

Influence of Soft - Selling Practices On Consumer Trust in YouTube Live Commerce: Evidence from Chennai

Dr. B. Jagadeeswaran¹, Hemavathi.M², Jenifer.V³

¹Associate professor, & Head,

PG & Research Department of Commerce,
Thiruthangal Nadar College, Selavayal, Chennai

²Full Time Research scholar, PG & Research Department of Commerce,
Thiruthangal Nadar College, Selavayal, Chennai

³Full Time Research scholar, PG & Research Department of Commerce,
Thiruthangal Nadar College, Selavayal, Chennai

Abstract

This study aims to measure the influence of Soft Selling Practices on consumer trust in YouTube live Commerce in Chennai city. The study focuses on dimensions of soft selling practices which directly leads to build trust among consumers. which is important because in this era of social media sellers and consumers need a direct contact and communication. The main objective of the study is to examine the level of subscriber's trust towards sellers engaged in YouTube live commerce. This study adopts mixed research approach. Data were collected from 112 respondents using a both questionnaire and through interviewing directly. The study examined soft selling and consumer trust by using descriptive statistics, correlation between soft selling and trust, linear regression for data analysis. The findings indicate A Strong Positive correlation among Soft Selling and trust. The analysis further shows that Relationship & Engagement is the important Dimension leading to Trust. The study concludes that businesses can give more attention to soft-selling practices when communicating with customers. The findings provide implications for business and researchers.

KEYWORDS: Soft Selling, YouTube Live Commerce, Consumer Trust

1. INTRODUCTION

Soft Selling Practice in YouTube

In the competitive market place, entrepreneurs are forced to develop new techniques to have a long-lasting relationship with their consumers rather than relying on the traditional method of marketing. To make the customer feel good the sellers have come out with practical solutions one among them is Soft Selling, which focuses on understanding consumer needs, providing relevant information, communicating in a less pressurized manner, and developing positive interactions with customers. Soft selling is a unique technique in which Seller demonstrates the products and speaks about its Brand, Features, Merits and Drawback of the products. Seller will never ever make a aggressive sales or even uses a verbal statement to force the consumer purchase the product.

Among various social media platforms, YouTube has become an important channel for product communication because of its combination of video content, entertainment, information, and direct audience engagement. Consumers increasingly use YouTube not only for entertainment but also to discover products, obtain product information, watch reviews and demonstrations, and evaluate the experiences and opinions of content creators.

Every individual has their own style of selling the products and their trade mark of words which they use instead of making a forceful word to make them purchase the products. Similarly, the consumers to have a particular influencer or a sales person who represent a Particular YouTube channel on whom they trust and believe their demonstrations. By the study I came to know that consumers stick on with some particular Channels and the influencers for their purchases.

Trust

Consumer trust plays a key role in successful customer relationships. Trust refers as consumer's reliability on a seller information based on their own usage of the product. In situations where consumers face uncertainty regarding a product, seller, or brand, trust can play an important role in shaping their responses and subsequent purchasing behavior. Therefore, the way in which a business communicates with consumers have a greater connect for the development of trust.

The relationship between soft selling and trust is particularly relevant because non-pressurized selling interactions may allow consumers to develop more favorable perceptions of the seller. When consumers perceive sales communication as informative, respectful, and focused on their needs rather than solely on completing a sale, they may be more willing to engage with the seller and develop confidence in the relationship

2. PROBLEM OF THE STUDY

The paper aims to measure level of trust that each consumer holds with the YouTube live commerce platform. The researcher tries to measure the relationship among soft selling and Trust of consumers

3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The paper describes about how soft selling influence its users to have a brand loyalty and committed with that particular communicator. In this study the author is mentioning the influencer as a communicator of the product in the particular YouTube channel so as the users don't feel that they are being influenced. The study used quantitative research method to compare two communicators' channels and describes how they have target audience to their channel. This paper provides more information about the important role of communicator in building the brand image of the products they sell. The author clearly stats with the choice of media selection platforms help a lot to create brand image and loyalty to a consumer. Ilham Baihaqi, Salsabila Cahyarani, & Farida Nurfalah. (2025)

This study is about a luxury beauty brand "Nudestix" which sells its products through social media in specific has a beauty influencer who sells these products through her YouTube channel. This brand uses this mode to make a brand image to the end user and targeted people easily. "YouTube allows for a visual and textual analysis due to the video content as well as the comment section where beauty influencers can list and link their affiliate code" (2). A content analysis method was used in the study. The study reported

that the products broadcasted by influencer in her YouTube channels have made a higher sales volume compared to others that have not been promoted by that channel. Chidley, A. (2021).

