

Synthesizing the Integration of S-O-R, Source Credibility, and Advertising Value Models in AI-Driven Social Commerce: A Comprehensive Analysis of Consumer Purchase Intention

Fazil Ahamed¹, Sanath Kumar², Shivaraj³

^{1,2,3}MBA Student, Department of Management, CMR University, Bengaluru, India

Abstract

ai driven social commerce

The digital economy has catalyzed a profound transformation in marketing paradigms, shifting from static electronic commerce to highly interactive, socially embedded, and algorithmically driven ecosystems. In this contemporary landscape, short-form video platforms and artificial intelligence (AI) have converged to radically reshape consumer behavior, redefining the mechanisms through which brands generate awareness, cultivate trust, and ultimately drive purchasing decisions¹. This paradigm shift has rendered traditional, linear marketing models insufficient for capturing the complex, multi-layered interactions between consumers and highly immersive digital stimuli. Consequently, understanding the psychological underpinnings of consumer decision-making in these dynamic environments requires a multidimensional theoretical approach that bridges technology acceptance, emotional processing, and cognitive evaluation. The explosive proliferation of short-form video platforms—most notably TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts—has fundamentally altered the consumption of digital content across a global user base exceeding billions¹. Characterized by ephemeral, algorithmically curated, and highly engaging formats, these platforms demand novel strategies for capturing consumer attention and fostering brand loyalty⁴. Simultaneously, the integration of AI-powered personalization, virtual influencers, and live-streaming commerce has introduced intricate variables into the consumer journey, amplifying both the opportunities for deep engagement and the inherent risks of consumer skepticism⁵.

To deconstruct the pathways through which short-form video marketing and AI-driven social commerce influence consumer purchase intention, this analysis synthesizes several seminal theoretical frameworks. The primary architectural foundation relies on the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) paradigm, which maps the trajectory from external digital cues to internal psychological states, culminating in behavioral outcomes¹. This structural model is augmented by integrating Ducoffe's Advertising Value Model¹⁰, Ohanian's Source Credibility Theory¹³, Chaudhuri and Holbrook's conceptualization of Brand Trust and Brand Affect¹⁶, and the foundational price-value evaluations established by Dodds, Monroe, and Grewal¹⁹. By weaving these established theories together with contemporary empirical data regarding social commerce, a comprehensive nomological network is established to dissect modern consumer behavior.

Foundational Theoretical Frameworks in Digital Marketing

The investigation of consumer behavior within digital marketing necessitates a rigorous grounding in established psychological and behavioral theories. These frameworks provide the requisite analytical lenses to interpret how disparate digital stimuli—ranging from machinelearning algorithmic recommendations to human-like virtual avatars—are processed by the consumer mind.

The Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) Paradigm

Originally formulated in the domain of environmental psychology by Mehrabian and Russell (1974), the S-O-R framework posits that environmental cues act as external stimuli that affect an individual's internal cognitive and affective states, ultimately driving approach or avoidance behaviors⁶. In the context of contemporary social commerce and online retailing, the S-O-R model has been extensively adapted to evaluate complex digital atmospherics.

The "Stimulus" encompasses the myriad external marketing triggers embedded in the digital environment, such as the quality of short-form video content, the real-time interactivity of live-stream commerce, the precision of AI-generated personalized recommendations, and the social presence of both influencers and peer consumers¹. The "Organism" represents the internal evaluative mechanisms of the consumer. Unlike early e-commerce studies that focused predominantly on rational, cognitive evaluations (e.g., the Technology Acceptance Model's focus on perceived usefulness), modern applications of the S-O-R framework heavily emphasize affective and emotional states. Constructs such as flow experience, emotional resonance, perceived value, and brand trust serve as critical mediating variables¹. Finally, the "Response" captures the behavioral outcomes, conceptualized primarily as purchase intention, continuous usage intention, and impulse buying behavior²⁸. The sustained efficacy of the S-OR model lies in its capacity to explain the transitional psychology that bridges mere media exposure and actual commercial conversion.

Ducoffe's Advertising Value Model

To systematically evaluate the nature of the stimuli within short-form video content, Ducoffe's (1996) Advertising Value Model remains a highly salient theoretical tool. The model hypothesizes that the perceived value of an advertisement is fundamentally a function of three primary antecedents: informativeness, entertainment, and irritation¹². Subsequent scholarship often integrates source credibility into this model as a fourth pillar¹¹.

