**Drivers of Youth Consumer Adoption of Sharing Commerce: Examining the Effect of Social and Technical Enablers on Generation Z in Sri Lanka**

**Abstract**

**Aim:** This study aims to investigate the factors influencing the adoption of sharing commerce among youth in Sri Lanka, addressing an empirical gap in the existing literature. **Background:** Sharing commerce, a subset of the sharing economy, focuses on peer-to-peer sharing of goods and services, leveraging underutilized assets and resources. Understanding the factors that drive young consumers, often referred to as 'digital natives,' to adopt sharing commerce is crucial for fostering innovation and sustainable economic growth. **Methods:** The research employs a quantitative approach, integrating established theories; the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), and Sociotechnical theory. Social influence, Trust, Perceived usefulness and Technology infrastructure are included as determinants. Data were collected through a survey questionnaire administered to the respondents in the Colombo District, Sri Lanka. The study used multiple regression analysis to identify the key factors influencing the intention to adopt sharing commerce. The data was collected for a period of three months from March 2024 to June 2024. Out of the 400 distributed questionnaires, 383 responses were received from all the groups.

**Findings:** The multiple regression analysis reveals that technology infrastructure and perceived usefulness positively influence the intention to adopt sharing commerce. In contrast, social influence and trust have a negative impact. These findings highlight the complex interplay of technological, social, and personal factors in shaping young consumers' adoption-sharing behaviour.

**Originality:** The study expands the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) by providing empirical evidence that negative social influence can deter young consumers from adopting sharing commerce. This finding adds a new dimension to TPB by exploring the negative aspects of social pressure, which have been less emphasized in previous research. The study contributes to Sociotechnical theory by emphasizing the importance of a reliable and user-friendly technological framework in facilitating the adoption of sharing commerce.

**Implications:** The findings provide valuable insights for policymakers, businesses, and educational institutions to foster innovation and sustainable economic growth through sharing commerce.

**Keywords:** Intention to adopt; Sharing commerce; Sociotechnical theory; Technology Acceptance Model; Theory of Planned Behavior; Youth

## **Introduction**

The evolution of sharing commerce goes back to the growth of electronic commerce (e-commerce), leading to the emergence of Social Commerce (S-Commerce) with the advancement of social networking applications like Facebook and Google in the late 1990s and early 2000s. S-Commerce developed from integrating social networking and e-commerce to an advanced model incorporating social psychology, heuristics, and advanced technologies. It emphasized community engagement and collaborative decision-making influenced by consumer preferences and norm acceptance. Simultaneously, sharing commerce focuses on collaborative consumption.

Sharing commerce is an approach used in online commerce where E-Commerce, S-Commerce, and social networking technologies are utilized in online buying and selling (Attar, 2022). Influencing dynamics for the adoption of e-commerce may vary based on the industry in which the organization operates. In the manufacturing industry, factors such as competitor pressure, government support, top management, organization readiness, perceived benefits and perceived barriers would govern the adaptability of e-commerce to an organization whereas order fulfilment, new entrants, distribution and mass customization would mainly influence in textile and apparel industry (Chee et al. 2016; Govinnage and Sachitra, 2019; Ballerini et al. 2023). Collaborative and participatory commerce are types of sharing commerce, where online operations like production, distribution, buying, and selling are shared among various entities, including consumers and businesses at different levels. In a recent comprehensive conceptual update by Schlagwein et al. (2020), sharing commerce is characterized as a model where individuals engage in peer-to-peer transactions, facilitated by an intermediary. This model has witnessed remarkable growth, with global operations projected to reach $335 billion by 2025 (Schlagwein et al., 2020).

Sharing commerce is important because it leverages underutilized assets and resources, providing a platform for individuals to earn income from idle resources. It promotes a more efficient use of resources, thereby contributing to sustainability by reducing waste and environmental impact (Köbis et al. 2021). It encourages short-term engagements and resource sharing, offering affordable alternatives for unemployed assets and providing the opportunity for individuals to earn from idle resources. Countries like China, Indonesia, and the UK have high adoption rates of sharing commerce, driven by factors such as technological advancements, economic benefits, and changing consumer behaviours (Statista, 2023). The future of sharing commerce looks promising, with continuous growth expected in sectors such as transportation, accommodation, and retail. Various factors contribute to this growth, including technological advancements, economic benefits, shifting consumer behaviours, and determinants of user adoption such as performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, perceived vulnerability, perceived usefulness, and perceived ease of use (Misra et al., 2022; Tripathi et al., 2024). Understanding these factors can help predict future trends and guide businesses and policymakers in making informed decisions.

In the Sri Lankan context, despite the lack of focus on sharing commerce, platforms like Kapruka, Daraz, Takas, Keells Super, PickMe, Yoho Bed, and Anything have emerged recently (Sri Lanka Country Commercial Guide, 2022). According to the Information and Communication Technology Agency (ICTA) of Sri Lanka and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTD), Sri Lanka’s Digital Economy was 4.37 per cent of GDP in 2022. Sharing commerce is important for Sri Lanka because it promotes the efficient use of resources by leveraging idle assets, leading to reduced waste and a more sustainable economy (Niezgoda & Kowalska, 2020), creating new employment opportunities, especially for young people, by offering flexible work options through platforms like ride-sharing and freelance services (Schlagwein et al., 2020), provides access to goods and services that might otherwise be unaffordable or unavailable, improving their quality of life (Misra et al., 2022) and drives innovation and technological adoption, enhancing the country's digital infrastructure and capabilities (Tripathi et al., 2024).

As sharing commerce continues to grow globally, it is crucial for Sri Lanka to keep pace with these trends to remain competitive and attract international investments. Understanding and addressing the challenges of sharing commerce can help policymakers create supportive regulations that facilitate its growth and ensure fair and safe operations. Therefore, focusing on sharing commerce can help Sri Lanka harness these benefits to foster sustainable economic development and improve the well-being of its citizens. As sharing commerce is still a relatively new concept in Sri Lanka, there are promising indicators of its potential for growth. In 2022, Sri Lanka's digital economy contributed 4.37% of its GDP, showing a significant engagement with digital platforms (UNCTAD, 2022). Furthermore, revenue in the e-commerce market in Sri Lanka is projected to reach US$2,654.00 million by 2025, with a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 10.78% from 2025 to 2029 (Statista, 2023). The number of users is expected to reach 3.1 million by 2029, with user penetration increasing from 13.3% in 2025 to 14.1% by 2029 (Statista, 2023). These statistics indicate that Sri Lanka's digital economy is expanding, suggesting a promising potential for the growth of sharing commerce in the country.

