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HOW USES AND GRATIFICATIONS OF SOCIAL MEDIA IMPACT ON INFORMAL ONLINE SHOPPING IN HOCHIMINH CITY

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Informal online shopping has become an emerging social phenomenon for many Vietnamese people. Similar to online shopping, informal online shopping functions as a Business-to-Consumer selling platform. Understanding the benefits and gratifications that social media shopping could bring to our lives, online individual sellers promote their products on their personal page to attract and entice many potential online shoppers. These online individual sellers are considered as spontaneous sellers without business licences and business registration certificates.

To assess opinions, attitudes, behaviours, and other defined variables across a substantial sample, quantitative research methodology was employed. This investigation endeavours to discern the motivations driving Vietnamese individuals residing in Ho Chi Minh City to engage in informal online shopping. The research findings illuminate a pronounced interest among this demographic in informal online shopping, a proclivity attributed to the myriad benefits it affords, encompassing time efficiency, convenience, product diversity, favourable deals, and discounts. These discerned preferences align with the principles of the Uses and Gratifications Theory. Moreover, the affable experience derived from informal online shopping prompts Vietnamese consumers to manifest purchase intentions and sustained commitment to this mode of commerce.

Keywords: Informal online shopping, social media shopping, uses and gratifications, purchase intentions and continuation intentions.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

SNS or SNSs   Social network site/ Social network sites

SM   Social media

U&G   Uses and gratifications

FB   Facebook

IOS   Informal online shopping

COD   Cash payment method

B2B   Business-to-Business

B2C   Business-to-Consumer

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Due to the evolution of Web 2.0, social media (SM) usage has become an indispensable part of our daily lives. The use of SM is one of the swiftest growing trends including web-based platforms sites, virtual game worlds, and virtual communities (Lin, Le and Cheng 2012, 196). According to Poushter, Bishop and Chwe (2018), the share of Internet users or smartphone owners continues to increase rapidly in the developing world and remains high in developed countries. In addition, SM usage has surged in emerging markets. A survey showed that approximately four-in-ten adults across the emerging nations employed social networking sites in 2015-16; this ratio went up to 53% in 2017. The survey also presented that 18-36 year-old people tend to use the internet more often than older generations. Similarly, people with more education are inclined to use the internet more than less-educated adults (Poushter, Bishop and Chwe 2018).

With global technological developments, Vietnam, which has over 29 million smartphone users and 47 million Internet users, is among the nations with the largest online connections. Furthermore, instead of utilising tools such as Google AdWords, 70 % of Vietnamese individual retailers post their own advertisements on their Facebook (FB) pages. In fact, SM, which is used by 47% of total domestic businesses, has outperformed search engines with 41% to become the most preferred online tools of advertisement due to its economical and effective characteristics. The mentioned domestic businesses comprise large corporations, small and medium enterprises and individual sellers. Therefore, social network marketing has been rising at a speedy pace and is now considered as a reliable and powerful tool. To demonstrate this, 46% of Vietnamese businesses reported reaching their targeted market successfully in comparison to 40% on search engines (Vietnam News 2017).

By 2020, Vietnam desires that 50% of SM users will employ domestic social networks The Vietnamese social network site (SNS), called Zalo, has over 100 million users; followed by Mocha and VCCorp but the two are striving to match the functions of Google, YouTube,

and FB (Reuters 2018). Along with the growth of SM usage in Vietnam, many serious problems, which affect consumers buying products through online individual sellers, have also increased. To be more specific, OIS or so-called spontaneous sellers are defined as those who sell their products on their SM channels without a business registration certificate and business licence. For this reason, it is truly difficult to find and accuse the sellers if they sell poor quality products that affect consumers' health or commit fraudulent activities.

There is an increase from 53% in 2014 to 68% in 2015 in shopping via forums or SM, which is reported by the Department of E-Commerce and Information Technology. In addition, it is not easy to control price, quality, safety, and especially, transaction process because trading activities on social networks are done by mostly small businesses and transactions are purely personal. Recently, many scams, which happened on SM, have been investigated by the police. In one case, a scam was discovered and reported a total loss of 400 million vnd, equivalent to 15,180.80 euro with more than 50 victims. Despite the fact that a lot of health and financial issues have occurred by buying from online individual sellers, such online sales through SM platforms continue to grow (ANTV 2016).

A report of habits of use of Vietnamese social networking conducted by Vinaresearch (2018) shows that 95.8% of participants have informal online shopping (IOS) experience; 31.2% of these have shopped regularly on SM. The report also indicates that women shopped on SM more often than men. Fashion items such as clothes and accessories or jewellery are the most purchased products on FB and Zalo. Cash payment method (COD) is Vietnamese's most preferred method, which accounts for 93.3%. However, men prefer e-wallet payment methods more than women and women prefer COD more than men (Vinaresearch 2018).

This study aims at exploring the reasons why Vietnamese want to buy products from online individual sellers and examining the impacts of buying on SM. To achieve the study goals, the author will also indicate the most common SM platforms that trading activities occur in, a list of products provided on those platforms, and how transactions are made.

1.2. Definitions

1.2.1. Online shopping

To detect the major difference between online shopping and IOS, a definition of online shopping is provided. According to Parker-Hall (2009), online shopping is defined as the process in which a purchase of a service or product is made by a customer on the internet. With this new way of purchasing, it is a lot more comfortable for a consumer to shop online. In 1979, the concept of purchasing from another channel without actually going to a shop, for example a domestic television or Videotext first shown before the World Wide Web (WWW) was in use with real time transaction processed from a domestic television (Parker-Hall 2009). Michael Aldrich (2011) is a pioneer in inventing online shopping. In 1979 he used a telephone line to connect a modified domestic television with a real-time multi-user transaction processing computer.

From 1980 onwards, this invention was marketed and sold to mainly Business-to-Business (B2B) systems such as holiday travel, vehicle and spares sales, loan finance, and credit ratings in many countries, especially in the UK, Ireland and Spain. In addition, the two Business-to-Consumer (B2C) projects, which use the Aldrich system, are Gateshead SIS with Tesco and Bradford Centrepoint with Wm. Morrison was introduced in the 1980s. Both projects were social service experiments and proved the concept of online grocery sales and home delivery by employing supermarkets rather than warehouses for order fulfilment. From the beginning, B2B online shopping was economically feasible but then, B2C online shopping was financially workable since the widespread usage of PCs and the Internet invented by Tim Berners-Lee in the 1990s. In 1992, the world's first online bookstore was opened by Charles Stack; in 1994, Amazon was initiated by Jeff Bezos, SSL encryption that enables online data transfer secure, was launched by NETSCAPE, online banking also started, and an online pizza shop was established by Pizza Hut. Moreover, Tesco invested in a full online shopping service and eBay was public in 1996 (Michael Aldrich 2011).

1.2.2. Informal online shopping

There are no specific and official definitions of IOS found on the internet. That is why online shopping was introduced to be able to provide the relative concept of IOS. Similar to online shopping aforementioned, IOS functions as a Business-to-Consumer selling platform. However, in IOS, a business party is considered as a spontaneous individual seller who sells products via his or her own SM channels without a business registration certificate and business licences.

Dat Nguyen (2018) indicates that consumers buy almost everything from informal online family-run businesses from groceries and homemade products, to clothes, cosmetics, and household items. Vietnamese SM users usually shop on platforms like FB, Instagram and a domestic social networking site called Zalo. In addition, FB is preferred to local e-commerce sites because the needed information can be directly inquired from sellers. Fresh or processed food can be ordered on FB and the payment is made by cash on delivery or money transfer via individual bank account. Vietnamese experts claim that social networks in Vietnam, especially FB, with newsfeed algorithms designed to grab user's attention and boost engagement have satisfied an enormous number of followers; these platforms have been seen as the perfect market place. Some of those who sell their items on FB want to earn some extra income on top of their day jobs, and some take FB seriously to build their entire business for making their living. In 2017, the Vietnam Online Business Forum estimated that there were approximately 50 young Vietnamese from 19 to 20 year-olds, who have their business on SM, have become dollar millionaires. It is estimated that there are at least 27,000 Facebook accounts which are used as a retail platform in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City. However, local authorities have not yet reckoned how to receive taxes from these shops (Nguyen 2018)

1.3. Research problem and purpose

This study considers IOS through SM as a new future shopping channel in comparatively many countries in Asia and a platform where consumers can see others' 'honest' reviews of a product. Thus, the purpose of this research is to examine the phenomenon of using SM and

the influences of U&G of SM on informal online shopping. The major research questions are '**Why do Vietnamese people want to buy products from online individual sellers?'** To achieve the study goals, the author will also show the most common SM platforms that trade activities, products bought on those platforms, and transaction methods. Moreover, Vietnamese people who are studied in this research are those who have experienced IOS in Vietnam no matter in which country they currently live.

1.4. Relevance of research

Despite the fact that IOS through SM has become increasingly popular, there are not many studies about this new way of shopping. It still remains an open field for research, especially the field of media education. More research is needed to update with this new type of media.

SM, which is created by the ideological and technical foundations of Web 2.0, is specified as a group of internet-based applications. It enables users to create, exchange and generate content (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010, p. 61). SM usage pertains to uses and gratifications theory which plays an important role in media literacy in general and in media education in particular. Due to the origins of uses and gratifications theory in the communications literature, the theory is linked to SM. It is considered as a communication mechanism enabling users to communicate with other people all over the world (Williams et al. 2012, 130). Moreover, uses and gratifications theory, which is an audience-centred approach, explains why and how users passionately search for particular media to fulfil specific needs, the impacts of media on people and what people do with media (Vinney 2022). The characteristics of this theory match the goal of the author's study which concerns the impacts of online shopping through SM in Vietnam.

According to Whiting and Williams (2013), there are seven reasons that make SM users become active online are social interaction, information seeking, entertainment, relaxation, pass time, convenience utility, and communicatory utility (Whiting and Williams 2013). However, how many reasons are there among the mentioned reasons that motivate Vietnamese people to shop via SM? This is a question that the author wants to investigate.

In addition, the popular purchased products, common SM platforms, and types of transaction process are studied.

