

Effectiveness of Social Commerce Marketing Among the Millennials in Chennai City

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Abstract

With the rapid growth of social media usage and online shopping in India, social commerce has emerged as a dynamic medium that blends social engagement with digital retailing. The study employs a descriptive research design, relying on primary data collected via a structured questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale. The survey covered 321 millennial respondents aged between 25 and 40 years residing in Chennai City who actively use social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp, and YouTube for product discovery and online purchasing. A non-probability convenience sampling method was employed, and data were analyzed using SPSS software version 21. The results of the study reveal that influencer credibility, social interaction, and eWOM have a significant positive relationship with millennials' purchase intention. Furthermore, trust was found to play a crucial mediating role between social commerce marketing activities and millennials' purchase decisions, indicating that authenticity, reliability, and transparency significantly enhance online buying confidence. The findings highlight that millennials in Chennai are highly influenced by credible influencers, peer recommendations, and engaging social interactions while making online purchase decisions. The study concludes that effective social commerce marketing requires

not only creative content and promotions but also the development of trust-based relationships with consumers.

Keywords: Social Commerce, Influencer Credibility, Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM), Social Interaction, Trust, Millennials, Purchase Intention, Chennai City.

I. INTRODUCTION

The emergence of social commerce—the intersection of social media and e-commerce—has revolutionized the way consumers discover, evaluate, and purchase products in the digital age. It represents a paradigm shift from traditional online shopping platforms to socially integrated environments that encourage user interaction, peer influence, and trust-based purchasing decisions. In India, particularly in metropolitan regions like Chennai, the proliferation of social networking sites such as Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp, and YouTube has transformed the marketing landscape. Businesses now rely on these platforms not merely for promotion but as active marketplaces that drive engagement and conversion through likes, shares, comments, and influencer endorsements. Among various consumer segments, millennials stand out as the most responsive and tech-savvy group in social commerce ecosystems. Born between 1981 and 1996, this cohort exhibits unique behavioral traits—digital dependency, preference for peer recommendations, social validation, and impulse-driven online purchasing tendencies. Their purchasing journey is heavily influenced by user-generated content, influencer credibility, brand storytelling, and interactive advertisements. In Chennai, one of India's fastest-growing urban centers with high digital penetration, millennials are increasingly turning to social platforms for both product discovery and online transactions. Social commerce marketing strategies—such as influencer marketing, community-based brand engagement, real-time feedback, and live streaming—are reshaping how brands build trust and foster long-term relationships. For marketers, understanding the effectiveness of these strategies among millennials in Chennai is crucial for designing campaigns that resonate with local culture, preferences, and technological adoption levels. The present study seeks to assess the effectiveness of social commerce marketing on millennials' purchase intentions in Chennai city. It explores key constructs such as influencer credibility, electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), trust, social interaction, and perceived value. Furthermore, it examines how demographic factors—age, gender, income, and occupation—affect millennials' responsiveness to social commerce activities. The findings of this study are expected to provide valuable insights for businesses aiming to leverage social media as a strategic tool for consumer engagement and conversion in a rapidly evolving digital marketplace.

