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Impact of social presence on consumer's online impulsive buying behaviour towards indispensable products in Bangalore city

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to investigate the impact of social presence characteristics, particularly kindness and integrity, on impulsive online shopping behaviour related to necessities like groceries and house basics.

Design / Methodology: The current study uses a positivist approach, which is deduced from previous studies on social presence and consumer buying behavior. Owing to its nature, the study is a monomethod quantitative analysis that uses online customers as the participants. Using the Kregcie-Morgan formula for the unknown population at a 7.5% margin of error, a sample of 170 online shoppers was considered viable. The researcher distributed 210 questionnaires, and 196 responses were considered for the study after removing the outliers. The data collection instrument was adapted from the previous studies. Using Gaskins' master validity tool, the validity and reliability of the questionnaire were verified. SPSS and AMOS software were used to analyse the data.

Findings: This finding indicates that an increased degree of social presence inside an online retail platform might significantly impact impulsive consumer purchasing behaviour. The findings imply that the average scores positively correlate with each other for social presence and the occurrence of impulsive consumer buying behavior in online settings

Originality: The COVID-19 epidemic has resulted in a rise in customers' online purchasing behavior, prompting websites to make concerted efforts to cater to the psychological needs associated with consumers' purchase intents. There is a lack of existing research in the specific domain under consideration, thus rendering the present study unique in its investigation of the effects of online purchasing behavior. It is imperative for websites to possess a comprehensive understanding of the psychological needs and preferences of consumers in order to properly tailor their offerings to align with consumers' purchasing intents.

Implications: Through the implementation of this study, researchers seek to address the existing gap in knowledge and offer significant insights to businesses, enabling them to optimize their online platforms with social presence elements and effectively cater to clients amidst the current demanding circumstances of online buying behaviour

Keywords – Benevolence ,Indispensable products, Integrity,Online impulsive buying behaviour,Social presence.

INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of online impulse buying, also known as e-impulse buying, has become a prominent subject of interest for market researchers. This is mostly attributed to the substantial rise in the utilization of the internet, smartphones, and other internet-enabled gadgets **Abdelsalam, S., et al (2020).**. The phenomenon of e-impulse buying has garnered significant attention from marketing strategists and decision makers due to its potential to effectively drive sales volume and earn substantial revenue **Adelaar et al., (2003).**

Definitions of Online impulsive buying behaviour

- *Impulsive purchasing, often referred to as impulsive buying behavior, denotes an unpremeditated choice to acquire a goods or service, typically occurring immediately prior to the actual transaction. Spontaneous purchases refer to unplanned buying behavior characterized by the absence of pre-shopping goals, whether it be a certain product category or a particular buying activity. These purchases are made on the spot, without prior contemplation or deliberate planning.* ***Shoib, S., & Arafat, S. Y. (2021)***
- *E-impulse buying refers to the spontaneous and immediate purchase of a product by online buyers, characterized by a sudden need to buy and a lack of prior purpose to make a purchase. This buying behavior is considered hedonically complicated and driven by spur-of-the-moment decisions.* ***(Verhagen and van Dolen, 2011)***

In the realm of online transactions, individuals have a notable inclination towards engaging in irrational purchasing behaviors, including impulsive buying **Kimiagari & Malafe, (2021).** Impulsive buying, which refers to the phenomenon of customers engaging in unexpected purchases in a sudden manner, is observed to be more prevalent in the online retail environment. According to **Nielsen's (2017)** findings, prior studies have indicated that the likelihood of impulsive purchases is 5% higher in online settings compared to offline environments. Additionally, it has been observed that around 40% of consumers' online expenditure is attributed to impulsive buying behavior. **Liu et al. (2013)**

Social presence

The concept of social presence pertains to the perception of the presence of individuals within the context of communication **Bickle, J. T., et al (2019).** It encompasses the subjective experience of being in the company of another person and the shared sense of togetherness. According to Short et al., the social presence theory posits that communication media facilitate a sense of presence for both individuals involved, hence impacting their interpersonal relationships **Lowenthal, P. R. (2010).** According to this theoretical framework, communication technologies, such as text messaging or video conferencing, have the potential to foster a perception of social presence by enabling individuals to regard the other party as authentic and actively involved in the encounter. There is a positive correlation between the perceived level of social presence and the likelihood of persons feeling connected and involved in the communication process. This idea holds significant implications for our comprehension and utilization of diverse communication modalities in both personal and professional contexts **Cui, G., et al (2013).**

The phenomenon under investigation mostly involved a continuous interpersonal engagement with either an individual or an organization, spanning a significant duration. Trust is commonly established over time through continuous contacts that allow individuals to develop dependable expectations regarding the actions of others, whether they are individuals or organizations. The absence of interpersonal interaction is a significant distinguishing element of e-Commerce, making it an intriguing aspect to consider in the context of the present study **Lu, B., et al (2016).** The absence of direct interpersonal communication in electronic commerce is a distinct obstacle in establishing trust between purchasers and vendors. In the absence of continuous interpersonal engagements, individuals are compelled to depend on alternative measures of trustworthiness, such as seller ratings and reviews **Shen, J. (2012).** As the e-Commerce sector experiences ongoing expansion, it becomes imperative to explore inventive strategies for establishing and sustaining trust in digital transactions **Weisberg, J., et al (2011)** .

