

# Empathizing the Effect of Mobile Coupon Promotions on Social Shopping Behaviour

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**Abstract:** The rise of e-commerce has led to a surge in sales promotions, with over 50% of consumers in 26 countries shopping from overseas retailers. This has prompted retailers to target a borderless market space, with India ranking third globally in e-service consumption. Promotions on social networking sites are driven by factors like self-confidence, social interaction, reciprocity, and perceived economic benefits. Positive reinforcement of m-coupon sharing behaviours may reinforce these behaviours. The study emphasizes the need for a better understanding of promotions and their impact on consumer evaluation of information sharing in social networking sites across food delivery services. A study using a positivist paradigm, cross-sectional approach, and convenience sampling found a strong correlation between social interaction and intention to share m-coupons. Factors like self-confidence, reciprocity, perceived economic benefits, and coupon proneness also play significant roles. The research suggests that e-retailers can use third-party reviews and deal popularity to improve their services. Understanding consumer psyche and past purchase behaviours is crucial for customizing promotions and increasing profitability. The study also highlights the origin of micro-influencers and the need for further research on user motivations in shaping these influencers.

**Keywords:** M-Coupons and S-Commerce; Social Networking Sites; Social Shopping; Mobile Coupon Promotions; Customizing Promotions; Increasing Profitability; Social Networking Sites; Social Interaction and Intention.

**Received on:** 19/08/2023, **Revised on:** 22/10/2023, **Accepted on:** 27/11/2023, **Published on:** 05/03/2024

**Journal Homepage:** <https://www.fmdbpub.com/user/journals/details/FTSHS>

**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.69888/FTSHS.2024.000151>

**Cite as:** V. Kadiresan, S. S. Hameed, and B. Subramaniam, "Empathizing the Effect of Mobile Coupon Promotions on Social Shopping Behaviour," *FMDB Transactions on Sustainable Humanities and Society*, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 30–38, 2024.

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## 1. Introduction

The dependency on sales promotions, particularly monetary ones, is often seen as a short-term repercussion of price competition caused by myopic management. Critics argue these promotions can erode market share and increase price sensitivity, destroying brand equity. Internet technology has influenced the industry, making e-commerce popular and advantageous. Retail e-commerce sales worldwide reached \$2.84 trillion in 2018 and are projected to grow to \$4.88 trillion in 2021.

The growth in online shopping has prompted retailers to target a borderless market space, with over 50% of consumers from 26 countries experiencing online shopping from an overseas retailer in the past six months. The services industry has also embraced e-commerce, with restaurants, travel services, and events becoming a significant portion of products/services bought

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online. India ranks third globally in e-service consumption, with revenue in the market amounting to \$10,444m in 2019 and expected to grow at a 10.4% CAGR (2019-2023). The Internet provides an attractive channel for service providers to boost their sales.

The dynamism in marketing strategy has led to the revision of all 4 Ps in marketing, with consumers bombarded with monetary and non-monetary promotions. Consumers evaluate promotion attractiveness based on external and internal factors, including online deal popularity and familiarity with the service provider. Price promotion is a complex marketing topic influencing companies' revenues, profits, and intangible assets such as brand equity and loyalty [14]. Research on promotions can be divided into seven broad areas: dynamic promotional effects, choice models for consumer purchase decisions, reference pricing effects of price promotion on consumers, coupon redemption and usage, equilibrium pricing strategies, retail promotions, and repeat purchase and loyalty.

Dynamic promotional effects investigate the long-term impact on key performance indicators like sales, profit, and market share. Choice models focus on brand choice models that simulate consumers' purchase decisions, while reference pricing affects consumer expectations of price promotions. Coupon promotion specifically investigates coupon usage, processing, and redemption rates. Equilibrium pricing strategies focus on national brands and store brands, while repeat purchase probability investigates how promotions affect purchase decisions while the promotion is on and when it is withdrawn.

