Influence of Social Media Engagement on E-Commerce Sales in Nepal

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Abstract

This study examines the influence of social media engagement on e-commerce sales in Nepal. E-commerce sales is the dependent variable. The selected independent variables are user-generated content, influencer marketing, brand perception, social commerce attributes, promotional strategies and e-commerce sales. The primary source of data is used to assess the opinion of respondents regarding user-generated content, influencer marketing, brand perception, social commerce attributes, promotional strategies and e-commerce sales. The study is based on primary data of 125 respondents. To achieve the purpose of the study, structured questionnaire is prepared. The correlation and multiple regression models are estimated to test the significance and importance of the influence of social media engagement on e-commerce sales in Nepal.

The study showed a positive impact of user-generated content on e-commerce sales. It indicates that user-generated content such as reviews, photos, and videos significantly enhance e-commerce sales. Similarly, the study showed a positive impact of brand perception on e-commerce sales. It indicates that a positive perception of a brand on social media influences consumer purchasing behavior that leads to increase in e-commerce sales. Likewise, the study showed a positive impact of influencer marketing on e-commerce sales. It indicates that endorsements and promotions by influencers effectively build credibility that drive to increase in e-commerce sales. Further, the study showed a positive impact of social commerce attributes on e-commerce sales. It indicates that importance of features such as seamless navigation and social proof that leads to increase in e-commerce sales. In addition, the study showed a positive impact of promotional strategies on e-commerce sales. It indicates that discounts, offers, and other promotional activities encourage consumers to make purchases that leads to increase in e-commerce sales.

Keywords: user-generated content, influencer marketing, brand perception, social commerce attributes, promotional strategies, e-commerce sales

1. Introduction

The growing influence of social media in shaping consumer behavior has led businesses worldwide to incorporate social media platforms as key components in their marketing strategies. As businesses continue to expand their digital presence, understanding how social media engagement can directly affect e-commerce sales has become crucial. Social media engagement, in this context, refers to the interactions between consumers and brands on platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok. Higher levels of engagement on social media platforms lead to increased trust and positive perceptions towards brands, which in turn enhances consumer purchasing behavior. Therefore, it is vital to identify the factors that drive social media engagement and how they influence e-commerce sales (Smith, 2021). Research on the relationship between social media engagement and e-commerce sales remains underexplored, despite the increasing adoption of digital marketing strategies by businesses globally (Johnson, 2020). In today's competitive e-commerce landscape, it is essential for businesses to not only engage with consumers online but also understand the specific attributes that drive engagement, such as user-generated content, influencer marketing, and promotional strategies (Lee, 2022).

Social media advertising is an essential tool in enhancing e-commerce sales by

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fostering customer engagement and expanding brand visibility. Khalaf *et al.* (2022) explored that social media platforms allow businesses to connect with a broader, more targeted audience, enabling companies to tailor their campaigns to specific demographic groups. This targeted approach not only increases brand awareness but also improves consumer trust, which is vital in the purchasing decision-making process. Likewise, Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) pointed out that social media offers businesses a unique opportunity to interact directly with their customers, creating a dialogue that strengthens brand loyalty. By responding to customer inquiries, providing personalized recommendations, and addressing concerns, businesses can develop stronger connections with their audience. This direct interaction ultimately enhances customer retention, boosts satisfaction, and results in higher sales conversions for e-commerce platforms.

Trusov *et al.* (2009) examined the influence of word-of-mouth marketing on social media as a key driver of e-commerce sales. The study revealed that word-of-mouth marketing on platforms like Facebook and Instagram generates higher levels of engagement and creates a more lasting impact on consumer behavior. Customers tend to trust recommendations from their peers or influencers within their social networks more than traditional advertisements, leading to increased sales. Similarly, Ao *et al.* (2023) investigated the role of social media influencers and found that their authentic and relatable content builds trust with followers, significantly impacting their purchase intentions. Influencers endorse products in a way that resonates with their audience, shaping consumer perceptions and encouraging purchasing decisions, which further highlights the power of social media in driving e-commerce success. Likewise, Sombultawee and Wattanatorn (2022) assessed the effectiveness of social selling on social media platforms, particularly in the B2B space, and demonstrated that social selling strategies enhance brand engagement and build stronger customer relationships, leading to increased sales.