This study looks at how kindness and honesty affect the social media presence of e-commerce firms.Integrity can be characterized as the perceived manifestation of honesty and ethical conduct exhibited by sellers, whereas benevolence pertains to the perceived inclination of sellers to operate in the best benefit of purchasers **Sivaji, A., (2011).** The aforementioned variables exert a substantial influence on the credibility of internet vendors, since they afford purchasers a perception of assurance and dependability. By prioritizing these variables and devising strategies to improve them, e-commerce platforms have the potential to cultivate a more robust perception of reliability among purchasers, ultimately resulting in heightened levels of customer contentment and allegiance **Gefen, D., & Straub, D. W. (2004).**

Indispensable Products

Indispensable products, sometimes referred to as vital products, are items that are necessary for the daily functioning and sustenance of individuals. They address significant or substantial challenges in one's life **Bance, P., and Schoenmaeckers, J. (2021).** There are no viable alternatives for these particular types of products, making them indispensable for regular use. This study primarily investigates food products and online grocery services, specifically fresh vegetables, dairy products, packaged/tinned items, frozen food products, and home basics. The market size of the online grocery industry in India was assessed at USD 2.9 billion in the year 2020, with an anticipated rate of compound annual increase (CAGR) of 37.1% from 2021 to 2028. The marketplace has experienced significant growth in recent months due to shifts in consumer lifestyles, increasing urbanization, and the preference of technologically inclined generations to make online purchases. Due to the rise in disposable incomes and the prevalence of hectic schedules, individuals are progressively opting for personalized and convenient online platforms for food shopping, as opposed to physically visiting local sellers. The inclination towards the utilization of online platforms for the distribution of grocery items became increasingly apparent subsequent to the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic. **Wiens et al. (2018**) Due to the implementation of social distancing measures, consumers are increasingly directing their attention towards online grocery shopping, a method that offers both convenience and enhanced safety.

The industry is anticipated to experience substantial growth in the next years. The implementation of measures such online payment and delivery without contact options has garnered customer interest in purchasing their routine groceries from various online platforms, including Amazon, BigBasket, Grofers, and others. Due to the heightened safety considerations surrounding the coronavirus pandemic and a substantial portion of the population engaging in remote work, there has been a notable escalation in customers' reliance on internet platforms. Consequently, this has presented numerous opportunities for market expansion **(Grand view research report, 2022)**

Understanding how customers shop for necessities on the internet is of utmost importance for a number of reasons, including the fact that there are many of these reasons. To begin, this makes it possible for businesses to more effectively focus on and promote these items to the target audience, thereby ensuring that they are accessible when it is necessary to do so. The analysis of the behavior of customers who shop online reveals prevalent trends and preferences, which in turn enables businesses to expand their product offerings and more successfully meet the ever-evolving requirements of customers. In addition, the study of consumer spending patterns online enables businesses to enhance the functionality of their digital platforms and the quality of the shopping experience as a whole. This, in turn, makes it easier for customers to obtain the items they require and satisfy their shopping needs. Within the setting of shopping websites, the influence of social presence, particularly the dimensions of integrity and compassion, can have a substantial impact on the impulsive purchasing behavior of vital products. This is especially true in the realm of the internet. When people believe that a website possesses attributes such as honesty, transparency, and reliability (together referred to as integrity), they are more likely to have a sense of assurance in engaging in impulsive buying behavior. This can lead to increased revenue for the website. In addition, the stimulation of impulsive buying behavior can be further increased if the website cultivates a sense of benevolence towards its customers by providing customized recommendations, excellent customer service, and convenient return policies. This can further increase the likelihood that the user would make an unplanned purchase. As a result, the incorporation of these aspects of social presence into the shopping website carries with it the potential to exert a significant influence on the manner in which customers make purchases of essential goods online. The ever-increasing prevalence of e-commerce, in particular when considered within the framework of the COVID-19 global health crisis, is a major factor that contributes to the importance of this study. Because of the growing reliance that customers are placing on e-commerce platforms for their day-to-day needs, businesses need to have a full understanding of the factors that drive impulsive purchasing behavior. This has resulted in this topic assuming a crucial role for the success of enterprises. Businesses have the potential to not only increase client attractiveness but also increase sales and encourage customer loyalty if they acknowledge the relevance of social presence and integrate it into their online platforms. This may be accomplished by integrating social presence. This study provides valuable information for organizations that are interested in building online shopping experiences that successfully satisfy the psychological expectations of customers and, as a result, have an impact on the purchasing decisions those customers make.

