

SOCIAL NETWORKING SERVICES IN SOCIAL COMMERCE AND ITS EFFECTS DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC: A CASE STUDY OF STUDENTS OF UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN IN OYO STATE

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Abstract: The study investigated on the influence of social networking services on social commerce most especially during the wide spread of the virus; Covid-19. Social media was globally in tune with the house lockdown as the pandemic kept spreading to more countries. The Pandemic made 5 billion people all around the world to stay indoors, living within the radius and diameter of their own houses, thus some of our daily needs and usage for domestic purposes were all made possible by the use of the internet. People either living with loved ones and family or some who did refrain themselves while they isolated. Isolating yourself from your immediate environment meant you receiving medical care from doctors who are also ensured to be well protected by wearing gloves and protective nose masks. The research thus, investigated on the buying and selling of various products and commodities on the cyber space. Rightly with the use of social networking services in social commerce and its usage most especially during the breakout of the covid-19 virus. This assertion requires empirical investigation. The study used the design of survey research type where students of the prestigious university of Ibadan, Nigeria were used as data. In this study, research questions were raised and answered in this study. The interference that can be drawn from the research is that the social networking services greatly enhances social commerce growth. Conclusion can be made that during the covid-19 pandemic, there was no decline in the social commerce of the nation as the tools of social networking services were fully in usage in every nook and cranny of the world. Where buyers met sellers and made sure items were delivered to each and every of their individual locations.

Keywords: Social Networking, Pandemic, Social Commerce, Internet, Products.

1. INTRODUCTION

The world is becoming more digital. According to the (Nations, 2020), over 87 percent of people in industrialized nations utilized the internet in 2019, while the (GSMA, 2020) predicts that nearly 5.2 billion mobile phones were used worldwide in 2019. In such an atmosphere, new digital trends emerge, with the average user spending an increasing amount of time connected. This digital conquest has an impact on retail, which is now being transformed, with the Electronic Commerce (EC) branch developing rapidly. According to (Turban, Outland, King, Lee, Liang, and Turban, 2018), Electronic Commerce is the business model that permits electronic transactions over the Internet, allowing electronic innovations, communication, and cooperation amongst individuals, influencing consumer behavior and effecting enterprises. According to Business (Wire, 2020), EC is anticipated to expand by 70% till 2023 when compared to 2019. At the same time, the COVID-19 epidemic, which expanded rapidly throughout 2020, drastically altered the day-to-day lives of millions

throughout the world, altering not only their way of life, but also their purchasing habits. Government restrictions, such as quarantining, and the climate of uncertainty associated with the pandemic compelled consumers to seek alternatives to more traditional physical shopping. This was a critical factor in the consolidation of EC, which, due to its inherent characteristics of being virtual, became a useful source for complying with the precautionary measures advised by the World Health Organization (WHO) and local government policies. According to popular views, even after the pandemic, people are willing to continue purchasing through EC platforms. In the early decades of the twenty-first century, there are hundreds of social networking sites (SNSs) with a plethora of high-tech possibilities that serve a diverse spectrum of hobbies and activities. The majority of these SNSs allow users to present themselves and connect with current and new social network users. Scholars from many areas investigate SNSs to learn about the behaviors, consequences, culture, relevance of sites, user involvement, and the aim of social commerce (s-commerce). With its complete simplicity of use and technological capabilities, SNSs have become a suitable online endeavor for information exchange and social engagement, assisting in the development of interactive communication and social interaction and have a greater potential to create value for the organization.

Furthermore, social media usage has been massive in recent times, thus making being on the internet having to be one of the largely acquired hobbies of a lot of people. Surfing the net, being connected to the globe via the internet has become a popular thing for all and sundry thus turning into a global society where you get to meet people with same interests and likes. Business owners see this avenue as an atmosphere for online purchases and sales.

Research Significance

The reason for this examination is to investigate the job of informal communication locales in friendly trade, as well as its ramifications during the Coronavirus plague. With the COVID 19 adversely affecting the way of life of customers. It's basic to get the effect of the pandemic on client commitment in friendly business, as well as the capacity of long-range informal communication destinations, as the pestilence ended customary buying techniques and constrained clients to go to the various social trade locales accessible to them. To this effect; students of the University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria would be cross sectionally sampled to carry out the research.

Research Questions

The study however shall provide answers to these questions:

1. Investigate the attitude towards social commerce.
2. Examine the influence of the COVID-19 outbreak on the use of social commerce?