Through the integration of viral marketing and coupons, social media platforms such as SNSs have transformed worldwide communication and word-of-mouth. Transform rates are high because customers trust information supplied by people they know. Mobile coupons, or m-coupons, are expected to be redeemed for \$91.2 billion in 2022, with a redemption rate over 10% greater than regular coupons. Retailers give shareable links to "seed" customers with the information so they can spread it further. Source credibility signals are enabled by SNSs, which remove user anonymity and promote social exchanges amongst known friends. With India being one of the biggest mobile device sales marketplaces and home to the cheapest Internet, this study aims to understand sales promotions in the e-commerce era better.

The gap identified was that prior literature had not discussed the motivations for sharing m-coupons among friends and peers. Previous research has been inconsistent, with some studies finding extrinsic motivation negatively impacts knowledge sharing while others find it positive. Tang et al. [13] highlight that m-coupon sharing involves extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, leading consumers to share information amongst peers. According to the findings of the study, coupon proneness refers to the increased propensity to respond to a purchase offer when the promotion is presented in the form of coupons.

The purpose of this study is to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors that influence the intention to share mobile coupons in the context of social commerce and coupon proneness. Coupon proneness refers to the increased propensity to respond to purchase offers that are presented in the form of coupons. Additionally, the research aims to investigate how the perceived value of coupons can also influence the consumers' intention to share coupons.

The study highlights the need to understand better promotions and their impact on consumer evaluation across different services. It also highlights the importance of consumer evaluation in devising promotional campaigns and policies and the role of social cues and e-WOM in determining successful e-service strategies. The findings are robust and help to understand whether the basic instinct to react to promotions is the same across different services.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. Online Shopping Promotions**

Digitization has led to mobile and convenience-seeking consumers seeking the best options at the most apt pricing. Firms have responded by making their offerings more attractive with monetary and non-monetary promotions in their communication strategies. Recently, promotions have evolved with changes in the dynamic marketing environment, such as the incorporation of gamification and Artificial intelligence. eBay's bidding and feedback system is an example of gamification in e-purchases, making buying items on eBay feel like a victory. On eBay, consumers feel they have "won" by beating other consumers bidding against them, sealing their victory. They also try to improve their seller percentage sale, get more stars, improve feedback scores, and constantly check back to see if they have new bids or competition.

Chandon et al. [11] influential paper characterizes these strategies with the concepts of Monetary promotions (MP) and Non-monetary promotions (NMP). MP is defined as promotions directly affecting the cost-benefit equation, while NMP does not provide the direct cost benefit. The most common method for influencing the purchasing decisions and brand choices of customers who make e-purchases is through the use of sales promotions. To gain an understanding of the psychological factors that contribute to the preference for one promotion method over another are essential. Numerous factors, including hedonic and

utilitarian purchasing of products and services, brand loyalty, brand equity, and long-term benefits, have been identified as predictors of preference for MP/NMP in the research that has been conducted up till now. In order to contribute to a better understanding of this phenomenon, the purpose of this study is to investigate the impact that social networking facilities and coupon proneness have in determining the attractiveness of promotions associated with online shopping. Even these online promotional activities enhance the consumer's ability to obtain orientation about their shopping from the e-marketers through social networking sites.

Shopping orientation is a multidimensional concept involving personal and market behaviour dimensions. Stone [5] studied it, focusing on women shoppers and classifying them into four categories: Economic, Personalizing, Ethical, and Apathetic. This work laid the groundwork for segmenting consumers based on their marketing orientations, enhancing the understanding of consumer behaviour. It reflects the complex nature of consumers shaped by prior experience, environment, psychological factors, demographics, and more. Studies have shown that the formulation of orientation takes time and evolves slowly, making findings related to shopping orientation effective for understanding a phenomenon.

During the 1950s-1970s, shopping orientation was used to categorize consumers into various groups, including gender, ethnicity, and age. Lichtenstein et al. [3] classified shoppers as dependent, individualistic, and compulsive, while Li et al. [10] classified shoppers based on 11 orientations. Zhao et al. [17] reduced this to two by dividing shoppers into Shopping Affect and Shopping Snob [12]. As consumers became more price-conscious and impulsive, e-commerce, m-commerce, and s-commerce have emerged, making shopping orientation a key subject for understanding consumer behaviours.