Informativeness refers to the capacity of the advertising message to provide useful, timely, and relevant data that facilitates consumer decision-making¹¹. In environments saturated with infinite scrolling, informative value satisfies utilitarian needs, reducing the cognitive effort required to evaluate product alternatives. Entertainment, conversely, addresses hedonic needs, fulfilling desires for escapism, aesthetic pleasure, and emotional arousal⁷. Irritation acts as a negative predictor, capturing the annoyance, intrusiveness, or anxiety associated with poorly targeted, manipulative, or overwhelming advertisements²³. Empirical validations consistently demonstrate that in social media and short-form video contexts, entertainment and informativeness significantly enhance advertising value, which in turn mitigates irritation and fosters elevated purchase intentions³².

Source Credibility Theory: Human and Virtual Influencers

Given the prominent role of content creators in social commerce, Ohanian's (1990) multidimensional scale

for measuring celebrity endorser credibility is essential for understanding persuasive communication dynamics¹⁵. Ohanian expanded upon early source credibility models to define three distinct, measurable dimensions: attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise¹³.

Expertise denotes the perceived knowledge, experience, and qualification of the endorser regarding the promoted product category³⁸. Trustworthiness reflects the audience's perception of the endorser's absolute honesty, integrity, and sincerity¹⁴. Attractiveness extends beyond mere physical appearance to encompass social appeal, relatability, and charm¹³. In the modern digital ecosystem, these dimensions dictate the efficacy of parasocial interactions. When consumers perceive an influencer—whether human or AI-generated—as highly credible, psychological resistance to persuasive messaging diminishes significantly⁴⁰.

Evaluative Paradigms: Brand Trust, Affect, and Price-Value Synthesis

Chaudhuri and Holbrook's (2001) seminal work provides the theoretical mechanism explaining how trust operates as the cornerstone of consumer-brand relationships. They define brand trust as the willingness of the average consumer to rely on the ability of the brand to perform its stated function¹⁶. In their framework, brand trust and brand affect act as dual mediators that drive both attitudinal loyalty (emotional commitment) and behavioral loyalty (repeat purchase patterns)¹⁷.

Concurrently, the evaluation of price, quality, and value—as rigorously established by Dodds, Monroe, and Grewal (1991)—remains a critical cognitive step in the purchase process. Their foundational model demonstrates that extrinsic cues, specifically price and brand name, significantly influence perceived quality and perceived value, which subsequently determine the willingness to buy¹⁹. In the realm of social commerce, these traditional evaluations of price and quality are frequently recalibrated by the presence of social proof, interactive engagement, and time-sensitive promotional framing, requiring a synthesis of cognitive pricing theory with emotional trust models²⁵.

Environmental and Content Stimuli (S): The Vanguard of Digital Engagement

The external cues that initiate the consumer decision-making process in contemporary digital marketing are multifaceted. They combine the structural attributes of media platforms with the qualitative aspects of the content itself.

Short-Form Video Marketing Dynamics

Short-form videos have aggressively become the dominant medium for digital storytelling. The effectiveness of this format hinges entirely on its content quality, which operates across informative, entertaining, and persuasive dimensions⁸.

Informativeness in short-form videos requires the highly concise presentation of product features, usage demonstrations, and value propositions within a severely constrained timeframe (often under 60 seconds). Effective informational content allows consumers to conduct rational evaluations swiftly, acting as a crucial risk-mitigation tool⁸. Entertainment acts as the primary acquisition mechanism. Platforms like TikTok and YouTube Shorts are inherently hedonic, designed to capture attention through visually stimulating, rhythmically engaging, and emotionally evocative sequences³. Entertainment content stimulates positive affective responses, lowering psychological defenses and bridging the psychological distance between the consumer and the brand⁸.

Persuasive content integrates logical arguments with emotional appeals and social proof. Social proof, derived from the quantity and quality of user comments, likes, and shares, serves as a powerful mental heuristic⁴⁵. When consumers observe high levels of engagement from peers, it signals product popularity and credibility, validating their own emerging purchase desires⁴⁵.