2. Theoretical framework

Social media has plenty of various platforms for users to choose such as FB, Instagram, YouTube, and etc. Due to the diversity and many useful features of social networks, users also have different needs. It is reminiscent of the characteristics of user needs in U&G theory, for example, information seeking, sharing, entertainment and convenience as shown in figure 1.
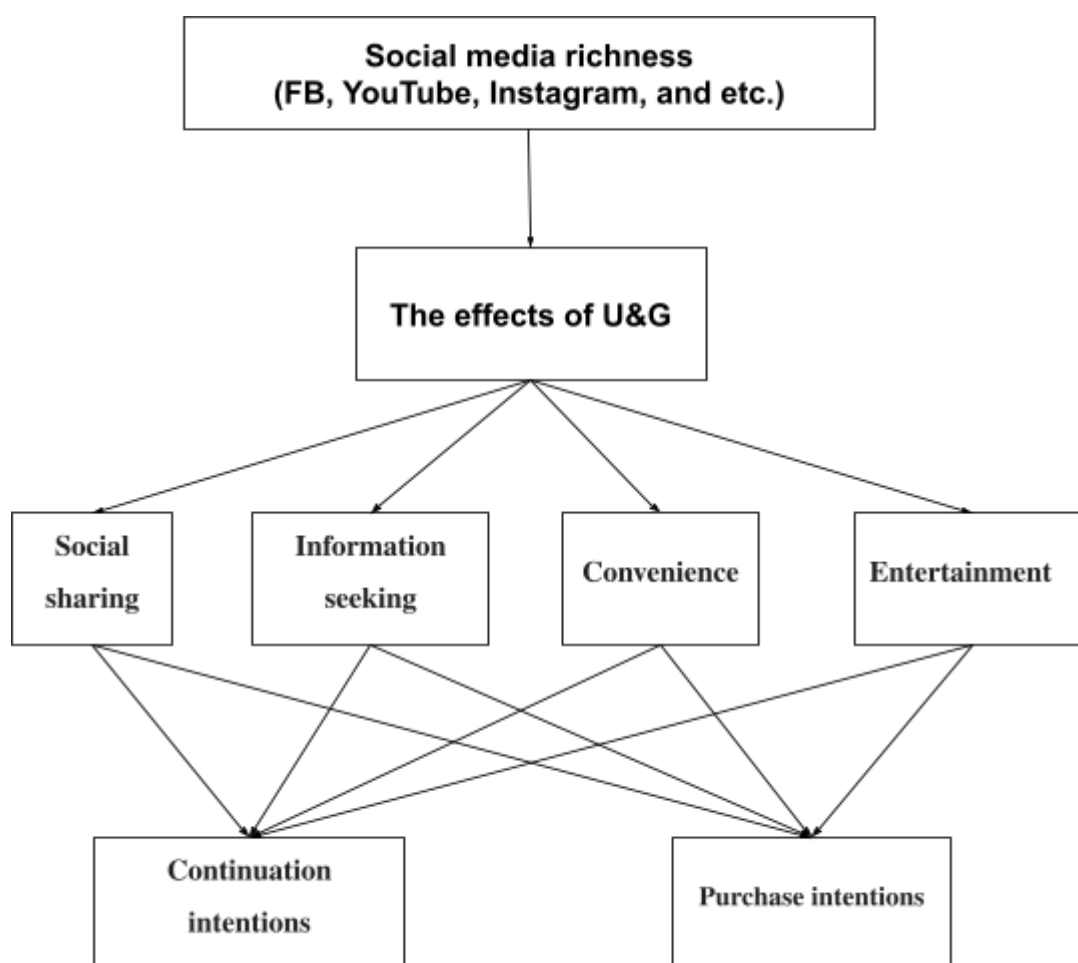

Figure 1. Research framework based on U&G theory

2.1 Theory of uses and gratifications

Elihu Katz and Jay Blumler are the developers of the uses and gratifications theory. They search for explanations of the relationship between an audience and his or her usage of the media. The question arises why media consumers choose certain media platforms and what

gratifications they gain from it. When U&G theory is applied correctly, it will establish successful communications and enable researchers to gain an understanding of the reason for specific decisions made by media users (Turney 2016). These features of U&G theory help the author to achieve the aims of this study which is to comprehend why Vietnamese want to buy products from online individual sellers, and to examine the impacts of buying on SM. Turney (2016) claims that the audiences described in U&G theory usually choose media actively to satisfy their own needs. They employ media for a range of different reasons, consisting of learning, entertainment, escapism and so on (Turney 2016).

Moreover, U&G theory shows the link between uses and gratifications and a set of human needs, especially communication needs including understanding, orientation, passing or storing knowledge. However, not all media platforms will satisfy those needs; and with some level of certainty, gratification can be predicted if needs can be defined and served by particular media characteristics. It is a directive link between satisfaction and media characteristics. By the context of usage, there is a sequence of effects: needs lead to media, which results in gratification. Theory of uses and gratification includes two levels including complexity and abstraction. U&G can be considered as a puzzle with the perplexing complexity of the pieces; on the other hand, it can also be seen as a huge picture which provides pieces for researchers to combine with their visualisation and needs (Matei 2010). The concept of uses and gratifications, the media, and its audience began to be researched in the 1940'; however, it has developed in recent years since communications outlook has expanded (Turney 2016).

Perse and Rubin (1988, cited from Ruggiero 2000, 8) propose that to have a multidimensional view of audience activity, media use should be focused rather than media exposure. Additionally, Rubin (1994a, cited from Ruggiero 2000, 9) debated that U&G researchers should clarify the intricacy of the media progress from classification of media motivation and uncomplicated exposure explication of effects to conceptual models. Ruggiero (2000) claims that U&G theory certainly offers an advanced theoretical approach in the fundamental phases of every new method of mass communications such as television, radio, newspapers, and now the Internet. Besides, demassification, hypertextuality,

interactivity and asynchronicity must be included in contemporary and future models. In a more comprehensive methodology, researchers should also explore qualitative and interpersonal features of mediated communication (Ruggiero 2000). However, the ultimate strength of U&G theory is that it paves the way for researchers to explore mediated communication situations by various sets of psychological motives, needs or gratifications, communication content or channels within a cross-cultural or specific context (Lin 1996, cited from Ruggiero 2000, 14). Internet forums including electronic bulletin boards have satisfied many expectations of interpersonal and communication; thus, the Internet has become a new dominion of human activity and a new dominion for U&G researchers (James et al. 1995, cited from Ruggiero 2000, 14).

Kiesler (1997, cited from Ruggiero 2000, 28) claims that networks provide users not only a 24-hour information retrieval and asynchronous or synchronous interactions but also exchange within individuals and groups (Kiesler 1997, cited from Ruggiero 2000, 28). It is effortlessly traceable for communication on the Internet and it is always ready for content to be visible, copied, and recorded. (Newhagen & Rafaeli, 1996, cited from Ruggiero 2000, 28). U&G theory is found successful to apply in many different research for perceiving consumers' concerns and motivations: why media consumers use different media like TV, radio and electronic bulletins (Eighmey & McCord, 1998, cited from Ruggiero 2000, 23). Depending on how much media users rely on mass media, this will affect their motivation to employ media (Galloway and Meek 1981, cited from Ruggiero 2000, 10).

U&G theory offers a theoretical framework to research motivations for employing media (Blumler, Katz, & Gurevitch, 1974, cited from Ruggiero 2000, 4). Media consumers' expectations for media gratifications are keenly connected to technological capabilities of media (Sundar & Limperos, 2013, 506). U&G theory's central assumption is media users' awareness of their needs and these needs drive them to choose media for need gratification. It is shown in this process: media users have the psychological and social origins of needs that create expectations of the mass media or other sources, leading to various forms of media exposure and resulting in need gratifications. (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1973, cited from Ruggiero, 4). Thus, U&G theory forms a concept of media usage as a method of

fulfilling individual needs (Rui and Stefanone 2016, 8). Initially, the theory was evolved in research on the efficacy of the radio in the 1940s. It concentrates mainly on the explanations for media users' related behaviours and motivations. Since computer-mediated communication appears, it has made uses and gratifications theory become crucial (Ruggiero, 2000).

Findings from the television studies of U&G have already been used in Internet research (Kaye and Johnson 2002, 11). By making the difference between gratifications sought and gratifications obtained when they developed the notion of gratifications, scholars reinforce society's understanding of the U&G theory (Kink & Hess, 2008, 18). Media users' gratifications are acquired by actual experience of using a particular medium. Gratifications sought (also considered as motives or needs), on the contrary, regard to those gratifications that media users expect to receive from a medium prior to coming into contact with it. Research indicates that if the gratifications sought are met or exceeded by a media user, regular usage will happen (Palmgreen & Rayburn, 1979, cited from Ruggiero, 6). Researchers suggest that it is important to comprehend the gap between these two sorts of gratifications in order to analyze how different media consumers employ various types of media, the gratifications they acquire from a variety of media products, and the expectations that they have when using their media. Media consumers are considered as goal-oriented with a set of logical reasons for their usage of a diversity of media (Brandtzæg & Heim, 2009, 145). McQuail (1983, cited from Ruggiero, 4) suggested the notion of "user taste" when investigating media options. This means that media consumers select the media according to personal motivations and preferences. Fahr and Boecking (2005) shows that if individuals have negative feelings, for example, anxiety, boredom, and loss, they are more likely to change a program.

Rubin (2002, 526) highlights that six major elements of U&G theory focus on motivations comparison through media forms, the connection between behaviours and the media-use motives with media attitudes, link evaluation or distinction between gratifications sought and gratifications obtained, inspection of the method, validity and reliability of measuring motivation and examination of the different psychological and social conditions of media usage. (Rubin, 2002, 526)

Besides, U & G theory indicates that media users basically seek for five needs, which consists of social integrative needs, cognitive needs, personal integrative needs, affective needs and tension free needs. Social integrative needs indicate media consumers need to interact with friends, family and others in society by employing SNSs such as X (or Twitter as it was formerly known), Tumblr, Facebook and so on. Cognitive needs refer to users who want to obtain information, knowledge, facts, etc from sources such as news, quiz programs or any topics. Personal integrative needs or self-esteem needs show that users want to gain credibility and stabilize, and reassure their status by utilizing media. Affective needs refer to various types of moods, emotions, and pleasure of users. Tension-free needs suggest that media helps users to relieve stress or pressure and escape from reality; because of this reason, users keep employing media (Communicationtheory.org).

The early theories of mass communication such as the hypodermic needle theory suggest that the mass media has a speedy and unchanging effect on users. They are supposed to be likely to be influenced and incapable of shaping their own ideas (McQuail & Windahl, 1993, cited from Ruggiero, 4). The exposure to standardized cultural goods was supposed to make media users become a passive, uncritical, homogenous heap with little self-control to withstand the effect and attraction of the mass media.

What differentiates U&G from early communication theories is the media users' directed goal, which means that the users are particularized as discerning, active and motivated in their media usage. Users' activities with media are the centre point of the theory rather than the media effect on individuals (Katz et al., 1974, cited from Ruggiero 2000, 4).

The cornerstones for inspecting gratifications acquired from the media are formed by understanding of users as they intentionally choose a type of media based on particular needs. For example, when a media user feels the need for an escape, he or she will choose a particular, available media to satisfy this need. Many of the early researches on U&G has paid attention to television such as Schramm, Lyle, and Parker (1961, cited from Ruggiero 2000, 5); Cazeneuve (1974, cited from Ruggiero 2000, 26); Eastman (1979, cited from Ruggiero 2000, 7); Bantz (1982, cited from Ruggiero 2000, 8); Rubin (1983, cited from

Ruggiero 2000, 18); Bryant and Zillmann (1984, cited from Ruggiero 2000, 7); Dobos (1992, cited from Ruggiero 2000, 8); Mcilwraith (1998, cited from Ruggiero 2000, 9); as well as other traditional media such as Armstrong and Rubin (1989, cited from Ruggiero 2000, 10); Dimmick, Sikand and Patterson, (1994, cited from Ruggiero 2000, 11); O'Keefe and Sulanowski (1995, cited from Ruggiero 2000, 11). Interactivity is an outstanding characteristic of new media, it depicts users' capability to create content in response to a communication partner or a source (Ha and James, 1998, cited from Ruggiero 2000, 15).

