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Triple effect of social commerce attributes, support and relationship

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Abstract: Recent social commerce research has focused on how social media attributes affect purchase intention, rather than how social media users create supportive relationships. We examine how social media qualities affect users' affective moods after a supportive brand page relationship. Two competing hypotheses based on social cognitive theory (SCT) and the theory of planned behaviour are evaluated to see if social commerce qualities in social media might boost. Purposeful sampling used survey questionnaires. Instagrammers gave 324 valid responses. A structural equation model reveals that social commerce attribute endorsement significantly contributes. Social commerce qualities greatly impact relationship quality, social support, and social shopping intention. Social support influences quality and intention, while relationship quality increases buying intention. The authors illustrate that social commerce improves user behaviour and supporting relationships by combining the two notions. Social commerce characteristics and social shopping intention (SHOP) were likely mediated by social support and connection quality. Effective social media use promotes user engagement and encourages social media shopping, a critical managerial outcome.

Keywords: social commerce; social support; relationship quality; shopping intention; interactivity and recommendation; purchase decision; SHOP; social shopping intention.

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Biographical notes: V. Vinayagalakshmi is a Doctoral Researcher specialising in the Evolution of Social Commerce. Her academic pursuits focus on the interplay between technology, consumer behaviour, and digital marketplace innovation. With a keen interest in emerging trends and transformative practices in e-commerce, she is dedicated to advancing knowledge and providing impactful insights within this dynamic field.

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Analytics and Business Intelligence from the University of Texas, Austin. He is an alumnus of the prestigious IIMK and has 12 years of teaching experience, specialising in Marketing Analytics and Business Analytics. His passion for research is long-lasting, as evidenced by his numerous publications and presentations in highly indexed, reputable publications and international conferences. He has also gained editorial experience by serving as a reviewer for esteemed publishers such as Springer Nature, Emerald, Elsevier, IGI, Taylor & Francis, among others.

1 Introduction

In the real experience of the case, my sister wants to buy sunscreen based on her skin tone. She asked me for some recommendations through WhatsApp. Immediately, I share my saved posts and reels related to sunscreen and skin care on Instagram. Despite not using sunscreen myself, I forwarded influencer reels showcasing positive feedback in the comments, along with specific sunscreen product suggestions. This incident made me realise that social media serves not only as entertainment but also as a platform for combining socialising with shopping. This digital transformation turns online shopping into social shopping. Shopping with companions (known as purchase pals) makes it more enjoyable and helps us to think through our alternatives and make decisions. Shopping together could be a shared activity, and it motivates one to maintain relationships with others. It also builds confidence while making a purchase decision. So, from the socialisation perspective, e-commerce might have a solution for those who like to shop with their purchase pals on online platforms, which is “Social commerce” (Venkateswaran and Thammareddi, 2023).

Social commerce is a pattern of retailing intermediated by social media involving the convergence of the Phygital environment. The popularity of social technologies and social media platforms is the main reason for the growth of social commerce. Statistics show (DIGITAL, 2022) that there were 658 million internet users in India, and more than 460 million people used social media at the time of January 2022. Social media has changed as an inevitable source of communication and transmitting information in routine life (Kanyimama, 2023). So, many firms use it as an opportunity to engage and effectively communicate with their customer (Al-Mokdad, 2024).

Social commerce impacts the stages of the customer journey decision (Singh et al., 2023). In a social commerce context, Shopping intention is the initial step of the digital consumer journey (Anand et al., 2024). Shopping intention refers to the willingness of a user to initiate a purchase of a specific product while roaming social media platforms (Zhao et al., 2023). Before making a purchase decision, consumers are inclined towards recommendations and suggestions about products provided by social media users, which is known as social shopping intention (SHOP) (Hajduk et al., 2024). The consequence of crowdsourcing in social media online researchers are converting into online shoppers because 82% of the consumers buy products after completing online research, like going through reviews, comments, recommendations, feedback, and brand page interaction

(Bugshan and Attar, 2020). Here, social commerce attributes (SCA) play a vital role in influencing purchase intention (María et al., 2023; Yturralde and Ramos (2023).

The main purpose of social media is to build supportive relationships (Venkatasubramanian et al., 2023). The relationship is an essential foundation for building s-commerce (social commerce). The researcher initiated this research to discover the role of a supportive relationship among social media users and its effect on SHOP. The supportive relationships included two aspects: social support (SS) and relationship quality (RQ) (Doralba et al., 2024). Social support (SS) assesses a person's perception of receiving assistance from those in their social groups (Gottlieb and Bergen, 2010). Relationship tightness and strength play a key role in persuading users to stay loyal in social communities, which is called Relationship Quality (Achen, 2019). The prior study explores the combination of these two constructs into a supportive relationship and its impact on SHOP (Ashifa, 2024; Vinu et al., 2023).

There are many researchers contributed to discovering the driving factors of SHOP, such as trust (Al-Tit et al., 2021), social support (Guo and Li, 2022), social commerce constructs (Liang et al., 2011; Santhosh et al., 2023), social presence (Horng, and Wu, 2020; Venkateswaran et al., 2024), relationship quality, etc., there is existing "knowledge gap" with researchers, as their issues on shopping intention in social commerce in the view of supportive relationship perspective are "rarely investigated" in behavioural studies (Geethanjali et al., 2023). The research includes SCA and supportive relationship factors such as SS and RQ, which could contribute a unique direction to understanding customer attitudes in the context of social commerce (Damodaran et al., 2024; Said and Tripathi, 2023).

By addressing the gap as mentioned above, the study explores the prior literature in the following ways: primarily, the research proposed a triple impact model of SHOP, which demonstrates how SHOP is affected by SCA, social support and relationship quality (Hernandez and Nunez, 2023; Venkateswaran et al., 2023). The combination of Social cognitive theory (SCT) (Martin and Guerrero, 2020; Singh et al., 2023) and the theory of planned behaviour model (Nimri et al., 2020; Saleh et al., 2024) has been proposed because the users' attitudes and behaviour have been affected by social commerce environmental features and which the mediation effect of supportive relationship factors such as social support and relationship quality between social commerce features and SHOP (Kadiresan et al., 2024; Venkateswaran et al., 2024). It seeks to fill this gap by proposing a conceptual frame and empirically testing how social commerce features and supportive relationships affect consumer purchase behaviour (Kalyani and Devi, 2024; Sangchumngong et al., 2023). This research purpose is to answer the following research questions:

- Does the SCA influence shopping intention in social commerce platforms?
- Do the supportive relationship factors (SS and RQ) affect SHOP in social commerce platforms?