The Integration of AI-Powered Personalization

Artificial intelligence has transitioned from a backend analytical utility to a frontline driver of the customer experience. AI-powered marketing mechanisms, including deep-learning personalization algorithms, generative recommender systems, and conversational AI, are structurally embedded in the consumer journey⁵⁰.

Personalization algorithms analyze vast datasets of behavioral history, dwell times, and contextual variables to deliver hyper-targeted content. This capability enables brands to present highly relevant stimuli directly to the consumer, maximizing the probability of engagement². High-quality, AI-driven personalization enhances the perceived usefulness and convenience of the shopping experience⁵³. Furthermore, the advent of Generative AI has facilitated the creation of highly novel cultural and creative products. Novelty, acting as a powerful subjective stimulus arising from unfamiliarity and expectancy violation, significantly stimulates exploratory motivation and subsequent positive evaluations of perceived value⁵⁴. Conversational AI, such as advanced chatbots, introduces a new modality of interaction, emulating human-like communication and providing immediate gratification⁵. Studies grounded in the Computers as Social Actors (CASA) framework demonstrate that consumers apply social-psychological heuristics to AI interactions, evaluating them based on perceived empathy and interaction quality⁵⁰. When AI systems successfully simulate socio-emotional intelligence, they foster parasocial intimacy and trust.

Real-Time Atmospheric and Live-Streaming Commerce

Live-streaming commerce merges entertainment with instant purchasing capabilities, creating a potent, synchronous stimulus environment. It leverages commercial stimuli (discounted prices, scarcity appeals), social interaction stimuli (social presence of the host and audience, sense of belonging), and influencer-specific stimuli²⁶.

The interactive features of live-streaming—such as live chats, polls, and real-time Q&A—elevate social presence, making the consumer feel socially embedded in a communal event²⁴. Streamers actively provide personalized recommendations, enhancing perceived utilitarian product value, while flash sales and scarcity promotions create an intense sense of urgency⁵⁶. The continuous social reinforcement observed in these environments makes buying behavior increasingly automatic, transitioning standard purchase intentions into highly impulsive actions²⁵.

Organismic States (O): Cognitive Appraisals and Affective Processing

Digital stimuli do not translate directly into behavior; they are processed through complex internal psychological states. The S-O-R framework identifies these cognitive and affective evaluations as the crucial mediating mechanisms.

Emotional Resonance and the Flow Experience

Beyond basic trust and value, digital stimuli frequently evoke profound psychological states such as emotional resonance and flow. Emotional resonance occurs when content aligns seamlessly with the

consumer's personal values, cultural identity, or immediate emotional state¹. Short-form videos that leverage relatable narratives or nostalgic elements trigger resonance, transforming passive viewers into emotionally engaged participants⁵⁸.

Simultaneously, the frictionless design of modern digital platforms is engineered to induce a state of "flow"—a psychological state of deep absorption characterized by a distorted sense of time, loss of self-consciousness, and intense focus²⁴. Flow experience is strongly activated by optimal challenges, rapid feedback loops, and the high entertainment value of short-form videos²⁷. When consumers enter a state of flow, their cognitive defenses are significantly lowered, rendering the processing of persuasive messaging more fluid and uncritical²⁶.

Parasocial Relationships and Influencer Credibility

The sustained interaction between influencers and their audiences cultivates Parasocial Relationships (PSRs). While Parasocial Interactions (PSIs) refer to momentary engagements during a specific viewing instance, PSRs represent enduring, one-sided emotional bonds developed over repeated exposures⁴¹.

The effectiveness of these relationships relies entirely on the influencer's source credibility.

Research indicates that expertise and attractiveness play major roles in shaping consumer trust, which acts as the critical psychological mechanism linking influencer traits to decisionmaking¹⁴. Interestingly, while attractiveness commands initial attention, expertise and trustworthiness are the primary drivers of persuasive impact and actual purchase intentions¹³. When consumers perceive an influencer as competent and sincere, it fosters a communal relationship, reducing resistance to marketing messages⁴¹.