In developing countries, the adoption of sharing commerce often faces additional challenges related to limited internet penetration, infrastructure constraints, and regulatory barriers (Misra et al., 2022; Tripathi et al., 2024). This study aims to investigate the intentions of young consumers to participate in sharing commerce. The interest in understanding consumers' intentions to participate in sharing commerce is particularly pronounced among young individuals for several reasons. Generation Z, comprising those born in 1995 or later, plays a pivotal role in driving the growth of sharing commerce and shaping social and economic landscapes. They are tech-savvy, digitally connected, communicative, collaborative, socially conscious, and prioritize relationships over material possessions (Kim & Park, 2020). They are open to new experiences and innovative concepts, making them more likely to engage in sharing commerce services like ridesharing and peer-to-peer lending. Additionally, young individuals are more environmentally and socially conscious, valuing sustainability and community engagement (Kim & Park, 2020). The social aspect of sharing commerce, which fosters a sense of community and connection, further attracts young people who prioritize social interactions and collaborative consumption.

As noted in the literature, understanding the specific factors that influence the adoption of sharing commerce among young consumers is critical. These factors may include technological familiarity, perceived usefulness and ease of use, social influence, economic benefits, and environmental consciousness. Examining these dimensions can provide valuable insights into how digital natives interact with and adopt sharing commerce platforms. Identifying the motivations, barriers, and enablers for sharing commerce adoption among young consumers can guide policymakers, businesses, and stakeholders in fostering a supportive environment for sharing commerce.

This study aims to fill the empirical gap in the current body of literature by providing insights into the attitudes and behaviours of youth towards sharing commerce in a developing country context. Ultimately, this study aims to contribute to the theoretical understanding and practical applications of sharing commerce in Sri Lanka, promoting sustainable consumption patterns and driving economic development. In line with that, the study aims to examine the factors influencing the intention to adopt sharing commerce among youth in Sri Lanka.

As for the theoretical approach, the study utilised Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) by (Davis, 1989), the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) developed by (Ajzen, 1985) and Sociotechnical theory, where social and technical enablers of trust are both needed to capture the complex nature of consumers' trust towards social commerce marketplaces (Adler & Docherty, 1998; Kronlid et al., 2024). The theoretical contribution of this research lies in its potential to extend these theories in the context of sharing commerce. The findings of this study offer several practical implications for various stakeholders. By addressing trust, perceived usefulness, technology infrastructure, and social influence, e-commerce platform providers, policymakers, education institutions, and business firms can create a more favourable environment for young consumers to engage in sharing commerce. The strategies can ultimately lead to higher adoption rates and a more vibrant sharing economy in similar contexts.

**Review Literature**

***Sharing Commerce***

The expansion of the sharing economy and sharing commerce has redefined the E-Commerce platform introducing new concepts along with the S-Commerce technologies. Sharing commerce is an approach of sharing resources on mutual consent by means of buying/selling, barter system, or any other form of transaction.Literature has found an increasing adoption of sharing commerce (Jeonghye et al., 2015; Mittendorf, 2016; Bilgihan et al., 2016); however, research in this area is limited, especially in developing contexts.

There can be various approaches to sharing commerce based on the degree of participation of the consumers and the company providing the platform. For example, in group buying, participants use third-party platforms to place bulk orders at a low price, and another company delivers the order. Similarly, in participatory commerce, consumers themselves become involved in the process of producing, buying, and selling goods and services. Therefore, sharing commerce can be defined as an approach wherein online commerce operations such as production, distribution, buying, and selling are shared among various entities, including consumers and businesses at various levels (Hamari et al., 2015). Schlagwein et al. (2020) opined that sharing commerce is characterized as a model where individuals engage in peer-to-peer transactions, facilitated by an intermediary. This model has witnessed remarkable growth, with global operations projected to reach $335 billion by 2025 (Schlagwein et al., 2020). The surge in sharing culture can be attributed to shifting consumer attitudes, values, and behaviours, particularly in response to recent economic challenges (Niezgoda & Kowalska, 2020).

Sharing commerce is based on the concept of resource-based sharing, revenue-based sharing and information sharing. Thus, sharing commerce is gaining momentum in recent times due to its various degrees of participatory methods, which not only give more freedom to consumers in the process of buying and selling but also help them select the right product at the right price (Parves & Jim, 2016). The concept of sharing can be identified in relation to information being generated on S-Commerce platforms, which can be influenced by individuals and social capital factors (Liu et al., 2016). Individuals may be influenced by economic gains, trust, enjoyment of the process, satisfaction gained by helping other customers, feedback, public relations and integrated with new technologies to adopt sharing commerce. As the sharing commerce is still in its premature stages of development, the scope of its applicability and associated drivers are yet to be analysed.

The interest in understanding consumers’ intention to participate in the sharing commerce is particularly pronounced among young individuals (Hamari et al., 2016). Among youth, generation Z, comprising those born in 1995 or later, plays a pivotal role in driving the sharing economy’s growth and shaping social and economic landscapes. Although research specifically targeting Generation Z’s participation in the sharing economy remains limited, this demographic possesses ideal traits: they are tech-savvy, digitally connected, communicative, collaborative, socially conscious, and prioritize relationships over material possessions (Kim & Park, 2020).

***Theoretical Review***

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) by (Davis, 1989), Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) developed by (Ajzen, 1985) and Sociotechnical theory (Adler & Docherty, 1998; Kronlid et al., 2024) have been widely used in understanding technology adoption and provided solid theoretical foundation for this study. Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), often used for understanding the adoption of information technology products, focuses on two key factors: perceived usefulness (the belief that using a system enhances performance) and perceived ease of use (the perception of system usability). As such, the TAM helps to assess how young consumers perceive the practical benefits of sharing commerce (usefulness) and how easy it is for them to engage with these platforms (ease of use).