## **2.2. Sharing of Promotions (M-coupons) in SNS**

Mobile coupons have become a popular tool for m-commerce, with 84% of shoppers using them online due to their ease of use, green nature, and subscription capabilities. As mobile subscription bases have grown, this growth has made m-coupons relevant in emerging countries such as China, Brazil, India, etc. Through product trials, customer retention, and an appeal to take action, like using a coupon for a purchase, m-coupons encourage, motivate, and engage customers to buy a product. In addition to being able to be received, shared, and kept on any mobile device, they can disseminate messages through the use of text or images, audio or video URLs. Recently, the simplicity of redemption has drawn attention; m-coupon redemption rates are 10% compared to 1%.

Social media, such as social networking sites (SNSs), has created a new wave of global communication and is an excellent word-of-mouth tool. SNSs have high penetration among the target group, and marketers can effectively utilize and optimize their marketing cues through them. The new aspect of viral marketing could be revolutionized by combining these two phenomena. Social networking sites (SNSs) have accelerated viral marketing, using personal networks to sway consumers' buying decisions. Knowledge or information sharing can be broadly classified into intrinsic and extrinsic motivators. Previous research has explored this concept. Several elements, including self-improvement, innovativeness and opinion leadership, competence, self-efficacy, individuation, neuroticism, and altruism, are identified in the literature on why consumers talk on online platforms.

Wiedmann et al. [9] conducted a significant study on the motivations behind eWOM communication, and they found five main categories: focus-related utility (supporting the company, gaining social benefits, caring about other customers, and exercising power); consumption utility (seeking guidance after a purchase); approval utility (benefiting oneself and the economy); moderator-related utility (supporting problem-solving and convenience); and homeostasis utility (expressing positive emotions and venting negative feelings). In order to investigate the causes and effects of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) in the context of music-related communication, Sun et al. [19] also put forth an integrated model.

Tong et al. [15] investigated the costs (cognitive and execution costs) and advantages (benefits such as self-improvement, economic reward, and satisfaction from assisting other customers and influencing the business) that a customer may anticipate. Another intriguing component of reciprocity was introduced by Cheung and Lee [2] and Tang et al. [13]. It is the advantage that a user anticipates receiving in return as a potential outcome of providing information. From the literature support, this study takes the two categories of motivators: Internal and external. Internal factors will include social interaction and a sense of self-confidence, while the external factors include reciprocity and economic benefits.

## **2.3. Internal and External Motivations for M-coupon Sharing**

The prior pieces of literature on external and internal factors in social media marketing have explored numerous variables, which include self-esteem, self-construal, digital innovativeness, web usage, attitude towards mobile advertising, knowledge sharing on SNS, review from consumers, economic incentives, empathy with others, the effect of gamification and social

sharing of online business content. In 2012, Lee and Cheung [2] included one new variable, reciprocity, which means the expected reward to the user obtained in the return value of information sharing.

Motivation plays a crucial role in shaping consumer behaviours and attitudes, with motivations categorized into three broad categories: motivation, Extrinsic, and Intrinsic. Instrumental values drive extrinsic motivation and are further subcategorized into external regulation, injection, identification, and integration. Intrinsic motivation is driven by intrinsic interest and enjoyment, while instrumental values drive extrinsic motivation.

The self-determination theory, proposed by Deci and Ryan, categorizes human motivation into three states: state of motivation, state of extrinsic motivation, and state of intrinsic motivation. Extrinsic motivation is characterized by external regulation, injection, identification, and integration with an internal locus of control. Intrinsic motivators interest the user and drive a sense of enjoyment and inherent satisfaction.

Internal motivation is influenced by conditions that are found within an individual, such as economic incentive and reciprocity. The attitude that people have toward m-coupons is positively influenced by reciprocity. For example, a sense of self-worth and the desire to interact with other people are examples of intrinsic motivators. The satisfaction and inner happiness that a consumer experiences as a result of sharing mobile coupons on social networking sites is what constitutes a sense of self-worth. This satisfaction motivates individuals to become more proficient in sharing information that is helpful to others and to assist others in their day-to-day lives.