Credibility Dimension (Ohanian, 1990)	Psychological Mechanism in Digital Commerce	Impact on Organismic State
Expertise	Reduces information asymmetry; signals high utilitarian value.	Increases Cognitive Trust and Perceived Information Quality ¹³ .
Trustworthiness	Mitigates perceived risk; authenticates the brand narrative.	Increases Affective Trust and Emotional Resonance ¹⁴ .
Attractiveness	Triggers visual appeal heuristics; fosters social identification.	Increases Initial Attention and Parasocial Intimacy ¹³ .

Perceived Value and Brand Trust

Perceived value represents the consumer's overall assessment of the utility of an offering, calculating perceptions of what is received versus what is sacrificed¹⁹. In social commerce, perceived value extends beyond functional and economic dimensions to heavily incorporate emotional, epistemic, and social value²⁹. Informational stimuli enhance the perceived value of the content, which subsequently transfers to the promoted product⁸.

Trust functions as the central nervous system of this ecosystem. In digital environments where physical inspection is impossible, brand trust and influencer trust serve as primary riskmitigation mechanisms¹⁶.

The synergy between cognitive trust (belief in reliability and competence) and affective trust (emotional attachment and benevolence) creates a robust psychological commitment that drives both satisfaction and loyalty⁹.

The Moderating Role of Skepticism and Greenwashing

While positive stimuli cultivate trust, the digital ecosystem is heavily characterized by consumer skepticism, particularly concerning ethical, sustainable, and privacy-related claims.

Skepticism acts as a powerful psychological barrier, disrupting the translation of stimuli into positive organismic states⁶⁵.

In green marketing, the proliferation of vague or exaggerated sustainability claims—known as greenwashing—has severely eroded consumer trust⁶⁷. Based on the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), when consumers perceive subjective norms and brand communications to be misaligned with actual ethical practices, their perceived behavioral control and purchase intentions plummet⁶⁵. Research indicates that avoiding greenwashing acts merely as a "hygiene factor"—its absence prevents credibility loss, but it does not independently generate authenticity⁶⁹. To overcome deep-seated skepticism, brands must utilize radical transparency, lifecycle disclosures, and third-party certifications, ensuring that informational stimuli are verifiable and unimpeachable⁶⁷.

Behavioral Responses (R): The Architecture of Conversion

The culmination of cognitive and affective processing within the S-O-R framework is the behavioral response. In digital marketing, this response is operationalized primarily through continuous purchase intention and impulse buying behavior.

Sustained Purchase Intention and Brand Loyalty

Purchase intention is the deliberate, conscious inclination of a consumer to acquire a specific product or service in the future⁷¹. It reflects the ultimate synthesis of all prior evaluations regarding quality, price, value, and trust²¹.

Empirical evidence underscores that purchase intention is driven by dual pathways: an attitudinal path and an immersive path³³. In the attitudinal path, the quality of information and the credibility of the source elevate perceived value and build brand trust. The consumer rationally evaluates the utilitarian benefits, concluding that the purchase is justified⁸. This leads to sustained attitudinal loyalty—a deep emotional commitment to the brand—and behavioral loyalty, characterized by repeat purchasing patterns¹⁶.

The Mechanisms of Impulse Buying

In stark contrast to the deliberate nature of planned purchase intention, impulse buying is a sudden, compelling, and hedonically driven urge to purchase immediately, often devoid of extensive evaluation²⁶. The architecture of social commerce is explicitly designed to precipitate impulse buying by bypassing rational deliberation²⁶.

The interactive atmospherics of live-streaming or highly engaging short videos generate intense emotional arousal²⁶. Features such as real-time comments and visible purchase counters create an environment of observational learning and herd behavior. Consumers experience a Fear of Missing Out (FoMO), which acts as a powerful affective catalyst²⁵. This heightened arousal, combined with the flow state induced by high entertainment value, overrides cognitive control mechanisms²⁴. Consequently, the consumer yields

to the immediate gratification of the purchase, transforming a passive viewing session into an instant transactional event⁵.

Generational Variances in Behavioral Responses

Consumer responses to digital stimuli vary significantly across demographic cohorts, necessitating highly segmented marketing strategies.