TPB posits that subjective norms, attitudes toward a specific behaviour, and perceived behavioural control collectively predict the intention to participate. TPB allows us to examine how social norms (subjective norms) and perceived control (self-efficacy) impact young consumers’ intentions to embrace sharing commerce. It considers not only individual attitudes but also external influences, which are crucial in a social context (Yuen et al., 2020).

Sociotechnical theory underscores the interconnectedness of social and technical components. It provides a lens through which to explore trust dynamics, considering both technical and social dimensions. Technology infrastructure, the backbone of any system, directly influences trust. A robust infrastructure fosters trust among young consumers; conversely, inadequate infrastructure may erode trust (Boateng et al., 2019).

By examining team dynamics, trust-building mechanisms, perceived usefulness, and technology infrastructure, it can be uncovered factors that impact adoption. According to Tripathi et al. (2024) and Misra et al. (2022), perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, perceived risk, perceived trust, perceived compatibility, perceived cost, perceived security, perceived enjoyment, perceived social influence, and perceived image are the most commonly studied determinants of e-commerce adoption in developing countries.

The theoretical contribution of this study lies in its potential to extend TAM, TPB and Sociotechnical theories in the context of sharing commerce. It can also contribute to the emerging body of literature on sharing commerce, providing empirical evidence from a previously underexplored context.

***Empirical Review***

Yuen et al. (2020) conducted a study by integrating TAM and TPB to understand users’ intentions to use Shared Autonomous Vehicles (SAVs) in Vietnam. The study found that five dimensions; performance expectation, effort expectation, habit, price value, and hedonic motivation, were influenced by users’ attitudes toward using SAVs. Misra (2022) concluded that performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, and perceived vulnerability are significant determinants of behavioural intention towards the adoption of electronic markets in India.

Yuen et al. (2020) identified that trust plays a critical role in sharing commerce adoption. Users need to trust the platform, other users, and the shared products or services, perceived value where the users assess the value they receive from participating in sharing commerce. This includes both economic value (cost savings) and social value (community building), collaboration and Co-creation which emphasizes collaborative aspects, where users actively participate in co-creating value within the sharing economy and platform Features which are the factors related to platform usability, ease of use, and convenience influence adoption.

Misra et al. (2022) provided insights into factors that can also influence sharing commerce adoption. Factors such as trust, perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and familiarity play a crucial role in shaping user behaviour. Tripathi et al. (2024) revealed that perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, perceived risk, perceived trust, perceived compatibility, perceived cost, perceived security, perceived enjoyment, perceived social influence, and perceived image are the most commonly studied determinants of e-commerce adoption in developing countries. Similarly, they highlighted factors such as perceived usefulness, hedonic value, subjective norms, and emotional support as the key determinants of adopting sharing commerce.

Sharing commerce is still a relatively new concept in Sri Lanka. There seems to be a lack of comprehensive and accessible information on the operational aspects, benefits, risks, and legal considerations of sharing commerce. Therefore, an empirical gap exists in the current body of research. Specifically, there is a shortage of empirical studies investigating the factors influencing the adoption of sharing commerce in Sri Lanka, particularly among the youth in the country. Understanding the factors that influence their intention to adopt sharing commerce can provide valuable insights into their attitudes towards this new economic model. Moreover, it can guide policymakers, businesses, and stakeholders in fostering innovation and sustainable economic growth. For instance, if cost-effectiveness and convenience are found to be significant factors, businesses can focus on highlighting these aspects in their marketing strategies. Policymakers can also use this information to create supportive regulations that facilitate the growth of sharing commerce.

The necessity to examine these factors of influencing intention to adopt sharing commerce, Social influence; Trust, Perceived usefulness and Technology infrastructure stems from the potential of sharing commerce to contribute to the economy and the lack of existing research in this specific context. By identifying these factors, this research can fill the empirical gap and contribute to the theoretical understanding of sharing commerce adoption.

Therefore, the study hypothesized as;

*H1: Social influence has a positive effect on young consumers’ intention to adopt sharing commerce.*

According to Ajzen (1991), social influence refers to the impact of others’ opinions, behaviours, and norms on an individual’s decision-making process. When potential adopters observe their peers, family members, or social networks engaging in sharing commerce activities, they are more likely to consider it as a viable option. In TPB, subjective norms (which include social influence) significantly affect an individual’s intention to adopt a behaviour. When people perceive that their social environment encourages sharing commerce, they are more likely to adopt it. In the context of sharing commerce, young consumers are influenced by their peers, family, and social networks. When young consumers perceive positive social influence regarding sharing commerce (e.g., friends recommending a particular platform or sharing positive experiences), they are more likely to adopt sharing commerce practices.

*H2: Perceived trust has a positive effect on young consumers’ intention to adopt sharing commerce.*

In the context of sharing commerce, trust refers to the confidence that users have in the platform, its providers, and other users. It is a fundamental element that influences users’ willingness to participate and engage in sharing activities. Davis (1989) opined that trust is fundamental in any exchange relationship, especially in sharing commerce, where individuals share resources (e.g., rides, accommodation, goods) with strangers. Trust mitigates uncertainty and risk. When users trust the platform and fellow participants, they feel more comfortable engaging in sharing transactions. TAM recognizes trust as a critical factor affecting technology adoption. Perceived trust in the platform and other users directly impacts perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness (Garay et al., 2019).

*H3: Perceived usefulness has a positive effect on young consumers’ intention to adopt sharing commerce.*

Perceived usefulness refers to an individual’s perception of how adopting a technology or behavior will enhance their performance or achieving specific goals (Davis, 1989). Both TAM and TPB highlight perceived usefulness as a central determinant of adoption intention. In the context of sharing commerce, users assess whether participating in sharing platforms will be beneficial (e.g., convenient, cost-effective, and meeting their needs) (Lu et al., 2019).