The paper's remaining sections are arranged as follows. The existing research on the factors that influence Purchase intentions is examined in the next section. The research technique portion comes next, and the findings are then shown and discussed. An overview and conclusions are offered at the end.

2 Review of literature

In 2005, Yahoo introduced the term social commerce as an enhanced version of e-commerce, allowing consumers to create posts, recommendations, reviews, and feedback (Kim and Park, 2013). Social commerce merges social media and e-commerce, facilitating connections and content sharing (Han et al., 2018). It empowers customers to engage digitally with peers and brands, while businesses leverage this for brand growth through direct interactions (Hu et al., 2022). Social cognitive theory suggests that personal, environmental, and behavioural factors influence people's behaviour. SCA create an online environment that encourages interaction and engagement. SCT emphasises observational learning, social support, and positive reinforcements in building behavioural intention (Kharayat et al., 2024). Positive interactions in a social commerce setting build users' confidence, enhancing their shopping intention (Sadath and Faheem, 2024). At the same time, the theory of planned behaviour suggests that SCA influence consumer behaviour, with positive interactions, recommendations, and strong brand relationships enhancing attitudes and perceived behavioural control (Nimri et al., 2020). The combination of SCT and TPB theories suggests that social commerce environments enhance social support, relationship quality, and user confidence, thereby shaping consumer intentions.

2.1 Social commerce attributes

The friendly atmosphere of s-commerce inspires the consumer to actively contribute through information sharing and shopping experiences to generate content (Hajli, 2014). This user-generated content (UGC) could create more marketable value for the products or services and enhance consumer empowerment because it provides social support in the shopping process and increases the confidence to buy a product (Hajli, N, 2015). Social commerce is more attractive compared to e-commerce because it has the favour features of interaction, recommendation and feedback. According to Guo and Li (2022), social commerce features are divided into tri-factors such as Recommendation (RE), Interactivity (IA), and Feedback (FB). These features could connect their customer and facilitate the exchange of information, reciprocate each other, and share their opinion as comments or reviews (Shadkam and O'Hara, 2013).

Interactivity: It is defined as the perception of consumers towards the interaction level of the seller's brand pages (Kuo and Feng, 2013), which includes whether the brand page or websites are livelihoods and the company regularly engages with his followers through their new posts and events (Li, and Guo, 2021). Interactivity is identified as a significant component of website quality (Jang et al., 2008) because it may increase customer brand loyalty in their online community (Kim and Park, 2013). The evolution of social media expands the coverage of market location environment space and explores person-to-person communication (Bowen et al., 2021). Social commerce provides a new experience to the customers, which is they can proceed with the transaction process without leaving the social media platforms, and it encourages them to participate in a deep way (Vazquez et al., 2020). Through interactivity, consumers can communicate with other people during the shopping process, which is also known as social shopping (Qin et al., 2021). So, interactivity is an inevitable process of social shopping because it provides a shopping

experience with socialising and enhances their willingness to participate in social commerce (Li and Guo, 2021).

Recommendation: The recommendation is one of the main components of the social commerce construct (Hajli, 2015). Recommendation means providing product suggestions or suitable choices between peers based on their needs or desires (Lin et al., 2017). The effect of social networking sites (SNS) development recommendation systems applied successfully in many fields like e-government, online learning, facts retrievals, travel notes and e-shopping, specifically in aspects of social commerce (Bunnell et al., 2020). RE is an informal communication channel that impacts the customer's purchase decision because it is designed to obtain knowledge about the product and service before shopping; this information might increase the expectation of consumption (Senecal and Nantel, 2004). The effect of technical improvement of products is that users could generate crowdsourcing, which delivers a huge amount of information about the products that will help the consumer effortlessly realise their target product (Weeks et al., 2021). In social commerce, most users' purchase intentions may change because of recommendations and information available on the brand page (Chen et al., 2019). Social commerce users look for information before buying a product, and getting recommendations and suggestions from others makes them more confident about their purchase decisions.

Feedback: It refers to customers' guidance to the sellers on the view of customer perspective through their consumption experiences (Bettencourt, 1997). In social commerce, feedback is expectation fulfilment ratings towards the products and evaluation generated by the customer on social media brand pages after the shopping experience (Bhandari et al., 2021). Nowadays, most social commerce platforms provide different forms of feedback, such as digital star ratings and genuine feedback (Agag and Eid, 2020). From this feedback, new customers can easily understand the product details, reducing risk and fear of uncertainty of buying (Sharma et al., 2021). From a seller's point of view, feedback they can know about the customer expectations, improve their service quality, enhance their social interaction, develop their brand community environment and enhance their loyalty (Meilatinova, 2021). Social commerce attributes and enables UGC by sharing information and social interaction among the members, which influences the customers' shopping intention. Therefore, in this study, social commerce features were taken as independent variables towards social commerce purchase intention (Kharayat et al., 2024).

2.2 Social support

SS denotes "an individual perceived accessible resource obtained from the non-professionals in the form of formal support group and informal helping relationships" (Gottlieb and Bergen, 2010). It brings social values to the online community (Liang et al., 2011). The term social support (originated by Cullen in 1994) was coined from social support theory (Kort-Butler, 2018). The theory clearly shows how social relationships influence the individual's thoughts (cognition), emotions and behaviour (Huang et al., 2010). The components of social support differ from one context to another, such as psychology, sociology, and healthcare.

In social commerce, SS factors comprise informational support (IS) and emotional support (ES) (Ko et al., 2013). An individual's receiving the message as a

recommendation or advice from social groups or other individuals to solve problems is known as informational support (Batara et al., 2024). An individual receiving the message has sensitive concerns such as caring, kindness and empathy for another person, which is known as emotional support (Akram et al., 2021). These supports are an important mechanism for social shopping in the e-commerce context. IS helps to offer an interpretation towards the problem (Akram et al., 2021). Emotional support could offer concerns towards the problem (Lin et al., 2022). Each support helps attract more social media users to establish interest in particular products or services, whether directly or indirectly (Ronald et al., 2024). Thus, the research suggests that SS contributes significantly to the influence of social commerce shopping intention (Sabarirajan et al., 2023).