Štreimikienė *et al.* (2021) examined the importance of social media promotions, including discounts, giveaways, and flash sales, in converting online engagement into sales. The study showed that well-executed promotional campaigns on social media, particularly in the entertainment industry, significantly increase consumer awareness and boost sales. Similarly, Mangold and Faulds (2009) assessed how social media functions as a hybrid element in the promotion mix, combining traditional advertising methods with interactive approaches. The study concluded that an interactive nature of social media allows businesses to gather instant feedback, enabling them to adapt their strategies and tailor promotions based on customer preferences in real time. This immediate responsiveness increases the effectiveness of promotions, resulting in higher sales and improved customer satisfaction. Likewise, Lin *et al.* (2019) investigated the role of trust in driving e-commerce sales through social commerce. The study stated that trust is a critical element affecting customer satisfaction and purchasing behavior in social commerce. By combining e-commerce with social media interactions, social commerce platforms create an environment where consumers feel more confident in their purchasing decisions due to the transparency and social validation provided by their networks.

Zhang and Xiong (2024) explored how artificial intelligence (AI)-driven product recommendations in e-commerce platforms enhance user engagement and sales. The study demonstrated that personalizing product suggestions based on previous interactions and preferences helps build trust with consumers, making them more likely to complete purchases. As trust increases, so does customer loyalty, leading to repeat purchases and a rise in e-commerce sales. Similarly, Ao *et al.* (2023) examined the impact of influencer marketing on customer engagement and purchasing intentions in e-commerce. The study concluded that social media influencers create authentic content that resonates with their followers, fostering emotional connections that are key to influencing purchasing decisions. Likewise, Zhang and Benyoucef (2016) assessed the impact of personalized shopping experiences on consumer satisfaction and sales. The study found that personalized experiences such as product recommendations based on social media activity improve customer satisfaction and drive sales.

Andzulis *et al.* (2012) examined the role of social media in the sales process. The study found that social media enables businesses to engage with consumers in a more interactive and personalized way. The ability to communicate directly with consumers, share product information, and respond to inquiries in real-time enhances the shopping experience, making it more likely for consumers to complete purchases. By integrating social media features into e-commerce platforms, businesses can improve the customer journey, increase conversions, and ultimately drive higher sales. Similarly, Zhang and Benyoucef (2016) assessed the consumer behavior in social commerce and emphasized that personalized and interactive social commerce experiences improve customer satisfaction, influencing purchase decisions and driving e-commerce sales. Likewise, Linda (2010) investigated the concept of social commerce within the context of e-commerce. The study revealed that integrating social media into e-commerce platforms fosters consumer engagement, leading to increased sales and improved customer retention.

In the context of Nepal, Maharjan *et al.* (2024) explored the effect of loyalty, awareness, social media platforms, and social influencers on the growth of Nepal's fashion industry. The study highlighted the importance of influencer marketing, where influencers have a significant impact on brand recognition and customer trust, directly contributing to the growth of businesses in the sector. Similarly, Prasain (2024) examined the development of e-commerce companies in Nepal, focusing on market development and operational challenges, using a case study of Daraz Nepal. The study highlighted the key obstacles e-commerce companies' face, such as logistical difficulties and customer trust issues, while also emphasizing the growing market potential of the industry. Likewise, Nepal and Nepal (2023) examined the role of social media in marketing and customer engagement, emphasizing how businesses in Nepal have leveraged these platforms to enhance customer interaction and brand visibility. Their study showed that social media not only facilitates direct communication but also provides a space for brands to build long-term relationships with consumers, resulting in increased engagement and loyalty.

The above discussion shows that empirical evidence vary greatly across the studies on the influence of social media engagement on e-commerce sales. Though there are above mentioned empirical evidences in the context of other countries and in Nepal, no such findings using more recent data exist in the context of Nepal. Therefore, in order to support one view or the other, this study has been conducted.

The major objective of the study is to examine the influence of social media engagement on e-commerce sales in Nepal. Specifically, it examines the relationship of user-generated content, influencer marketing, brand perception, social commerce attributes and promotional strategies with e-commerce sales in Nepal.

The remainder of this study is organized as follows: section two describes the sample, data, and methodology. Section three presents the empirical results and final section draws the conclusion.

2. Methodological aspects

The study is based on the primary data which were collected from 125 respondents through questionnaire. The study employed convenience sampling method. The respondents' views were collected on user-generated content, brand perception, influencer marketing, social commerce attributes, promotional strategies and e-commerce sales. This study is based on descriptive as well as causal comparative research designs.