*H4: Technology infrastructure has a positive effect on young consumers’ intention to adopt sharing commerce.*

Technology infrastructure encompasses the availability, reliability, and accessibility of digital platforms and communication channels (Boateng et al., 2019). In the realm of sharing commerce, technology infrastructure serves as the backbone that enables seamless interactions between users, fosters trust, and enhances overall user experience. The Sociotechnical Theory recognizes that effective systems involve an intricate interplay between social and technical elements. Technological Systems which include digital platforms, communication channels, and hardware, ensure smooth operations, data flow, and accessibility. When technology infrastructure is robust, it supports social interactions.

**Methodology:**

The objective of this study is to identify the factors influencing the intention to adopt sharing commerce among young generations in Sri Lanka. The study utilized a quantitative approach to investigate the applicability of theories and the prior findings discussed in the literature review.

Acknowledging the literature, the study used four dimensions in the independent variable namely Social influence; Perceived trust, Perceived usefulness and Technology infrastructure, and the dependent variable intention to adopt sharing commerce. The measurement items of the selected variables were based on established scales from the literature. Table 1shows the measurement items of each of the variables. These measurement items are presented as a five-point Likert scale statement (1 denoting strongly disagree and 5 denoting strongly agree with a neutral option) to the respondent to obtain the data.

**Table 1: Operationalization of variable**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Constructs** | **Definition** | **Measures** | **Sources** |
| Social influence | The extent to which individuals perceive that, others who are important (e.g., family, friends, community) believe they should use sharing commerce platforms. | * I am influential by my family members in shaping my decision to use sharing commerce * I am influential by my friends in shaping my decision to use sharing commerce * I have observed others using sharing commerce, and their positive experiences influenced my decision to use sharing commerce * I feel that using sharing commerce aligns with social norms or expectations within my community * I would be more likely to use sharing commerce if I knew that others in my social circle also use it | Akman & Mishra (2017) |
| Perceived trust | The degree to which the users believe that sharing commerce platforms are reliable and keep their commitments by protecting the privacy. | * Sharing commerce platform is trustworthy * Sharing commerce platform is honest in its dealings with me * Sharing commerce platform keeps its commitments to its users | Garay et al. (2019) |
| Technology infrastructure | The quality, speed and reliability of the technological framework supporting sharing commerce platforms. | * The sharing commerce platform is user-friendly and easy to navigate * The sharing commerce platform consistently performs without technical glitches * I am confident in the security measures having in place to protect my information | Hu & Zhu (2022) |
| Perceived Usefulness | The degree to which the users believe that using sharing commerce platforms will enhance their performance or convenience in day to day life. | * I expect to gain from using sharing commerce continuously * Convenience is important in my decision to adopt sharing commerce * Features or services offered by sharing commerce platforms that I find particularly useful * I find the sharing commerce platform valuable | Attar et al. (2021) |
| Intention to adopt sharing commerce | The degree to which the users are willing to use sharing commerce platforms in the future. | * I indent to use sharing commerce at every opportunity in the future * I plan to use sharing commerce in the future * I predict I would use sharing commerce in the future * I have a plan to adopt sharing commerce in next month | Hamari et al. (2015) |

The scope of this study was the young generation in Sri Lanka. In Sri Lanka, the National Youth Services Council (NYSC) has established the youth age range to be 14 to 29. Data suggests they make up a substantial portion, potentially over 25%, of Colombo District's population (Department of Census and Statistics, 2024). Therefore, the target population included young generations in the Colombo District of Sri Lanka. As there is no officially recognized sample framework, the study has to utilize the non-probability sampling design. The sample of this study is restricted to a specific group of users referring to criteria like age, gender, socioeconomic status and taking the main criteria as age (14-29 years) and location (Colombo District) and also the users who are able to provide the required information, therefore, the study employs purposive sampling method. Considering the sample size to determine the representativeness of the sample the study is following with Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sample size calculation, where the study considered 450 users as the sample size and the questionnaire yielded 382 responses. Reach out to potential participants through appropriate channels (e.g., email and social media) of university WhatsApp groups, youth organizational groups and office groups.

The study uses primary data for the purpose of achieving its objectives collected using the survey method through a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of 29 questions divided into two segments: demographic factors and adoption motivators. For demographic profiling, 10 questions cover age, educational background, professional experience, and engagement in sharing commerce. The adoption motivators segment includes questions rated on a five-point Likert scale with statements describing each sub-category. The questionnaire is web-based and created using the Google form application. The questionnaire was distributed among the targeted sample through the mentioned channels primarily focused on the young generations in the Colombo District of Sri Lanka. The data was collected for a period of three months from March 2024 to June 2024.

In the quantitative approach, data analysis consists of three steps: measuring the sample profile, testing the goodness of the data, and testing the hypotheses. The sample profile is measured using frequency analysis. The measurement items' reliability and validity were tested to ensure the measurement's goodness. Factor analysis, construct reliability, average variance extraction, Cronbach's alpha values, and discriminant validity were all tested. Multiple regression analysis is used to test the hypotheses. The data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software.

**Result:**

***Sample Profile***

Out of the 400 distributed questionnaires, 383 responses were received from all the groups. Among the 383 responses, there were 359 valid responses, with an overall response of 89.75%.

The first section of the questionnaire collected data on gender, education level, income level, age, employment, occupation, awareness of sharing commerce, engagement in e-commerce and engagement in sharing commerce. Among the respondents, 153 were male (42.6%) and 206 were female (57.4%). In terms of educational level, there were 27.6% of respondents had a high school diploma or less and most of them were in the age range of 14-20. 25.1% of them were qualified with a degree whilst 27.9% of them were qualified with a master’s degree level. There were also 19.5% professional degree holders. When it comes to the income level, most of them were in the range of more than 70,000 rupees which was 66.3%. 14.5% of them were between 30,000 – 70,000 and 19.2% of them were less than 30,000 who were the age range of 14-20. The majority of respondents, 339 (94.4%), were employed and only 20 (5.6%) were unemployed. Additionally, 251 respondents (69.9%) were from the private sector and others were from the government sector and self-employed.