2.3 Relationship quality

RQ denotes the intensity or strength of the relationship, which is a key indicator of customer loyalty (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2002). The quality of the relationship between the consumer and the company positively affects market performance, consumer purchase decisions, repurchase intentions, customer retention, and customer loyalty (Athanasopoulou, 2009). Relationship quality is a multidimensional concept, but it consists of three constructs: Satisfaction, Trust and Commitment (Palmatier et al., 2006). Satisfaction is the emotional evaluation of an interactive experience with sellers, trust is the belief in a partner's confidence in an exchange, and commitment is the maximum effort or desire to maintain the relationship (Gustafsson et al., 2005).

Information system research explains that relationship quality is essential in online shopping (Achen, 2019). Relationship quality constructs describe the user's attitude towards social networking sellers (Taylor et al., 2022). The empirical literature suggests that relationship quality helps to maintain long-term relationships between the customer and service providers (Ibrahim and Aljarah, 2023). So, the quality of the relationship might stimulate social shopping. In consumer-to-consumer websites, quality is influenced by trust, commitment and satisfaction (Rallang et al., 2023). From the relationship quality, the customer can facilitate relationship stability (Tajvidi et al., 2020). Thus, the study considered that relationship quality ultimately impacts the customer's SHOP in a social commerce context (Ramos et al., 2023).

2.4 Social shopping intention

Social shopping intention is the predictor of decision-making that reflects the consumer's reason to buy a particular product (Watchravesringkan and Shim, 2003). This term is derived based on the "intention to buy" construct in the technology acceptance model (TAM), which means SHOP refers to the combination of the desire to buy a product with socialising facilities (Ahmad et al., 2022). It's related to consumer perception, behaviour and attitude. SHOPS might differ according to the situation where consumers tend to buy a specific product in a social commerce environment (Chen et al., 2022). Many factors affect the customer's SHOP, such as web quality (Cassandra and Kristin, 2017), Information sources (Fu et al., 2020), and product quality (Chen et al., 2022). In s-commerce, the presence of friends and their consumer purchase behaviour affect the intention to shop socially. Social commerce provides social experience through interactions and information sharing on SNS (Busalim et al., 2023); the customers could

participate with confidence and are willing to make purchases on social commerce platforms. According to Sohn and Kim (2020), SHOP in social commerce is affected by economy, reliability and sales promotion.

Social commerce links business activities and consumer-related activities through social media technology. Business-related activities emphasise maintaining the brand fan community where they can express their opinion freely, attract new users and generate more UGC (Fu et al., 2018). These events reflect the attributes of social commerce (Guo and Li, 2022). Because s-commerce facilitates the sharing of consumers' personalised shopping experience with others through different forms like videos, posts, and comments, they can recommend their satisfied shopping experience to their friends and family. In social commerce, consumer-related activities include creating UGC through consumer communications and the exchange of information (Bugshan and Attar, 2020). Even the entities could collect consumer feedback through their comments and use this feedback to improve their customer experience and promote consumer purchase intention (Horng and Wu, 2020).

3 Hypotheses development and research model

Social commerce attributes (SCA) are a popular strategy among e-vendors due to the evolution of Web 2.0 and technology adoption. SCA allows consumers to rate, comment, and participate in forums and communities, fostering social interaction and communication between buyers and sellers. Interactivity in SCC supports consumer understanding of desired products, providing realistic information about product quality and after-sales services. Recommendations, which contain product information and suggestions received from social networks, are crucial for marketing success. Customers recommend products to new users when their post-use satisfaction level reaches a high point. However, due to the broad internet density and crowdsourcing, obtaining relevant information can be difficult for consumers (Kler et al., 2024).

Friends have a better understanding of customer purchase needs and desires, leading to specific recommendations. These shared recommendations significantly influence consumer behaviour during purchase decisions and online product choices (Rafiq and Subbulakshmi, 2024). SCC is a crucial strategy for e-vendors to engage with consumers and improve their online shopping experience (Raj et al., 2024). Feedbacks change turn into ratings and reviews (Komperla, 2023). The prior research classified the feedback into two: active and passive (Kolachina et al., 2023). Active feedback refers to sharing product usage experiences or consulting with consumers on SNS (Lavanya et al., 2023). Passive feedback refers to the companies asking for product information from the customer, even if it will be ratings or reviews in SNS (Bhandari et al., 2021). The empirical evidence from the prior study is that in online shopping, most consumers consult reviews and ask for feedback from existing users before they buy a product or service (Ringler, 2021). Feedback from reviews also influences the brand's reputation (Kuragayala, 2023). Based on the literature support, the following hypothesis has been framed:

H1a: Social commerce attributes directly affect the intention to shop socially.

SCA has been considered as a major source of SS (Informational and emotional support). Through this interaction, consumers can get professional advice, like trendy products,

coupons, offers, and details, and they can optimise their purchasing process at a low cost (Hajli, 2014). Through interaction, the consumer gets respect from the sellers, and the consumer feels enthusiastic and attracted by the better shopping experience (Akram et al., 2021). Social commerce attributes provide social support to the users of SNS (Gu et al., 2021). When the user utilises the SC features effectively, they can establish a strong and trustable bond with like-minded people (Busalim et al., 2023). The prior studies also stated that SC features affect social support as well as relationship quality (Kumar et al., 2024). Hence, the following hypotheses have been formulated.

H1b: Social commerce attributes have an impact on social support.

H1c: Social commerce attributes have an impact on Relationship quality.

Social support theory examines how support behaviour affects social relationships (Ocoró et al., 2023). When individuals get social support from social networking, they will show a willingness to join community groups (Ho and Cheng, 2020). Online communities or members of social networks have social support, whether informational or emotional support, within the group (Makmor et al., 2018). Frequent interactions among the group member influence their behaviours. A piece of information obtained from a third party influences the intention to shop in social commerce (Baptista et al., 2022). From this evidence, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1d: Social support influences the intention to shop socially among social media users.