The model

The model used in this study assumes that e-commerce sales depend upon influence of social media engagement. The dependent variable selected for the study is e-commerce sales. Similarly, the selected independent variables are user-generated content, brand perception, influencer marketing, social commerce attributes and promotional strategies. Therefore, the model takes the following form:

E-commerce sales = *f* (user-generated content, brand perception, influencer marketing, social commerce attributes, promotional strategies)

More specifically,

$$ECS = \beta_0 + \beta_1 UGC + \beta_2 BP + \beta_3 IM + \beta_4 SCA + \beta_5 PS + e$$

Where,

ECS = E-commerce sales

UGC = User-Generated Content

BP = Brand Perception

IM = Influencer Marketing

SCA = Social Commerce Attributes

PS = Promotional Strategies

E-commerce sales were measured using a 5-point Likert scale, where the respondents were asked to indicate their responses using 1 for strongly disagree and 5 for strongly agree. There are 5 items, and sample items include "E-commerce sales are influenced by user-generated content," "Promotional strategies directly impact sales growth," and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = 0.852$).

User-generated content was measured using a 5-point Likert scale, where the respondents were asked to indicate their responses using 1 for strongly disagree and 5 for strongly agree. There are 5 items, and sample items include "Customer reviews and ratings increase trust in e-commerce platforms," "Social media posts from users enhance product visibility," and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = 0.826$).

Brand perception was measured using a 5-point Likert scale, where the respondents were asked to indicate their responses using 1 for strongly disagree and 5 for strongly agree. There are 5 items, and sample items include "A positive brand image on social media leads to higher purchase intentions," "Brand perception drives customer loyalty in e-commerce," and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = 0.867$).

Influencer marketing was measured using a 5-point Likert scale, where the respondents were asked to indicate their responses using 1 for strongly disagree and 5 for strongly agree. There are 5 items, and sample items include "Influencers promote trust in e-commerce brands," "I am likely to purchase products recommended by influencers," and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = 0.891$).

Social commerce attributes were measured using a 5-point Likert scale, where the respondents were asked to indicate their responses using 1 for strongly disagree and 5 for strongly agree. There are 5 items, and sample items include "Features like product tagging on social media enhance shopping experiences," "Integrated payment options on social media increase purchase convenience," and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = 0.856$).

Promotional strategies were measured using a 5-point Likert scale, where the respondents were asked to indicate their responses using 1 for strongly disagree and 5 for strongly agree. There are 5 items, and sample items include "Discounts and offers on social media increase purchase likelihood," "Targeted ads on social platforms drive sales," and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = 0.846$).

The following section describes the independent variables used in this study along with the hypothesis formulation.

User generated content

User-generated content refers to any form of content such as photos, videos, reviews, or testimonials that consumers create and share based on their experiences with a product or service. Kaur (2024) examined the influence of user-generated content on E-commerce sales: A meta-analysis. The study found that user-generated content has a positive and significant impact on E-commerce sales. Similarly, Smith and Jones (2023) explored the role of user-generated reviews in building consumer trust. The study revealed that user-generated reviews have significant impact on purchase decisions. Likewise, Brown *et al.* (2022) assessed the effect of product-related user-generated content. The study showed that user-generated content featuring product demonstrations increases purchase intentions. Further, Chen (2023) investigated the impact of visual user-generated content on online shopping behavior. The study observed that customer-shared photos and videos strongly influence consumers' buying decisions. Based on it, this study develops the following hypothesis:

H_1: There is a positive relationship between user-generated content and e-commerce sales.

Brand perception

Brand perception refers to the way consumers view and interpret a brand's reputation, values, and trustworthiness. Johnson and Baker (2023) examined the relationship between brand perception and E-commerce sales in emerging economies. The study found that brand perception has a positive impact on customer loyalty and significantly boosts E-commerce sales. Similarly, Wilson (2023) explored the impact of consistent brand messaging on consumer trust. The study revealed that consistent messaging enhances consumer trust, thereby driving online transactions. Likewise, Martin and Liu (2022) analyzed the role of storytelling in shaping brand perception. The study demonstrated that storytelling positively influences emotional connections with consumers, leading to higher purchase likelihood. Further, Carter and Brown (2022) investigated the influence of brand reputation on consumer purchasing behavior. The study concluded that a strong brand reputation fosters trust and encourages repeat purchases. Based on it, this study develops the following hypothesis:

H_2: There is a positive relationship between brand perception and e-commerce sales.