## **2.4. M-coupon sharing intention in SNS**

### **2.4.1. sense of self-confidence**

In SNS, the users are motivated to share their valued information with peers and friends. These motivations have been derived from the desire to be an altruist and boost the users' self-esteem among their peers. Consumer participation in information sharing has been positively influenced by the user's selfless behaviour, which has been a good influence. Consequently, the m-coupon gets distributed to other prospective customers who may utilize it and/or spread the word about it, making it viral. The most likely people to distribute the m-coupon are those who view it as a helpful gesture that benefits other members [2]. Self-competence, or the belief in one's skill and capacity to assist others, directly influences one's sense of self-worth and positively affects one's behaviours while sharing knowledge on social networking sites (SNSs). People depend on SNSs to increase their feelings of self-worth [18].

### **2.4.2. Social interaction**

Social interaction is developing, preserving, and cultivating connections with linked users on social networking sites especially virtual networks. The Uses and Gratification (U&G) theory, which describes how social and psychological requirements build preferences for social media, is the foundation of this socializing urge. A key component of the U&G paradigm is socializing, which encourages people to share information on social networking sites (SNSs). Users may maintain and develop social engagement on SNSs through various options, including sharing, liking, commenting, publishing, and reviewing.

On SNSs, information sharing starts discussions and encourages member interaction, which keeps the network lively [8]. Users are more inclined to contribute current and pertinent information, like m-coupons, when they feel at ease in the community. Furthermore, people are more inclined to distribute m-coupons if they feel a sense of community inside a group where they participate and share information [16]. Social interaction encourages users to exchange news, information, and expertise, which makes it an essential component of social interaction on social networking sites.

### **2.4.3. Reciprocity**

Reciprocity is the act of an individual reverting another to them as a favour, not a legally binding action like economic transaction behaviour. It is purely extrinsic and is not to be confused with altruism, which is driven by response in return. Reciprocity affects information sharing, as it is intentional and autonomous. Users on social networking sites (SNSs) feel like debtors and creditors, seeking prospects for relevant m-coupons.

Users' sharing behaviour and their propensity to share have been shown to be influenced by reciprocal behaviour. There is a possibility that engaging in m-coupon sharing behaviour can be favourably reinforced through positive reinforcement. Knowledge sharing is reciprocated by highly engaged users on social networking sites, according to Zhao et al. [17]. Despite the fact that the majority of research indicates that reciprocity and information sharing have a positive affect on consumer intention to share, there are some studies that demonstrate that people experience anxiety around reciprocity. Consumers'

intentions to contribute on social networking sites are positively influenced by reciprocity and the sharing of knowledge as individuals.

#### 2.4.4. Perceived Economic Benefits

In the context of social networking sites (SNSs), in particular, Social Exchange Theory (SET) offers a helpful paradigm for comprehending viral message decision processes. The idea explains behaviour motivated by things, money, social amenities, or friendships, among other external considerations [6]. Despite the unusual results on the connection between financial reward and knowledge sharing, most research has been done in an organizational setting.

M-coupons have increased people’s desire to share information since they provide financial incentives. Rewards for referrals in cash or credits can motivate users to engage with SNSs more often. However, the relationship that results from sharing information depends on the kind of information employed; explicit knowledge has a positive impact, while tacit knowledge has a negative one.

#### 2.4.5. Coupon proneness

According to Khajehzadeh [14], “coupon proneness” describes a respondent’s inclination toward promotional offers. According to studies by Liu et al. [4] and Bawa et al. [7], those more prone to coupons are also more inclined to use M-coupon apps. According to Tang et al. [13], consumers inclined to use coupons see their value and share them to boost their sense of worth. These people believe that giving their m-coupons will help others and benefit them financially. This selfless method produces intense satisfaction, which improves the sharing of coupons. These works of literature support the following hypotheses, and a conceptual model has been framed.

- H1- Sense of self-confidence impacts the intention to share m-coupons.
- H2- Social Interaction has an impact on the intention to share m-coupons.
- H3- Reciprocity has an impact on the intention to share m-coupons.
- H4- Perceived Economic benefits impact the intention to share m-coupons.
- H5 – Coupon proneness has an impact on the intention to share m-coupons.