Review of Literature

The growing integration of social networking platforms and e-commerce has given rise to social commerce, a concept that leverages online social interactions to influence consumer decisions. According to Hajli (2015), social commerce represents a transformation in online shopping behavior where social media functions as both an information source and a purchasing platform. Similarly, Busalim and Hussin (2016) emphasized that social commerce encourages collaborative online shopping by enabling peer communication, reviews, and trust-based exchanges. These interactions enhance social presence and build consumer confidence in purchase decisions. Recent studies by Zhao, Huang, and Su (2023) identified that social commerce platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok foster consumer engagement through interactivity, social proof, and real-time feedback mechanisms, which collectively shape millennials' purchase intentions. Among the many influencing factors, trust remains a central construct mediating the relationship between social cues and consumer purchase behavior. Pham and Tran (2021) classified trust antecedents into people-based, technology-based, and information-based dimensions, revealing that the presence of secure systems and credible information enhances consumers' willingness to buy online. Likewise, Lee (2025) distinguished between cognitive trust—rooted in rational evaluation—and emotional trust—driven by social bonding—showing that both forms jointly reduce consumers' perceived risks in social commerce. Supporting this argument, Alam, Shabbir, and Malik (2022) demonstrated that trust in social media influencers significantly impacts purchase intention among Indian consumers, particularly millennials who exhibit higher social media dependency. Influencer marketing is a critical pillar of social commerce effectiveness. Coutinho, Dias, and Pereira (2023) found that influencer credibility dimensions such as expertise, attractiveness, and trustworthiness strongly predict consumer attitudes and intentions to purchase endorsed products. Similarly, Shamim et al. (2024) discovered that influencer credibility and message consistency enhance perceived authenticity, leading to stronger consumer–brand relationships. Moreover, Sanapang and Ardyan (2024) highlighted that online customer reviews act as electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), where review quality and valence significantly influence consumer trust and impulse buying in social commerce environments. Despite the abundance of research, contextual studies focusing on urban millennial consumers in India remain limited. As Van Dat and Nguyen (2025) pointed out, socio-cultural factors such as collectivism, community belongingness, and local digital literacy moderate the effect of social commerce cues on purchase behavior. In the context of Chennai city, where millennials are highly active on digital platforms, understanding these moderating influences is essential. Thus, this study aims to bridge the existing research gap by empirically examining how social commerce marketing strategies influence

millennial purchase intention in Chennai, emphasizing the roles of influencer credibility, trust, and social interaction.

Objectives of the Study

- To investigate how influencer credibility, social interaction, and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) influence millennials' purchase intentions on social commerce platforms in Chennai City.
- To determine the effect of trust on the relationship between social commerce marketing activities and millennials' purchase decisions in Chennai City.

Hypotheses of the Study

- There is a significant relationship between influencer credibility, social interaction, and eWOM on millennials' purchase intention through social commerce platforms in Chennai City.
- Trust has a considerable influence on the relationship between social commerce marketing activities and millennials' purchase decisions in Chennai City.

Research Methodology

The present study, titled "Effectiveness of Social Commerce Marketing among Millennials in Chennai City," employs a descriptive research design to analyze the impact of social commerce marketing factors—such as influencer credibility, electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), and social interaction—on millennials' purchase intentions. Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale, comprising demographic details and statements on key constructs including influencer credibility, eWOM, trust, and purchase intention. A pilot study with 30 respondents confirmed the reliability of the instrument, with Cronbach's alpha values exceeding 0.70. The target population consisted of millennials aged 25–40 years residing in Chennai who actively use social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp, and YouTube for shopping. Using a non-probability convenience sampling method, a total of 321 valid responses were obtained through both online and offline modes. The collected data were analyzed using SPSS software, applying descriptive statistics to summarize demographic characteristics and inferential analyses such as correlation, regression, and structural equation modeling (SEM) to test the proposed hypotheses. This methodological approach provides a comprehensive framework to evaluate how social commerce marketing strategies influence millennial consumers' trust and purchase behavior,

offering meaningful insights for marketers and digital commerce practitioners operating in Chennai's evolving social media landscape.

Results of the Study

Table1
Demographic Profile of Millennials
(n=321)

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	176	54.8
	Female	145	45.2
Age Group (in years)	25 – 28 years	98	30.5
	29 – 32 years	112	34.9
	33 – 36 years	65	20.2
	37 – 40 years	46	14.4
Educational Qualification	Undergraduate	82	25.5
	Postgraduate	165	51.4
	Professional	74	23.1
Occupation	Student	59	18.4
	Private Employee	136	42.4
	Public Sector Employee	48	15
	Self-Employed	43	13.4
	Others	35	10.8
Monthly Income (₹)	Below 25,000	71	22.1
	25,001 – 50,000	123	38.3
	50,001 – 75,000	81	25.2
	Above 75,000	46	14.4

