

Information Sharing Intention to Improve Social Media Content Quality

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ABSTRACT

Social media, with 5.04 billion users in 2024, has transformed marketing by enabling engagement, enhancing media content and consumer experience. The concept of consumer experience is pivotal in shaping consumer behaviour, loyalty, and satisfaction. The growth of social media by 5.6%, coming from younger users, represents the future of active society members who, driven by a need for two-way communication, exhibit a strong preference for social media despite its complexity. This research evaluates social media usage among higher education students in Indonesia to understand its impact on content, engagement, experience, and information sharing. Using a quantitative method involving descriptive and inferential analysis, cross-sectional with non-probability convenience sampling, data were collected from 120 higher education students via online questionnaires. The research finds that social media content influences engagement and experience but does not directly affect the intention to share information. It highlights gender differences in preferences, with males prioritising functional attributes and females service experience. The research also addresses the perplexing challenge of distinguishing real from fake information, emphasising the managerial implications for generating positive information that meets users' needs, thereby affecting brand advantages and product benefits. The credibility of information significantly impacts consumer experience, sharing intentions, and transaction influences.

Keywords: Perplexing information, Consumer experience, Information sharing, Higher education students.

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1. INTRODUCTION

As of the start of 2024, there are roughly 5.04 billion social media users, representing 62.3% of the world's population, seeing a 5.6% increase with 266 million new users joining in 2023 according to Datareportal (Kemp, 2024). Nowadays, technology connects billions worldwide, transforming social behaviour and human interactions (Nagajayanthi, 2022). According to Arpaci (2020), unlike traditional marketing, social media has become a primary need of society, influencing transactional activities and serving as a platform for sharing content and promoting products (Arpaci, 2020;

Schouten, Janssen and Verspaget, 2020; Liao, Widowati and Hsieh, 2021; Simbolon and Law, 2022; Drossos, Coursaris and Kagiouli, 2024).

Social media has introduced radical new ways of engagement and revolutionised marketing practices, enabling companies to share content, stay interactive, acquire consumer feedback, and provide service, thereby enhancing engagement and brand interaction (Smith and Johnson, 2018; Imtiaz *et al.*, 2019; Hallock, Roggeveen and Crittenden, 2019; Miah *et al.*, 2022; Moon and Iacobucci, 2022). This has resulted in increased richness of content and improved consumer experience. Additionally, social media enables consumer engagement and information sharing without cost, distance, or time constraints, helping consumers find diverse information sources (Smith and Johnson, 2018; Arpaci, 2020; Cao *et al.*, 2021; Shahbaznezhad, Dolan and Rashidirad, 2021).

The concept of consumer experience, particularly in the realm of online consumer experience (Chen, Chen and Keng, 2020; Zhang *et al.*, 2020), can be categorised into sensory, cognitive, and emotional experiences (Hilvert-Bruce *et al.*, 2018; Martins *et al.*, 2019). The significance of consumer experience cannot be overstated, as it plays a vital role in shaping consumer behavior, loyalty, and overall satisfaction (Chen *et al.*, 2023; Gerlich, 2023). This encompasses the range of feelings elicited from the interaction between consumer to consumer as well as consumers and enterprises, including from pre-purchase to post-purchase stages and influences consumer perceptions, preferences, and decision-making processes, contributing to the overall consumer experience (Chen and Yang, 2023). Consumers have a freedom to share their reason of like or dislike of particular products (Das, 2020).

Social media usage worldwide has increased by 5.6% over the past year, with younger users, particularly 16-24 years old (Generation Z), being the most active and heaviest users, spending more time on these platforms than any other generation (Kemp, 2024). Research by Al-Rahmi *et al.* (2021) found that higher education students as a young generation perceived using social media as important and that it is linked to their daily use and they will continue using them in the future. They use social media as the first resource when looking for either information or inspiration” and become increasingly visual, thus satisfying the “visual preference heuristic” of younger consumers (Jones and Kang, 2020), who, after all, are regarded to be the future of every nation (Arena *et al.*, 2023). Higher education students will play a key role in the future as active society members (Barreiros *et al.*, 2024), with a stronger need for stimulation, which is an important driver of satisfaction (Rajagopal, 2009), although some may find the complexity of two-way communication to be stimulating (Kirk *et al.*, 2015).