Digital native communities voluntarily participate in social team activities through communication and interaction on social commerce platforms (Hsu et al., 2018). From this interaction, they get informational and emotional support, which builds trust among communities and helps to create value to help accomplish high-level satisfaction from the community members (Narakorn and Seesupan, 2019). Prior literature (Achen, 2019) shows that relationship quality affects shopping intention in social commerce platforms (Necib and Gmati, 2024). Hence, the research proposed that:

H1e: Relationship quality significantly affected the intention to shop socially among social media users.

The support from an online community increases the individual's trust, commitment and satisfaction with SNS (Ho and Cheng, 2020). Information support provides personal experience advice from third parties in social commerce. Compared with informational support, emotional support also indirectly influences the customer purchase intention (He and Jin, 2024). When consumers receive care and warmth from the online community, it helps them achieve physiological benefits. From these benefits, the social commerce environment turns out to be trustable and more valuable for its users (Hu et al., 2016). They even get a shopping experience with the feeling of consumer empowerment and enjoyment. Past evidence shows that sellers on social networking websites could encourage relationships with customers by showing their effects on emotional support (Hossain et al., 2021). Hence, it tries to verify that social support facilitates an increase in the relationship quality among users on SNS (Mahadewi et al., 2024).

H1f: Social support significantly impacts the relationship quality among social media users.

The best practices of social commerce include interactivity, recommendation and feedback because they help to enable the consumer to generate their content and share their experience (Shanmugam et al., 2016). In the e-commerce context, its attributes have been regarded as a major source of social support (Lishmah Dominic et al., 2023). Among the SNS communities, the attributes of social commerce significantly influence social support as well as trust-building (Zhang et al., 2024). From a rational perspective, RQ plays a mediation role in the relationship between system attributes and success (Zhou, 2020). Prior studies (Baptista et al., 2022) have proven that when people receive strong social support, they feel connected as a friends and build trust among themselves. Moreover, if customers get more SS from their friends in SNS, it paves the way to relationship advantages that also affect the shopping intention of the consumers (Pandit, 2023). From the literature support, the study proposed that:

H2a: Social support mediates the relationship between SCA and SHOP.

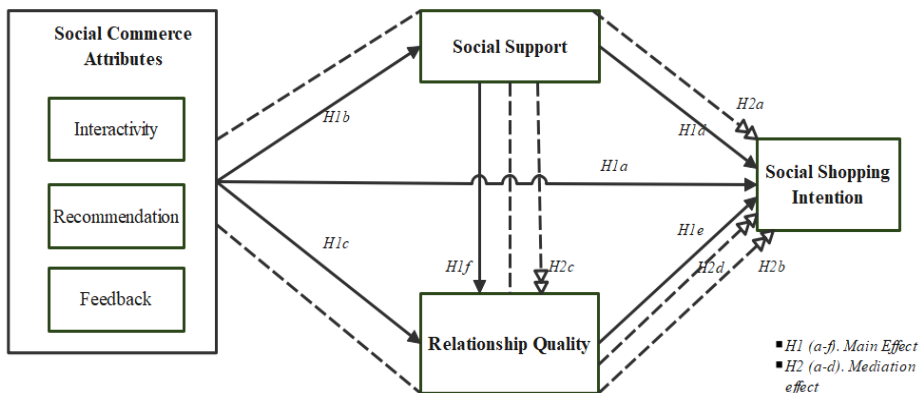
H2b: Relationship Quality mediates the relationship between SCA and SHOP.

H2c: Social Support mediated the relationship between SCA and RQ.

H2d: Relationship Quality mediates the relationship between SS and SHOP.

In the above-discussed literature, this study argued that in SNS, consumers' purchase intention is affected by SCA (i.e., interaction, Recommendation, Feedback) and supportive relationship factors (SS and RQ). From the previous literature, this study presents the research model below in Figure 1. The purpose of this model is to understand customer behaviour towards the purchase intention in an e-commerce environment (Philip et al., 2024). Based on the literature, SCA impacts social support, which facilitates the improvement of relationship quality (Phoek et al., 2023). This study also expects that SS and RQ have a direct impact on shopping decisions with a mediated mediation effect in SNS (Princy Reshma et al., 2023).

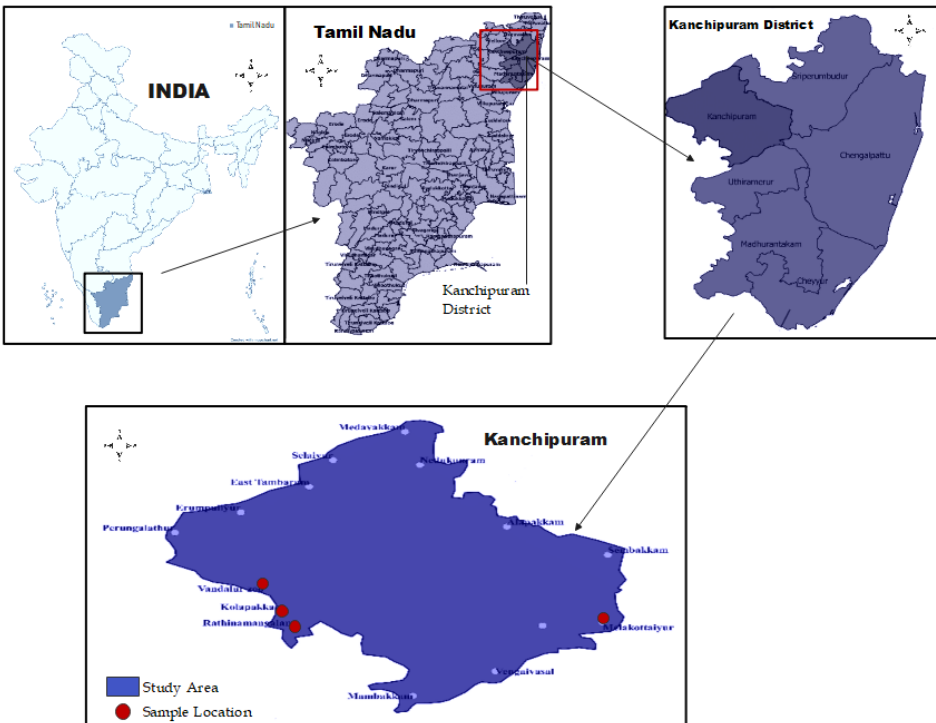
Figure 1 Triple impact model of social shopping intention (see online version for colours)