- **Generation Z:** This digitally native cohort relies heavily on parasocial relationships and influencer authenticity. Their purchase intentions are strongly dictated by emotional relatability, cultural alignment, and the perceived sincerity of the content creator⁴¹. Furthermore, Gen Z exhibits a higher propensity for impulse buying induced by influencers (e.g., the "budol culture" observed in Southeast Asian markets) due to high levels of social identification and emotional trust⁵⁹.
- **Generation Y (Millennials):** While also highly engaged in social commerce, Gen Y consumers exhibit a stronger reliance on the informativeness of content. Their purchase intentions are more closely linked to perceived utilitarian value, transparent pricing, and robust brand trust⁷.
- **Elderly Consumers:** Digital marketing increasingly targets elderly demographics through accessible channels like short video apps and social media. Their impulse buying behavior is heavily influenced by system responsiveness, ease of use, and practical features like personalized recommendations or virtual try-ons. For this cohort, overcoming technological anxiety and establishing deep trust in the platform's security are critical precursors to purchase intention²⁹.

Empirical Validations and Structural Equation Modeling

To rigorously validate the complex interrelationships posited by the extended S-O-R framework, researchers extensively deploy advanced multivariate statistical techniques, predominantly Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM)². PLS-SEM is optimally suited for evaluating complex path models that incorporate both direct and sequentially mediated relationships across latent variables²³.

Measurement Model Robustness

The operationalization of constructs such as Advertising Value, Source Credibility, and Brand Trust requires the adaptation of established psychometric scales. The evaluation of the measurement model necessitates rigorous testing of internal consistency, convergent validity, and discriminant validity⁸.

Internal consistency is universally assessed via Composite Reliability (CR) and Cronbach's Alpha. Convergent validity is confirmed when the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each latent construct surpasses the 0.50 threshold, demonstrating that the construct explains the majority of the variance of its indicators²⁵. Table 1 aggregates representative validity metrics demonstrating the robustness of these measurement scales across recent social commerce studies.

Latent Construct	Cronbach's Alpha (α)	Composite Reliability (CR)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Source Reference
Information	0.872	0.901	0.752	[cite: 79]

Security Perception				
Satisfaction	0.902	0.928	0.763	[cite: 79]
Brand Trust	0.863	0.876	0.767	[cite: 16, 80]
Entertainment Value	0.921	0.938	0.841	[cite: 27, 34]
Purchase Intention	0.894	0.918	0.741	[cite: 79]

Structural Model and Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity ensures that distinct theoretical constructs are empirically unique. This is fundamentally evaluated using the Fornell-Larcker criterion, which dictates that the square root of a construct's AVE must be strictly greater than its highest correlation with any other construct in the structural model³². Modern methodological approaches also mandate the reporting of the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio to rigorously confirm discriminant validity⁷³.

Path analysis within the structural model quantifies the strength and significance of relationships. For instance, empirical data frequently reveals that Visual and Affective Appeal exhibits a strong, direct effect on Purchase Intention ($\beta = 0.37, p < 0.001$), closely followed by Information Quality ($\beta = 0.31, p < 0.001$)⁸⁴. In the context of influencer marketing, the path from Influencer Credibility to Green Brand Authenticity also demonstrates substantial predictive power ($\beta = 0.44, p < 0.001$), far outweighing the negative influence of perceived greenwashing ($\beta = -0.28, p < 0.001$)⁶⁹. (Table 2 details the specific factor loadings for the widely utilized Brand Loyalty and Brand Trust scales, reinforcing the psychometric stability of Chaudhuri and Holbrook's foundational work.

Construct / Item Measure	Standardized Factor Loading	Theoretical Implication
Attitudinal Loyalty: I am committed to this brand.	0.892	High emotional attachment ¹⁶ .
Attitudinal Loyalty: I would be willing to pay a higher price.	0.922	Premium pricing tolerance ¹⁶ .
Behavioral Loyalty: I intend to keep purchasing this brand.	0.911	Sustained revenue generation ¹⁶ .
Brand Trust: This is an honest brand.	0.908	Transparency and integrity ¹⁶ .

Brand Trust: This brand can address my concerns.	0.875	Benevolence and competence ¹⁶ .
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Advanced Predictive Modeling: Artificial Neural Networks (ANN)

The integration of Artificial Neural Networks (ANN) alongside PLS-SEM represents the methodological frontier in modeling consumer behavior. While PLS-SEM excels in confirming linear relationships and complex mediating pathways, ANN architectures capture intricate, non-linear patterns within the data²³. By processing inputs through hidden layers to minimize Root Mean Square Error (RMSE), ANN provides a highly robust ranking of the predictive power of various marketing stimuli. This dual-stage analytical approach significantly enhances the predictive validity of models assessing purchase intention, particularly in highly volatile environments governed by algorithmic short-form videos and personalized AI recommendations²³.