The difference between a producer and a consumer in new media is inclined to be obscure, this is how the term prosumer is introduced. Prosumer is depicted as an active user who rules his or her own production and content distribution (Toffler, 1980, 9). In comparison to traditional media, this helps users to manage media usage and content, as well as inspects the gratifications which new media offers to users (Lin, 2001, 22). Even though a typology of uses cannot grant a flawless theoretical perspective as some scholars would desire, it equips a benchmark foundation of data for further studies on media usage. Moreover, the design of U&G studies shows an intensive diversity of personality features has become a more tractable attempt because of a current preference for more detailed models of human characteristics (Finn 1997, cited from Ruggiero 2000, 12). For instance, contemporary scholars classify a typology into five categories (Anderson and Revelle, 1995, cited from Ruggiero 2000, 12) and some others classify it into three core personality types (Eysenck, 1991, cited from Ruggiero 2000, 12). The earlier scholars, on the other hand, divide human typology into 16 fundamental components which are developed by Cattell, Edger, and Tatsuoka (1970, cited from Ruggiero 2000, 12) and McGuire (1974, cited from Ruggiero 2000, 12). Secondly, broadening and refining theories dealing with affective motivations toward media use has become a trend (Finn, 1997, cited from Ruggiero 2000, 12). Take the rigid dichotomy between instrumental and ritualistic behaviors for example, before, highly esteemed information seeking for entertainment searching behaviors has been transmitted into new motivational theories. These factors weigh the individuals' need to control affective states (D. R. Anderson, Collins, Schmitt, & Jacobvitz, 1996; Kubey & Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, cited from Ruggiero 2000, 13). Last but not least, it is premature to entirely concentrate on the cultural and social effects of modern communication technologies until we completely comprehend how and why users utilize media channels

(Perse and Dunn, 1998, cited from Ruggiero 2000, 10). It is obvious that media users will search for information in the information age. In the survey done by World Wide Web, respondents said that they prefer information formats which communicate with them in a larger entertaining context and in a more personalized voice (Eighmey and McCord, 1995, cited from Ruggiero 2000, 13).

Therefore, the process of media uses and effects is complicated because it demands prudent attention to consequent, mediating, and antecedent conditions (Rubin, 1994b, cited from Ruggiero 2000, 9). Scholars strongly suggest to proceed and develop theory building which gives an explanation and forecast of media consumption of the public based on psychological, sociological and structural factors. The relevance of shifting the range of U&G research is demonstrated by some modern research from an overemphasis on the usage of mass media to respond to social deficits, and to the operation it satisfies (Blumler 1985, p.41, cited from Ruggiero 2000, 13). In addition, a recent lack of standardization such as operating systems, servers and browsers might cause a great challenge to methodical quantitative research. However, more complicated methods of tracking users are created and researchers are more familiar with users' demographics, so generalizability to well-studied sections of the overall population should be less difficult (Smith, 1997, cited from Ruggiero 2000, 13).

According to Dicken-Garcia (1998, cited from Ruggiero 2000, 21), an outstanding and interesting feature of Internet users' behavior is the way that users communicate and express themselves differently on the internet in comparison to the way they talk in person or on the phone (Dicken-Garcia 1998, cited from Ruggiero 2000, 21). The Internet also provides crucial segmentations for the communication gratifications which are traditionally searched by users of news information. The news which is produced by traditional media institutions, has been connected with the establishment of an informed election such as international and political events, as well as the existence of democratic society (Wenner, 1985, cited from Ruggiero 2000, 21).

Hence, to comprehend what encourages users to shift from one tool to another, we need to concentrate on SM. Besides, using different tools at the same time recommends that every

tool satisfies a separate need which makes U&G study crucial (Quan-Haase and Young 2010, 351). The facility of demassification, so-called the control and customisation, which the online environment provides the internet users, is also emphasized by Williams et al. (1988, cited from Ruggiero 2000, 15). Therefore, the internet in general and SNSs in particular establish more modern media formats along with their own specified features, which under the theoretical lens of U&G theory are useful for assessment (Williams et al. 1988, cited from Ruggiero 2000, 15).

2.2. Social network sites

Since the rapid growth of social networking sites (SNSs) such as FB, YouTube, Twitter, blogs and Flickr, media consumers have been continually connected and capable of communicating with one another (Ding & Zhang 2010, 88). SNSs are defined as web-based services which enable media users to establish personal profiles involving self-depictions within an online community, and to show a list of other users in a system and with whom they have the same connection (Boyd and Ellison 2007, 212).

SNSs are also considered as online spaces in which media users can express themselves, voice their opinions on social networks, as well as build and keep connections with others (Ellison et al. 2007, 1144). Previous research suggests that from SM the gratifications sought could be from a distribution place for information to a depot for feedback or to a promotion channel for organisations or a chance to join in any community group (Stassen 2010, 5). The gratifications, found when users have FB or MySpace accounts, are to stay in touch with old and new friends, to see or post pictures, to locate friends and to make friends. In addition, gratifications are observed when users also feel connected, share information about themselves, post social functions, keep updated about events, about dating and academic purposes (Raacke and Bonds-Raacke 2008, 170).

SNSs are fundamentally internet-based tools which enable communication or content combines and interchanges in various ways (Sharma and Godiyal 2016, 2250). Kuss and Griffiths (2011) indicate that over the past few years, empirical data on SNS adoption and

consumer research shows a rapid growth in the regular use of SM, and for social purposes, SNSs are mainly employed to sustain the established offline networks. Moreover, students and teenagers are studied to make the most use of SNSs in comparison to the general population. The Pew Research survey named "Social Media Usage: 2005-2015" shows that in 2015, 65 % of adults employ social media, compared to 7% in 2005 (Kuss and Griffiths 2011, 3529).

Most youth people start social networking at 14.6 years and the average time they spend daily on Social Networking is 3.6 hours. The most favourite function of social networking is making friends, chatting and interacting with others so FB is preferred by youngsters (Sharma and Godiyal 2016, 2252). Different people use SNSs differently, this leads to various social implications. SNS usage mainly depends on media consumers' interactions in terms of frequency measures (e.g., irregular use or regular use) or on particular SNSs such as FB, MySpace, YouTube, Twitter, Flickr, or LinkedIn. The adoption of SNSs relates to systematic patterns, meaning the same SNS can be served for various purposes, and dissimilar SNSs can be employed for similar purposes (Brandtzæg & Heim 2011, 30).

In Vietnam, 62 million users use social networks which accounts for 64% of Vietnam's population in 2019. Sixteen percent of those people compared to the previous year use social networks on mobile. For many enterprises in Vietnam, the most popular communication tool is SM. In 2018, FB was outperformed by Youtube, which is the most active social network. Google listed Vietnam in the top 5 countries for watching YouTube videos the most in the world. Thus, last year 65% of Vietnamese businesses raised their budgets for Video Marketing as well as video advertising grew up to 16% of average advertising costs. These figures indicate that video marketing plays an important role in the content marketing trend. Moreover, live video marketing is predicted to become the best tool of content marketing in the future (Vnetwork 2019).

As shown in figure 2, In Vietnam SNSs are Youtube, FB, FB messenger, Zalo, Instagram, Twitter, Skype, Viber, Wechat, Line and so on. Youtube and FB are the most used by Vietnamese media users, respectively 96% and 95%; followed by FB messenger with 79%,

Zalo with 74% and Instagram with 51%. The thesis focuses mainly on Youtube, FB, Zalo and Instagram.
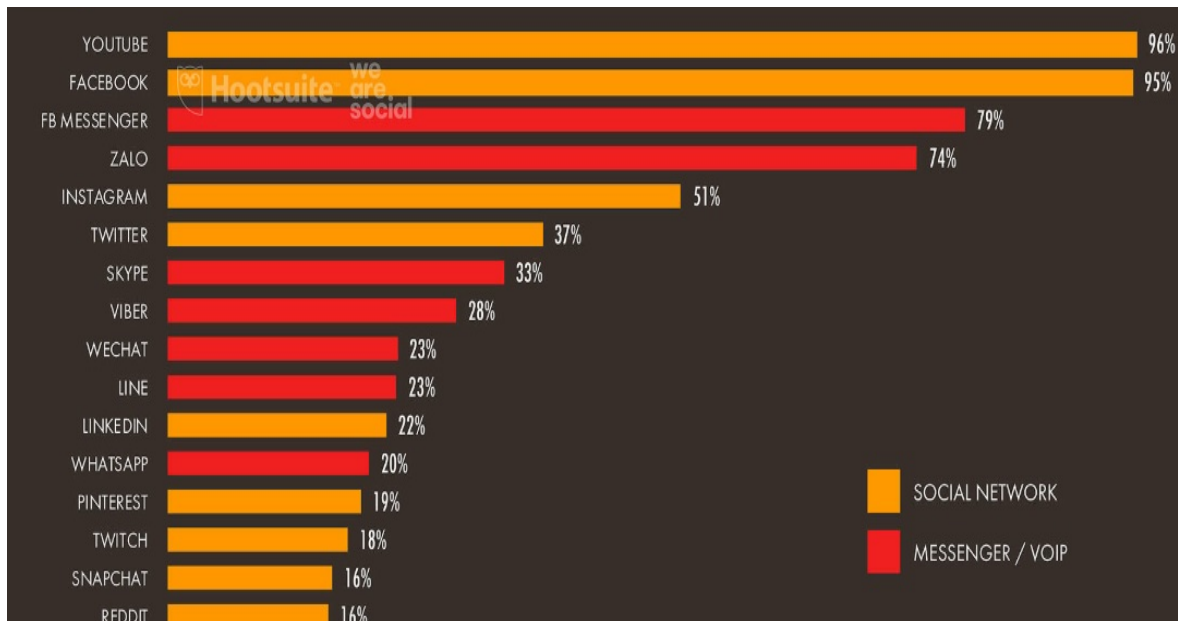

Figure 2. The percentage of users using SNSs in Vietnam in 2019

(Source: https://vnetwork.vn/en/news/cac-so-lieu-thong-ke-internet-viet-nam-2019)

2.2.1. Facebook

Mark Zuckerberg was the founder of FB on February 4, 2004. It was first called Facemash, then The FB and only used by Harvard students. After that, Universities including Stanford, Columbia, and Yale started using FB and eventually, most universities in the United States and Canada also used it. In 2006, everyone who was at least 13 years old with a valid email address could use FB. In 2018, FB had 2.37 billion monthly active users and 1.49 billion daily active users with more than one billion of those being mobile-only users. FB was subsequently employed by 26.3% of the online population internationally. FB consumers spent an average of 20 minutes per day; and the average user made 4 comments, liked 10 posts and clicked on 8 ads in a month. Moreover, FB saw over 60 million active business pages, and via FB ads more than 2 billion people could be reached. To support their favourite brand, 49% of users liked the FB page of the brand. Although Videos account for only 3% of content, they create the highest rate of engagement (Smith 2019) .

In Vietnam, online sellers have many reasons to use FB as a selling platform. The first reason is thatFB has a large number of users and the sales time lasts longer than the traditional selling way (at physical stores); for example, online customers can view and order products any time they want from an online shop. Secondly, FB interaction between sellers and buyers is more interesting and faster than in the traditional way. To attract more attention, online sellers on FB use a livestream function to sell their products and give viewers discounts if they like or share the information to their friends. Lastly, with 72% of shoppers accessing e-commerce websites by smartphones and 50% of them purchasing products online, sales channels on mobile platforms such as FB are crucial. According to a survey done by Sapo.vn, 80% of 5000 online shop owners say they run their business on FB. The survey also shows that FB has the biggest number of members, which means that users have a high chance to reach their potential customers (Saigon Times 2019).