All the 359 participants (100%) were aware of sharing commerce. Regarding the engagement of e-commerce, the majority of the respondents were engaged in e-commerce, with 349 participants (97.2%) identifying as such and only 10 (2.8%) were not. To further understand of the sharing commerce engagement, the survey focused on a question which was, how likely to engage in the types of sharing commerce in the future. For this, 198 participants (55.2%) were business-to-consumer engagement where 88 participants (24.5%) were consumer-to-business engagement and 61 participants (17%) were business to business and finally only 12 participants (3.3%) were consumer-to-consumer engagement.

***Normality Test***

For the statistical analysis to obtain accurate results, it is essential that the data obtained in the study exhibit a normal distribution as it is the standard distribution considered in statistics. This requirement is particularly important when conducting multivariate analysis, as the validity of the results depends on the normality of the data. Ensuring that the data is normally distributed is an important step in the analysis process. To determine whether the data meets this requirement, the study employed the skewness parameter as a measure of normality. Skewness assesses the asymmetry of the data distribution. A skewness value close to zero indicates a symmetrical distribution, while values outside the range of -1 to +1 suggest a departure from normality. The results showed that all variables had skewness values within the acceptable range of -1 to +1 (Social Influence - -0.151; Perceived trust - -0.005; Technology infrastructure - -0.102; Perceived usefulness – 0.014; Intention to adopt sharing commerce - -0.032). This indicates that the data is symmetrically distributed and meets the criteria for normality.

***Goodness of Measurements***

To reduce the data and purify the items under each study variable, a factor analysis was used. The Kaiser-Meyer-Oklin (KMO) sample adequacy measure was used. According to Hair et al. (2010), a KMO value of 0.60 or higher indicates a good factor analysis. Table 2 shows that the KMO value of the measurement items was greater than 0.50 and that Bartlett’s test of sphericity showed a significant level (p < 0.001), indicating the appropriateness of factor analysis. The reliability of each variable was assessed using Fornell and Larcker’s (1981) measure of composite reliability (CR) and Cronbach alpha, as shown in Table 2. The CR and Cronbach’s alpha values for each construct were above 0.70, which falls within the acceptable reliability range (Hair et al., 2010). The convergent validity of the constructs was assessed by examining the average variance extracted (AVE). The results presented in Table 2 further show that AVE values exceed the respective threshold values (above 0.50) ensuring the convergent validity.

The discriminant validity was ensured as the square root values of all AVEs exceeded the correlation values of the respective constructs (Fornell and Larcker, 1981) (Table 3). The values of the square root of the AVE are as given in italics along the diagonals in Table 3.

**Table 2: Assessment of adequacy of measurement**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Variable** | **No. of Items** | **KM measure** | **Bartlett’s test of sphericity** | **AVE** | **CR** | **Cronbach’s alpha** |
| Social influence | 5 | 0.763 | 818.537 | 0.776 | 0.941 | .835 |
| Perceived trust | 3 | 0.814 | 0.906 | .823 |
| Technology infrastructure | 3 | 0.795 | 0.953 | .819 |
| Perceived usefulness | 4 | 0.903 | 0.928 | .873 |
| Intention to adopt sharing commerce | 4 | 0.869 | 0.945 | .861 |

**Table 3: Discriminant validity**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Variable** | **Mean** | **Std. deviation** | **SI** | **PT** | **TI** | **PU** | **ISC** |
| Social influence (SI) | 3.96 | .920 | ***0.881*** |  |  |  |  |
| Perceived trust (PT) | 4.12 | .846 | .824\*\* | **0.902** |  |  |  |
| Technology infrastructure (TI) | 4.08 | .957 | .848\*\* | 0.848\*\* | **0.892** |  |  |
| Perceived usefulness (PU) | 4.18 | .962 | .879\*\* | .785\*\* | 0.793\*\* | **0.950** |  |
| Intention to adopt sharing commerce (ISC) | 4.17 | .936 | .787\*\* | 0.695\*\* | .835\*\* | .890\*\* | **0.932** |

*\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)*

A correlation analysis was conducted in order to determine the strength of the relationship existing between the variables of the study. As illustrated in Table 2, the correlation values exceed 0.7. Starting with the variable Social, exhibits strong positive correlations with all other variables. Specifically, it has a correlation of 0.824 with Trust, 0.848 with Technology, 0.879 with Usefulness, and 0.787 with Intention to adopt. These values suggest that as social factors increase, there is a corresponding increase in trust, technology adoption, perceived usefulness, and the intention to adopt. Trust also shows strong positive correlations with the other variables. It has a correlation of 0.848 with Technology, 0.785 with Usefulness, and 0.695 with Intention to adopt. Although the correlation with Intention to adopt is slightly lower, it still indicates a moderate to strong positive relationship, implying that higher levels of trust are associated with higher levels of technology adoption, perceived usefulness, and intention to adopt.

The variable Technology is strongly correlated with all other variables as well. It has a correlation of 0.793 with Usefulness and 0.835 with Intention to adopt. These strong positive correlations indicate that as technology adoption increases, so do the perceived usefulness and the intention to adopt the technology.

Usefulness shows very strong positive correlations with the other variables, particularly with Intention to adopt (0.890), indicating that as the perceived usefulness of technology increases, so does the intention to adopt it. The correlations with Social (0.879), Trust (0.785), and Technology (0.793) are also strong, reinforcing the idea that perceived usefulness is closely linked with these factors.

Finally, Intention to adopt is strongly correlated with all other variables, with the highest correlation being with Usefulness (0.890). This suggests that the intention to adopt a technology is most strongly influenced by its perceived usefulness. The correlations with Social (0.787), Trust (0.695), and Technology (0.835) further indicate that social factors, trust, and technology adoption also play significant roles in influencing the intention to adopt.