The demographic profile of the respondents provides valuable insights into the characteristics of millennials who actively engage in social commerce activities in Chennai City. As shown in the table, male respondents (54.8%) slightly outnumber female respondents (45.2%), indicating that men are marginally more involved in social commerce participation in the study region. In terms of age distribution, the largest group of respondents falls within the 29–32 years (34.9%) category, followed by 25–28 years (30.5%), showing that younger millennials form the dominant consumer segment utilizing social commerce platforms for product exploration and purchase. Regarding educational qualification, more than half of the respondents (51.4%) hold a postgraduate degree, suggesting that well-educated consumers are more aware of digital marketing trends and confident in making online purchase

decisions. Another 25.5% are undergraduates, and 23.1% are professionals, which collectively shows that the majority of participants are well-qualified individuals with a good understanding of online marketing content. With respect to occupation, the majority are private employees (42.4%), followed by students (18.4%), public sector employees (15%), self-employed individuals (13.4%), and others (10.8%). This distribution indicates that working professionals, particularly those in the private sector, are most exposed to and influenced by social commerce marketing in Chennai.

In terms of monthly income, the highest proportion of respondents (38.3%) earn between ₹25,001 and ₹50,000, followed by 25.2% in the ₹50,001–₹75,000 bracket, while 22.1% earn below ₹25,000 and 14.4% earn above ₹75,000. This pattern indicates that a majority of respondents belong to the middle-income group, which is consistent with the typical spending capacity of millennials in metropolitan areas. Overall, the demographic analysis reveals that social commerce in Chennai is predominantly driven by young, educated, and working millennials with moderate to high income levels. Their high digital literacy and purchasing power make them the most responsive group to influencer marketing, online reviews, and peer recommendations in social media-based shopping environments.

Table 2
Hypothesis Results

Hypothesis	Statistical Test Used	Test Value / Path Coefficient (β / r / F)	p-value	Result
H₁: There is a significant relationship between influencer credibility, social interaction, and eWOM on millennials' purchase intention through social commerce platforms in Chennai City.	Multiple Regression Analysis	$R = 0.724$ $F = 45.37$	0.000**	Significant – Hypothesis Supported
H₂: Trust has a considerable influence on the relationship between social commerce marketing activities and millennials' purchase decisions in Chennai City.	Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) – Path Coefficient	$\beta = 0.612$	0.000**	Significant – Hypothesis Supported

The results presented in Table 2 reveal significant relationships among the variables examined in the study on the effectiveness of social commerce marketing among millennials in Chennai City. The first hypothesis (H₁) tested the relationship between influencer credibility, social interaction, and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) on millennials' purchase intention through social commerce platforms. The results of the multiple regression analysis show a strong positive association ($R = 0.724$, $F = 45.37$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that these factors collectively exert a substantial influence on the purchase intentions of millennial consumers. This implies that when social media influencers are perceived as credible, when online users engage in meaningful social interactions, and when eWOM is perceived as authentic and informative, millennials are more inclined to make purchase decisions via social commerce platforms. Hence, the hypothesis is statistically supported, confirming that social factors play a pivotal role in shaping online buying behavior. The second hypothesis (H₂) examined whether trust significantly influences the relationship between social commerce marketing activities and millennials' purchase decisions. Using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), the path coefficient value ($\beta = 0.612$, $p < 0.01$) indicates a substantial and statistically significant effect. This suggests that trust acts as a crucial mediating factor that enhances the effectiveness of social commerce marketing. Millennials are more likely to complete online purchases when they trust the platform, the influencers, and the information shared by other users. Therefore, high levels of trust reduce perceived risk and strengthen the relationship between social marketing activities and consumer purchase behavior. Overall, the findings confirm that influencer credibility, social interaction, eWOM, and trust are key determinants of millennial consumers' purchase intentions in social commerce contexts. The strong statistical significance across both hypotheses underscores the growing importance of authentic engagement and relationship-building in digital marketing strategies targeting millennials in Chennai City. These results highlight that marketers must focus on establishing credibility, fostering user trust, and promoting interactive, transparent communication to maximize the impact of social commerce campaigns.