2.2.2. Zalo

In 2012, Zalo was launched by Quang Khai as a premier Vietnamese chatting channel; the name Zalo is a combination of "Zing" and "Alo", meaning hello when Vietnamese people answer on the phone. In 2019, Zalo became a fast-growing app, which reached over 100 million users worldwide, 45 million pictures are sent every day through the Zalo app, 900 million messages and 50 million minutes of calls. It is astonishing when the app has 2 million users in just a year after the release. One of many reasons for this success is because of funny and unique icons on the app. Furthermore, smartphone users from other countries such as Singapore, Korea, Taiwan, China, Japan, Australia, Russia, and the U.S start to become intrigued by the app. This app is also preferred by Vietnamese users who are under 35 years old; they are likely to have the app installed for texting, sending photos and voice messages as well as making video calls (Chapman 2016).

Online shops on Zalo enable buyers and sellers to have a strong connection because of its optimized features and interface on mobile phones. New product updates and discounts can be provided to customers by Zalo free broadcast messages. Furthermore, Zalo can swiftly synchronize products from the owner's online website to Zalo Shop (Saigon Times 2019).

2.2.3. Instagram

Instagram, founded in 2010, is one of the world's most-influential and biggest social media platforms to share photos and short videos; and the key selling point of Instagram is picture filters. Instagram was created by Michel Krieger, a software engineer and his partner Kevin Systrom, a computer programmer and former Google-employee. Facebook bought Instagram for $1 billion in 2012. Instagram had reached one billion monthly active users, 500 million daily Instagram Stories users in 2018. Instagram is considered by 89% of marketers as a crucial marketing strategy; thus, over 50% of their influencer marketing budget is spent by 60% of marketers on Instagram (Iqbal 2020).

In Vietnam, Instagram had 6 235 000 users in 2018 with 57.3% of them being women. The biggest group, which has 3 100 000 users, is people aged 18 to 24 as shown in figure 3 (Napoleoncat 2020).
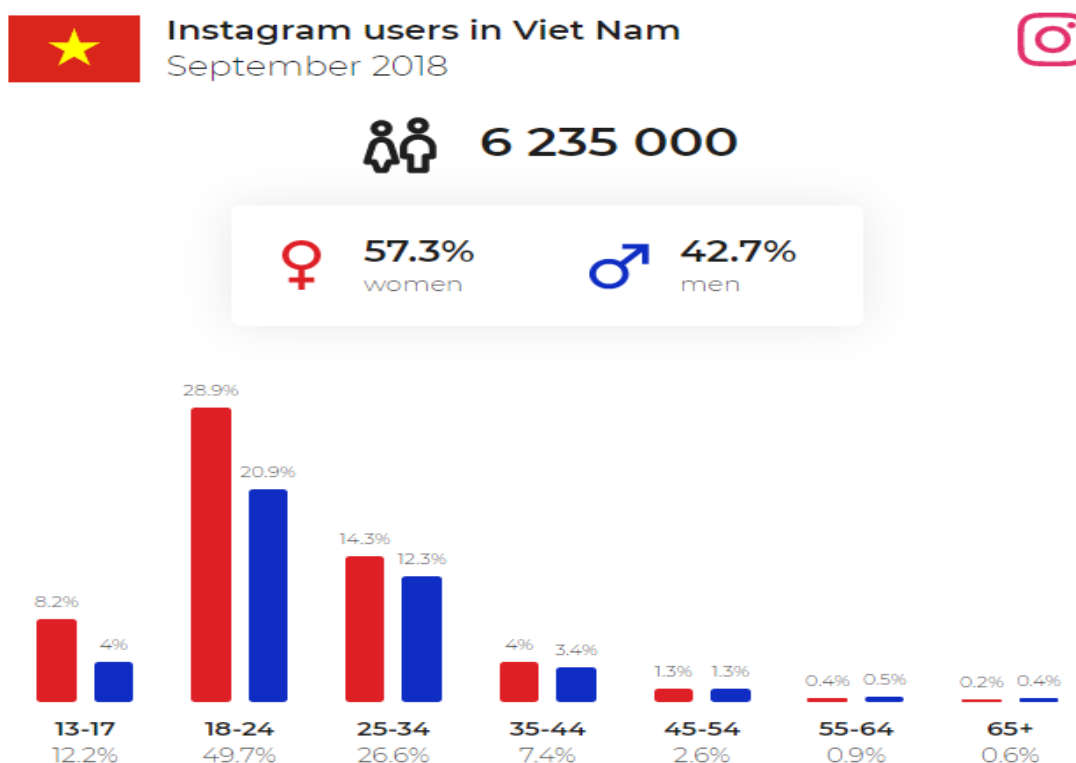

Figure 3. Statistics of Instagram users in Vietnam

(Source: https://napoleoncat.com/stats/instagram-users-in-viet_nam/2018/09)

2.2.4. Youtube

YouTube was created by three PayPal employees namely Steve Chen, Chad Hurley and Jawed Karim in 2005. YouTube, which is a holder of short-video format, has become one of the world's most omnipresent apps. The fame of YouTube came from its variety of advanced characteristics such as easy-to-use embed functionality, content algorithms, live streaming, viewer ratings, voice recognition rank and below-the-line comments to serve its users. In 2018, YouTube attained 2 billion monthly active users, the most-downloaded iOS app, 500 hours of content uploaded per minute. It is quite impressive that YouTube is accessible in 80 languages and exists in 91 countries (Iqbal 2020).

In Vietnam, 3 out of 4 Vietnamese people watch YouTube on their smartphones. Within a year, the percentage of users uploading their videos on YouTube grew by 300% compared to last year. In addition, the number of viewers grew by 85%, which shows the shift of the media supply platform in Vietnam. Vietnam is included in the top countries and territories which have the most YouTube viewers in the world. YouTube offers the opportunity for young Vietnamese to make money. The three contents, which Vietnamese people are interested in, are TV shows, cartoons and children's shows, and action (Tran 2017).

3. Methodology

The research studies the reasons Vietnamese people want to buy products from online individual sellers and examines the impacts of buying on SM. Due to the nature of this study, the author chose to conduct a quantitative research which would then show how the determinants of the U&G impacts consumer behaviour decisions.

According to Earl (2015), in quantitative methods, the statistical, numerical, or mathematical analysis of data gathered by surveys or polls and objective measurements are accentuated, which indicates that this method concentrates on collecting and generalising numerical data, and analysing a specific phenomenon (Earl 2015, 2).

3.1 Case study

Social networks have become not only an indispensable part of our daily lives but also an important element in the current economy in Vietnam for over the past ten years (Mona Media 2020). Since then, IOS has become an emerging social phenomenon for many Vietnamese people. Understanding the benefits and gratification that SM could bring to our lives, online individual sellers promote their products on their personal page to attract and entice many potential customers. These online individual sellers are considered as small entrepreneurs without business licence and business registration certificate. Therefore, it is a daunting task to manage and control the impacts of this new form of business, especially, when the quality of the products are promoted by sellers' promises, word of mouth, comment box; and most of the transactions are done by cash or personal money transfer.

On the other hand, it is also undeniable that other reputable online individual sellers offer more reasonable prices with the same products than prices offered by sellers who hold business licences and business registration certificates in the market. Because of that, the paper would delve into studying this new form of business, particularly the five matters including the most common SM platforms for trading activities in Vietnam. Firstly, the

author examined the most used SM channels in which trading activities happen. These channels are supposed to be FB, YouTube, Zalo, Instagram and so on. Secondly, products which were purchased on the SM market, were essentially contributing to the interpretation of why consumers choose to buy such products from SM spontaneous sellers. These products could possibly be various types of items from food to cosmetics, fashion items (clothes, shoes, handbags, and etc.), and medicines. Thirdly, the author answered one of the most crucial questions: Why do Vietnamese people want to buy such products on SM?

3.2 Research aim, objectives, and research questions

GWI's data indicates that in the past year, approximately 62.5% of Vietnamese consumers consider social networks as a way of searching information about products and brands. Social networks are expected to continue to act as the "shopping capital" of users. This result is even higher than specialised search engines like Google, Bing… (52.9 percent) (Minh Khanh 2022). Therefore, the research aims of this thesis is to expose the reasons why Vietnamese people prefer to buy some products from SM individual sellers who do not own any business registration certificate or business licences, which then enables the author to find the impacts of this phenomenon. To achieve this aim, the study concentrates on active users' interactions with SM during all phases of the purchase process as well as all phases of the consumer decision process.

3.3 Research method

To measure opinions, attitudes, behaviours, and other defined variables as well as to survey a large group of people, it is rational to use quantitative research. As the method relies on data and quantifiable numbers, it provides accurate and close-ended information. The chosen people and a structured questionnaire were prepared with forced-choice or closed-ended questions so that the chosen people would answer these questions which helped to build a cause-effect relationship to infer results. In terms of origins and consequences, this method also helped to identify how different phenomena relate.

As quantitative research helps to provide descriptive, normative, and prescriptive approaches to ease the decision-making process, quantitative research method is at the core of behavioural sciences. It also provides the research study a definite purpose The encompassing of quantitative analysis methodology in behavioural sciences gives the research study a specified purpose, because it is a statistical way of investigating behaviour (AppCloneScript 2021).

In the previous discussion, the word "quantitative" is often added to highlight that the variables are measured numerically in terms of 0, 0.5, 1, 2, 3.3, 4…. nth digit etc. Quantitative Descriptive Research methodology includes choosing a logical process on the subject which is the study or research problem, how to recognize or frame specific objectives of the study. This gives a foundation as to why a particular method or procedure is employed at a certain stage in the research process so that the outcome of the research is achieved. The two methodologies or designs in quantitative descriptive research are survey research methodologies and observational research (Mbuva 2023).

3.3.1 Characteristics of descriptive research

The characteristics of descriptive research are qualitativeness, quantitativeness, uncontrolled variables, cross-sectional studies, carried out in a natural environment and basis for further research (Dovetail 2023).

- Qualitativeness

Descriptive research provides context and meaning to the numbers given by quantitative descriptive research; therefore, descriptive research can also be qualitative. The tools, which are used in this case, are focus groups, interviews, and ethnographic studies to identify the research problem and explain why things are what they are. Furthermore, descriptive research is more explanatory than experimental or exploratory research (Dovetail 2023).

- Quantitativeness

Descriptive research is quantitative since it collects quantifiable data to statistically analyze a sample, which then shows connections, patterns, and trends over time and can be uncovered by using connections, surveys, and experiments (Dovetail 2023).

- Uncontrolled variables

In comparison to experimental research, the variables cannot be manipulated in descriptive research. This is also one of the most outstanding features of descriptive research (Dovetail 2023).

- Cross-sectional studies

As descriptive research inspects several areas of the same group, it is a cross-sectional study and during a certain period it relates to acquiring data on multiple variables at the personal level. Besides, when attempting to comprehend a bigger community's preferences or habits, descriptive research is obliging (Dovetail 2023).

- Proceed in a natural environment

Descriptive studies enable researchers to avoid affecting responders by gathering data in a natural setting or in the participants' everyday environment (Dovetail 2023).

- Basis for further research

Descriptive research's outcomes can be further dissected and those outcomes can be employed for different types of investigation. In addition, the outcomes also serve as a starting point for following studies and can lead future investigations (Dovetail 2023).