The objective of the present study is to examine the influence of social presence variables, specifically integrity and benevolence, on the impulsive buying behavior of essential products in an online context. The initial portion provides a concise elucidation of online impulsive purchasing behavior, the concept of social presence, and the significance of vital products. The subsequent part elucidates the importance of social presence and its contributing variables in relation to prior scholarly works, while also presenting a conceptual framework that addresses the observed research gap. The third section of the paper delves into the study methodology, encompassing the research plan, data collection tool, and sample design. The findings of the investigation are outlined in the fourth section of the paper, while the fifth section encompasses the conclusion, encompassing the constraints and potential avenues for further research.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In order to assess background reviews and independent studies of social presence on shopping websites and online impulsive purchase behaviour, the study used a systematic literature review methodology. Based on the requirement that only English studies published during the last five years be included, 34 studies were found and chosen for inclusion in the review. After obtaining the full text of the corresponding research works, a total of twenty-four literary works were chosen in order to perform an extensive assessment of their quality. Because of their quality problems and iterative processes, two research were not included in the analysis. The current research is based on an extensive analysis of twenty-two pertinent academic publications.

The articles were sourced from reputed journals and were scrutinized to determine the level of quality exhibited by each study. Elsevier database, Routledge and CRC Press Taylor and Francis database. Emerald Group Publishing database, Springer Nature database and Sage database. Several supplementary articles were acquired from reputable academic databases such as Wiley, Academia, JSTOR, and Guildford Press.

Literature review of social presence

- **Chen and Liao (2022)** The utilization of live streaming commerce as a prevalent marketing strategy has garnered significant interest; yet, there remains a dearth of understanding regarding the elements that encourage viewers to consistently participate in live streaming. In order to address this particular void in existing research, the present study utilizes the framework of social presence theory to investigate the effects of sense of community, emotional support, and interactivity on viewers' social presence. This, in turn, has an impact on their engagement with live streaming content. The present study presents a comprehensive theoretical framework that aims to elucidate the factors influencing individuals' intention to engage in live streaming activities, drawing upon the social presence theory.

- **Zhang, G., et al (2022).** The recent rebranding of Facebook to Meta has sparked renewed interest in the metaverse notion. There are several indications that the public buzz surrounding the metaverse is more influential than technical factors in driving its current popularity. In order to provide a clearer understanding of the factors contributing to the growing acceptance of the notion, this research endeavor constructs a theoretical framework grounded in the principles of embodied social presence theory. The results show that users' embodied presence and embodied co-presence are not significantly predicted by the main technological elements influencing the metaverse's popularity. On the other hand, users' creativity positively correlates with both their propensity to regularly participate in the metaverse and their corporeal presence in it. The effects of co-presence and embodied presence mitigate this influence. The study's conclusions offer some support for the theory that user imagination, which is impacted by public opinion, drives the metaverse's popularity. The objective of this study is to analyze the impact of presence, which encompasses the social presence of live streaming platforms, viewers, live streamers, and telepresence, on consumer trust and flow state. Additionally, this study wants to investigate how these factors influence impulsive buying behaviors, with a particular focus on the moderating role of personal sense of power.
- **Ming, J., et al (2021).** Utilizing the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework as a theoretical foundation, the conceptual model encompasses several constructs such as social presence, telepresence, consumer trust, flow state, personal sense of power, and impulsive purchase behavior. An online survey was given to a sample of 405 Chinese consumers who had previously engaged in live streaming purchasing as part of a study. Structural equation modelling was utilised to analyse the gathered data (SEM). According to the study's findings, social presence may be categorised into three different dimensions: viewers, live streamers, and social presence of live streaming platforms. Furthermore, it was discovered that telepresence significantly and favourably affected consumer trust and flow state. As such, all of these elements work together to encourage customers to make impulsive purchases.Furthermore, the association between consumer trust, flow state, and impulsive purchase behaviour is moderated by customers' perceptions of power. The goal of this study is to give live streamers and online retailers a thorough grasp of the best ways to influence customers' buying decisions. Furthermore, it acts as a benchmark for the development of live streaming business in several other countries. This study fills a vacuum in the literature by examining the effects of social presence and telepresence on impulsive purchasing behaviour in the context of live streaming commerce.
- **Jiang, C., et al (2019).** The significance of users' social presence is growing in the realm of social commerce, prompting online retailers to seek methods of augmenting it in order to bolster consumer trust and increase product sales. Previous research has acknowledged the impact of social presence on trust, while it remains unclear which specific aspects of social presence contribute to the enhancement of customer trust. Furthermore, the impact of information support on the connection between social presence and trust remains ambiguous. The objective of this study is to investigate the moderating role of information support in the association between several dimensions of social presence and trust in the context of social commerce. Additionally, this study investigates the impact of consumers' trust in online retailers on their purchase intentions. The results of the study provide evidence supporting the legitimacy of three distinct aspects of social presence: consumer-to-consumer contacts, consumer-to-merchant interactions, and consumer-to-commodity connections. Specifically, the availability of information support does not have a positive moderating effect on the relationship between consumers' interactions and their trust in online merchants. However, information support does reduce the impact of the other two dimensions on trust. Ultimately, the level of trust that customers place in online merchants has a notable impact on their intents to engage in shopping activities. The results of the study provide theoretical insights and practical applications.
- **Gefen and Straub (2004)** The major driving factor behind human conduct is the desire to reduce social uncertainty, which involves comprehending, forecasting, and managing the actions of others. In situations where established laws and customs prove inadequate, individuals often turn to trust and familiarity as fundamental strategies for mitigating social uncertainty. The limited presence of regulations and established norms on the Internet necessitates a heightened emphasis on consumer familiarity and trust, particularly within the realm of e-Commerce. However, the absence of interpersonal communication and the transient nature of standard online commercial transactions render this form of customer trust distinct, as trust is inherently tied to human connection and thrives through ongoing engagement. This study provides validation for a four-dimensional trust scale within the domain of e-Products and afterwards revalidates it within the domain of e-Services. The study subsequently demonstrates the impact of social presence on these trust qualities, particularly benevolence, and its subsequent effect on intentions to make online purchases.