**Multiple Regression Analysis**

The regression analysis results are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4: Regression analysis results**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **R** | | **R Square** | | **Adjusted R Square** | **Std. Error of the Estimate** | **Durbin-Watson** | **F**  **Sig.** | |
| .920a | | .933a | | .871 | .3607 | 1.947 | 639.596  0.000b | |
| **Model** | | **Unstandardized Coefficients** | | **Standardized Coefficients** | **t** | **Sig.** | **Collinearity Statistics** | |
| **B** | **Std. Error** | **Beta** | **Tolerance** | **VIF** |
| 1 | (Constant) | -.918 | .17 |  | -5.196 | .000 |  |  |
| Social influence | .603 | .03 | .615 | 15.298 | .000 | .210 | 4.753 |
| Perceived trust | -.211 | .05 | -.211 | -4.549 | .000 | .159 | 4.308 |
| Technology infrastructure | .820 | .04 | .820 | 20.539 | .000 | .214 | 4.677 |
| Perceived usefulness | -.351 | .05 | -.297 | -7.814 | .000 | .236 | 4.233 |
| a. Predictors: (Constant), Perceived usefulness, Perceived trust, Social Influence, Technology Infrastructure  b. Dependent Variable: Intention to adopt sharing commerce | | | | | | | | |

The R² value was 0.871 (F = 639.596, p < 0.001), indicating that 87.1% of the variation in the intention to adopt sharing commerce can be explained by social influence, perceived trust, technology infrastructure, and perceived usefulness. The results of the hypothesis testing reveal that social influence and perceived trust negatively influence (beta = -0.211 and beta = -0.351, respectively) the intention to adopt sharing commerce, while perceived usefulness and technology infrastructure have a positive effect (beta = 0.820 and beta = 0.603, respectively). These findings are crucial for understanding the barriers and motivators for young consumers in the Colombo district. The following sections provide a detailed discussion of each hypothesis, integrating relevant literature to explain the observed relationships.

**Discussion and Implications**

The results of the regression analysis indicate that Technology Infrastructure and Usefulness have strong positive effects on the Intention to adopt sharing commerce, while Social Influence and Perceived Trust have negative effects. Even though most of the research has presented that there is a positive relationship between social influence and the intention to adopt sharing commerce, social influence can negatively impact young consumers’ intention to adopt sharing commerce due to perceived risks and trust issues. Yin et al. (2019) found that in cultures with high uncertainty avoidance, social influence can lead to increased scepticism and reduced adoption rates (Yin et al. 2019). Additionally, Hu and Zhu (2022) highlight that social media usage does not always generate purchase intentions, especially in cross-cultural contexts where cultural distance can attenuate the effects of social media usage on purchase intentions (Hu & Zhu, 2022). This suggests that while social influence is generally positive, it can also amplify concerns about privacy and security, deterring young consumers from engaging in sharing commerce.

The negative effect of social influence can be explained by the fear of judgment or criticism from peers. Young consumers might avoid adopting sharing commerce if they believe their peers view it unfavourably or if they feel it does not align with their social group’s norms and values. This aligns with the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), where subjective norms (perceived social influence) significantly influence an individual’s intention to perform a behaviour (Conner, 2020). Additionally, the influence of social norms on technology adoption has been well-documented, indicating that peer influence can significantly impact user behaviour (Venkatesh et al., 2003).

It's possible that social standards within the target demographic might not be favourable for sharing economy practices. This can happen due to cultural values that prioritize individualism or private ownership, which may hinder the adoption of sharing economy practices. For instance, there might be a prevailing mindset among this demographic regarding individualism or materialism that discourages sharing. If a young person's social circle views sharing economy practices as "cheap" or "uncool," they may be hesitant to participate, fearing a negative view of them. Apart from this, some individuals might be concerned about the surrounding social stigma, as they could be perceived negatively by their peers if they are seen as being frugal or environmentally conscious.

Literature has shown that social influence can have both positive and negative effects on technology adoption. For instance, negative social influence can arise from concerns about social judgment, leading individuals to avoid behaviours that might be perceived negatively by their peers (Graf-Vlachy et al., 2018). In the context of sharing commerce, young consumers might fear that participating in such platforms could be seen as unconventional or not aligning with their social group's values, thus deterring them from adoption. This is supported by studies indicating that perceived social risks and the desire to conform to group norms can significantly impact technology adoption decisions (Venkatesh et al., 2003). Therefore, the negative influence of social norms on young consumers' intention to adopt sharing commerce can be attributed to the fear of negative peer judgment and the pressure to conform to social group norms, which are critical factors in their decision-making process.

Similarly, the negative effect of trust level on the intention to adopt sharing commerce (H2) corroborates previous research highlighting the critical role of trust in online transactions (Johnson et al., 2018). Trust is a well-known and highly accepted factor when it comes to the internet in the early stages. Lower levels of trust lead to lower intentions to adopt sharing commerce. Even though trust is crucial for the adoption of sharing commerce, low levels of trust can significantly deter young consumers. Anaya and De La Vega (2022) emphasize that perceived risks and the complexity of online transactions can diminish trust, negatively impacting purchase intentions (Anaya & De La Vega, 2022). Kong et al. (2020) further support this by demonstrating that both social and technical enablers are essential for building trust, and their absence can lead to negative outcomes (Kong et al. 2020). Therefore, a lack of trust in the platform or other users can be a significant barrier to the adoption of sharing commerce among young consumers.

Moreover, the negative effect of trust level on the intention to adopt sharing commerce can be attributed to several factors. Firstly, when trust in a platform increases, users might become more aware of potential risks such as privacy and security concerns. This heightened awareness can lead to increased caution and reluctance to engage in sharing commerce. Secondly, higher trust levels can raise users' expectations for flawless service. Any minor issue or perceived failure can significantly deter users, as their higher trust level makes them less tolerant of errors. Additionally, in societies that prioritize individualism or private ownership, higher trust in sharing platforms might conflict with cultural values. Young consumers might view sharing commerce as conflicting with their personal or social norms, leading to decreased adoption despite high trust levels. Furthermore, increased trust might make users more aware of the complexities and efforts involved in using sharing platforms. If users perceive the process as too complicated or time-consuming, they might be less inclined to adopt sharing commerce, even if they trust the platform. Lastly, even with high trust in the platform, users might fear negative social judgment if their peers view sharing economy practices unfavourably. This fear can lead to decreased intention to adopt sharing commerce, as users might avoid behaviours that could be perceived negatively by their social circle.