Social media significantly influences the sharing of opinions and product knowledge among consumers, thereby impacting other consumers (Miah *et al.*, 2022). Although these posts exhibit high engagement through liking, they do not significantly affect information sharing. However, these posts display the lowest level of sharing, likely because consumers become brand fans through positive product experiences and seek further brand-related information (Dolan *et al.*, 2019).

The consumer experience has evolved the marketing mix from product-centric to consumer-centric, when consumers increasingly invest their daily time in social media to interact with brands globally at any time (McCarthy, 1960; Fetherstonhaugh, 2009; Pop and Zsuzsa, 2020; Konhäusner, Shang and Dabija, 2021; Tanveer, Khan and Ahmad, 2021). It has conceptualised an online consumer experience framework that emphasises consumer experience as an internal subjective state of the consumer (Vazquez *et al.*, 2020). Interaction with social media does not, however, always result in a positive

experience and may even negatively impact (Grewal, Stephen and Coleman, 2019; Li, Larimo and Leonidou, 2023).

Higher education students as a young consumers are essential because they are both present and future consumers (Ebrahimi *et al.*, 2022). Many ordinary young consumers have started to share reviews about products and services on social media (Phan and Nguyen, 2024). However, among the large number of posts shared on social media, there is also misleading content disseminating wrong information about products and making the audience highly aware and mistrustful. Companies' ability to generate social media content does not guarantee that the characteristics of information will be well-received. Ensuring protecting consumers from disseminating fake information, is crucial for increasing consumer trust towards brands (Dwivedi *et al.*, 2021). The large amounts of similar and repetitive social media content make it perplexing to discern between real and fake information, thereby undermining the credibility of the information (Aju, Kumar and Lal, 2022). Companies must pay attention to the consumer service department to prevent consumers from putting their negative experiences on social media, specifically when a consumer complains on social media, said consumer is venting their anger and stress (Kusumawati, Suhandi and Purwanegara, 2024). However, companies face novel challenges in converting media investments into meaningful consumer engagement (Hallock, Roggeveen and Crittenden, 2019; de Oliveira Santini *et al.*, 2020; Shahbaznezhad, Dolan and Rashidirad, 2021).

This research is important due to social media's content's significant impact on consumer experience and information sharing, highlighting the need to understand the implications on the higher education students as a young generation, called digital natives, who are expected to be competent in the use of digital technologies (Janschitz *et al.*, 2020; Mertala *et al.*, 2024).

Social media enables consumers to engage in activities such as writing reviews, posting content, tagging others, liking, and sharing, and investigating how their motivations for sharing influence perceptions of these messages could provide valuable insights on sharing (Grewal, Stephen and Coleman, 2019; Dwivedi *et al.*, 2021). Encouraging consumers to post about products can still lead to benefits for receivers, such as social influence and information diffusion.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research employs quantitative methods to test theories, ascertain facts, illustrate correlations between variables, and predict outcomes. A questionnaire was developed based on literature concerning social media content, its impact on consumer experience, and information sharing. To ensure quality, academics reviewed the questions, and a pilot test was conducted with a small sample of social media users, resulting in modifications to the final questionnaire.

The questionnaire consisted of two sections: the first gathered socio-demographic information, including gender, social media usage patterns, and online shopping frequency; the second included statements on social media content, consumer experience, and information sharing, reflecting the four variables under investigation. Respondents rated the impact of social media content on consumer experience and information sharing using a 4-point Likert scale, ranging from "Strongly disagree" (1) to "Strongly agree" (4), without a neutral option.