Research Gap

The phenomenon of spontaneous buying was initially introduced by Clover in 1950 **Clover (1950)**. Numerous studies have been conducted on the phenomenon of impulsive buying across various global contexts, yielding significant findings and insights in this domain. However, within the realm of online context, this field is still in its early stages, with limited research conducted thus far. The social presence theory was initially proposed by **Short, J. (1976),** and subsequent research has been conducted in the field of telecommunication psychology. There is a scarcity of research examining the influence of social presence on impulsive buying behavior in online contexts. Consequently, the present study aims to address this gap in the literature.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

According to **Haydam, N. E., and Steenkamp, P. (2021)** , the research process can be visualized as an onion with each layer representing a progressively more comprehensive step. The current study is a positivism approach which is deduced from previous

studies on Social presence and consumer buying behaviour . Owing to its nature the study is a mono method quantitative analysis which uses online shoppers as the participants of the study. Using the Kregcie morgan formula of Unknown population **Chaokromthong, K., and Sintao, N. (2021)** at 7.5% margin of error a sample of 170 online shoppers was considered viable. The researcher distributed 210 questionnaires and 196 responses were considered for the study after removing the Outliers. The data collection instrument was adapted from the previous studies. The items for Social presence- Integrity and benevolence were adapted from the study of **Gefen, D., & Straub, D. W. (2004).** The statements for online impulsive buying behaviour were taken from **Verma, Hemraj & Singh, Shalini. (2019).** The questionnaire was prepared by adapting to the items mentioned in the previous studies to measure the impact of social presence on the online impulsve buying behaviour.

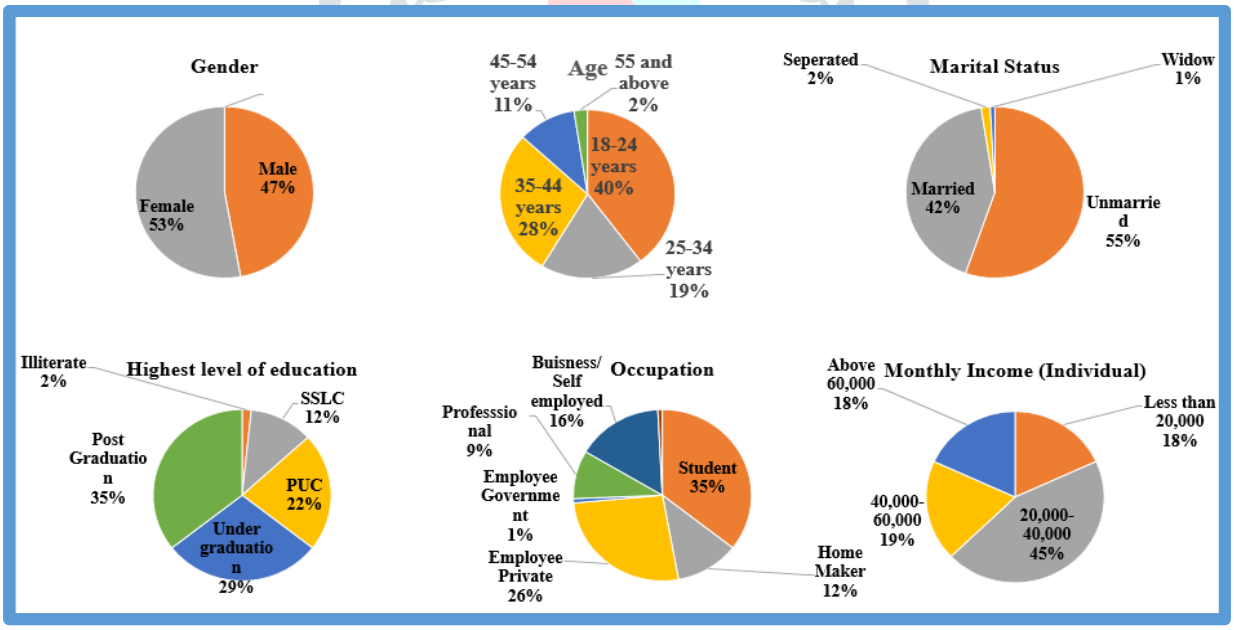
The questionnaire was first validated by 5 experts in the academic field followed by launching a pilot study. The pilot study results revealed that the instrument was reliable and consistent with a Cronbach alpha of 0.887 for 2 constructs measuring Social presence and 0.829 for 3 construct measuring online consumer buying behaviour.

