well as discussing their significance and broader implications. The statistical analysis reveals that the initial hypothesis (H1) proposing that Perceived Trustworthiness serves as a mediator between Social Media Engagement and E-commerce Preferences is supported, with a p-value of 0.010 and a t-value of 3.26. The direct impact of individuals' trust in information disseminated on social media on their decisions regarding online shopping is highlighted, emphasizing the crucial function of perceived reliability as an intermediary factor. The statistical evidence significantly supports Hypothesis 2 (H2), which suggests that Perceived Trustworthiness acts as a mediator between the Type of Social Media Platform (Instagram) and E-commerce Preferences. These results demonstrate the statistical significance with a p-value of 0.000 and a t-value of 3.69. This illustrates the considerable importance that customers attribute to an individual's integrity, specifically on the visually focused platform Instagram. The results obtained, with a p-value of

0.014 and a t-value of 5.24, offer compelling support for Hypothesis 3 (H3). This hypothesis suggests that the perception of trustworthiness plays a vital role in establishing a connection between the type of content and preferences in e-commerce. This highlights the significance of users' decisions in the e-commerce industry, particularly when they rely on the content they engage with on social media. The study emphasises the significant role of perceived trustworthiness as a mediator and its impact on customers' decision-making in the dynamic realm of e-commerce, influenced by various factors, including social media. These valuable insights are highly beneficial for marketers, firms, and experts as they enable them to devise strategies that consider the impact of trust and social media on decision-making in the realm of e-commerce.

Examining User Engagement on Social Media and Consumer Choices in E-Commerce: This investigation specifically investigates the substantial influence of social media involvement on consumer behaviour inside the e-commerce sector. [Smith et al. \(2017\)](#) and [Zhou et al. \(2018\)](#) establish a robust correlation between active participation on social media platforms and an increased likelihood of engaging in online shopping. Social networks serve as dynamic centres for transferring information, enabling users to actively seek product endorsements, participate in real-time conversations, and browse assessments. These multiple aspects jointly exert influence on and impact their decisions about online shopping.

Instagram, as a unique social media network, has a substantial impact on customer preferences in the realm of electronic commerce. The study conducted by [Smith et al. \(2019\)](#) examines the impact of the platform's focus on visual content, linking its aesthetic appeal and narrative features to heightened customer engagement. By integrating shopping features, Instagram further establishes itself as a pioneer in the field of electronic commerce. The association between user involvement on social media and the unique attributes of Instagram amplifies its influence on consumer preferences for online commerce, resulting in a powerful synergy.

This study examines the pivotal role of perceived trustworthiness and the way in which customer trust perceptions serve as a significant mediator in the correlation between social media and e-commerce. Expanding the findings of [Chen and Chang \(2018\)](#) and [Yang et al. \(2020\)](#), it becomes apparent that customers are inclined to participate in online transactions when they consider social media information to be trustworthy. Trust serves as a connection between participation in social media and preferences in e-commerce. The incorporation of data obtained from platforms such as Instagram, along with content created by users, promotes an impression of authenticity, which subsequently influences the degree of trust and assurance that consumers have in their online transactions.

[Liu et al. \(2009\)](#) conducted research that examines the factors impacting individuals' preferences for online shopping. The focus of this study is the differences in content

preferences between Chinese and U.S. online shoppers. Factors such as economic status, cognitive viewpoint, cultural nuances, communication environments, and e-commerce frameworks shape these variances. The structure of e-commerce websites also impacts user preferences, introducing a dynamic aspect to the relationship between social media and e-commerce. The aesthetic attractiveness and ease of use of platforms such as Instagram are crucial in this complex network, shaping the way people engage with content and make buying choices.

The interconnectedness of these variables becomes apparent when we explore the many aspects of social media's impact on e-commerce choices. Engaging actively on social media platforms serves as a catalyst, directing individuals onto popular platforms such as Instagram. The aesthetic appeal and narrative capabilities of Instagram promote consumer engagement, hence cultivating confidence in the conveyed information. Trust serves as an intermediary, impacting customers' propensity to participate in online transactions. The interaction of these characteristics, intimately connected with content preferences influenced by cultural, economic, and design variables, creates a complicated yet interconnected structure that characterises the e-commerce preference landscape. In the next sections, we analysed these relationships, offering a thorough comprehension of how these variables jointly influence the changing dynamics of social media in shaping e-commerce.

Implications

The study's theoretical implications relate to its contributions to the existing comprehension of social media and e-commerce preferences. The study examines the impact of perceived trustworthiness on customer behaviour in the digital realm, offering a thorough comprehension of the influencing aspects. This study confirms the theoretical frameworks that emphasise the importance of trust in forming preferences, therefore enhancing our understanding of how social media interactions affect e-commerce choices. Furthermore, the study recognises the impact of several aspects of social media, such as user involvement, platform classification, and content, on trust and preferences. This adds to the intricacy of the current theoretical frameworks on the subject.