The positive influence of perceived usefulness on the intention to adopt sharing commerce (H3) supports the core premise of the Technology Acceptance Model (Davis, 1989). Shao et al. (2023) found that the perception of usefulness, ease of use, and social benefits positively affect consumer behaviour through community identification (Shao et al. 2023). When young consumers find a sharing commerce platform useful, they are more likely to adopt it, as supported by numerous studies highlighting the importance of perceived usefulness in driving technology adoption. When young consumers perceive sharing commerce as beneficial and efficient, their likelihood of adoption increases (Venkatesh et al., 2003). This is consistent with findings from mobile commerce research, where perceived usefulness and ease of use are critical determinants of adoption (Cho, 2008; Wei et al., 2009). The positive effect of perceived usefulness can be explained by the practical benefits that sharing commerce offers, such as cost savings, convenience, and access to a wider range of goods and services. When young consumers recognize these advantages, they are more likely to adopt sharing commerce.

Lastly, the positive impact of technology infrastructure on the intention to adopt sharing commerce (H4) emphasizes the significance of a reliable and user-friendly technological framework. A robust technology infrastructure is essential for the successful adoption of sharing commerce. Studies have shown that a well-developed technological framework, including reliable internet connectivity and user-friendly interfaces, positively impacts consumers’ willingness to engage in sharing commerce (Davis, 1989). Attar et al. (2022) found that technologically advanced social commerce platforms enable collaborative commerce, leading to the development of new commerce concepts such as sharing commerce (Attar et al. 2022). This suggests that a strong technology infrastructure can mitigate some of the barriers to adoption and enhance the user experience. Adequate technology infrastructure, such as robust e-commerce platforms, secure digital payment systems, efficient cloud computing services, and high-speed internet connectivity, not only facilitates seamless user experiences but also enhances the overall attractiveness of sharing platforms (Kim & Park, 2020).

This study makes several theoretical contributions to the understanding of young consumers’ intention to adopt sharing commerce by integrating and extending established theories such as the TAM, TPB, and Sociotechnical theory. In the context of sharing commerce, TAM plays an important role because it helps to understand how young consumers perceive the usefulness and ease of use of sharing platforms. By applying TAM, this study identifies how perceived usefulness impacts young consumers' intention to adopt sharing commerce.

Moreover, this study enhances TAM by incorporating additional factors relevant to sharing commerce, such as trust in the platform and social influence. By integrating these elements, the study provides a more comprehensive understanding of the determinants of technology adoption in the sharing commerce context, thereby extending the applicability of TAM beyond traditional e-commerce settings (Brown et al., 2022; Kim & Park, 2020). While TPB traditionally focuses on subjective norms, this study provides empirical evidence that negative social influence can deter young consumers from adopting sharing commerce. This finding is consistent with Conner’s (2020) framework but adds a new dimension by exploring the negative aspects of social pressure, which has been less emphasized in previous research (Smith et al., 2020).

By highlighting the negative impact of social influence, this study extends TPB by demonstrating that not all social pressures are positive or neutral; some can actively discourage behaviour adoption. This nuanced understanding of social influence provides a more comprehensive view of how subjective norms operate within the TPB framework. Furthermore, the study shows that young consumers' decisions are influenced by a variety of factors beyond just social influence, indicating a sophisticated approach to adopting sharing commerce. This contributes to the theoretical understanding of TPB by incorporating the complexity of social dynamics in technology adoption. Lastly, the study contributes to Sociotechnical theory by emphasizing the integration of social and technical systems to enhance user experience. The positive impact of technology infrastructure on the intention to adopt sharing commerce highlights the significance of a reliable and user-friendly technological framework (Brown et al., 2022; Kim & Park, 2020).

These findings indicate that young consumers consider a complex interplay of technological, social, and personal factors when deciding whether to participate in sharing commerce, reflecting a broader and more sophisticated decision-making process (Martinez-Gonzalez et al., 2021). This paradox can be explained by the complexity of trust dynamics in the context of sharing commerce. While social and technical enablers can enhance trust by mitigating perceived risks and improving user experience, they can also raise users' expectations and awareness of potential issues. For instance, higher trust levels might lead to increased scrutiny of the platform's performance and greater sensitivity to any perceived shortcomings or risks. Young consumers may become more cautious and selective, fearing that their high expectations might not be consistently met, which can ultimately deter them from adopting sharing commerce.

Additionally, cultural values and social norms play a significant role. In societies that prioritize individualism or private ownership, even high levels of trust in the platform might conflict with personal or social values, leading to unwillingness to adopt sharing commerce. This aligns with the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), where perceived behavioural control (in this case, trust) influences the intention to perform a behaviour (Conner, 2020). Therefore, while social and technical enablers are essential for building trust, the study highlights the complex interplay between trust, user expectations, and cultural values, which can result in a negative influence on the intention to adopt sharing commerce.

In addition to the theoretical insights discussed earlier, the findings of this study offer several practical implications for businesses, policymakers, and educational institutions aiming to enhance the adoption of sharing commerce among young consumers. Firstly, the study highlights the complex role of trust in sharing platforms. Given that higher levels of trust were found to negatively influence young consumers’ intention to adopt sharing commerce, companies should investigate the underlying reasons for this relationship. It may be that excessive trust leads to complacency or overconfidence, reducing the perceived need to adopt new sharing platforms. Companies should balance building trust with maintaining a sense of novelty and urgency. This includes ensuring data privacy, providing secure payment options, and maintaining high standards of service quality (Cheng, 2020), while also highlighting the unique benefits and innovations of their platforms. Platforms like Uber and PickMe can benefit from balancing trust with novelty by continuously introducing new features, such as enhanced safety measures, real-time tracking, and loyalty programs. Ensuring secure payment options and maintaining high service standards can help build trust while keeping the service fresh and appealing. Accommodation-sharing platforms like Airbnb can enhance trust by implementing robust verification processes for hosts and guests, offering secure payment systems, and providing comprehensive insurance options. Highlighting unique stays and local experiences can maintain a sense of novelty and excitement. This is a good opportunity to touch the tourism industry as well.