The validity of the questionnaire was measured using the CR- Composite reliability > than 0.70; AVE – Average Variance explained > than 0.50; MSV – Maximum shared square variance > than AVE and MaxR(H) – Maximum reliability > than MSV. The second criterion to measure validity , the discriminate validity involves evaluating discriminant validity through the utilization of the Fornell-Lacker criterion **Afthanorhan, A., et al.(2021).** Using the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE), the correlation between latent constructs is compared using this method (Hair Jr & et al., 2017). It is expected that a latent construct will be better at explaining variance in its own indicators than it will be in indicators of other latent constructs. Hair Jr. and others. (2017) state that it is expected that the correlations with other latent constructs will be lower than the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE) for each construct. The questionnaire was deemed valid and reliable in the current model since all dimensions have been verified and all constructs meet the validity criteria.Using Gaskins' master validity tool, the validity and reliability of the questionnaire were verified. The software programmes AMOS and SPSS were used to analyse the data.

RESULTS

Demographic profile of the respondents

Fig 1- Demographic variables of the respondents



DISCUSSION

The target audience consists of a majority of 53% females and 47% males. Approximately 40% of individuals fall within the age range of 18-24 years, while approximately 28% belong to the late 30s and early 40s age group. A minority proportion of the target audience consists of individuals aged 55 years and above. The data pertaining to the marital status of the target audience indicates that 42% of individuals are married, while 55% are unmarried. The remaining percentage comprises individuals who are either separated or widowed. A minute fraction of the participants exhibit illiteracy, while a mere 12% have successfully obtained a Secondary School Leaving Certificate (SSLC). The data reveals that a significant proportion of the population, specifically 29%, have obtained a graduate degree, while an additional 35% have pursued postgraduate education. Education plays a crucial role in comprehending the advantages of organic food products and serves as a significant socio-demographic variable in the context of this study. In terms of occupation, the data reveals that 35% of individuals identified as students, 12% as homemakers, 26% as employees in private companies, and 16% as self-employed individuals. Most members of the target demographic make between INR 20,000 and INR 40,000 per year, with 19% making more than INR 40,000

Item analysis for Social presence

The mean scores above 4.00 indicated that the online impulsive customers of indispensable products are highly influenced by Social presence of the shopping website – Integrity (M = 4.12, SD = 0.876) and Benevolence (M = 4.07, SD = 1.100). This implies that consumers attach significant importance to the reliability and reputation of the e-commerce platform while engaging in spontaneous transactions for essential goods on the internet. The mean scores demonstrate a noteworthy influence of these aspects on the decision-making process and their contribution to the overall pleasure derived from the online purchasing experience. The prioritization of establishing and sustaining a robust social presence that embodies integrity and generosity is of significance to businesses, as it facilitates the attraction and retention of impulsive customers.

Item analysis for online consumer buying behaviour

The mean scores above 4.00 indicated that the online impulsive shoppers of indispensable products highly agree for the consumer buying behaviour statements- Intrinsic consumer buying behaviour (M = 4.16, SD = 0.911) , extrinsic consumer buying behaviour (M = 4.22, SD = 1.278) and hedonic consumer buying behaviour (M = 3.98, SD = 1.233). These high mean scores indicate that individuals who engage in impulsive online shopping for essential products exhibit a significant inclination towards valuing intrinsic elements, such as personal happiness and enjoyment, in their decision-making processes related to purchases. Additionally, they attach considerable importance to extrinsic elements like as social influence and advertising incentives. Nonetheless, the marginally diminished average score pertaining to hedonic consumer buying behavior suggests that although individuals still take pleasure and sensory gratification into account, these elements may not hold as much significance in their decision-making process compared to the other two variables. In summary, the aforementioned findings underscore the considerable impact of consumer purchasing behavior on impulsive online buyers of essential commodities.