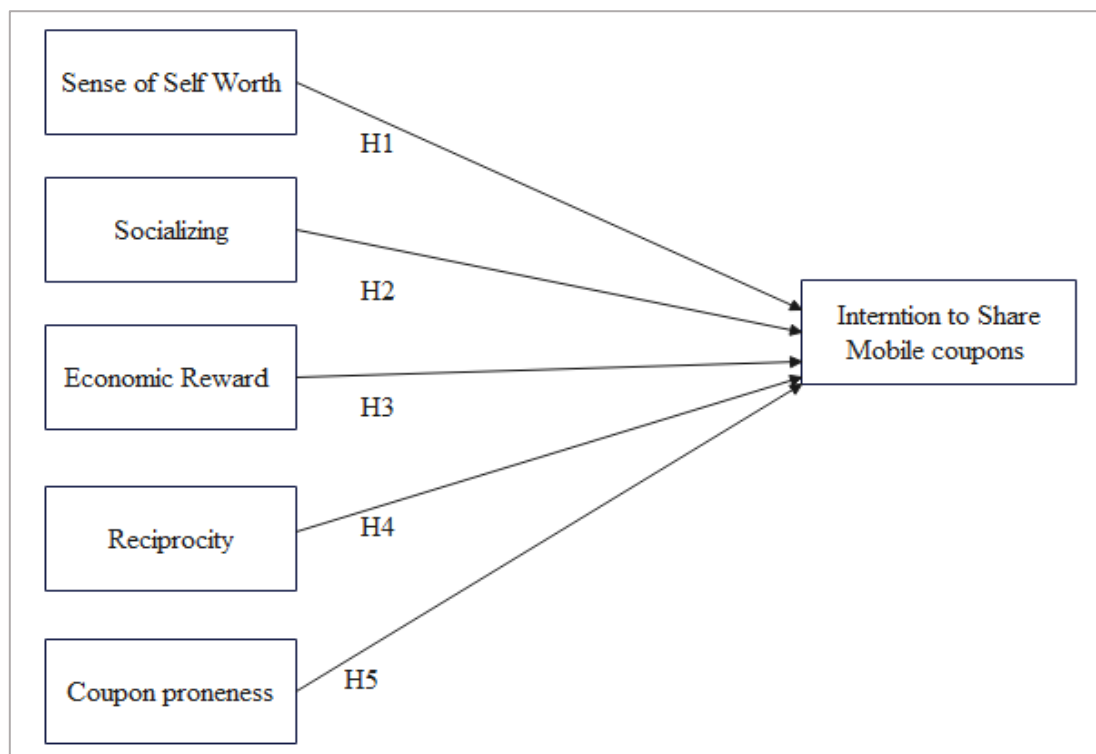


Figure 1: Proposed conceptual model

### 3. Methodology

The quantitative research approach that has been selected covers the positivist paradigm, cross-sectional approach, and survey technique. This positivist paradigm-based study aims to demonstrate a causal relationship between the changes in the dependent variables and the independent factors. The researcher employed a deductive approach because a conceptual model (Figure 1) had been created, and the hypotheses had been tested. However, because data for this study were only collected once, it would always be cross-sectional.

Convenience sampling was used to generate an online survey of the people in the community who use third-party apps to order food and social media. Data collection from respondents proved rather challenging based on the sample frame. Convenience sampling was, therefore, the most efficient method in terms of time for this study to find potential participants. The available respondents were invited to complete the survey through an online platform, and over one month passed throughout the survey. A total of 375 people anonymously completed the survey. But only 334 answers are valid responses. So, 334 has been taken for further data analysis.

The six variables' scales were adapted from the following prior pieces of literature: the sense of self-confidence, Social interaction [8], perceived Economic benefit [6] and reciprocity [2], Coupon proneness, and intention to share coupons [1]. This study pursued established guidelines in the prior researcher's work. Each item was measured using a five-point Likert Scale, anchored from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Structural equation modelling has been conducted to test the hypotheses.

### 4. Results

The researcher used SEM to examine the relationships between the intention to share m-coupons and internal and external motivational factors. The analysis examined the relationships between exposure, result, and path coefficient.