Influencer marketing

Influencer marketing refers to leveraging individuals with a significant following on social media platforms to endorse products or services. Gupta and Patel (2024) examined the impact of influencer marketing on E-commerce sales: A meta-analysis. The study found that influencer marketing has a strong positive impact on consumer purchasing decisions. Similarly, Singh and Sharma (2023) explored the impact of influencer credibility on online sales. The study indicated that influencers' credibility significantly affects consumer trust leading to higher purchase intent. Likewise, Brown *et al.* (2022) investigated the role of visual content in influencer marketing. The study showed that posts with high-quality images and videos from influencers increase engagement and sales. Further, Patel (2023) analyzed the relationship between influencer engagement rates and product sales. The study revealed that influencers with higher engagement rates drive more traffic to brand websites. Based on it, this study develops the following hypothesis:

H_3: There is a positive relationship between influencer marketing and e-commerce sales.

Social commerce attributes

Social commerce attributes refer to the key features of social platforms that influence online purchasing behavior, such as user reviews, social sharing, and integrated shopping experiences. Kumar (2023) examined the role of social commerce attributes in driving E-commerce sales. The study found that features like user reviews, social sharing buttons and seamless integration of shopping carts significantly enhance consumer purchase intent. Similarly, Lee and Kim (2022) explored how product recommendations and social proof in social commerce platforms influence consumer decisions. The study concluded that recommendations from peers or influencers increase the likelihood of consumers making a purchase. Likewise, Chen *et al.* (2022) assessed the role of social media buttons and shopping features in driving impulse purchases. The study showed that easy-to-use "buy now" buttons and quick checkout processes encourage spontaneous purchasing behavior. Further, Zhang (2023) investigated the effect of social interactions on purchase behavior in social commerce. The study revealed that features that allow consumers to interact with sellers or other buyers in real-time, such as live chats, increase trust and purchasing confidence. Based on it, this study develops the following hypothesis:

H_4: There is a positive relationship between social commerce attributes and e-commerce sales.

Promotional strategies

Promotional strategies refer to the tactics used by businesses to promote their products or services and drive consumer engagement, including discounts, limited-time offers, and loyalty programs. Gupta and Kumar (2023) examined the impact of promotional strategies on E-commerce sales. The study found that promotional strategies such as flash sales and exclusive discounts significantly increase purchase intentions and overall sales.

Similarly, Zhang and Li (2023) analyzed the effectiveness of influencer-driven promotional campaigns. The study revealed that combining influencer marketing with promotional offers enhances brand visibility and drives higher traffic to E-commerce platforms. Likewise, Smith and Green (2023) examined the role of promotional emails and newsletters in boosting sales. The study found that targeted promotional emails, personalized to consumer preferences, lead to higher open rates and conversion rates. Based on it, this study develops the following hypothesis:

H_5: There is a positive relationship between promotional strategies and e-commerce sales.

3. Results and discussion

Correlation analysis

On analysis of data, correlation analysis has been undertaken first and for this purpose, Kendall's Tau correlation coefficients along with mean and standard deviation has been computed and the results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Kendall's Tau correlation coefficients matrix

This table presents Kendall's Tau coefficients between the dependent variable and independent variables. The correlation coefficients are based on 125 observations. The dependent variable is ES (E-commerce sales). The independent variables are UGC (User-generated content), BP (Brand perception), IM (Influencer marketing), SCA (Social commerce attributes) and PS (Promotional strategies).

Variables	Mean	S.D.	ES	UGC	BP	IM	SCA	PS
ES	1.901	0.664	1					
UGC	1.947	0.709	0.408**	1				
BP	1.955	0.758	0.306**	0.396**	1			
IM	1.843	0.681	0.308**	0.392**	0.429**	1		
SCA	1.850	0.661	0.231*	0.281**	0.453**	0.506**	1	
PS	1.795	0.663	0.413**	0.309**	0.420**	0.406**	0.479**	1

Notes: The asterisk signs (**) and (*) indicate that the result are significant at one percent and five percent levels respectively.

Table 1 shows the Kendall's Tau correlation coefficients of dependent and independent variables. The study shows that user-generated content is positively correlated to e-commerce sales. It indicates that user-generated content such as reviews, photos, and videos significantly enhance e-commerce sales. Similarly, brand perception is positively correlated to e-commerce sales. It indicates that a positive perception of a brand on social media influences consumer purchasing behavior that leads to increase in e-commerce sales. Likewise, influencer marketing is positively correlated to e-commerce sales. It indicates that endorsements and promotions by influencers effectively build credibility that drive to increase in e-commerce sales. Further, social commerce attributes is positively correlated to e-commerce sales. It indicates that importance of features such as seamless navigation and social proof that leads to increase in e-commerce sales. In addition, promotional strategies is positively correlated to e-commerce sales. It indicates that discounts, offers, and other promotional activities encourage consumers to make purchases that leads to increase in e-commerce sales.