Impact of Social presence on online consumer buying behaviour

H1- There is a significant impact of Social presence on online consumer buying behaviour

Step -1 Exploratory Factor analysis

Social presence – Two factors

The KMO measure of sampling adequacy, which is equal to 0.898, and Barlett's Test of Sphericity, which comes with a significance level of 5%, are statistically significant. It was found by chi-square analysis that the Chi-square value of the Bartlett test is 1209.750 with the significant value less than 0.05 and 127 degrees of freedom, which shows that correlation matrix, is not an identity matrix and that it looks to be factorable.

Communalities refer to the extraction values for each of the items and should be above 0.300 and the communalities for stress items were between 0.338 and 0.896

The total of squared loadings that has been removed accumulates to about 73.737 % of the original loadings. In social sciences, a cumulative Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings is considered good if it is above 50%. 2 components are discovered while applying the approach of Factor Analysis, according to the results of the study. The two components were integrity of the shopping website and its benevolence.

The rotated component matrix showed that due to the appropriate factor loadings no items were deleted in the study.

Online impulsive consumer buying behaviour **– Three factors**

The KMO measure of sampling adequacy, which is equal to 0.916, and Barlett's Test of Sphericity, which comes with a significance level of 5%, are statistically significant. It was found by chi-square analysis that the Chi-square value of the Bartlett test is 1653.092 with the significant value less than 0.05 and 157 degrees of freedom, which shows that correlation matrix, is not an identity matrix and that it looks to be factorable.

Communalities refer to the extraction values for each of the items and should be above 0.300 and the communalities for stress items were between 0.451and 0.703

The total of squared loadings that has been removed accumulates to about 69.392% of the original loadings. In social sciences, a cumulative Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings is considered good if it is above 50%. 3 components are discovered while applying the approach of Factor Analysis, according to the results of the study. The three components were intrinsic stimulus, extrinsic stimulus and hedonic motivation.

The rotated component matrix showed that due to the appropriate factor loadings no items were deleted in the study.

Step -2 Run the model

Table 1 - Measurement Model – impact of social presence on online consumer buying behaviour

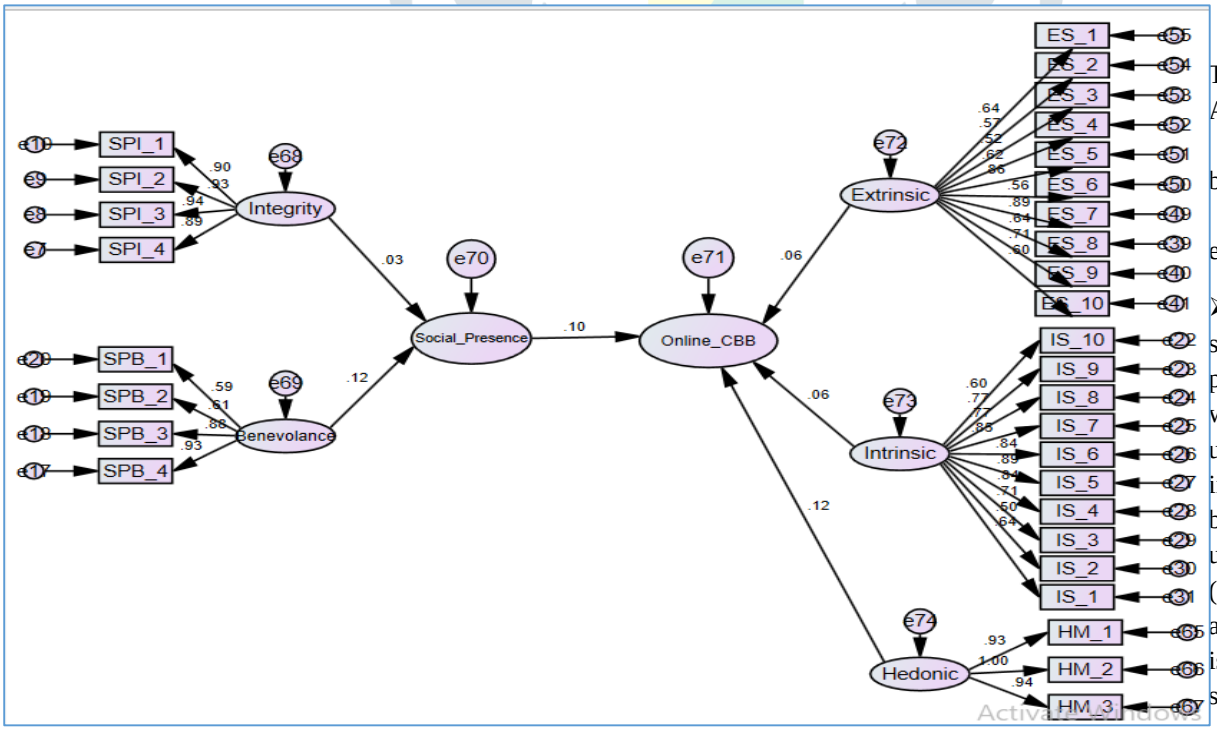
Model Fit Summary				
CMIN				
Model	NPAR	CMIN	Degrees of Freedom	CMIN/DF ($\chi 2$/df)
Default model	89	238.911	104	2.297
Criteria				<3.000
RMR, GFI				
Model	RMR	GFI	AGFI	PGFI
Default model	0.051	0.911		
Criteria	<0.100	>0.80		