3.3.2 Descriptive research approaches

For gathering data in descriptive research, there are three basic approaches, namely, survey, observational, and case study (Dovetail 2023).

- Survey

To gather data in descriptive research, surveys can be used. This relates to collecting information from many people. Furthermore, for descriptive research design, surveys remain the dominant research tool and researchers can carry out different studies and gather many types of data

Surveys can be conducted via online, over the phone or face-to-face. The survey might be a short interview or conversation with prepared questionnaires, which aim to acquire fast information from the primary source (Dovetail 2023).

- ● Observation

This descriptive research method consists of observing and collecting data on a phenomena or population without manipulating variables. Observation, which is an essential component of descriptive research, can be used in market research, psychology, and other social science studies to follow and comprehend human behavior (Dovetail 2023).

- ● Case studies

A case study can draw a specific topic's traits which might be an event, an organization, a person, or a group. To characterize the features of a big group, case studies include a subset of that group as a sample. By doing that, researchers generalize knowledge from investigating a case study to benefit a larger group of audience. This method demands carefully studying a specified event, person, or group over time. You can learn something new about the study topic by using a small group to better understand the dynamics of the entire group (Dovetail 2023).

3.4 Description of the Data

This study utilised a questionnaire survey comprising 21 questions focused on gathering demographic information from respondents and conducting factor analysis. The factor analysis involves the following set of questions:

- How often do you purchase by using social media platforms?
- How do you agree with the following statements? Considering a scale where 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree.
    - ➢ Online shopping on social media is time-efficient and convenient.
    - ➢ Online shopping on social media provides a wide range of items to consumers.
    - ➢ Online shopping on social media offers good deals or discounts.

➢ Online shopping on social media is safe and trustworthy.

➢ I find it entertaining and fun to shop on social media from individual retailers.

➢ Others' reviews in the comment box are important and useful in aiding my shopping decisions.

➢ I like to purchase what I want on social media shopping pages.

➢ I like to find product information on social media.

➢ I feel delighted when shopping on social media.

➢ It is likely that I will continue to buy products from individual sellers on social media in the future.

➢ I intend to do more of my shopping on social media.

In the research framework, items reflect each variable and Likert scale of five-points is employed to analyse these items from strongly disagree to strongly agree. In addition to it, all questions belonging to the subject of this study were fixed-alternative questions. In the survey, limited alternative answers were given to the respondents and they were required to determine the closest answers to their thoughts.

3.4.1 Target Population

It is important to identify the target group of respondents in order to achieve fruitful results and relevant values, because this helps to comprehend the buyer persona (Penalver, 2019). In this research, respondents, who currently live in HCMC, are required to have some sort of income for online shopping and have shopped online in recent years as well as to be exposed to the internet and a variety of advertisements so that the researcher can understand how SM advertisements can influence purchasers. The respondents' minimum income must be around 200 euro per month to be able to shop online after paying for their basic needs. According to Da Thao (2022), a minimum monthly salary, which could enable people to live in Hochiminh city, is 4,680,000 vnd or 181 euro (Da Thao 2022). To ensure respondents are frequently exposed to SM ads, they are also required to have the internet and a computer or a laptop.

3.4.2 Sampling Method

The researcher uses a list of questions which are related to the uses and gratification theory. The survey is distributed to 200 consumers from 18 to 35 years old because according to Tuoitre online news (2022), customers who shop via SM tend to be younger which account for 82% of Gen Z and Millennials (Tuoitre Online 2022). The researcher believes that the age range shows clearly the impact of online shopping via SM since this is the active shopper on SM. Furthermore, Hochiminh city, the biggest city in Vietnam, is chosen to be studied because it offers a great opportunity to achieve the needed data.

The survey research is conducted online. Data is collected by a set of questionnaires which are created on Microsoft Forms and the results were analysed by Excel. In addition, quantitative data is used to collect 200 suitable respondents. The sample size is relevant because according to Greatbook.com, 200 responses lead to quite good survey accuracy under parameters of a survey project and most assumptions (Greatbook.com 2023). To identify the ideal respondents, screening questions are used to fulfil those above-mentioned qualifications: live in HCMC within the desirable age range, income, SM ads exposure, shopping frequency.

In order to examine consumers' informal online shopping purchase intentions, the author posed inquiries pertaining to the advantages of online shopping on social media. Furthermore, the author also inquired about respondents' potential future informal online shopping intentions on social media, seeking to understand whether they intend to persist in purchasing products from individual sellers on social platforms or engage in more extensive social media shopping. A comprehensive overview of the survey questions can be found in Section 3.4, 'Description of the Data,' which offers detailed information

4. ANALYSIS

Data collection was conducted with the participation of a total of 200 young people. These people are from 20 to above 35 years old, who are living in Hochiminh city and had the experience of purchasing products on SM such as FB, Instagram, YouTube, Zalo and other possible social networking sites through informal sellers, so that the author can find the answers for the research question which is why Vietnamese want to buy products from online individual sellers. Hence, the author is able to clarify the nature of the theory of uses and gratifications in the current era when social networks are on the rise. The survey was conducted online using Forms questionnaire and Excel sheet analysis. The respondents were kept anonymous and voluntary.

The reason the author chose the age range from 20 to above 35 years old is because this group of people are supposed to have better income than those younger than 20 years old. According to Nguyen (2023), young people between the ages of 18 and 19 are the ones who are starting to look for a job and might as well start University. Therefore, they do not yet have a stable income, which the author is not aiming at. It is also crucial to note that the individual or informal sellers on SM means those who do not own a business license or business registration certificate to sell the items they are selling on SM.

This chapter consists of two parts, which are demographics of respondents and factor analysis. The demographics of respondents part shows the characteristics of the target audiences. The second part points out engagement of consumers on SM shopping and gratifications of SM shopping.

4.1 Demographics of respondents

Table 1: Results of demographic analysis

Variables of socio-demographics	description	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	97	48,5%
	Female	103	51,5%
Age	20 -25 years old	15	7,5%
	26-30 years old	93	46,5%
	31-35 years old	75	37,5%
	Over 35 years old	17	8,5%
Highest education	High school	7	3,5%
	Bachelor's degree	174	87%
	Master's degree	18	9%
	Others	1	0,5%
Occupation	Student	6	3%
	White-collar employee	98	49%
	Blue-collar employee	95	47,5%
	Unemployed	1	0,5%
Monthly income	Under 400€	84	42%
	Between 400€ and 1000€	102	51%

	Between 1000€ and 1500€	11	5.5%
	Above 1500€	3	1.5%

In this survey, the number of males and females participating in shopping on social networks did not have much difference with 48,5% of males and 51,5% of females at various ages ranging from 20 years old to above 35 years old. The majority of people interviewed were in the age group of 20-27, which accounted for 47%. This is followed by the group of 31-35 years old with 37,5%; the group of people over 35 years old accounts for 8,5% and 7,5% of people from the group of 20-25 years old.

Regarding the highest education and occupation, the large number of respondents have a bachelor's degree which makes up 87% , 9% of respondents have a master's degree, and only 3,5% of the respondents graduated high school. Most of the respondents are white-collar employees and blue-collar employees, respectively 49% and 47,5%. The group of interviewees who are students accounts for 7% and 0,5% is unemployed.

The group of respondents, who have monthly income between 400€ and 1000€, made up the largest percentage of monthly income with 51%, followed by 42% of respondents having monthly income under 400€. The group of interviewees, who have income between 1000€ and 1500€, accounted for 5.5%. Only 1.5% of the interviewees have income above 1500€.

4.2. Factor analysis

4.2.1. Consumers' engagement on informal social media shopping
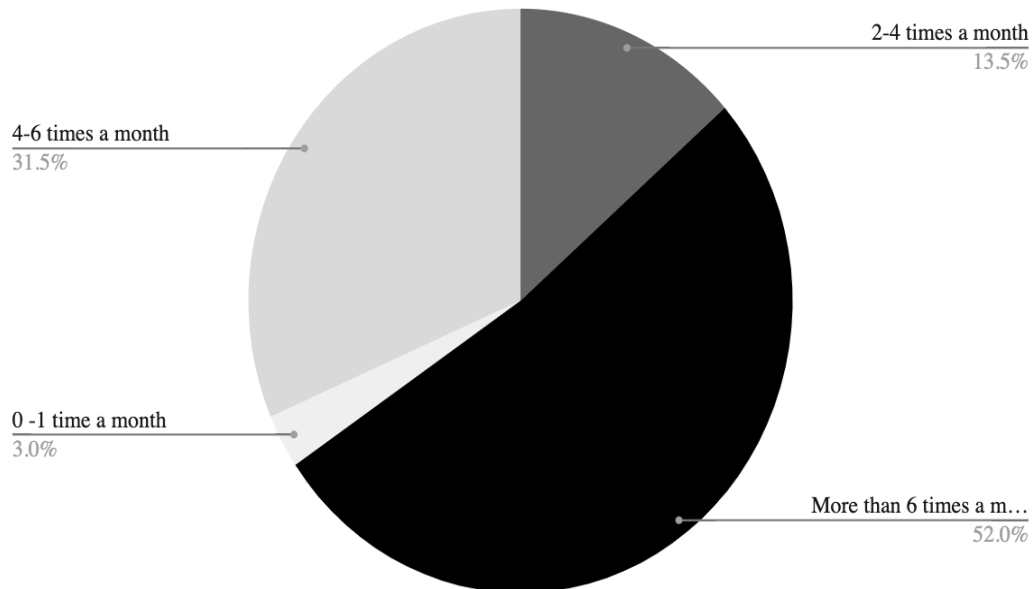
Figure 4: Shopping frequency of the people surveyed

Figure 4 illustrates the proportion of shopping frequency among respondents who took part in the survey. The respondents shop on SM quite often with 52% of respondents who answered 'more than 6 times a month' and 31.5% answered '4-6 times a month' for the question 'how often do you purchase by using SM platforms?' While the respondents who shop 2-4 times a month made up 13.5% and 0-1 time a month accounted for 3%.