4 Material and methods

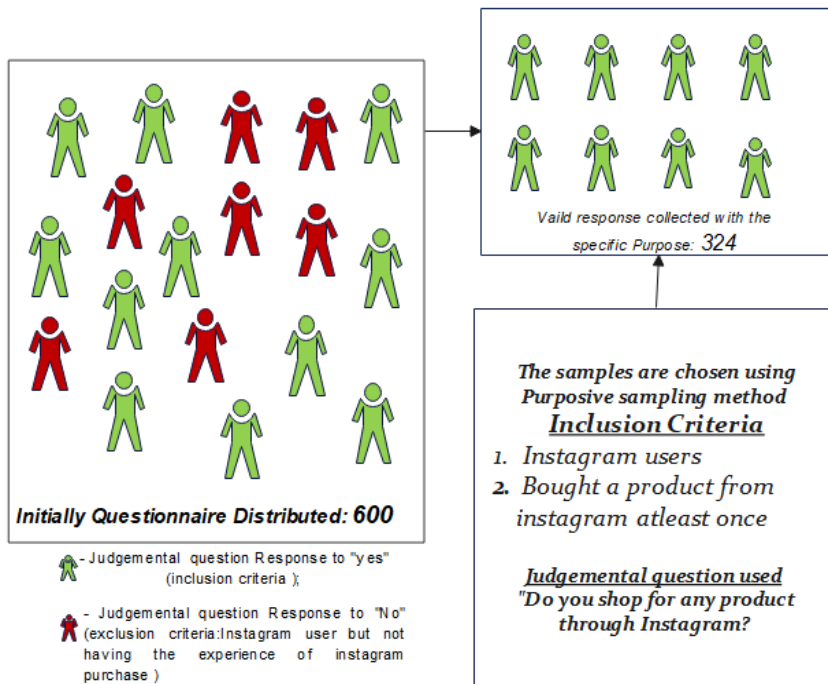
Data collection: The study was predicated on the idea that positive interactions among social media users impact users' inclinations to make purchases on social commerce platforms. To examine the hypotheses, this study uses a quantitative survey method. With over 230.25 million users as of January 2022, Instagram is one of the most popular social media platforms in India among youngsters. A sample of 600 Instagram users was selected for the purpose of determining the population of the study, which is that Instagram users should have an experience with Instagram purchases at least once. Data were obtained using an online questionnaire. Participants are chosen from among the college attendees at the particular colleges in Kanchipuram district (Figure 2).

Figure 2 Map of the study area (see online version for colours)



Source: Mageswari Shanmugam et al. (2017)

In this study, judgemental sampling methods were used for data collection. In the questionnaire, the judgemental question, “Do you shop for any product through Instagram?” was added to choose the correct sample, and people who answered “No” were not included in the sample because they did not have experience with Instagram purchases (Figure 3). A total of 324 valid answers (response rate: 72%) were gathered.

Figure 3 The process of data collection (see online version for colours)

Source: Author's

Scale development: The questionnaire used a five-point Likert scale, with constructs adapted from previous research to ensure validity and reliability. Social commerce attributes were measured by interactivity (3 items), recommendation (4 items), and feedback (3 items) based on Guo and Li (2022). Social support was assessed using six items from Al-Tit et al. (2021), while relationship quality was measured by five items from Hajli (2014). Social shopping intention, reflecting consumer willingness to purchase based on peer influence in social commerce, was measured using three items from Zhou (2020). After pilot testing with 25 samples, the results revealed that the factor loadings of RQ6, SHOP 4, RQ7, RQ8, RQ9, and SS6 were below the accepted threshold of 0.6, impacting the validity of the scale. So, Items were refined for clarity, resulting in the final scale (see Appendix 2).

The demographic coverage of the collected sample (refer to Appendix 1) reveals that 67.8% of the participants are female. The age range of the majority of the respondents (34.8%) is 21–30 years. Facebook (32.1%), Instagram (30.3) and WhatsApp (29.7%) were the most used social media among the respondents.

5 Presentation of results

5.1 Confirmatory factor analysis

The study evaluated the reliability and validity of the scales utilised. Factor loadings indicate the correlation between items and their associated factors, with high loadings

indicating strong associations. Interactivity, Recommendation, Feedback, Social Support, and Relationship Quality have high factor loadings. The findings indicate that all variables surpassed the recommended threshold values for composite reliability (CR) and Cronbach's alpha (CA) of 0.7, indicating strong internal consistency (Garcia-Perez et al., 2019). Table 1 displays reliability values, demonstrating the good reliability and internal consistency of the scales. To assess convergence validity, the researcher examined factor loadings and average variance extracted (AVE) values. All the measured items exhibited factor loadings above 0.7, ranging from 0.712 to 0.944, and AVE values for the factors ranged from 0.642 to 0.839, indicating good convergent validity of the scales used in the study.

Table 1 Result of reliability and convergent validity analysis

<i>Factor</i>	<i>Items</i>	<i>Factor loading</i>	<i>CR</i>	<i>CA</i>	<i>AVE</i>
Interactivity (IA)	IA1	0.900	0.881	0.926	0.807
	IA2	0.907			
	IA3	0.888			
Recommendation (RE)	RE1	0.937	0.936	0.954	0.839
	RE2	0.893			
	RE3	0.924			
	RE4	0.909			
Feedback (FB)	FB1	0.813	0.798	0.882	0.713
	FB2	0.883			
	FB3	0.836			
Social support (SS)	SS1	0.801	0.878	0.911	0.672
	SS2	0.838			
	SS3	0.732			
	SS4	0.836			
	SS5	0.793			
	SS6	0.382			
Relationship quality (RQ)	RQ1	0.784	0.858	0.899	0.640
	RQ2	0.760			
	RQ3	0.712			
	RQ4	0.869			
	RQ5	0.865			
Social shopping intention (SHOP)	SHOP1	0.922	0.869	0.921	0.795
	SHOP2	0.944			
	SHOP3	0.804			

“(CA – Cronbach's alpha; CR – Composite reliability; AVE – Average Variance Extracted)”.

The Fornell-Larcker criterion was used to assess discriminant validity among the six latent constructs. The off-diagonal co-efficient should, according to this criterion, be smaller than the square roots of the extracted variance (AVEs).