The study aims to measure the influence of influencers in YouTube gadget purchasing intention by the consumers. The authors used non experimental quantitative approach in the study. Influencer marketing interview data reveals that 80% of the consumers purchased the gadgets only since it was demonstrated by the particular influencer. Most of the consumers state that influencer life style motivates them to purchase a high ended gadget. Almost 89% of the consumers states the brand of gadgets are quite unknown to them but yet they opt to purchase the products through the trust held with influencer. Hence this study clearly states the importance of the influencer who brings the brand awareness and brand trust among the consumers. The study lights up the area responsibility that ever influencer held on their shoulders as to serve the society loyally. *Anwar, L., Endin Mujahidin, & Syamsul Rizal Mz. (2023).*

4. RESEARCH GAP

Based on the above-mentioned study this paper finds a research gap there is no combination of paper which speaks about the soft selling attitude of an influencer which drives the customers to have brand trust. Most of the study was conducted in Indonesia and China where there is more culture on YouTube purchases. Hence very limited study with sample of Chennai was done before.

5. LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

- ❖ The study was conducted with limited time line which may not be suitable for long run and under any specific circumstance.
- ❖ The study was conducted only to the consumers who had purchased already through live commerce in Chennai city alone.

6. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study provides a future direction to live commerce which can influence millions of targeted customers very easily. The future study can be done with soft selling increasing the volume of sales, a new brand introducing its product through this channel as Brand Awareness and further study can be done geographically to a vast area.

7. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

- To examine whether soft selling practices differ significantly across selected demographic characteristics.
- To identify and measure the key dimensions of soft selling practices engaged in YouTube live commerce.
- To determine the relationship between soft selling dimensions and consumer trust in YouTube live Commerce.
- To assess the level of subscriber's trust towards sellers engaged in YouTube live commerce.

8. HYPOTHESIS

Ho- There is no significant relationship between the dimensions of soft selling practices and consumer trust in YouTube live selling platforms.

H1- There is significant relationship between the dimensions of soft selling practices and consumer trust in YouTube live selling platforms.

Ho- The dimensions of soft selling practices do not significantly influence consumer trust in YouTube live commerce.

H1 The dimensions of soft selling practices significantly influence consumer trust in YouTube live commerce.

Research Methodology

Research design

This study undertakes both quantitative and descriptive research approach. To satisfy quantitative research a structured questionnaire containing 5point Likert scale is used. Descriptive research also opted as it describes about respondent's demographic profile, soft selling practices and the level of consumer trust. The study also undertakes Analytical research to statistically examine the raw data.

Data collection

The study underwent a structured questionnaire which contains 30 questions. The questionnaire is designed in way it has four sections. The first part aims to gathers demographic information about the respondents. The second part includes questions related to soft selling practices. Third part extracts information relating to consumer trust related information. The last part contains the usage of YouTube live commerce related information.

Sampling technique and sample size

Convenient sampling technique was employed in the study. The study is conducted among consumers who has at least purchased one product through YouTube selling platforms and only from those who reside in Chennai. A total of 130 respondents were served out of this 112 was found useful for the analysis. Of those 18 of them are inappropriate and not useful for the study. Hence our N= 112 for this study.

9. TOOLS AND DATA INTERPRETATION

Table1: Demographic Profile of Respondents

S.N O	DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES	CLASSIFICATION OF VARIABLES	RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
1	AGE	Below 25 Years	27	24
		26-35 Years	43	38
		36-45 Years	32	29
		45-Years & above	10	9
		TOTAL	112	100

2	GENDER	Male	49	44
		Female	63	56
		Transgender	0	0
		TOTAL	112	100
3	MONTHLY INCOME	No personal income	8	7
		Below ₹ 20000	13	12
		Rs.20,001-40,000	31	28
		Rs 40,001-60,000	33	29
		Above Rs.60,000	27	24
		TOTAL	112	100
4	EDUCATIONAL QULIFICATION	Illiterate	9	8
		School Level	23	20
		UG level	48	43
		PG level	21	19
		Professionals	11	10
		TOTAL	112	100

Table2: Reliability Statistics of The Study Constructs

Construct	Number of items	Cronbach's Alpha
Soft selling practices	13	0.937
Consumer trust	6	0.919

Inference

Since Cronbach's alpha value (α) 0.919, 0.937 which is more than the $P > .50$, indicating excellent internal consistency among the items. Both scales have alpha > 0.90 , hence the reliability test results are very strong.