A non-probability accidental sampling method was employed to gather data from higher education students in Indonesia as respondents through online questionnaires distributed nationwide, specific for students active as social media users and who had made an online purchase in the past 12 months. Based on the basic proportion formula, with a population of 7.8 million higher education students (Indonesia Central Bureau of Statistics/BPS, 2023) and a 10% margin of error, the required sample size was approximately 100 respondents. Data collection occurred in November and December 2023, targeting higher education students who use social media and online shopping activities, resulting in a final sample of 120 valid responses.

The analyses conducted included two types: descriptive and inference analysis with additional sub-groups for males and females. Descriptive analysis provided the socio-demographic profile of respondents and summary statistics (minimum, maximum, mean) for each variable and indicator in the research model. Inference analysis utilised PLS-SEM for hypothesis testing in two stages: first, measurement model assessment to evaluate indicator-construct relationships, and second, structural model evaluation to assess predictive capability and construct-construct relationships (Aguirre-Urreta and Rönkkö, 2018).

3. RESEARCH ETHICS

Ethical principles were paramount in this research, encompassing respondent anonymity and rights, prevention of harm, and proper data handling. The study adhered to ethical guidelines and standards, ensuring the respect and dignity of all respondents.

4. RESULT

4.1. Descriptive Analysis

The socio-demographic profile of the 120 respondents in the first part of the questionnaire revealed that 49% were male and 51% were female (Figure 1). Social media usage patterns showed that 93% of respondents used social media “Frequently”, more than once a day, but online shopping frequency was mainly “Sometimes” (50%, minimum once a week) and “Frequently” (26%, more than once a week).

It is noteworthy that younger females spend more time using social media than males, as indicated by data showing that 98% of social media users are female and 86% of male users are frequent users (Kemp, 2024). Additionally, female consumers purchase online more frequently than males, with 84% of females engaging in online shopping at least once a week compared to 68% of males (Bonilla-Quijada *et al.*, 2024; Kemp, 2024).

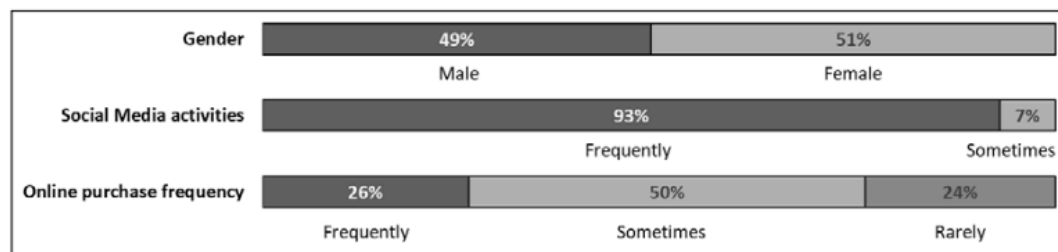


Figure 1. Respondents' characteristics (n:120 respondents)

This research uses descriptive data analysis from the second part of the questionnaire to address the question: Does social media content and product information impact consumer experience and information sharing? The analysis includes minimum, maximum, and mean values for each variable in the research model (Table 1).

Table 1. Descriptive Data Analysis

Items	All Respondents			Male Respondents			Female Respondents		
	Min	Max	Mean	Min	Max	Mean	Min	Max	Mean
Social Media Content	1	4	3.231	1	4	3.237	2	4	3.225
Product Information	2	4	3.371	2	4	3.364	2	4	3.377
Consumer Experience	2	4	3.298	2	4	3.297	2	4	3.299
Information Sharing	1	4	3.227	1	4	3.242	2	4	3.213

The highest mean value in the research model is the "Product Information" variable (mean: 3.371 on a 4-point scale), with similar results for both male at 3.364 and female at 3.377. When information meets their needs, consumers are more motivated to search for products and services (Gupta *et al.*, 2021; Ebrahimi *et al.*, 2022)

The lowest mean value is for the "Information Sharing" variable (mean: 3.227), with similar results only for females at 3.213. Interaction with social media does not always result in positive engagement and may even have negative effects from fake information (Aju, Kumar and Lal, 2022; Moon and Iacobucci, 2022). But for males, the lowest mean value for male is the "Social Media Content" variable at 3.237. Ma et al. (2022) show that there are large differences in online shopping behaviours and attitudes between males and females. Males are more satisfied with commerce interactivity than females, likely due to their focus on functional product attributes, a finding consistent with prior research indicating females generally find online shopping less satisfying.