In Table 2, this study creates displays of diagonal values. The diagonal value ratio should be smaller than 0.90 (Rönkkö and Cho, 2022). The study identifies seven distinct constructs with high AVE values: Feedback (0.844), interactivity (0.899), recommendation (0.816), Relationship Quality (0.8), Social Support (0.892), and SHOP (0.892). Feedback has good discriminant validity, while interactivity strongly correlates with recommendation. The recommendation is distinct from other constructs, and relationship quality, social support, and SHOP are distinct, which supports the validity of the model.

Table 2 Discriminant validity

<i>Constructs</i>	<i>FB</i>	<i>IA</i>	<i>RE</i>	<i>RQ</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>SHOP</i>
Feedback (FB)	0.844					
Interactivity (IA)	0.491	0.899				
Recommendation (RE)	0.475	0.829	0.816			
Relationship Quality (RQ)	0.422	0.488	0.518	0.800		
Social Support (SS)	0.278	0.401	0.397	0.644	0.820	
Social shopping intention (SHOP)	0.443	0.412	0.464	0.685	0.648	0.892

5.2 Structural equation modelling

Hypothesis testing was conducted using structural equation modelling (SEM), which effectively examines relationships among variables and measures direct and indirect impacts.

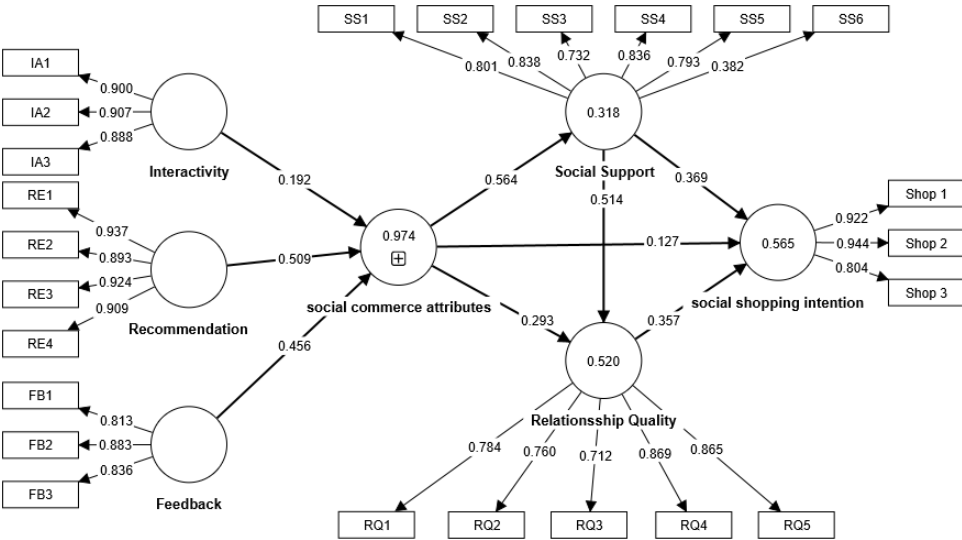
Table 3 shows significant associations among SCA, SS, RQ, and SHOP via path coefficients, indicating that strong social support on social media enhances shopping intention. The results display that three elements of SCA, which include interactivity (0.192), recommendation (0.509) and feedback (0.456), have a statistical impact with a path coefficient above 0.15 with SCA. The strongest effect is on recommendation, followed by feedback, with a weaker effect on interactivity. This suggests that SCA are particularly effective in enhancing recommendation and feedback functions, while their impact on interactivity is moderate.

Table 3 Path co-efficient

<i>Particulars</i>	<i>Direct effect</i>
Social commerce attributes → Interactivity	0.192
Social commerce attributes → Recommendation	0.509
Social commerce attributes → Feedback	0.456
Social commerce attribute → Social Support	0.564
Social commerce attributes → Relationship Quality	0.293
Social commerce attributes → Social Shopping Intention	0.127
Social Support → Social Shopping Intention	0.369
Social support → Relationship Quality	0.514
Relationship Quality → Social Shopping Intention	0.357

Social commerce attributes have a statistically significant impact on SS, RQ and SHOP with path coefficients of 0.564 (SS), 0.293(RQ), and 0.127 (SHOP), respectively. Hence, the framed H1a, H1b, and H1c have been supported. The SS has a statistical influence on RQ and SHOP, with the path co-efficient of 0.369 (SHOP) and 0.514 (RQ), respectively. Hence, H1d and H1f accepted. Relationship quality has a statistical influence on SHOP with a co-efficient of 0.357, which shows that H1e is also accepted. So, the results revealed that SCA significantly enhance social support, impacting relationship quality and SHOP. These attributes are stronger when mediated through social support, suggesting a supportive social environment is crucial for fostering users' shopping intentions on social media. For a better understanding, Figure 4 shows the structural model of the research.

Figure 4 The result of the triple impact model of social shopping intention



5.3 Test of mediation effect

Table 4 shows the mediator effect between the factors through mediation analysis. The mediator effect of social support and relationship quality was analysed. To test the mediation path coefficient was taken to test the hypotheses.

The study utilised Nitzl et al.'s (2016) formula to calculate the Variance Accounted For (VAF) value, indicating a significant mediation effect between independent and dependent variables. Hair et al. (2016) defined full mediation as VAF values above 0.80, partial mediation from 0.20 to 0.80, and zero-mediator effect below 0.20. Table 4 shows that H2a, H2b, H2c and H2d are accepted. Both social support and relationship quality have a partial mediator effect for all the hypotheses. This result reveals that support relationship plays a partial mediator role between SCA and SHOP. The study reveals a strong correlation between SCA, social support (SS), SHOP, and relationship quality (RQ). Higher SCA levels increase social support, boosting users' intention to shop socially. Strong relationships with brands or communities foster trust and loyalty, motivating users to make purchases. The findings emphasise the importance of fostering supportive relationships in social media environments.