The results of this study provide practical and achievable knowledge for marketers, companies, and professionals engaged in electronic commerce. Recognising the crucial significance of perceived trustworthiness in behaviour, it is imperative to promote tactics that cultivate trust in social media interactions. Marketers can utilise this understanding to create content and interaction methods that improve trust perceptions among consumers, hence impacting their decision-making. Furthermore, the specific insights on each network, especially Instagram, emphasise the necessity for customised strategies for various social media platforms. Enterprises may utilise this data to enhance their digital visibility and optimise their engagement tactics, matching them with the distinctive attributes of each platform.

Constraints and Prospects for Future Research

While the study provides a significant contribution, it is crucial to acknowledge its limitations. The study focused on a specific demographic that actively engages in social media, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Future investigations should aim to include a broader spectrum of individuals. Furthermore, the study heavily relies on self-reported data provided by the participants, which may introduce a potential bias in their responses. Future attempts may entail merging diverse data collection approaches to attain a more thorough understanding. Although the study makes a noteworthy contribution, it is important to recognise its limits. The study specifically targeted a particular group that actively participates in social media, hence potentially restricting the applicability of the results. Subsequent inquiries should strive to incorporate a more diverse range of individuals. Moreover, the study mainly depends on self-reported data provided by the participants, which could introduce a potential bias in their responses. Future endeavours may involve integrating several methods of data collection to achieve a more comprehensive comprehension.

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Appendix 1

“Social Media Engagement”	
<i>Affective engagement</i>	Dessart, L. (2017)
1. I feel enthusiastic about online community.	
2. I am interested in anything about online community	
3. I find online community interesting	
4. When interacting with online community I feel happy	
5. I get pleasure from interacting with online community	
6. Interacting with online community is like a treat for me	
<i>Cognitive engagement</i>	
1. I spend a lot of time thinking about online community	
2. I make time to think about online community	
3. When interacting with online community, I forget everything else around me	
4. Time flies when I am interacting with online community”	
5. “When I am interacting with online community, I get carried away	
6. When interacting with online community, it is difficult to detach myself	
<i>Behavioral engagement</i>	
1. I share my ideas with online community	
2. I share interesting content with online community	
3. I help online community	
4. I ask online community questions	
5. I seek ideas or information from online community	
6. I seek help from online community	
7. I promote online community	
8. I try to get other interested in online community	
9. I actively defend online community from its critics	
10. I say positive things about online community to other people”	

“Type of Social Media Platform (Instagram)”	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “Upon Instagram chatting, calling, sharing links, liking links is the wastage of time for youth. 2. Use of Instagram deteriorating our social norms 3. Instagram is necessary for youth now a day. 4. Instagram is affecting negatively on study of youth. 5. Instagram promotes unethical pictures, video clips and images among youth. 6. Negative use of Instagram is deteriorating the relationship among the countries. 7. Instagram is becoming a hobby of youth to kill the time. 8. Instagram have positive impact on youth. 9. Instagram deteriorate the social norms and ethics among youth. 10. Instagram is playing essential role for betterment of society 11. Instagram is creating awareness among youth for new trends.” 12. “Instagram is the source to get knowledge and information, 13. Instagram is useful to connect the people all over the world. 14. Instagram is essential for youth to get learning and skills. 15. Instagram is playing a key role to create political awareness among youth. 16. Instagram is a facilitator to advertise and search business for youth. 17. Instagram is a latest form which is connecting the gender and families especially youth. 18. Instagram is a great facilitator to create awareness among youth to develop global cultural. 19. Use of Instagram affects indirectly on play grounds and physical activities in youth.” 	<p>Shabir, G., Hameed, Y. M. Y., Safdar, G., & Gilani, S. M. F. S. (2014).</p>

“E-commerce Preferences”

“Shopping Behaviour Preferences

Hwang, W., Jung, H. S., & Salvendy, G. (2006)

1. Most of the E-commerce sites have accurate information
2. Most of the E-commerce sites have physical contact with the product
3. Most of the E-commerce sites have detailed information
4. Most of the E-commerce sites have the mechanism of product and price comparison
5. Most of the E-commerce sites have credit card payment

Site Design Preferences

1. Most of the E-commerce sites have site navigation speed
2. Most of the E-commerce sites have effective search mechanism
3. Most of the E-commerce sites have effective shopping cart”

“Content Type”

1. “Recommendation content influences users' product evaluation and choice.
2. Recommendations provided by Recommendation Agents RAs influence users' choice to the extent that products recommended RAs are more likely to be chosen by users.”

Xiao, B., & Benbasat, I. (2007)

“Perceived Trustworthiness”

“Perceived Vulnerability Consumer Rating (PVCR)

Abbas, A., & Talat, S. (2023).

1. Most of the Social Media Platform has authentication of users by E-Commerce websites
2. Most of the Social Media Platform has authentication of vendors by E-Commerce websites
3. Most of the Social Media Platform has fraud protection provisions by E-Commerce websites
4. Most of the Social Media Platform has provision of secure communications by E-Commerce websites

Perceived Product Transparency (PPT)

1. Most of the Social Media Platform has provision of the information related to product price by E-Commerce websites
2. Most of the Social Media Platform has provision of the information related to product features by E-Commerce websites
3. Most of the Social Media Platform has provision of the information related to product quality by E-Commerce websites
4. Most of the Social Media Platform has provision of the information related to product availability by E-Commerce websites”