Strategic and Managerial Implications

The comprehensive synthesis of these theoretical frameworks and empirical validations carries profound, actionable implications for marketing practitioners, brand managers, and digital strategists operating in the AI and short-form video era.

First, the dominance of the S-O-R mechanism underscores that marketers must abandon purely transactional, static advertising in favor of creating immersive, high-value digital stimuli⁵. Content strategies must meticulously balance informativeness and entertainment. Short-form videos that are highly entertaining but lack clear, credible product information may generate massive vanity metrics (views and likes) but will ultimately fail to trigger the cognitive evaluation necessary for actual purchase intention³⁵. Conversely, overly informational content devoid of a hedonic hook will be rapidly bypassed in platforms characterized by ephemeral attention spans²⁷.

Second, the deployment of Artificial Intelligence in marketing must be strictly guided by human-centric principles. While generative AI and predictive algorithms offer unprecedented capabilities for scale, hyper-personalization, and novelty, they cannot autonomously generate the deep emotional empathy required to sustain genuine brand trust⁵⁰. Marketers must leverage AI to handle data-intensive optimization and segmentation, while simultaneously relying on human creativity, emotional intelligence, and strategic brand positioning to craft narratives that resonate on a profound affective level⁵³. The concept of "radical honesty" is paramount; as consumers become increasingly sophisticated in identifying AI-generated content and algorithmic manipulation, brands that communicate with vulnerability, acknowledge flaws, and exhibit consistent ethical consciousness will command the highest levels of trust and market share⁵⁸.

Third, the management of influencer partnerships must evolve far beyond superficial metrics such as aggregate follower counts. The empirical evidence heavily supports Ohanian's dimensions, explicitly highlighting that an influencer's domain expertise and perceived trustworthiness are far more critical in driving actual purchase intentions than mere physical attractiveness or viral fame¹³. Brands must conduct rigorous alignment audits to ensure that the influencer's digital persona congruently matches the product's core value proposition. Furthermore, cultivating long-term parasocial relationships through sustained, authentic influencer partnerships yields exponentially higher conversion rates than episodic, highly commercialized endorsements⁴¹.

Finally, the architecture of the digital point-of-sale must be meticulously optimized to facilitate flow and safely capture impulse buying. Frictionless checkout processes, integrated seamlessly within the short-

form video or live-stream interface, capitalize on the temporary state of high emotional arousal⁵. However, to mitigate post-purchase cognitive dissonance and ensure the transition from a fleeting impulsive buyer to a highly loyal brand advocate, firms must guarantee exceptional post-transaction service quality, clear communication, and product delivery that strictly meets the elevated expectations set during the arousal phase⁴³.

Conclusion

The intersection of short-form video content, artificial intelligence, and social commerce represents a highly complex, stimuli-rich ecosystem that is continuously rewriting the rules of consumer behavior. As demonstrated through the rigorous application of the extended Stimulus-Organism-Response framework, the path to purchase intention is no longer a linear funnel, but a dynamic, multidimensional interplay of cognitive evaluations and profound affective states.

High-quality digital stimuli—characterized by optimal informativeness, immersive entertainment, and credible, authentic communication—serve as the indispensable catalysts for commercial success. These external stimuli must successfully navigate the consumer's internal psychological landscape, simultaneously building perceived value and deep-seated brand trust, while occasionally inducing states of immersive flow that bypass traditional rational barriers. In an era marked equally by advanced technological personalization and heightened consumer skepticism, the brands that will achieve sustained competitive advantage are those that master this psychological alchemy. They will utilize AI and short-form media not merely as blunt instruments for algorithmic reach, but as sophisticated platforms for authentic, transparent, and emotionally resonant human connection. Ultimately, while technology provides the infrastructure for the transaction, it is the establishment of genuine trust, credible information, and perceived value that secures the modern consumer's enduring loyalty and purchase intention.

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