2. METHODOLOGY

A survey will be conducted via Questionnaires which is a quantitative research instrument for soliciting for responses on the level of awareness of students to social commerce and also gets to evaluate the role trust plays in allowing consumers participate in social commerce. The questionnaire's results will be entered into Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and analyzed using ANOVA. An in-depth review of relevant literature in the subject area will be carried out. Also, there was a web search of the ways by which social commerce can be made possible, this has been well done for many years by Jeff Bezos and his amazon company. A survey was however carried out amongst students of the University of Ibadan to determine the perception to social commerce with the sole intention of developing a trust model so they would participate in all forms of social commerce without any bias.

Instrumentation

Survey Instruments were used: A validated semi structured questionnaire consisting of both open and closed ended questions, comprising seven sections were administered to the study participants.

3. METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

Data collected were analyzed from the study participants and numbered serially. It is a descriptive statistic where the summary was done using proportions, means, bar graphs, pie charts and frequency tables. The data would be analyzed using statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS) software at $p > 0.05$ level of significance.

4. RESULTS

The results are presented and discussed with respect to the research questions that guided the study. Each question asked in the questionnaire were presented and analyzed according to their relevance to each research questions and at the end, finding was able to be presented in accordance with the data presented. The data derived from the questionnaire was read and studied thoroughly to understand what each participant's view on each question and their views was stated with descriptive statistic used to analyze the frequency of occurrence of same opinions shared on each question.

Research Question One

Investigate the attitude towards social commerce. Here we get to view the highlights of the attitudes of respondents relating to SC. A high proportion of the students 210(70.0%) agreed that "SC makes life more interesting", while a little below one-third of the students 77(25.7%) agreed that "it is safe to transact business online". A great proportion of the students 226(75.3%) agreed that "SC has made life easier", while majority, 223(74.3%) also believed that "SC has brought great convenience to life". A high proportion of the students 185(61.7%) agreed that "SC improves work productivity", and less than half of the students 113(37.7%) agreed that "they enjoy Social Commerce". A high proportion of the students 213(71.0%) disagreed that "they prefer to buy online than the traditional way", while slightly above half of the students 168(56.0%) also disagreed that "making use of SC is very wise and a good decision". In all, slightly above average was favorable disposed to SC, while a little below half of the students had poor disposition to SC

Table 1: Attitude of Respondents Relating to Social Commerce

Variable	Option	Frequency	Percentage
SC makes life more interesting	Agree	210	70.0
	Disagree	90	30.0
SC has made life easier	Agree	226	75.3
	Disagree	74	24.7
SC has brought great convenience to life	Agree	223	74.3
	Disagree	77	25.7
SC improves work productivity	Agree	185	61.7
	Disagree	115	38.3
It is safe to transact business online	Agree	77	25.7
	Disagree	223	74.3
I enjoy shopping online	Agree	113	37.7
	Disagree	187	62.3
I prefer to buy online than the traditional way	Agree	87	29.0
	Disagree	213	71.0
Making use of SC is very wise and a good decision	Agree	132	44.0
	Disagree	168	56.0

The null hypothesis states that there is a significant relationship between knowledge in SC and the attitude of the students towards SNS. The result revealed that there is a significant relationship between knowledge in SC and the attitude of the students towards SNS ($p < 0.05$). The null hypothesis is therefore accepted, and the alternate hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between knowledge in SC and the attitude of the students towards SNS is rejected. See Table 2 for more details

Table 2: Relationship Between Knowledge in SC and The Attitude of The Students Towards SNS

Knowledge	Attitude			df	X ²	P-value
	Poor disposition	Favourable disposition	Total			
Knowledge Adequate	84	192	276(100%)	1	0.000	<0.05
Inadequate	71	54	125(100.0%)			

The null hypothesis states that there is no significant relationship between attitude towards SC and the utilization of SNS. The result revealed that there is a significant relationship between attitude towards SC and the utilization of SNS ($p < 0.05$). The null hypothesis is therefore rejected, and the alternate hypothesis which states that there is a significant relationship between attitude towards SC and the utilization of SNS is accepted. See Table 3 for more details.