It is likely that I will continue to buy products from individual sellers on social media in the future
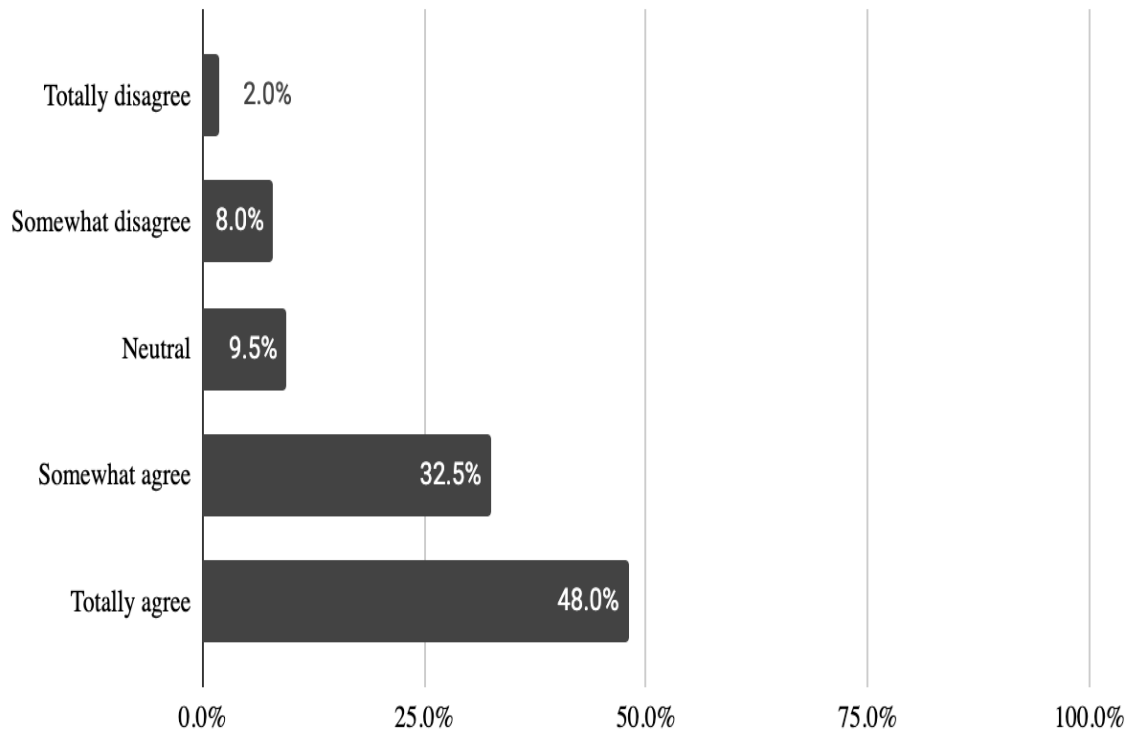
Figure 5: Respondents' continuance of SM shopping

The large percentage of respondents who totally agree (48%) and somewhat agree (32.5%) that 'it is likely that I will continue to buy products from individual sellers on SM in the future'. However, 10% in total of respondents who totally disagree and somewhat disagree; 9.5% hold neutral opinions.

I intend to do more of my shopping on social media
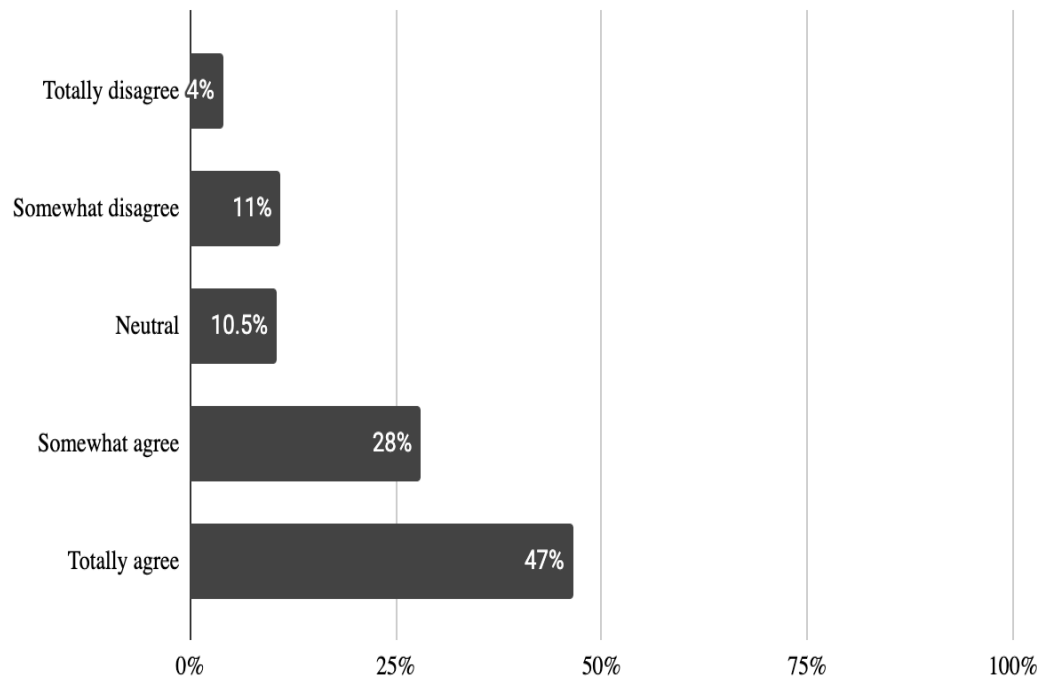
Figure 6: Intention to do more SM shopping by consumers

When asking if the respondents agree with the statement: 'I intend to do more of my shopping on SM', 70% of the interviewees totally agree and somewhat agree with this statement. Followed by 10.5% hold neutral opinions and 15% in total of respondents who totally disagree and somewhat disagree.

4.2.2. Gratifications of social media shopping

Online shopping on social media is time-efficient and convenient
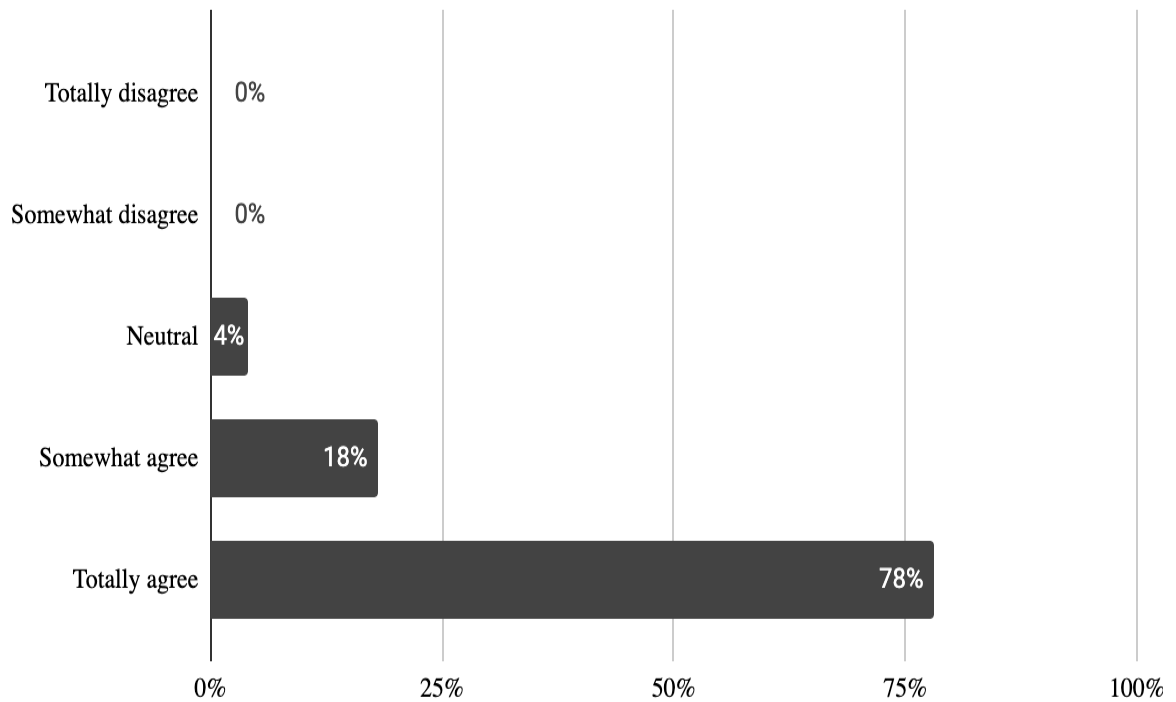
Figure 7: Time-efficiency and convenience of shopping on social networks

As we can see on figure 7, the majority of respondents totally agree and somewhat agree that 'online shopping on SM is time efficient and convenient' with 78% and 18% respectively. Respondents who had a neutral answer accounted for 4% and no one disagreed with the statement.
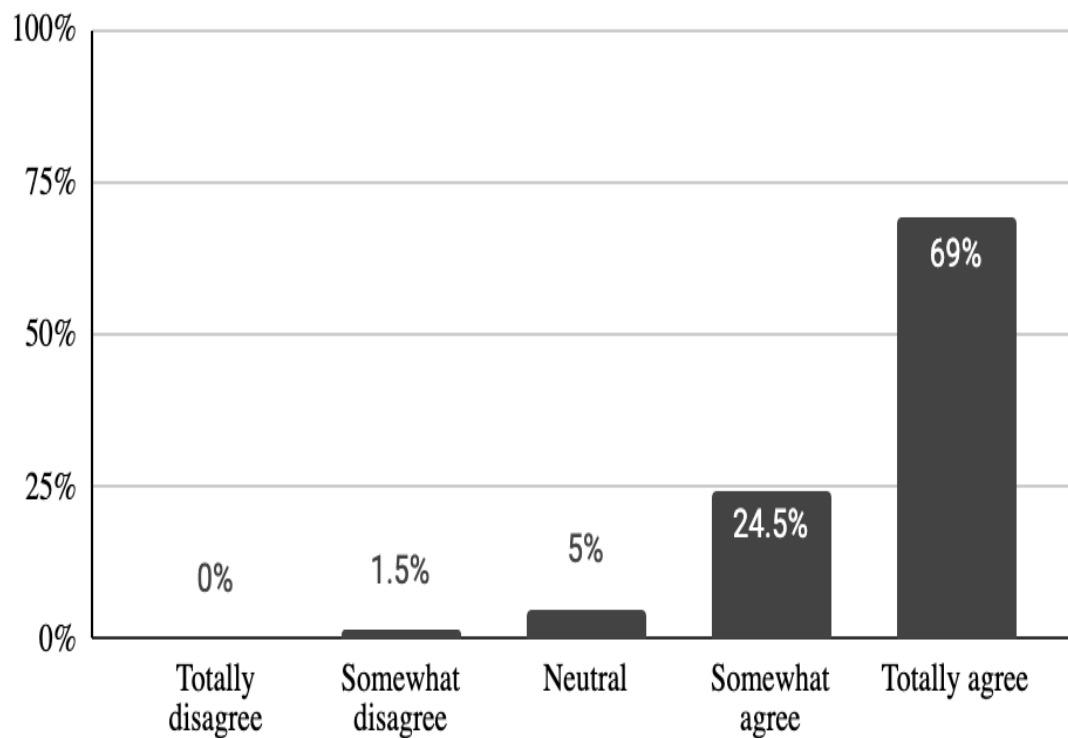
Figure 8: Online shopping on SM provides a diversity in product choices for consumers

The large percentage of respondents totally agree with 69% and somewhat agree with 24.5% that online shopping on SM provides a wide range of items to consumers. However, 5% of respondents have a neutral answer and 1.5% somewhat disagree with the statement.