The table above showcases the important statistics for model fit. The chi-square divided by degrees of freedom ($\chi 2$ / df) is within the acceptable range of 3, which is a positive outcome (specifically, 2.876). The observed Goodness of Fit value (0.826) exceeds the proposed attributes. The boundary estimation yields a promising value of 0.048 for the RMR. The model in question has received significant recognition within the academic community, which is a great achievement. Its measures of fit are reasonably appropriate, indicating that it has the potential to be even more accurate.

Table 2- Structural relationship model - Impact of social presence on online consumer buying behaviour

			Unstd Estimate	**Std Estimate**	**P values**
Online consumer buying behaviour	<---	Social presence	0.463	0.101	***

Fig 2- Pictorial representation of Structural relationship model - impact of social presence on online consumer buying behaviour



The results of SEM Analysis illustrate (Relationship between variables of unstandardized estimates)

- When the mean scores for social presence in shopping website goes up by 1 unit, the online impulsive consumer buying behavior goes up by 46 times (B=0.463,b= 0.101) and this relationship is statistically significant at p<0.05.

The existence of social elements within a shopping website exerts a notable influence on the behavior and decision-making of online consumers. The experience of perceiving social presence, such as encountering reviews and ratings from fellow buyers, engenders a sense of trustworthiness and genuineness. The utilization of social proof aids consumers in making well-informed selections and instills a sense of confidence in their purchase. Moreover, the existence of social presence facilitates the opportunity for consumers to actively participate in dialogues and seek clarification, so fostering a sense of communal belonging and augmenting the whole shopping

encounter. The present study examines the influence of integrity and benevolence on the social presence of the shopping website. The element of benevolence exhibits a greater influence on social presence, as indicated by a b value of (B= 0.124, P=0.000) . In contrast, the element of integrity exhibits a somewhat diminished influence, as indicated by its b value of 0.092. This implies that customers place importance on the website's dedication to integrity and openness, as well as its desire to exceed expectations in fulfilling their requirements. By placing equal importance on compassion and honesty, the e-commerce platform may effectively cultivate a robust social presence that nurtures trust and engenders loyalty among its clientele. In conjunction with kindness and integrity, responsiveness emerges as a significant determinant of the social presence of a shopping website **Ming, J., et al (2021).** The factor with a b value of (B=0.108, P=0.000) suggests that customers place significant importance on a website's capacity to rapidly address their complaints and offer satisfactory resolutions. By prioritizing the prompt and efficient handling of client concerns and feedback, the shopping website may effectively augment its social presence and cultivate enduring customer relationships. **Weisberg, J., et al (2011) ; Lu, B., et al (2016) and Shen, J. (2012).**

The online impulsive buying behavior of customers is influenced by three constructs: intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and hedonic motivation. Intrinsic motivation pertains to the internal stimuli that compel individuals to engage in impulsive online purchases, encompassing aspects such as personal delight or self-expression (B=0.329, P=0.000). In contrast, extrinsic motivation pertains to external stimuli such as discounts, promotions, or societal pressure that serve to compel consumers towards engaging in impulsive purchasing behaviors (B=0.281, P=0.000). Lastly, hedonic motivation revolves around the inclination for pleasure or excitement derived from impulsive purchases, as individuals pursue immediate gratification and indulgence. These three factors interact synergistically to form and exert impact on customers' impulsive buying behavior in the online context. In the present study, hedonic incentive (B= 0.698, P=0.000) is found to exert a substantial influence on the online impulsive purchasing behavior of essential products. The present study revealed that hedonic incentive exerts a substantial influence on the impulsive purchasing behavior of essential products in online settings. Consumers are motivated by the pursuit of pleasure and excitement, leading them to seek immediate gratification and engage in impulsive internet purchases. The motivation to engage in impulsive buying behavior is influenced by various factors, including limited-time offers and social pressure presence can significantly alter the trajectory of organizations.