4.2. Inference Analysis

This research uses inference analysis from the second part of the questionnaire to investigate the impact of social media content and product information on consumer experience and information sharing. The PLS-SEM model analysis involves two steps: measurement model assessment to evaluate indicator-construct relationships and structural model evaluation to examine predictive capability and construct relationships.

Table 2. Results of Measurement Model Analysis (All Respondents)

Variable	AVE	CR	CA	Indicator	Code	Loading Factor	Result
Social Media Content	0.703	0.905	0.861				Reliable
				- Text visual	Content 1	0.812	Valid
				- Picture visual	Content 2	0.829	Valid
				- Video visual	Content 3	0.839	Valid
				- Animation visual	Content 4	0.873	Valid
Product Information	0.621	0.864	0.782				Reliable
				- Availability	Information 1	0.543	Valid
				- Interesting	Information 2	0.881	Valid
				- Appropriate	Information 3	0.853	Valid
				- Updated	Information 4	0.827	Valid
Consumer Experience	0.620	0.866	0.793				Reliable
				- Convenience	Experience 1	0.795	Valid
				- Promotion activities	Experience 2	0.849	Valid
				- Product Selection	Experience 3	0.677	Valid
				- Services	Experience 4	0.817	Valid

Information Sharing	0.664	0.886	0.827				Reliable
				- Engagement	Share 1	0.677	Valid
				- Satisfaction	Share 2	0.733	Valid
				- Share	Share 3	0.923	Valid
				- Convincing	Share 4	0.898	Valid

The measurement model analysis (Table 2) indicates that all indicators have valid indicators with loading factors >0.50 (Cheng, Wu and Leiner, 2019; Hair *et al.*, 2019). Most indicators for digital natives are significant, with loading factors >0.70 , except for the Availability indicator from Product Information, Product Selection indicator from Consumer experience, and the Engagement indicator from Information Sharing, which are less significant (loading factors >0.50 and <0.70). The average variance extracted (AVE) for all variables is >0.50 , and the composite reliability (CR) and Cronbach's alpha (CA) are >0.7 (Hair *et al.*, 2019), confirming the reliability of the all four variables.

Confirming from the measurement model analysis with everything valid and reliable, a structural model analysis was conducted using Smart-PLS v3.0 with bootstrapping of 500. The analysis examined relationships (Hair *et al.*, 2019) between constructs, t-statistics to test moderating effects (values > 1.646 indicating significance for one tail test) and P-values to confirm hypotheses (values < 0.05).

Table 3. Results of Structural Model Analysis

Hypothesis		Male Respondents				Female Respondents			
		Original Sample	t Statistics	P values	Result	Original Sample	t Statistics	P values	Result
H1	Social media content has a positive relationship with Information Sharing	0.093	0.721	0.471	Rejected	0.166	1.648	0.100	Rejected
H2a	Social media content has a positive relationship with Product Information	0.578	5.576	0.000	Accepted	0.177	1.156	0.248	Rejected
H2b	Product Information has a positive relationship with Information Sharing	-0.154	1.171	0.242	Rejected	0.094	0.964	0.335	Rejected
H3a	Social media content has a positive relationship with Consumer Experience	0.377	3.988	0.000	Accepted	0.177	1.623	0.105	Rejected
H3b	Product Information has a positive relationship with Consumer Experience	0.369	2.996	0.003	Accepted	0.620	8.503	0.000	Accepted
H3c	Consumer Experience has a positive relationship with Information Sharing	0.845	9.917	0.000	Accepted	0.686	6.357	0.000	Accepted

H1. Social media content has a positive relationship with information sharing.