Table 4 Test of mediation effect

<i>Paths</i>	<i>Path coef.</i>			<i>Total. Ind. effect</i>	<i>Total effect</i>	<i>VAF</i>	<i>Result</i>
	(a)	(b)	(c)	(a) * (b)	(a * b + c)		
SCA → SS → SHOP	0.564	0.369	0.127	0.208	0.335	0.62	Accepted/ Partial
SS → RQ → SHOP	0.514	0.357	0.369	0.183	0.552	0.33	Accepted/ Partial
SCA → RQ → SHOP	0.293	0.357	0.127	0.105	0.232	0.45	Accepted/ Partial
SCA → SS → RQ	0.564	0.514	0.293	0.290	0.583	0.50	Accepted/ Partial

6 Discussion

This study contributes in a variety of ways to behaviour intention and social commerce. Previous consumer behaviour research has placed a strong emphasis on UGC and user behaviours related to purchase promotion through social media. Previous research indicates that social media interactions can offer organisations the chance to add value to their goods and services. To better understand social media users' behaviour throughout the consumer journey, our study model took into account two extra SCA: recommendations and feedback.

Social commerce attributes significantly affect social media users' (consumer) supportive relationship behaviour. Among the SCA components, the recommendation ($\beta = 0.509$) has a more statistical impact compared to interactivity ($\beta = 0.192$) and feedback ($\beta = 0.456$) because it might be due to the consumer could gain customised information, which may reduce the pressure to reach the end of the customer journey with their correct decision in confidently, which indicates that interactivity and feedback features could not provide sufficient information about the products or services. This recommendation on social media helps reduce shopping time, meets their needs, and provides confidence to make better decisions. The effect of feedback is higher than interactivity, and these findings suggest that consumers are given more attention to information shared by others, such as user-generated interactions like reviews, ratings, comments, and likes, before shopping and accessing the product recommendation.

The SCA statistically significantly affect consumers' SS and RQ. Our hypothesis rest results figure out that interactivity, recommendation, and feedback have positive effects on the supportive relationship of social support and relationship quality, and the β values 0.564 and 0.293, respectively. This reflected that the shopping experience through social commerce could make consumers obtain more informational and emotional support via social media and preserve and build a quality relationship with sufficient trust, commitment and satisfaction, which continuously stimulated their intention to be involved in social shopping. In this process, social support has a more significant effect on relationship quality. The main reason for this result may be that marketers could provide meaningful and needful information through SCA that may help them attain informational and emotional support from sellers, which could completely contribute to the improvement of SS on social media brand pages.

Compared to social support, relationship quality is the minimum level affected by SCA. Maintaining relationships is a long-term process because RQ is a combination of trust, commitment and satisfaction. To enhance the quality of relationships through SCA, the brand pages should use its features in an optimised way. The quality of relationships in social media brand pages is impacted ($\beta = 0.514$) by social support also. That deficit that strong supportive interactions and continuous commitment of the social media brand pages could lead to maintaining high relationship quality among the brand page members in social commerce.

The study reveals that socially supportive relationships (SCA), social commerce attributes (SS), and relationship quality (RQ) significantly influence SHOP. The results show that SCA, SS, and RQ have positive effects on shopping intention in social commerce, with β values of 0.127, 0.369, and 0.357, respectively. This aligns with previous research suggesting that a higher supportive relationship can lead to increased shopping intention among social media brand page members. The study also found that consumers are more concerned with relationship quality than social support, as it affects their shopping intention more than social support. Better relationship quality can enhance customer trust, provide tailored information, and create emotional attachment, leading to increased commitment and satisfaction with brand page activities.

This result contributes to the additional ideas for previous research on e-commerce, which shows the role of supportive relationships in forecasting consumers' shopping intention and also connecting the SCA with supportive relationships, which indicates bringing emotional pleasure to attain consumer attraction through the SNS effectiveness in reaching their shopping goals. Finally, after performing mediation testing, the research found that social support and relationship quality are mediators between SCA and SHOP. This encompasses the previous research on the mediating role of SS and RQ (AI-Tit et al., 2021) and verifies the important role of SS and RQ in promoting consumers' shopping intentions in social commerce. Social commerce attributions such as interactivity, recommendation and feedback are the primary experiences of consumer involvement in social commerce. The purpose of these attributes is to engage their brand page members with specific creative information so that consumers can initiate building bonds with a specific brand page. After that, under the incentive of strong bonding, consumers are encouraged to have a corresponding SHOP.

This reveals how important supportive relationships and social commerce qualities are to consumers' intentions to shop. Furthermore, the mediator between social support and SHOP is connection quality. This result suggests that social commerce environments may improve customers' perception of social support, which is in line with earlier research (Palmatier et al., 2006). Customers will view brand pages as extremely dependable, gratified, and dedicated after receiving social support from them, which will motivate them to make purchases on social media. This study concludes that the relationships between social commerce characteristics, social support, relationship quality, and social buying intention contribute to theory and practices since it looks at an important but understudied aspect of social commerce.

6.1 Practical implications

Based on the theoretical and empirical evaluations of our study model, the findings have various management-related implications. First off, the research's conclusions show that SCA significantly affects supportive relationships (SS and RQ). Therefore, to improve

customers' perception of a supporting connection from the brand sites, management should boost the influence of interaction, recommendation, and feedback. To encourage real-time and diverse information sharing among users, brand pages or marketers should, for instance, develop more inventive and practical communication channels. They should also concentrate on preserving the active interactivity among these communities, as this may increase community member participation and improve the interactive experience for brand page users.

For recommendations and feedback on social commerce platforms, marketers should analyse the users' opinions on consumption according to their comments, reviews, browsing history, and purchasing history. Using this big data technology, the merchant should provide customised product recommendations for users to influence their intention to shop. Marketers should improve the combined services to provide better after-sales service and address their after-purchase queries and information prompts. The monetary or non-monetary reward might encourage consumers to share their shopping experience with others in various forms, such as feedback. It may increase electronic word of mouth towards the product or services.

The study shows a positive correlation between SCA and SHOP. Brands should integrate interactive features like polls, Q&A sessions, and live video chats to increase perceived social support and influence buying behaviour. Fostering customer support communities and targeted campaigns can retain users and attract new ones. Reinforcing trustworthiness through transparency, openness to user questions, and customer reviews can build social capital and motivate purchases.