Table 3: Relationship Between Attitude Towards SC and the Utilization of SNS

Attitude	Have you ever bought anything on the Internet before?			df	X ²	P-value
	Yes	No	Total			
Attitude Poor disposition	31	124	155(100%)	1	0.000	<0.05
Favorable disposition	127	119	246(100.0%)			

Research Question Two

Examine the influence of the COVID-19 outbreak on the use of social commerce. Majority, 242(80.7%) of the students said that “it is because SNS allows ordering of product easily” is the reason why they prefer to buy goods online. Thus, they were able to still have access to their favorite items, goods and services all during the covid-19 pandemic. About 76.3% of the students also said that “it is because SNS is always available on the internet” is the reason why they make use of SNS. Other factors that influence the use of SNS include: SNS provides information 24 hours of the day 216(76%); SNS allows to choose from a wide variety of options 201(67%); and SNS allow ease of shopping comparison 186(62.0%). However, a high proportion of students 199(66.3%) stated that “SNS is not reliable and efficient”, while majority, 262(87.3%) of the student also stated that “SNS is not accepted by everybody”. The outbreak greatly influenced the high usage of the social media. Details of their responses can be seen in the table 4

Table 4: Participants Responses on Factors That Influences The Use of SNS

Variable	Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
I have sufficient knowledge for SNS	Yes	184	46.0
	No	216	54.0
SNS is a secured way of transacting business	Yes	120	30.0
	No	280	70.0
SC is very economical	Yes	243	60.8
	No	157	39.3
SNS allows ordering of product easily	Yes	322	80.5
	No	78	19.5

SNS is always available on the internet	Yes	305	76.3
	No	95	23.7
SC provides information 24 hours a day	Yes	284	71.0
	No	116	29.0
SNS allows choosing from a wide variety of options	Yes	266	66.5
	No	134	33.5
SC gives more value than the money spent	Yes	119	29.8
	No	281	70.3
SNS allows ease of shopping comparison	Yes	322	80.5
	No	78	19.5
SNS are very reliable and efficient	Yes	131	32.8
	No	269	67.3
SC is generally accepted by everybody	Yes	47	11.8
	No	353	88.3

5. DISCUSSION & RECOMMENDATION

The findings from the study demonstrates that trust influences the consumers' intentions to purchase online. It also revealed that consumers who lack trust in a specific online vendor are not likely to engage in Social Commerce. Disposition to trust is a general personality trait that conveys a general expectation of how trusting one should be. The more customers are disposed to trust the other party (i.e., the vendor), the less amount of risk they are likely to perceive. The study shows that more than half of the students do not trust SNS; which resulted in slightly less than half of the students making use of SC to purchase one item or the other on the internet. As revealed by McKnight (2002), if the consumers do not trust the vendor, they would not engage in it. The study also revealed that there was no significant association between trust in SC and the utilization of SNS; which goes ahead to say that, whether they buy a thing or two on the internet, this does not translate to them trusting Social Commerce. This study revealed the factors that influence the students' use of SC which includes the fact that SC allows the ordering of product easily, and that it provides information 24 hours of the day. The study also revealed that SC is not a secured way of transacting business, as a high percentage of the students believed so, and that SNS does not give more value than the money spent. This study is similar to the study of McKnight (2002), where a majority believed that fact that SC allows people to choose from a wide variety of options.

SC provides a different way of doing business that comes with its own set of benefits. The market size increases greatly to encompass the whole globe. This provides business with more customers and customers more choice. More mass customization can also be achieved. It becomes easier through SC for the customer to tell a business exactly what they require and individualize products or services. Also, SC allows the supply chain to be shortened; products can sometime be shipped directly from the manufacturer to the customer. This study revealed that the utilization of SC amongst the student is poor, as less than half of the students' population has ever purchased goods online. Amongst the few that has purchased goods online, books had the major share of purchase online followed by those paying for ticket to travel. The probable reason majority went for books is because they are students, and buying books would increase their knowledge in their chosen course. Clothing and accessories were another major item that was purchased online as majority of the students are young and need to be up to date with fashion.

The poor use of SC is due to the fact that most of the students do not trust the means of buying, even though they have a high understanding of the medium of transaction. Though they perceived SC to be free of effort, these did not translate to the use of SC.

The findings summarized above necessitates recommendation for social networking service providers. Therefore, the following recommendations were made:

1. The availability of internet providers should be made more efficient by the government so it can further enhance the sales and purchases of individual goods and services by all and sundry.

2. The possible fast delivery of these goods and services. This is being hindered by the government clamping on independent logistics services. These logistics companies need to be protected by the government.
3. The manner of power shortage also has played a key role in the unavailability for the social networking services to be used at all times and as the users please. The government needs to supply adequate power for the community

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