The first hypothesis (H1) that social media content influences information sharing and produces result consistently across both males and females was rejected (Table 3), as the

t-statistics values were less than 1.646 and P-values were greater than 0.05 for both groups (Hair *et al.*, 2019).

Higher education students as a young generation are driven by a stronger need for stimulation to play a part in their society and social media enables consumers to transmit social information; thus, a key motivation on social media may be to share self-relevant content that signals identity (Rajagopal, 2009; Grewal, Stephen and Coleman, 2019; Barreiros *et al.*, 2024).

H2. Social media content has a positive relationship with information sharing via product information.

The first hypothesis (H2a) is that social media content influences product information differently between males and females (Table 3), and is accepted for males, but rejected for females, as the t-statistics values were less than 1.646 and P-values were greater than 0.05. The second hypothesis (H2b) that product information influences information sharing and produces results consistently across both males and females was rejected (Table 3), as the t-statistics values were less than 1.646 and P-values were greater than 0.05.

Ma *et al.* (2022) show the differences in online shopping between gender, with males more satisfied with commerce interactivity, their focus being on functional product attributes. The faster and easier dissemination of information through various means has accelerated the explosive growth of falsehoods, posing a significant challenge to the credibility of newsfeeds and social networks, where fake news is alarmingly spreading quickly, necessitating rigorous cross-checking of news and information (Aju, Kumar and Lal, 2022).

Higher education students, motivated by a strong desire for social engagement, have the freedom to share but must cross-verify the content with their experience to determine its accuracy before sharing (Rajagopal, 2009; Barreiros *et al.*, 2024; González-Serrano *et al.*, 2024).

H3 Social media content has a positive relationship with information sharing via consumer experience.

The first hypothesis (H3a) is that social media content influences consumer experience differently between males and females (Table 3), and is accepted for males, but rejected for females, as the t-statistics values were less than 1.646 and P-values were greater than 0.05. The second hypothesis (H3b) that product information influences consumer experience consistently across both males and females was accepted (Table 3), as the t-statistics values were greater than 1.646 and P-values were less than 0.05 for both groups (Hair *et al.*, 2019). Likewise was the third hypothesis (H3c) that consumer experience influences information sharing and produces results consistently across both males and females (Table 3).

Although they may find the complexity of two-way communication to be stimulating, they face challenges in discerning between real and fake information due to large amounts of similar and repetitive content, posing a challenge to the credibility of the information (Kirk *et al.*, 2015; Nyagadza, 2022; Arief, Mustikowati and Chrisnardani, 2023).

Social media has a broad influence on consumers' perceptions, so the careful selection of social media for generation differences should not be neglected (Janschitz *et al.*, 2020; Cao *et al.*, 2021). Higher education students as a young generation who grew up surrounded by digital channels and shifted their media use toward mobile channels and social media, feel free to express their opinions or become prosumers, and content on social media increases their willingness to resemble their peers, influencing their attitudes and perceptions (Molnár, Szűts and Nagy, 2017; Janschitz *et al.*, 2020; Agárdi and Alt, 2022).

5. DISCUSSION

The results suggest that the gender cohort is an important element to consider when analysing the impact of social media content and product information on consumer experience and information sharing. Higher education students as Generation Z are more excited to interact with social media to stay connected with friends and family, and these interactions can create both positive and negative experiences that impact various aspects of life, aligning with previous research that highlights the development of favourable attitudes and purchase intentions toward products or services with congruent images, generating trust and commitment in users (Ahmed and Zia, 2021; Thompson, Taheri and Scheuring, 2022; González-Serrano *et al.*, 2024). Iswari and Budiyo's (2024) research highlights gender differences in decision-making and suggests that choices made by Generation Z individuals may involve the risk of loss, influencing their purchasing decisions. Specifically, these framing effects can impact whether Generation Z consumers choose to buy a product or not.