Table3: Soft Selling Dimensions And Trust

Variables	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard deviation
Soft selling dimension 1 Informative & Interactive Selling	112	2.57	4.86	4.24	0.66
Soft selling dimension 2 Authenticity & Transparency	112	3.00	5	4.33	0.65
Soft selling dimension 3 Relationship & Engagement	112	4.00	5	4.65	0.35
Trust among the users	112	2.83	5	4.23	0.66

Inference

The descriptive statistics show that respondents generally reported high levels across the three dimensions of soft selling and trust. Among the three dimensions, Soft-selling Dimension 3 recorded the highest mean score ($M = 4.65$, $SD = 0.34$) indicating that respondents had a relatively high level of agreement with the statements associated with this dimension. Soft-selling Dimension 2 also recorded a relatively high mean score ($M = 4.33$, $SD = 0.65$) followed by Soft-selling Dimension 1 ($M = 4.24$, $SD = 0.66$).

The mean score for trust was 4.23 ($SD = 0.66$), suggesting that the respondents generally expressed a high level of trust. The relatively small standard deviation for Soft-selling Dimension 3 ($SD = 0.34$) indicates that the responses were more closely concentrated around the mean, whereas the higher standard deviations for Dimensions 1 and 2 indicate somewhat greater variation in respondents' responses

Table 4: Frequency Of Purchases

Frequency of purchase	Frequency	Percentage
Rarely	14	12%
Occasionally	21	19%
Sometimes	21	19%
Frequently	44	39%
Very frequently	12	11%

Inference

The table shows majority of the respondents have the habit of Frequently purchasing products through YouTube live Sales.

Table:5 Correlation Between Soft selling, Trust, Frequency of Purchases

Variables	Pearson r	Sig.(2-tailed)	N
Soft selling and trust	0.877	<.001	112
Soft Selling and Purchase Frequency	0.780	<.001	112
Trust and Purchase Frequency	0.783	<.001	112

Inference

Since Pearson correlation findings indicates ($r = 0.877$, 0.783 , 0.780) which are higher than $P < 0.001$, hence positive relationship among the variables is supported.

Table:6 Simple Linear Regression of Soft Selling on Consumer Trust

Predictor	B	SE	β	t	P
Constant	-0.283	0.237	-	-1.196	.234
Soft Selling	1.036	0.054	0.878	19.194	<.001

Inference

Since, The Pearson correlation analysis indicates a strong positive relationship between soft selling and consumer trust ($r = .878$, $p < .001$, $N = 112$). This suggests that respondents who reported higher levels of soft selling also tended to report higher levels of consumer trust.

10. FINDINGS

The Cronbach's alpha explains the internal consistency reliability which has ($\alpha = 0.919$, 0.937) which indicates a high internal consistency of the factors.

The Pearson correlation analysis indicates a strong positive and statistically significant relationship between soft selling and trust ($r = 0.877$, $p < 0.001$). This suggests that higher levels of soft selling are associated with higher levels of consumer trust.

Similarly, soft selling has a strong positive and statistically significant relationship with purchase frequency ($r = 0.780$, $p < 0.001$). This indicates that respondents reporting higher levels of soft selling also tend to report higher purchase frequency.

Trust also shows a strong positive and statistically significant relationship with purchase frequency ($r = 0.783$, $p < 0.001$). Thus, higher trust scores are associated with higher purchase frequency

The major dimension of Soft Selling contributing to Trust is Relationship & Engagement with highest mean and lowest stranded deviation.

A simple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the influence of soft selling on consumer trust. The results indicate that the regression model was statistically significant, $F(1, 110) = 368.425$, $p < .001$. The model yielded an R value of $.878$ and an R^2 value of $.770$, with an adjusted R^2 of $.768$. This indicates that soft selling explains 77.0% of the variance in consumer trust.

The regression coefficient for soft selling was positive and statistically significant ($B = 1.036$, $\beta = .878$, $t = 19.194$, $p < .001$). This indicates a positive association between soft selling and consumer trust, such that higher soft-selling scores are associated with higher trust scores. Therefore, the proposed hypothesis that soft selling is significantly related to consumer trust is supported

11. SUGGESTIONS

1. Businesses can focus more on soft-selling approaches rather than using only direct promotional methods. Friendly communication and useful information may help create a better customer experience.
2. Building trust should be given importance. Customers are more likely to feel comfortable when the information provided by a business is clear, honest, and reliable.
3. Businesses can avoid making customers feel pressured to purchase. A more natural way of communicating with customers may help in developing a better relationship.
4. Since the respondents showed generally high scores for the soft-selling dimensions and trust, businesses can continue to improve these practices and maintain consistency in their communication.
5. Future studies can include a larger number of respondents and cover customers from different locations or types of businesses to get a broader understanding of soft selling and customer trust.

12. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that soft selling is an important approach in developing a positive relationship with customers. The descriptive findings show that the respondents had generally high perceptions of the three soft-selling dimensions and also reported a high level of trust. Based on the findings, businesses can give more attention to soft-selling practices when communicating with customers. Salespeople can focus on providing clear information, understanding customer needs, and avoiding excessive pressure during the selling process. Businesses should also maintain honesty and consistency in their communication, as these can help strengthen customer trust. This suggests that customer values more comfortable and less forceful approach to selling. Businesses can therefore give importance to clear communication, useful information, and genuine interaction while dealing with customers. Overall, the study provides a basic understanding of how soft-selling practices and customer trust are connected and can be useful for businesses looking to improve their customer relationships.

REFERENCE

1. Ilham Baihaqi, Salsabila Cahyarani, & Farida Nurfalah. (2025). Soft Selling Communications Strategies in Building Brand Awareness for “Sasa” on Raditya Dika’s YouTube Account Content. *Apollo: Journal of Tourism and Business*, 3(1), 346–355. <https://doi.org/10.58905/apollo.v3i1.444>
2. Chidley, A. (2021). The influence of YouTube: selling luxury cosmetics in the digital age. <https://doi.org/10.32920/ryerson.14661060.v1>
3. Anwar, L., Endin Mujahidin, & Syamsul Rizal Mz. (2023). PERENCANAAN KURIKULUM PENDIDIKAN ISLAM BERPOLA KURIKULUM MERDEKA DI SMK MUHAMMADIYAH KOTA BOGOR. *Al-Mubin*, 6(1), 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.51192/almubin.v6i01.436>
4. Herdiyani, S., Auliana, L., & Sukoco, I. (2022). The Role of Social Media in Developing a Business Journal of Communication Studies, 18(2), 103–121.
5. Mangiring, H., Simarmata, P., & Simarmata, PP (2023). The Influence of Video Influencers on Social Media on Body Care Product Purchasing Decisions among Indonesian Business Polytechnic Students Journal of Business and Innovation, 1(3).
6. Kapferer, J., & Bastien, V. (2009). The specificity of luxury management: Turn marketing upside down. *Journal of Brand Management*, 16(5-6), 311–322. doi:10.1057/bm.2008.51
7. Khelladi, I., & Castellano, S. (2016). Reputation, image, and social media as determinants of ereputation: The case of the digital natives and luxury brands. *International Journal of Technology and Human Interaction*, 12 (4), 1053–1076.
8. Chae, I., Stephen, A., Bart, Y., & Yao, D. (2017). Spillover effects in seeded word-of-mouth marketing campaigns. *Marketing Science*, 36 (1), 89–104
9. Yarrow, K., & O'Donnell, J. (2009). *Gen buY: How tweens, teens, and twenty-somethings are revolutionizing retail* (1st ed.). Joessey-Bass
10. Nurfalah F, Siswoyo M, Yani L. Strategi Komunikasi Yayasan Kampung Rotan Galmanthro Melalui Brand Image Kampung Wisata Rotan Galmanthro Desa Tegalwangi Kecamatan Weru Kabupaten Cirebon Dalam Meningkatkan Pengunjung. *J Signal [Internet]*. 2018;6(2):225–36. Available from: <https://www.academia.edu/download/74101799/808.pdf>
11. Choudhari, K. and Bhalla, V.K. (2015), “Video search engine optimization using keyword and feature analysis”, *Procedia Computer Science*, Vol. 58, pp. 691–697.

12. Gomez-Rodriguez, M., Gummadi, K. and Schoelkopf, B. (2014), “Quantifying information overload in social media and its impact on social contagions”, Eighth International AAAI Conference on Weblogs and Social Media, 1 June– 4 June, Michigan, MN, pp. 1-10.
13. Jaakkola, E. and Alexander, M. (2014), “The role of customer engagement behavior in value co creation: a service system perspective”, Journal of Service Research, Vol. 17 No. 3, pp. 247-261, doi: 10.1177/1094670514529187.
14. Gomez-Rodriguez, M., Gummadi, K. and Schoelkopf, B. (2014), “Quantifying information overload in social media and its impact on social contagions”, Eighth International AAAI Conference on Weblogs and Social Media, 1 June– 4 June, Michigan, MN, pp. 1-10.
15. Gomez-Rodriguez, M., Gummadi, K. and Schoelkopf, B. (2014), “Quantifying information overload in social media and its impact on social contagions”, Eighth International AAAI Conference on Weblogs and social media, 1 June– 4 June, Michigan, MN, pp. 1-10.