**Table 1:** Constructs Reliability and Validity

Constructs	Cronbach's Alpha (CA)	Composite Reliability (Rho_A) (CR)
Sense of Self- confidence	0.792	0.737
Social Interaction	0.817	0.805
Reciprocity	0.892	0.958
Perceived Economic benefits	0.781	0.793
Coupon proneness	0.853	0.855
Intention to share m-coupons	0.746	0.752

Both the construct validity and reliability of the study were evaluated in order to determine how effective the measuring strategy was. Cronbach's alpha (CA) and composite reliability (CR) were utilised in order to evaluate the dependability of the construct validity and reliability. According to the findings of Zhao et al. [17], the Cronbach's alpha test produces results that range from 0 to 1, with a value larger than 0.7 indicating that there is a high degree of internal consistency. Intermediate consistency is between 0.5 and 0.7. The tested items are dependable enough to warrant this research, as all Cronbach's alpha values in Table 2 are greater than 0.5. All constructs, including the sense of self-confidence (CR = 0.792, CA = 0.737), social interaction (CA = 0.817, CR = 0.805), reciprocity (CA = 0.892, CR = 0.958), economic benefits (CA = 0.781, CR = 0.793), coupon proneness (CA= 0.853, CR= 855), and intention to share m-coupons (CA=0.746, CR= 752), are above the acceptable level, as shown in Table 1. So, the constructs generally show acceptable internal consistency.

**Table 2:** Convergent validity

Constructs	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Sense of Self- confidence	0.436
Social Interaction	0.565
Reciprocity	0.566
Perceived Economic benefits	0.649
Coupon proneness	0.77
Intention to share m-coupons	0.664

The study examines the convergent validity of research using factor analysis, focusing on the reliability of questionnaire responses. To demonstrate convergent validity, each item loading must be at least 0.5 and relevant, with a correlated p-value equal to or less than 0.05. Additionally, each latent construct's AVE must be at least 0.5. Table 2 displays AVE values for factors, with a higher value than 0.5 considered more effective. Although the sense of self-confidence has not yet reached the AVE value of 0.5, these figures are considered reliable indicators of findings.

**Table 3: Discriminant Validity**

<b>Constructs</b>	<b>SSC</b>	<b>SI</b>	<b>RE</b>	<b>EB</b>	<b>CP</b>	<b>ISM</b>
Sense of Self- confidence						
Social Interaction	0.849					
Reciprocity	0.952	0.943				
Perceived Economic benefits	0.77	0.806	0.802			
Coupon proneness	0.765	0.86	0.882	0.771		
Intention to share m-coupons	0.522	0.91	0.677	0.625	0.742	

The researcher assessed the discriminant validity of a study's latent constructs, Li et al. [10] finding that HTMT ratios are most effective when values are below 0.85 and 0.90. Table 3 shows the correction values among the constructs used in this study. Reciprocity is highly correlated with social interaction (0.943) and sense of self-confidence (0.952), and these constructs have a lower level of discriminant validity. Sense of self-confidence has weaker corrections with other constructs, especially intending to share m-coupons (0.522), which these constructs have a high level of discriminant validity.

**Table 4: Path co-efficient**

<b>Constructs Relationship</b>	<b>Path Coefficients</b>
Sense of self-confidence-> Intention to share m-coupon	0.86
Social interaction-> Intention to share m-coupon	0.92
Reciprocity-> Intention to share m-coupon	0.902
Perceived Economic benefits-> Intention to share m-coupon	0.658
Coupon proneness-> Intention to share m-coupon	0.742

With path coefficients of =0.92, table 4 illustrates the statistically significant relationship between social interaction and intention to share m-coupon. The results show that if the application users have high social interaction, it will increase the intention to share m-coupon in their behaviour. H2 is therefore supported. The results demonstrate that the other four factors to share m-coupon purpose have a statistically significant impact with a path coefficient above 0.65, which is the sense of self-confidence (0.86), reciprocity (0.902), perceived economic benefits (0.658) and Coupon proneness (0.742). The results show that intention to share m-coupons will improve when users have a sense of self-confidence and reciprocity with their peers, and users perceive economic benefits as return and coupon proneness. H1, H3, H4, and H5 are therefore supported.