This research examines the social media content has a negative relationship to explain both gender cohorts in regard to information sharing (Figure 2). Social media content gives consumers different information sources that they must decipher to discern its trustworthiness and influence in their own opinions (Moon and Iacobucci, 2022). Social media enables consumers to transmit social information; thus, a key motivation on social media may be to share self-relevant content that signals identity (Grewal, Stephen and Coleman, 2019; Moon and Iacobucci, 2022).

Higher education students, driven by a stronger need for stimulation in their society, must cross-verify information accuracy with their experience before sharing (Rajagopal, 2009; Aju, Kumar and Lal, 2022; Barreiros *et al.*, 2024; González-Serrano *et al.*, 2024).



Figure 2. Results of structural model analysis for H1.

The second results suggest that the gender cohort is an important element to consider when analysing social media content, indicating that the social media content has a positive relationship with information sharing depending on the gender differences (Figure 3). According to Ma *et al.* (2022), males are more satisfied with online interactivity than females, likely due to their focus on functional attributes, while females prioritise service experience, consistent with prior studies indicating females generally find online less satisfying than males.

Social media rapidly spreads fake news, necessitating clarification and understanding to combat it. The abundance of similar and repetitive content makes it challenging to discern real from fake information, undermining credibility (Cao *et al.*, 2021). Emerging paradigms can help detect fake news, classified into knowledge-based, style-based, and stance-based types targeting specific age groups, genders, cultures, and political affiliations (Aju, Kumar and Lal, 2022).

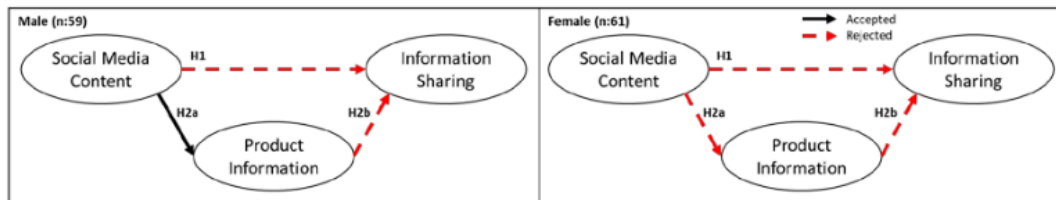


Figure 3. Results of structural model analysis for H1 and H2.

The third results suggest that the gender cohort is an important element to consider when analysing social media content, indicating that the social media content has a positive relationship with information sharing via consumer experience depending on the gender differences (Figure 4). Based on Anatan's (2023) results, fear of giving wrong information, fear of being seen as a show-off, and not knowing what to share are the most common obstacles experienced by students in willingness to share. Social media impacts physical activity by facilitating information sharing and motivating emotional expression, leading to enjoyable experiences (Cho and Son, 2019; Johnston and Davis, 2019; Peng *et al.*, 2019; Janschitz *et al.*, 2020; Cao *et al.*, 2021; González-Serrano *et al.*, 2024) while consumer experience is crucial for shaping consumer behaviour, loyalty, and satisfaction (Chen *et al.*, 2023; Gerlich, 2023).; additionally, males tend to be more satisfied with commerce interactivity, likely due to their focus on functional attributes (Ma, Gao and Zhang, 2022).

