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A STUDY ON THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN SHAPING FUTURE OF SOCIAL COMMERCE WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO COIMBATORE DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the role of social media in shaping the future of social commerce, with special reference to Coimbatore district. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp have significantly influenced business operations, marketing strategies, and customer engagement. The study focuses on how businesses in Coimbatore are adopting social media tools to improve visibility, build trust, and drive sales. It also explores the challenges faced during social media adoption, including issues of digital literacy, resource constraints, and customer trust in online transactions. The research highlights the importance of social media in modern commerce and suggests strategies for effective implementation. The findings indicate that social media plays a vital role in transforming traditional business practices into socially-driven digital models.

Keywords: Social Media, Social Commerce, Digital Transformation, Customer Engagement, Online Marketing, Coimbatore District

INTRODUCTION OF THE STUDY

Social media has become a revolutionary force in commerce, transforming traditional business practices into modern digital systems. Social commerce refers to the integration of social media platforms into business operations, fundamentally changing how organizations market, sell, and deliver value to customers. In recent years, businesses in Coimbatore district have increasingly adopted social media technologies to enhance visibility, customer interaction, and sales. Platforms such as Instagram Shops, Facebook Marketplace, and WhatsApp Business are widely used in commerce. Social media helps businesses analyze customer preferences, predict buying behavior, and engage audiences through interactive content. This not only reduces marketing costs but also improves efficiency and customer loyalty. In a growing commercial hub like Coimbatore, social commerce is essential for maintaining competitiveness in the market. This study aims to analyze how social media contributes

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to digital transformation in commerce and evaluates its impact on businesses in Coimbatore district.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To study the role of social media in shaping social commerce.
- To analyze the level of social media adoption among businesses in Coimbatore district.
- evaluate the benefits of social To media in improving customer engagement and sales.
- To identify challenges faced by businesses in implementing social media strategies.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In the modern business environment, digital transformation has become essential for growth and sustainability. Social media plays a crucial role in this transformation by enabling businesses to connect with customers, promote products, and facilitate transactions. However, adoption and effective utilization of social media tools are not uniform across all businesses. In Coimbatore district, many small and medium enterprises still rely on traditional marketing methods. Despite the availability of social media platforms, there is a lack of awareness, technical knowledge, and financial resources required for effective implementation. Challenges such as trust issues in online transactions, data privacy concerns, and resistance to digital change hinder adoption. Moreover, limited empirical research exists on how social media is influencing social commerce at the regional level, particularly in Coimbatore district. This creates a gap in understanding the extent of adoption, its benefits, and the challenges faced by local businesses.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design:

Descriptive and analytical research design.

Data Collection:

Primary Data: Structured questionnaires distributed to business owners, shopkeepers, and entrepreneurs in Coimbatore district.
Secondary Data: Journals, research articles, websites, and reports related to social media and social commerce.

Sample Size:

90 respondents from retail, manufacturing, and service sectors.

Sampling Technique:

Convenience sampling.

Tools for Analysis:

Percentage analysis, Chi-square test.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

- **Social commerce evolution**
  Social commerce extends e-commerce by integrating social media, making online shopping more interactive through user-generated content and social interaction.
- **Impact of social media engagement**
  Elements like ratings, reviews, referrals, and online communities significantly influence consumer purchase intentions.
- **Role of influencers**
  Social media influencers act as opinion leaders, building trust and strongly affecting buying decisions, especially among young consumers.
- **Importance of trust and social validation**
  Trust, peer recommendations, and interactive content play a crucial role

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in shaping consumer behaviour in social commerce.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1.1: Showing the Respondents' Adoption of Social Media Tools in Business

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	40	44%
Agree	30	33%
Neutral	10	11%
Disagree	6	7%
Strongly Disagree	4	5%
Total	**90**	**100%**

Interpretation

The data shows that a majority of respondents have a positive perception toward the statement under study, with 44% strongly agreeing and 33% agreeing, which together accounts for 77% of the total respondents. This indicates a strong favourable opinion and suggests that most participants support the role of social media in influencing social commerce. A smaller proportion of 11% of respondents remain neutral, indicating some level of uncertainty or lack of strong opinion, while only 7% disagree and 5% strongly disagree, showing that negative perceptions are minimal.

Table 1.2 showing the Challenges in Implementing Social Media Strategies

Challenge Level	Number of Respondents	Percentage
High	42	47%
Moderate	28	31%
Low	20	22%
Total	**90**	**100%**

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Interpretation

The data indicates that a significant proportion of respondents perceive challenges in the context under study. Out of 90 respondents, 47% reported high challenges and 31% reported moderate challenges, showing that the majority face considerable or some level of difficulty. Only 22% reported low challenges, indicating a smaller group experience minimal issue. Overall, most respondents experience either high or moderate challenges, highlighting the need to address these issues to enhance social commerce adoption.

FINDINGS

- A majority of respondents (77%) either Strongly Agree or Agree, indicating a generally positive perception or approval regarding the subject surveyed.
- Nearly half of the respondents (47%) perceive the challenge level as High, suggesting that the task or topic is considered demanding by a significant portion of participants.

SUGGESTIONS

- Conduct training programs for business owners on social media marketing
- Government should provide subsidies and digital literacy initiatives.
- Businesses should invest in secure payment systems and digital infrastructure.
- Educational institutions should include social media commerce in curricula.
- Awareness campaigns should promote trust in online transactions.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that social media plays a significant role in shaping the future of social commerce by transforming traditional online shopping into a more interactive and engaging experience. Factors such as reviews, ratings, influencer marketing, and user-generated content have a strong impact on consumer purchasing behaviour. The findings indicate that trust and social validation are crucial in influencing buying decisions, especially among younger consumers.

In the context of Coimbatore District, social commerce is gaining momentum due to increased internet penetration and social media usage. However, concerns related to security and privacy still exist and need to be addressed. Overall, social media is expected to continue driving the growth of social commerce, creating new opportunities for businesses and consumers alike.

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