## 5. Discussion

Extrinsic and intrinsic signals have a substantial impact on customers who are particularly focused on promotion, whereas consumers who are more concerned with prevention are affected by these cues approximately half of the time. When it comes to posting mobile coupons on social networking sites, a user's sense of self-worth is a crucial component. This is because users who have a strong sense of self-worth are characterised by high levels of competency, autonomy, and relatedness. As a result of their perception of themselves as resourceful persons who share information as a means of boosting their self-image, they experience a sense of satisfaction in making information available.

Individuals who are more likely to use coupons are more likely to exhibit this behaviour. The findings of this study provide credence to the work that Deci and Ryan have done on the subject of intrinsic motivation and bolster the hypothesis of self-determination as a significant explanation for observed behaviour. Another powerful intrinsic incentive is social interaction, which is heavily related with socialising. People aim to stay in touch with one another by exchanging commercial information on social networking sites, therefore social interaction contributes to the socialisation process. Initiating conversations on the user experience with regard to the utilisation of mobile coupons and maintaining relationships with friends and peer groups are both facilitated by this.

Users who are more likely to utilise coupons are more likely to engage in social contact, which explains why users who are more likely to use coupons have a greater capacity for socialising and sharing information with other members of the community. There is support for the theory of intrinsic motivation, the theory of literature's uses, and the theory of pleasure. It would appear that the perceived economic rewards are not the primary motivating factor behind the act of sharing information with other users, as was widely anticipated. Given that the perceived economic gain has the lowest co-efficient score when compared to a sense of self-confidence, reciprocity, social interaction, and coupon proneness, it is possible that receivers may view the sender who is being incentivized as a source that is not reputable.

Both extrinsic and intrinsic cues influence the promotion focus consumer. Understanding these factors can help inform strategies for promoting and preventing m-coupon sharing on social networking sites. This research highlights the importance of extrinsic cues in consumer shopping orientation, particularly in e-food services, due to their intangibility. Promotion-oriented consumers prefer extrinsic cues, which are crucial for making purchase decisions. E-service providers can leverage third-party reviews and deal popularity to improve their services. By asking consumers to provide feedback, they can filter out the best deals and spread word of mouth about them. E-service providers can take constructive feedback and improve their services.

The study provides structural and practical suggestions for designing promotions in e-commerce that resonate with consumers. By understanding key factors affecting consumer decision-making, e-retailers can customize promotional strategies for e-commerce, which is a key differentiation against traditional purchase processes. This can minimize reliance on price wars, leading to scarred profits. The findings can change the way e-retailers and consumers perceive promotions in e-buying.

## 6. Conclusion

India's social networking sites have a large user base, projected to be 447.9 million by 2023. The propagation of M-coupons relies on connecting and reciprocating others. The purpose of this study is to investigate the elements that influence the sharing of mobile coupons and to recommend techniques that would help providers enhance coupon redemption. Identifying group members who have spread M-coupons, developing viral marketing methods, encouraging exchange, and utilising location-based coupon sharing are all things that social networking sites need to look into. Understanding consumer psyche and past purchase behaviour can help e-commerce firms customize promotions and increase profitability. The study also explores consumer perception towards mobile coupon promotion, focusing on internal and external factors. It highlights the importance of understanding how users' perceptions affect e-services purchases, boosting hedonic shopping intention, and influencing non-monetary promotion consumption. The study also examines extrinsic and intrinsic cues in understanding consumer purchase behaviour, emphasizing self-confidence, social interactions, reciprocity, and economic benefits in motivating consumers to share coupons. Micro-influencers' origin has also been discovered, with further research focusing on how users' motivations can help form these influencers. Other than coupons, more promotional strategies are used to get user attention to the products. So, these ideas have to be taken for further research.

**Acknowledgement:** I am grateful to my co-authors for their experience and effort, which enhances this work. I'm grateful to my pals for their consistent support and encouragement during study.

**Data Availability Statement:** The corresponding author can provide study data upon request.

**Funding Statement:** No funding was used to write this manuscript and research paper.

**Conflicts of Interest Statement:** Authors declare no conflicts of interest. From the material used, all citations and references are appropriate for this new addition by the writers.

**Ethics and Consent Statement:** No conflicts of interest for the authors. The writers' new work is properly cited and referenced.

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