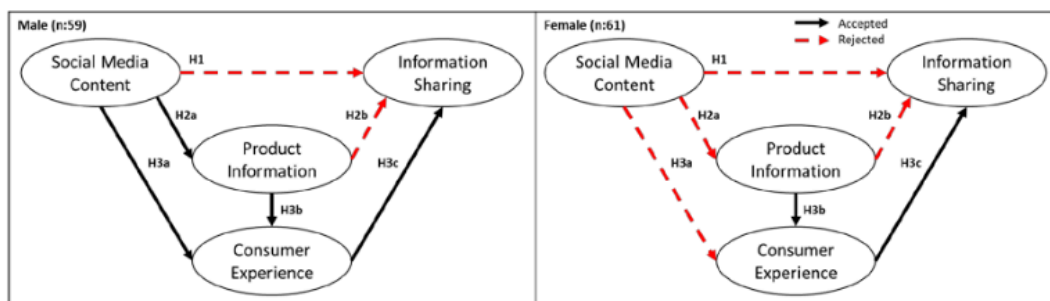


Figure 4. Results of structural model analysis for H1, H2 and H3.

According to Arpaci (2020), social media has become a societal necessity, influencing transactions and serving as a platform for content sharing and product promotion, which requires a re-evaluation of traditional marketing strategies (Schouten, Janssen and Verspaget, 2020; Liao, Widowati and Hsieh, 2021; Simbolon and Law, 2022; Drossos, Coursaris and Kagiouli, 2024).

Generation Z, trustworthiness and expertise are critical factors influencing source credibility, which in turn affects purchase intentions through their mediating role (Phan

and Nguyen, 2024). Marketing should leverage consumer habits by providing engaging social media content that positively impacts affective and behavioural responses-rational, interactional, and transactional-making engagement crucial for company success (Schreiner, Fischer and Riedl, 2021; Shahbaznezhad, Dolan and Rashidirad, 2021; Drossos, Coursaris and Kagiouli, 2024).

6. CONCLUSION

This research aims to compare the impact of social media content and product information on consumer experience and information sharing, highlighting the need to understand the implications of similarities and differences across different young generations, differences providing design implications for social media content tailored to male and female higher education students.

The research reveals the difficulty in distinguishing between real and fake social media information, which undermines credibility. Social media rapidly spreads fake news, necessitating clarification and understanding to combat it. Emerging paradigms can help detect fake news, classified into knowledge-based, style-based, and stance-based types targeting specific demographics.

The research emphasises the importance of gender in analysing social media content, showing a positive relationship between social media and information sharing based on gender differences. Males are more satisfied with online interactivity due to functional attributes, while females prioritise service experience, consistent with females generally finding online shopping less satisfying.

The research highlights the importance of gender in analysing social media content, showing a positive relationship between social media and information sharing via consumer experience. Recognising the impact of social media, it is recommended to provide credible information on social media to higher education students to overcome some limitations of social media content and product information, including consumer experience and emotional expression. However, when social media content is credible, it will increase the willingness of students to share without fear of giving wrong information and fear of being seen as a show-off.

Social media impacts physical activity by facilitating information sharing and emotional expression, leading to enjoyable experiences. The social dimension of credible information will give large contributions to the consumer experience, intention to share the social media content and influence transactions. Consumer experience is crucial for shaping consumer behaviour, loyalty and satisfaction. Males tend to be more satisfied with commerce interactivity due to their focus on functional attributes. Understanding the motivations behind these sharing behaviours can yield valuable insights into how they shape perceptions of the messages conveyed, including writing reviews, posting content, tagging others, liking, and sharing. Social media has become a societal necessity, influencing transactions and requiring a re-evaluation of traditional marketing strategies. Engaging social media content positively impacts affective and behavioural responses, making engagement essential for company success.

7. THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

Based on the research findings, it is recommended that companies adopt tailored strategies when engaging with higher education students in the context of consumer experience on social media. In terms of theoretical implications, the research reveals that even though higher education students are generally comfortable with digital information, they still face the perplexing challenge of distinguishing between real and fake social media information. The practical implication of the findings is that they emphasise the importance of companies accounting for the nuanced preferences and concerns of higher education students, particularly across gender cohorts. Companies should carefully navigate the unique needs and expectations of males and females to build long-term trust and drive meaningful consumer experiences.

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