Businesses should enhance social support and relationship quality with brand page members to boost SHOP. This can be achieved by improving the platform's user interface, layout, and operational procedures, providing clear product information, and engaging with customers through offer stories and call-to-action posts. Once they perceive social support from the brand pages, they would initiate to maintain a relationship with the brand page. To increase the quality of the relationship, the seller should ensure transparency regarding their transaction and buying processes. It will help to build trustable bonds between sellers and brand page members. The trustable members could actively participate in brand pages, leading them to purchase and repurchase the products on social commerce platforms. So, if the company maintain a supportive relationship between merchants and social media users, it will pave the way to social commerce success.

6.2 Theoretical contribution

There are two main contributions this research offers to the domains of individual purchasing behaviour and social commerce. Prior research has frequently regarded relationship quality, social support, and social commerce features as antecedent determinants of purchase and repurchase intention. The impact of social commerce features on the co-creation of brand value has not been thoroughly studied. This study built a triple impact factors model of consumers' intentions to shop socially by taking social commerce features as environmental influencing factors, drawing on the social support theory's (Gottlieb and Bergen, 2010) social support as a mediator, the relationship quality model's relationship quality as a second mediator, and the TAM (Hajli, 2015) to take intentional consumer behaviour that includes SHOP as the outcome with the theoretical support of the SCT (Martin and Guerrero, 2020) and theory of

planned behaviour (Nimri et al., 2020). By examining how users of brand pages create social commerce intentions in the social commerce environment, this study builds on earlier research on social commerce. It offers fresh empirical evidence for comprehending the critical role of social commerce attribution.

The research explores social shopping on social media platforms and its impact on customer attitudes and behaviour. It identifies supportive relationship variables and highlights the importance of relationships in influencing customer behaviour. The study supports an expanded version incorporating elements from planned behaviour and SCT. The model extends SCT to digital social commerce, highlighting the impact of environmental factors (social commerce attributes) and social influences (social support and relationship quality) on online consumer behaviour. It builds on the Theory of Planned Behaviour through Digital Social Influence (TPB) by demonstrating that SCA shape positive consumer attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control in online shopping contexts. The model also introduces social support and relationship quality as crucial mediators between SCA and SHOP, providing a nuanced understanding of how digital interactions influence behavioural intentions. The model integrates SCT and TPB for a holistic view of digital social commerce behaviour, suggesting that social commerce sites can drive stronger consumer intentions by focusing on supportive, interactive, and relationship-oriented features.

6.3 Future research direction

This paper presents a new model of shopping intention behaviour in social commerce, highlighting the impact of social support and relationship quality. It provides valuable insights for decision-makers, managers, early-stage marketers, sellers, resellers, policymakers, and aspiring entrepreneurs. In future studies, the researcher should consider revisiting the different features of their networking sites and place more emphasis on enhancing two-way communications. Future research on social commerce consumer behaviour should include diverse data collection, explore purchasing behaviour, and address methodological limitations. This study concentrated solely on user intention; however, future research should explore additional behaviours, including purchase decisions, repurchase intentions, and post-purchase behaviours within the context of social commerce. By including users from various SNS, researchers can better understand factors influencing purchase decisions. Mixed-methods approaches, including quantitative and qualitative methods, can provide nuanced insights into consumer attitudes and experiences. Longitudinal studies can track changes in consumer behaviour over time, while cross-cultural comparisons can help businesses tailor marketing strategies to specific cultural contexts. This comprehensive understanding can lead to more effective marketing strategies and enhanced user experiences on social media platforms.

7 Conclusion

As the researcher concludes, social commerce features, personalised recommendations, timely feedback, and social support enhance consumer understanding of purchasing options. It emphasises the importance of understanding the impact of customer

interaction techniques on purchasing behaviour. In conclusion, this study aims to investigate how social commerce features support customers' brand pages in boosting sales by cultivating social support and solid relationships. The research found that social commerce features positively influence social support, and stronger relationships enhance perceived social support. The study concludes that social commerce features, relationship quality, and social support collectively shape consumers' intentions to shop in a social commerce environment, highlighting the potential of social media platforms to drive customer engagement and sales. The analysis verifies that social media users' inclination to shop in a social commerce setting is influenced by a flowing together of social commerce features, social support and relationship quality.

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Appendix 1

Demographics of samples

Particulars	Categories	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	32.5
	Female	67.8
Age	Below 20	27.2
	21–30	34.8
	31–40	28.3
	Above 40	9.7
Most used social media	Instagram	30.3
	Facebook	32.1
	What’s app	29.7
	Others	7.9

Appendix 2

Measurement scale items used in the questionnaire

(1-Strongly Disagree; 2-Disagree; 3-Nutral; 4- Agree; 5-Strongly Agree)

<i>Items</i>	<i>Scales</i>
<i>Interactivity</i>	
IA1	Sellers can actively communicate with me on Instagram
IA2	Sellers often interact with me on Instagram
IA3	Sellers can respond promptly to my inquiries or comments on Instagram
<i>Recommendation</i>	
RD1	I think the suggestions made by friends on Instagram are generally frank
RD2	I think the suggestions of friends on Instagram are generally reliable
RD3	In general, the suggestions of friends on Instagram are trustworthy
RD4	I trust my friends on Instagram and share my status and photos with them
<i>Feedback</i>	
FB1	If I have a useful idea of how to improve a product or service, I will let sellers know through Instagram
FB2	When I receive premium products or services from sellers, I will comment on them through Instagram
FB3	When I encounter a problem, I will let sellers know on Instagram
<i>Social support</i>	
SS1	When I need help, I find someone (friends on Instagram) who provides me with suggestions
SS2	Some people (friends on Instagram) assist me in identifying the causes of my problems
SS3	I found someone (a friend on Instagram) who gave me the information I needed to solve my problems
SS4	My friends on Instagram encourage me in difficult situations
SS5	My friends on Instagram listen to my private feelings
<i>Relationship quality</i>	
RQ1	The relationship that I have on Instagram is something I am very committed to
RQ2	I am happy while chatting on Instagram
RQ3`	The relationship that I have on Instagram deserves my maximum effort to maintain
RQ4	When I follow the people on Instagram, I find that they are safe
RQ5	When I follow people on Instagram, I confirm that they are reliable to me
<i>Social shopping intention</i>	
SHOP1	I will consider the shopping experiences of other members on Instagram when I want to shop
SHOP2	I will ask other members on Instagram to provide me with their suggestions before I go shopping
SHOP3	I am willing to buy the products recommended by other members on Instagram