Online shopping on social media is safe and trustworthy
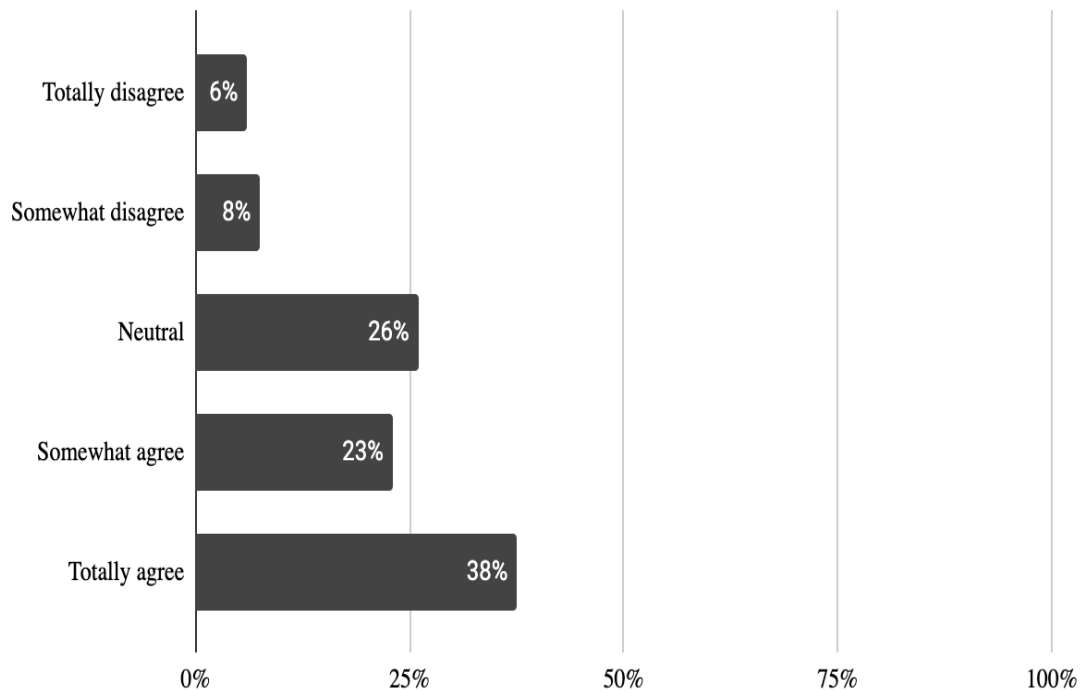
Figure 9: Safety and trustworthiness ofSM shopping.

Although there are 38% of people who totally agree and 23% of people who somewhat agree with the opinion 'online shopping on SM is safe and trustworthy', there is still a small percentage of 8% of people who somewhat disagree and 6% of people who totally disagree with the above opinion; 26% of respondents hold the neutral opinion.

I like to purchase what I want on social media shopping pages
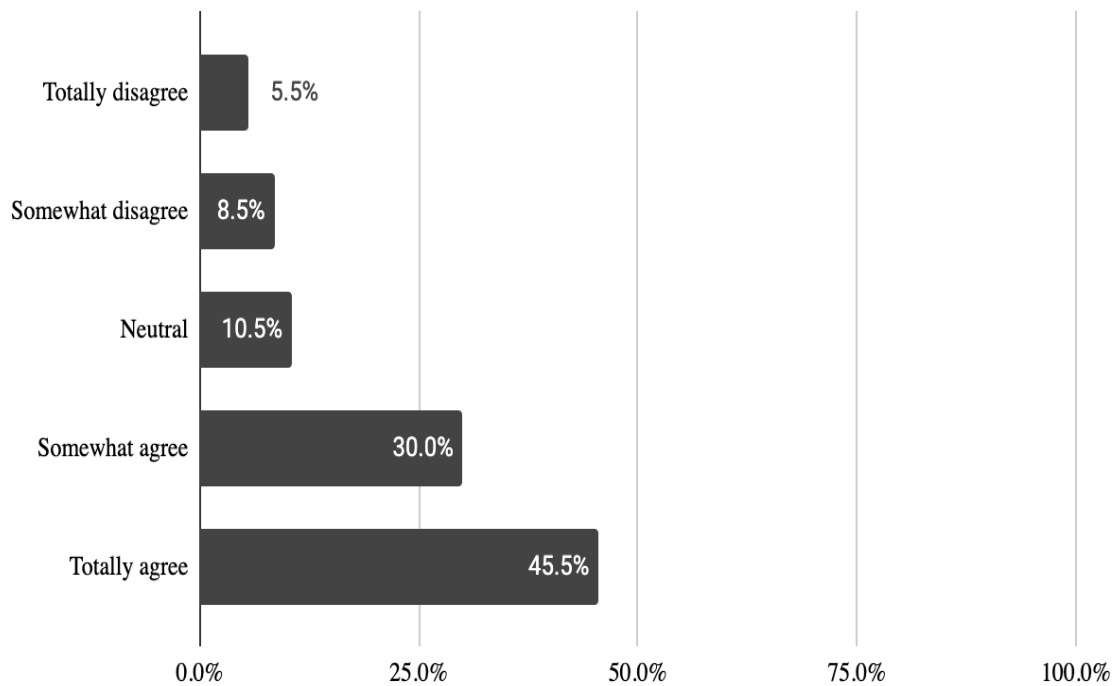
Figure 10: Entertainment of SM shopping

As shown in figure 10, the large percentage of respondents with 45.5 % totally agree and 30% somewhat agree with the statement 'I find it entertaining and fun to shop on SM from individual retailers'. Besides, 14% in total of respondents who disagree and somewhat disagree; 10.5% hold neutral answers.

I like to find product information on social media
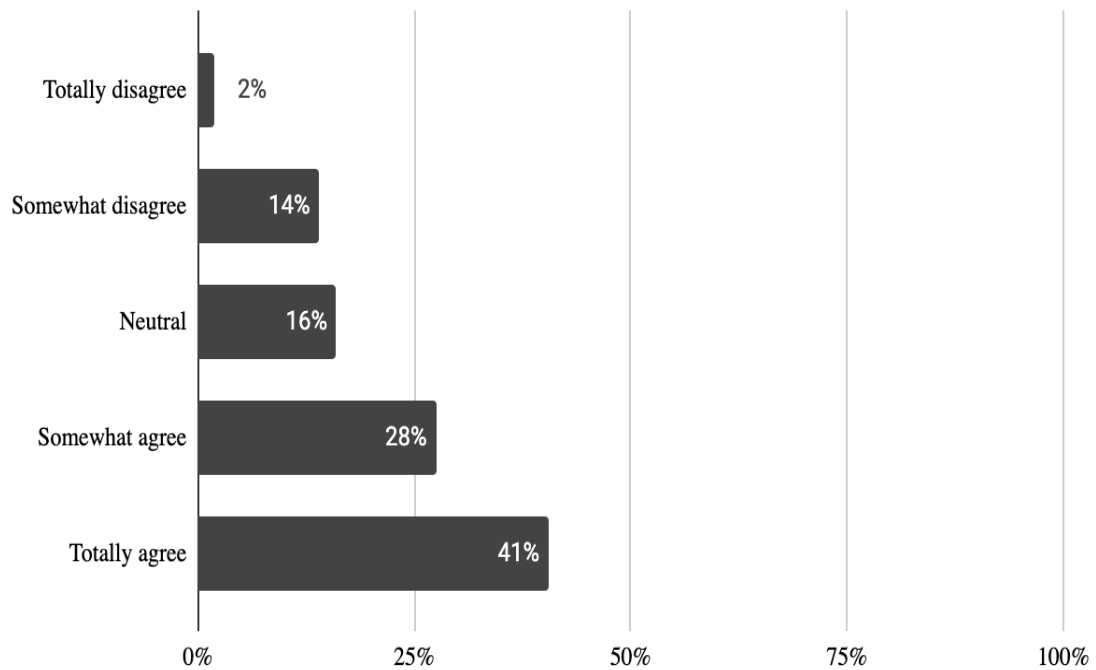
Figure 11: Preference of respondents toward SM shopping

When asking how the interviewees agree with this statement 'I like to find product information on SM', the majority with 41% totally agree and 28% somewhat agree. Followed by 16% in total of respondents who totally disagree and somewhat disagree; 16% hold neutral opinions.
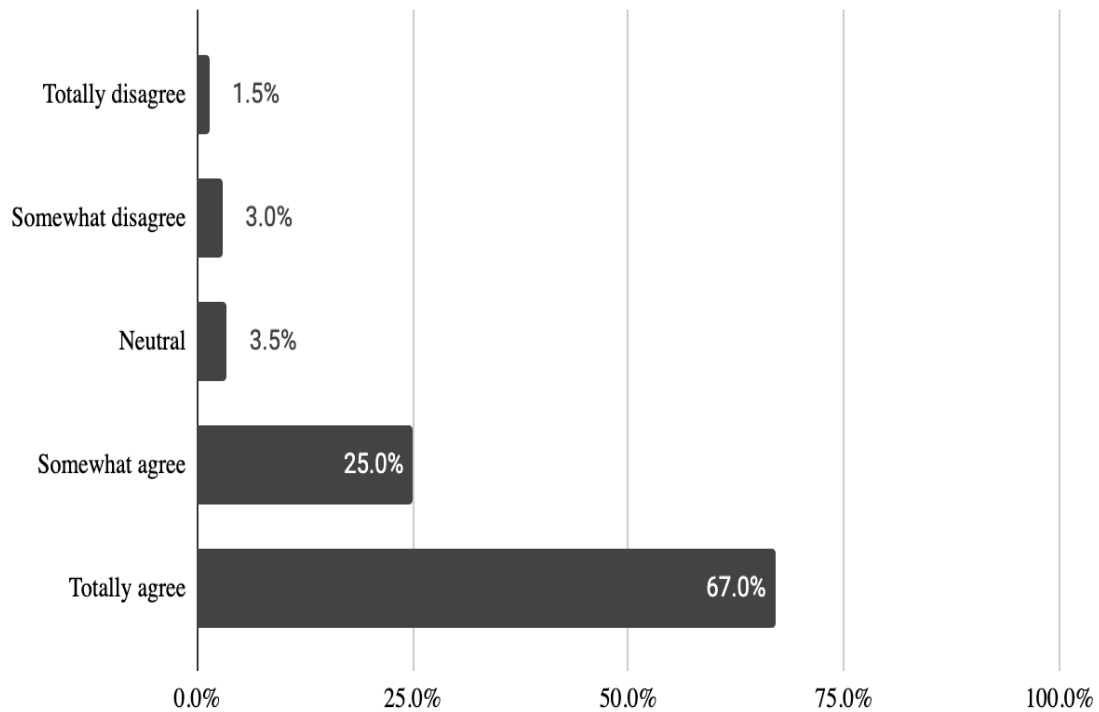
Figure 12: Delighted emotion of consumers when shopping on SM

Figure 12 illustrates that over 90% of respondents agree and somewhat agree with the statement 'I feel delighted when shopping on SM'; while a small percentage of 4.5% totally disagree and somewhat disagree and 3.5 % with neutral opinions.