Discussions

The findings of the present study provide valuable insights into how social commerce marketing factors influence millennials' purchase behavior in Chennai City. The results confirmed that influencer credibility, social interaction, and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) significantly impact millennials' purchase intention. This aligns with the earlier findings of Hajli (2015), who emphasized that social commerce platforms enhance purchase intentions by integrating social trust and peer influence into online shopping. Similarly, Busalim and Hussin (2016) highlighted that social interactions and peer-generated content strengthen

consumers' confidence and shape their purchasing behavior. The significant relationship observed in this study ($R = 0.724$, $p < 0.01$) supports the view that millennials are more likely to rely on influencer recommendations and peer reviews before making purchase decisions, validating the conclusions of Coutinho, Dias, and Pereira (2023) that influencer credibility positively affects consumers' online buying intentions.

Moreover, the study found that trust plays a mediating and influential role in the relationship between social commerce marketing activities and millennials' purchase decisions. This finding is consistent with Pham and Tran (2021), who demonstrated that trust is a critical determinant of consumers' willingness to engage in online transactions. Similarly, Lee (2025) found that both cognitive and emotional trust reduce consumers' perceived risks and enhance their confidence in social media marketing environments. The present study's results ($\beta = 0.612$, $p < 0.01$) confirm that when millennials perceive social media marketing messages as trustworthy and authentic, their likelihood of purchasing through social commerce platforms increases. This observation also supports the findings of Alam, Shabbir, and Malik (2022), who identified trust in influencers as a significant predictor of purchase intention among Indian consumers. Overall, the discussion indicates that trust, credibility, and social interaction serve as essential psychological drivers in shaping millennial purchase intentions within social commerce ecosystems. As suggested by Shamim et al. (2024), the credibility of online influencers and message consistency enhances authenticity and consumer engagement, while Sanapang and Ardyan (2024) reaffirmed that credible online reviews build trust and drive impulse buying. The present research reinforces these insights within the Chennai context, highlighting that millennials' trust-based engagement is a cornerstone for successful social commerce marketing strategies.

II. CONCLUSION

The present study, titled "Effectiveness of Social Commerce Marketing among Millennials in Chennai City," provides meaningful insights into how social media-based marketing strategies influence the purchasing behavior of millennials. The findings reveal that influencer credibility, social interaction, and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) significantly affect millennials' purchase intentions through social commerce platforms. These results demonstrate that millennials in Chennai rely heavily on peer recommendations, authentic content, and influencer endorsements before making purchase decisions. The study further highlights the crucial mediating role of trust, confirming that it strengthens the relationship between social commerce marketing activities and purchase decisions. When consumers perceive influencers and online information as reliable and transparent, their confidence in making online purchases increases considerably. Overall, the

study concludes that social commerce marketing has become a powerful tool for shaping consumer perceptions and purchase behavior, particularly among tech-savvy and socially engaged millennials. It underscores that the effectiveness of social commerce depends not merely on promotional efforts but also on building trust-based and relationship-driven interactions with consumers. For marketers and businesses operating in Chennai, the results suggest the need to focus on developing authentic influencer collaborations, credible content, and interactive engagement strategies to enhance consumer trust and loyalty. By integrating these approaches, organizations can strengthen their brand presence and drive sustainable growth in the competitive social commerce landscape. The research also contributes academically by expanding the understanding of how social and psychological factors interact within digital marketing environments. It reaffirms that millennial consumers' purchase behavior in social commerce is not solely driven by price or convenience but by perceived credibility, peer influence, and emotional trust. Thus, fostering an environment of authenticity and transparency will continue to be the cornerstone of successful social commerce marketing strategies in the evolving digital ecosystem of Chennai and beyond.

III. REFERENCES

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