Zhang, G., et al (2022). In essence, these components synergistically interact to mold and exert an impact on the decision-making process of consumers when engaging in impulsive online purchases **Chen, J., & Liao, J. (2022).** The consumer purchasing behavior for essential products exhibits small variations compared to other products, as consumers prefer to emphasize practicality and necessity over enjoyment and excitement. Essential commodities, such as sustenance and pharmaceuticals, are primarily motivated by imperative rather than preference. Although limited-time discounts may continue to have an impact, the decision-making process for essential products tends to be more pragmatic and logical. When making online purchases, consumers tend to prioritize criteria such as quality, affordability, and convenience. **Sivaji, A., et al (2011).**

This finding indicates that an increased degree of social presence inside an online retail platform might significantly impact impulsive consumer purchasing behaviour **Jiang, C., et al (2019).** The results suggest that there is a positive correlation between the average scores for social presence and the occurrence of impulsive consumer buying behavior in online settings **Gefen, D., & Straub, D. W. (2004).** Hence, it is imperative for enterprises to prioritize the augmentation of the social presence component of their websites in order to allure and captivate impulsive online consumers. By integrating elements such as customer reviews, ratings, and interactive chat functionalities, businesses have the ability to cultivate a more socially engaging and participatory atmosphere on their websites. This phenomenon has the potential to not only enhance the probability of engaging in impulsive purchasing behavior, but also cultivate a sense of communal belongingness among individuals who engage in online shopping activities. Furthermore, the implementation of targeted advertising efforts that highlight the social features of their products has the potential to augment the social presence and thus stimulate an increase in impulsive buying behavior. In the context of the online retail industry, comprehending and leveraging the impact of social

CONCLUSION

Indispensable products refer to essential goods that are of high necessity, such as food and medicines. These goods are indispensable for sustaining life and cannot be substituted or disregarded. During periods of crisis or emergency, there is a substantial surge in the demand for essential supplies. Individuals depend on these commodities to fulfill their fundamental need and safeguard their overall welfare. The absence of essential goods can lead to various detrimental outcomes such as malnutrition, sickness, and other negative repercussions for persons. Comprehending the online purchasing behavior of consumers for essential products holds significant importance due to many factors. Firstly, this enables firms to efficiently focus on and promote these products to the appropriate demographic, guaranteeing their accessibility when required. Moreover, the examination of online customer behavior serves to uncover prevailing patterns and preferences, so enabling enterprises to enhance their range of products and effectively cater to the ever-changing demands of consumers. Moreover, the analysis of online purchasing behavior enables enterprises to optimize their digital platforms and improve the overall shopping experience, hence facilitating consumers' accessibility and acquisition of necessary goods. Impulsive purchases of necessities in the online sphere can be greatly impacted by the social presence influence, especially when it comes to the aspects of honesty and compassion in the context of shopping websites. When individuals consider a website to possess qualities of trustworthiness, transparency, and reliability (referred to as integrity), they are more inclined to experience a sense of assurance in

engaging in impulsive buying behavior. Furthermore, the stimulation of impulsive buying behavior can be further enhanced if the website cultivates a sense of benevolence towards its clients through the provision of tailored recommendations, great customer service, and convenient return policies. Hence, the integration of these components of social presence within the shopping website holds considerable potential to exert a substantial impact on consumers' online buying behavior pertaining to indispensable commodities. The increasing frequency of e-commerce, especially in light of the COVID-19 global health issue, highlights the significance of our study. The increasing dependence of customers on e-commerce platforms for their daily need necessitates a comprehensive comprehension of the determinants that influence impulsive purchasing behavior, hence assuming significant importance for businesses. By acknowledging the significance of social presence and integrating it into their online platforms, businesses have the potential to not only enhance client attraction but also augment sales and foster customer loyalty. This study offers useful insights for businesses in designing online shopping experiences that effectively address consumers' psychological demands and consequently influence their purchasing decisions.

The present study used a quantitative research approach, while future researchers may consider incorporating qualitative features to elucidate the significance of social presence on shopping websites and its influence on customer behavior. Through the utilization of interviews or focus groups with online shoppers, researchers have the ability to get comprehensive insights about the impact of social presence on their decision-making procedures and total contentment with the buying encounter. Moreover, qualitative research has the potential to reveal the precise components of a website that contribute to the augmentation of social presence, including user reviews, interactive forums, and live chat functionalities. This acquired knowledge can subsequently be utilized to enhance and customize online buying experiences, ultimately resulting in increased client engagement and loyalty. The present study has the potential to be expanded to encompass diverse geographical regions and additional product categories, such as electronics, apparel, and food. This expansion would let us understand social presence's impact on different online shopping scenarios more thoroughly. Through the implementation of research in various geographical areas and sectors, it is possible to discern cultural and industry-specific elements that exert an impact on consumer engagement and loyalty. The expansion of the scope would allow firms to customize their e-commerce platforms accordingly, so assuring a gratifying and individualized experience for clients in many regions. In addition, doing an examination of various product categories will provide insights into the distinct obstacles and prospects that emerge within each industry. This, in turn, enables the formulation of focused approaches aimed at optimizing consumer contentment and loyalty.

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