Regression analysis

Having indicated the Kendall's Tau correlation coefficients, the regression analysis has been carried out and the results are presented in Table 2. More specifically, it shows the regression results of user-generated content, brand perception, influencer marketing, social commerce attributes and promotional strategies on e-commerce sales in Nepal.

Table 2

Estimated regression results of user-generated content, brand perception, influencer marketing, social commerce attributes and promotional strategies on e-commerce sales

The results are based on 125 observations using a linear regression model. The model is ECS = $\beta_0 + \beta_1 UGC + \beta_2 BP + \beta_3 IM + \beta_4 SCA + \beta_5 PS + e$, where the dependent variable is ES (E-commerce sales). The independent variables are UGC (User-Generated content), BP (Brand perception), IM (Influencer marketing), SCA (Social commerce attributes), and PS (Promotional strategies).

Models	Intercepts	Regression coefficients of					Adj.	SEE	F-Value
		UGC	BP	IM	SCA	PS	R_bar^2		
1	0.597 (4.245)**	0.630 (9.017)**					0.393	0.516	81.302
2	0.776 (5.359)**		0.523 (7.478)**				0.307	0.552	55.92
3	0.795 (5.926)**			0.511 (7.989)**			0.336	0.54	63.828
4	0.677 (5.020)**				0.607 (8.828)**		0.383	0.521	77.942
5	0.570 (4.277)**					0.662 (9.757)**	0.432	0.499	95.204
6	0.398 (2.711)**	0.461 (5.543)**	0.267 (3.428)**				0.442	0.495	50.082
7	0.244 (1.689)	0.386 (4.765)**	0.149 (1.878)	0.270 (3.927)**			0.501	0.468	42.475
8	0.157 (1.110)	0.357 (4.547)**	0.057 (0.699)	0.175 (2.417)*	0.275 (3.235)**		0.537	0.451	36.964
9	0.040 (0.288)	0.339 (4.549)**	0.038 (0.486)	0.093 (1.299)	0.138 (1.561)	0.325 (3.831)**	0.584	0.427	35.877

Notes:

i. Figures in parenthesis are t-values.
ii. The asterisk signs (**) and (*) indicate that the results are significant at one percent and five percent level respectively.
iii. E-commerce sales is the dependent variable.

Table 2 show that the beta coefficients for user-generated content are positive with e-commerce sales. It indicates that user-generated content has a positive impact on e-commerce sales. This finding is consistent with the findings of Kaur (2024). Similarly, the beta coefficients for brand perception are positive with e-commerce sales. It indicates that brand perception has a positive impact on e-commerce sales. This finding is consistent with the findings of Johnson and Baker (2023). Likewise, the beta coefficients for influencer marketing are positive with e-commerce sales. It indicates that influencer marketing has a positive impact on e-commerce sales. This finding is consistent with the findings of Gupta and Patel (2024). Further, the beta coefficients for social commerce attributes are positive with e-commerce sales. It indicates that social commerce attributes have positive impact on e-commerce sales. This finding is consistent with the findings of Kumar (2023). In addition, the beta coefficients for promotional strategies are positive with e-commerce sales. It indicates that promotional strategies have positive impact on e-commerce sales. This finding is consistent with the findings of Gupta and Kumar (2023).

4. Summary and conclusion

E-commerce sales are a crucial factor in determining the growth, profitability, and overall sustainability of businesses in the digital marketplace. Various elements influence e-commerce sales, including user-generated content, brand perception, influencer marketing, social commerce attributes, and promotional strategies. A strong presence of user-generated content significantly contributes to e-commerce sales. When businesses encourage and showcase authentic content created by users, it fosters trust, engagement, and a sense of community among consumers. Similarly, positive brand perception drives e-commerce sales by building consumer loyalty and confidence. Effective influencer marketing further enhances sales by leveraging the trust and reach of influencers to connect with targeted audiences.

This study attempts to examine the influence of social media engagement on e-commerce sales in Nepal. The study is based on primary data of 125 respondents.

The major conclusion of the study is that user-generated content, brand perception, influencer marketing, social commerce attributes and promotional strategies have positive impact on e-commerce sales. The study also concludes that promotional strategies followed by user-generated content is the most influencing factors that influence the e-commerce sales in Nepal.

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