Secondly, the positive impact of perceived usefulness on adoption intention (Davis, 1989; Venkatesh et al., 2003) suggests that sharing platforms need to clearly communicate their practical benefits. This can be achieved through targeted marketing strategies that emphasize the efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and convenience of using these platforms. For example, companies can use real-life success stories and user testimonials to illustrate how sharing commerce has benefited other users. Additionally, creating informative content such as blogs, videos, and infographics that highlight the practical advantages and unique features of the platform can help potential users understand its value. Demonstrating specific use cases and scenarios where sharing commerce provides significant benefits can also make the concept more relatable and appealing to young consumers. Platforms like Uber and PickMe can benefit from targeted marketing strategies that emphasize the convenience and cost-effectiveness of ridesharing. Real-life success stories and user testimonials can illustrate how these services save time and money. Informative content such as blogs and videos can highlight features like real-time tracking and safety measures, making the service more appealing to young consumers. Platforms like Airbnb can use user testimonials and success stories to showcase the unique experiences and cost savings of staying in shared accommodations. Creating content that highlights the benefits of local experiences, and the variety of available accommodations can help potential users see the value. Demonstrating specific use cases, such as affordable family vacations or unique travel experiences, experiencing local hospitality and tasting local foods can make the platform more relatable.

Thirdly, the study underscores the role of technology infrastructure in facilitating the adoption of sharing commerce. Companies should focus on developing user-friendly interfaces and reliable technological frameworks that enhance the overall user experience. Recent literature highlights several key facilities that are crucial for this purpose: optimizing mobile applications to be intuitive and responsive, with features such as easy navigation, quick load times, and seamless integration with other services (Attar et al., 2022); providing fast and responsive customer support through various channels, including chatbots and live support, to address user issues promptly and enhance trust (Díaz-Arancibia et al., 2024); implementing robust security protocols, such as encryption and secure authentication methods, to ensure data privacy and transaction safety (Kong et al., 2020); and regularly updating the platform to incorporate user feedback and technological advancements, keeping the platform relevant and user-friendly. By focusing on these aspects, companies can create a more reliable and attractive technological infrastructure that supports the adoption of sharing commerce.

As per the explanation of the negative effect of social influence discussed before, the findings indicate that social influence can deter young consumers from adopting sharing commerce if perceived negatively (Smith et al., 2020). Therefore, companies should focus on strategies to mitigate this negative impact. By reshaping peer perceptions through positive social proof and endorsements, engaging with influencers who can truly promote the benefits of sharing commerce, and creating community-driven marketing campaigns that highlight positive user experiences, companies can counteract the negative social pressure and encourage adoption. Platforms like Uber and PickMe can mitigate negative social influence by leveraging positive social proof and endorsements. Engaging with influencers who can authentically promote the benefits of ridesharing, such as cost savings and convenience, can help reshape peer perceptions. But other than the influencer, it can be really focused on the community-driven marketing campaigns that highlight positive user experiences, such as safe rides and reliable service, which can further encourage adoption. Platforms like Airbnb can use positive social proof by showcasing user testimonials and success stories that emphasize unique and enjoyable stays. Influencers who have had positive experiences with Airbnb can share their stories to promote the platform. But presenting the real-life stories of the community and the community-driven campaigns that highlight the benefits of staying in local neighbourhoods and experiencing different cultures, eating local foods can help prevent negative social perceptions. Educational institutions and policymakers also play a crucial role in promoting sharing commerce. Incorporating digital literacy and trust-building modules into educational curricula can prepare young consumers to navigate and trust online platforms effectively. Additionally, government policies that support secure and transparent online transactions can further enhance consumer confidence in sharing commerce (Mollick et al., 2023).

**Conclusion**

The sharing economy has emerged as a transformative consumption model with significant growth and potential, particularly in the context of digital platforms starting with e-commerce and then social commerce. This study aimed to understand the factors influencing young consumers’ intention to adopt sharing commerce, focusing on social influence, trust, perceived usefulness, and technology infrastructure. The findings underscore the complexity of consumer behaviour in this domain, revealing that young consumers are influenced by a multitude of factors beyond mere social trends. The upcoming era is characterized by a highly digitalized and tech-savvy generation. Understanding their behaviour and preferences is critical for the success of sharing commerce platforms. By addressing security concerns and enhancing the overall user experience, stakeholders can create an environment where young consumers can engage with confidence and without doubt. Continuous research and adaptive strategies will be essential to keep pace with the evolving digital landscape and to foster a thriving sharing economy.

**Further Research Suggestions**

While this study provides valuable insights into the factors influencing young consumers’ intention to adopt sharing commerce, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the study’s sample size and demographic focus may limit the generalizability of the findings. The research mainly targeted the young consumers in Colombo, which may not fully represent the broader population. Future studies could benefit from including a more diverse sample across different regions and age groups to enhance the generalizability of the results especially the new generation of ‘Generation Alpha’ who are born between 2010 and 2024, highly associated with technology with born talents. Secondly, the cross-sectional design of the study captures consumer intentions at a single point in time. This approach does not account for potential changes in consumer behaviour over time. Future studies could provide a more comprehensive understanding of how intentions and behaviours evolve, particularly as sharing commerce platforms and technologies continue to develop. Thirdly, the study relies on self-reported data, which may be subject to biases such as social desirability bias or recall bias. Participants might have provided responses they deemed socially acceptable or may not accurately remember their past behaviours and attitudes. Employing mixed methods, including qualitative approaches such as interviews or focus groups, could help mitigate these biases and provide deeper insights. Additionally, the study focuses on a limited set of factors—social influence, trust, perceived usefulness, and technology infrastructure. While these factors are significant, other variables such as cultural influences, economic conditions, and individual personality traits might also play crucial roles in shaping consumer intentions. Future research could explore these additional factors to provide a more holistic view of the determinants of sharing commerce adoption. In sum, while this study offers important contributions to the understanding of young consumers’ adoption of sharing commerce, acknowledging these limitations is important. Addressing these limitations in future research can help build a more robust and comprehensive body of knowledge in this field.

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