Others' reviews in the comment box are important
and useful in aiding my shopping decisions
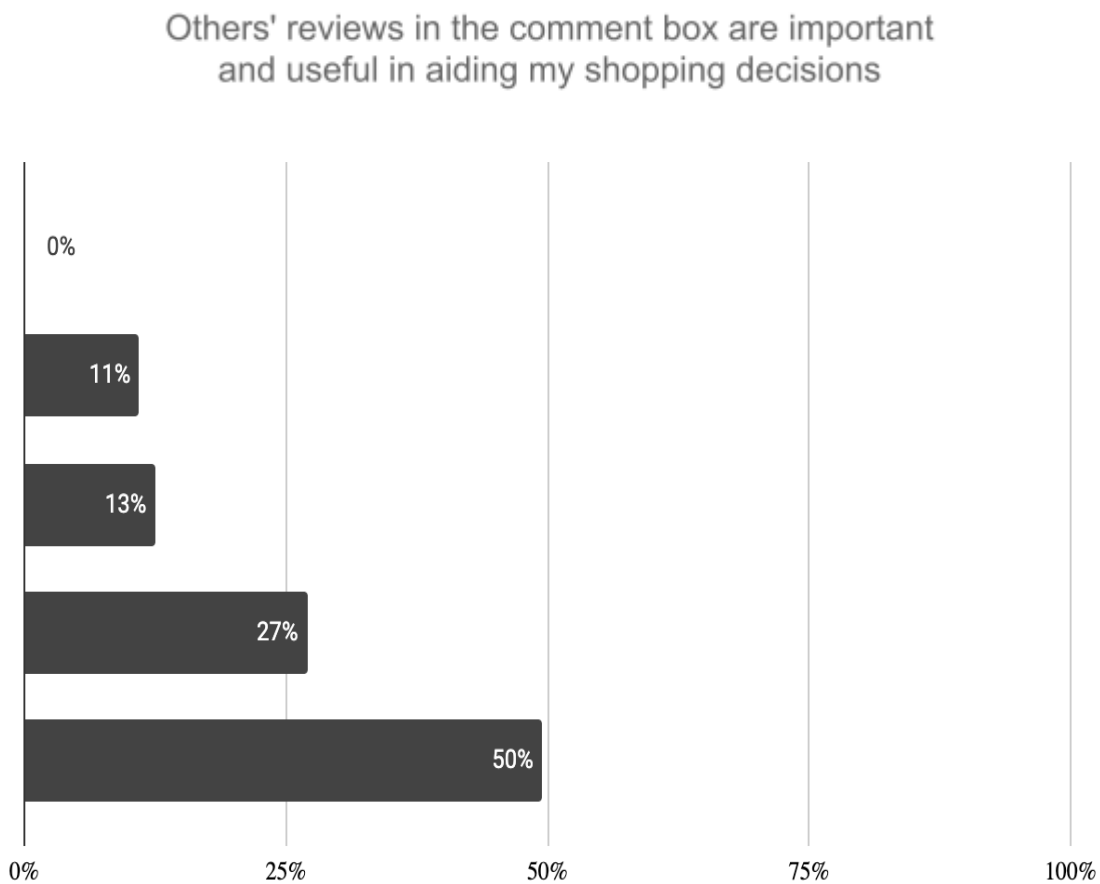
Figure 13: Percentage of people who find others' reviews in the comment boxes crucial

SM is an effective source for shoppers to receive useful information about the products that the shoppers intend to purchase. Figure 13 illustrates that 50% of respondents totally agreed and 27% of the respondents somewhat agreed with the statement: 'others' reviews in the comment box are important and useful in aiding their shopping decisions'; 13% held neutral opinions and 11% somewhat disagreed with the statement.

5. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

This chapter focuses on answering the thesis question, which is why Vietnamese people would like to purchase products from informal sellers on SM, based on U&G theory. Informal sellers in this research mean those who do not have business licences, or so-called spontaneous sellers. By analysing the motives behind the usage of most current types of media (e.g., photo-sharing, photo-tagging, instant messaging, and specific features of new media) (Dhir, 2016, Dhir et al., 2017, Gan and Li, 2018, Malik et al., 2015, cited from Kaur et al. 2020, 2), the author will achieve the set goal.

Scholars widely agree on the various purposes of uses and gratifications, which encompasses socialising, social sharing, exposure, information seeking, experiencing pleasure, fun, relaxation, and self-status seeking, creating and managing online self-presentation, affection, convenience, and even escaping from real-life problems (Dhir, 2016, Dhir et al., 2017, Hicks et al., 2012, cited from Kaur et al. 2020, 2 - 3). In this research, the author concentrates on social sharing, information seeking, convenience, and entertainment.

Previous research presents that the uses and gratifications of SM platforms have a remarkable impact on continuation intentions (e.g., Yen et al., 2018, cited from Kaur et al. 2020, 2 - 3), purchase intentions (e.g., Aluri et al., 2016, cited from Kaur et al. 2020, 2 - 3), use intentions, and actual use behaviour (e.g., Gan, 2017, cited from Kaur et al. 2020, 2 - 3). The author's research focuses on purchase intentions and continuation intentions.

5.1. The impact of the uses and gratifications of social media platforms on purchase intentions

Earlier studies illustrate a positive relationship of uses and gratifications with satisfaction (Kim et al., 2010) and loyalty (Kim, 2011). This is also seen in the author's research. When asking how the interviewees agree with these statements: (A)'I like to purchase what I want on SMshopping pages' and (B) 'I feel delighted when shopping on SM', approximately 80%

of interviewees agreed and somewhat agreed, while a small percentage of 14% of interviewees disagreed and somewhat disagreed with the statement (A) and 4.5% disagreed and somewhat disagreed with the statement (B).

The majority of respondents have a highly positive attitude toward SM shopping with approximately 90% totally agree and somewhat agree that online shopping on SM is time efficient and convenient, provides a diversity in product choices for consumers, and offers good deals and discounts. There is a small percentage or even 0% disagree or somewhat disagree or neutral opinions with the above statements. The percentage of people agreeing with this statement: 'online shopping on SM is safe and trustworthy', decreased to 60%, the percentage of respondents holding neutral answers increased to 26% to the same statement of the safety and trustworthiness of SM shopping.

SM is an effective source for shoppers to receive useful information about the products that the shoppers intend to purchase. The results of the survey shows that 77% of respondents found others' reviews in the comment box important and useful in aiding their shopping decisions; 13% held neutral opinions and 11% somewhat disagreed with the statement. Similarly, the percentage of people agreeing and somewhat agreeing with this statement: 'I like to find product information on SM', is 69%. Followed by 16% in total of respondents who totally disagree and somewhat disagree; 16% hold neutral opinions.

5.2. The impact of the uses and gratifications of social media platforms on continuation intentions

The author's research shows interviewees intend to continue to purchase items on SM through spontaneous sellers with a ratio equal to or higher than 75%. To be more specific, regarding to future shopping on SM, a relatively high percentage of respondents agreed and somewhat agreed with the statements: (A) 'it is likely that I will continue to buy products from individual sellers on SM in the future' with 81% and (B) 'I intend to do more of my shopping on SM' (75%). There is still a small percentage of people who disagreed and somewhat disagreed with the statement (A) with 10% and the statements (B) with 14.5%, while approximately 10% hold neutral opinions for the both statements.

5.3. Discussion

This research studies how uses and gratifications of SM impact the purchasing behaviour of consumers, in other words, have an effect on the consumers' intentions to purchase and continue buying items on SM through spontaneous sellers. This study is consistent with previous literature that highlights the motives of consumers or answers the questions why they do what they do.

The research results propose that social sharing, information seeking, convenience, and entertainment outstandingly impact purchase behaviour. Besides, a few studies present that various categories of U&G indirectly affect usage intentions via various mediating variables. Joo and Sang (2013, cited from Kaur et al. 2020, 8) discovered that process U&G (e.g., pass the time, escape) and content U&G (e.g., information seeking) have indirect influence on usage intentions through perceived ease of usage and utility. Some other empirical studies illustrate that the impact of information seeking on usage intentions is due to attitudes (Hausman and Siekpe, 2009; Lim and Ting, 2012, cited from Kaur et al. 2020, 8) and flow experience (Hausman and Siekpe, 2009, cited from Kaur et al. 2020, 8). The present study also shows that information seeking and escape indirectly impact revisit intention through satisfaction. (Chen et al., 2016, cited from Kaur et al. 2020, 8).

Furthermore, the different types of SM platforms are considered a tool that impacts consumer choices and decision-making processes, encompassing usage and purchasing behaviour (Mangold and Faulds, 2009, cited from Kaur et al. 2020, 9). Hence, businesses and organisations are actively using social platforms to directly reach their prospective and existing consumers (Kim and Ko, 2012, cited from Kaur et al. 2020, 9). The author's findings show that consumers' motives are important to be studied so that customer engagement can be increased. These research results also provide insights to businesses or organisations about consumers' purchase and continuance intentions towards social networks, specifically FB, Instagram, YouTube, and so on. To give an example, the results illustrate that the uses and gratifications of information seeking, convenience and

entertainment are effective variables which substantially impact consumers' intentions toward purchase behaviour.

Moreover, in this study social sharing is the others' reviews in the comment box for a product or service are highly important because such reviews influence other buyers' decision making. According to BrandMentions (2022), SM reviews are a type of rating scale with stars, descriptive blocks of even tags or text, photos and recommendations, and cumulative likes or dislikes. These platforms can suggest a business to its potential customers depending on a customer's response.

The author's research has several limitations; however, such limitations will give rise to more thorough and profound research on this topic in the future. First of all, the number of the respondents in this survey is 200 people which represents only 0.0022% of the population in Hochiminh city. According to Vietnam Groove (2022), the population of Hochiminh city is 9 million people but in reality more than 13 million people are living, working and studying in this city (Vietnam Groove 2022). Therefore, the number of respondents should be increased to achieve a more representative number. Secondly, the survey could be conducted in some other cities in Vietnam or in the whole country, instead of just being conducted in Hochiminh city so that we can see the huge influence of the uses and gratifications of SM shopping, specifically SM shopping through spontaneous sellers.

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APPENDIX

2. **What is your gender?**
    Giới tính của bạn là gì? *

    ○ MALE (NAM)

    ○ FEMALE (NỮ)

    ○ DON'T WANT TO ANSWER (KHÔNG MUỐN TRẢ LỜI)

3. **How old are you? (Bạn bao nhiêu tuổi?)** *

    ○ 20-25 years old (20-25 tuổi)

    ○ 26-30 years old (26-30 tuổi)

    ○ 31-35 years old (31-35 tuổi)

    ○ Over 35 years old (Trên 35 tuổi)

4. **What is your highest education? (Trình độ học vấn cao nhất của bạn là gì?)** *

    ○ High school (Trung học phổ thông)

    ○ Bachelor's degree (Bằng cử nhân)

    ○ Master's degree (Bằng thạc sĩ)

    ○ Others (Khác)

5. **What is your occupation? (Nghề nghiệp của bạn là gì?)** *

    ○ Student (Học sinh)

    ○ White-collar employee (Nhân viên văn phòng)

    ○ Blue-collar employee (Công nhân)

    ○ Unemployed (Thất nghiệp)

    ○ Other (Khác)

6. **What is your monthly income? (Thu nhập hàng tháng của bạn bao nhiêu?)** *

    ○ Under 400€ (Dưới 10 200 000 vnd)

    ○ Between 400€ and 1000€ (Từ 10 200 000 vnd đến 25 500 000 vnd)

    ○ Between 1000€ and 1500€ (Từ 25 500 000 vnd đến 38 200 000 vnd)

    ○ Above 1500€ (Trên 38 200 000 vnd)

7. **What are your most used websites when shopping online? (Trang web nào bạn sử dụng nhiều nhất khi mua sắm trực tuyến?)** *

    ☐ Youtube

    ☐ Facebook

    ☐ Instagram

    ☐ Zalo

    ☐ Other

8. **How often do you purchase by using social media platforms? (Bạn có thường xuyên mua hàng bằng cách sử dụng các nền tảng truyền thông xã hội không?)** *

    ○ once a month (Mỗi tháng một lần)

    ○ 2-4 times a month (2-4 lần một tháng)

    ○ 4-6 times a month (4-6 lần một tháng)

    ○ More than 6 times a month (Hơn 6 lần một tháng)

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9. How do you agree with the following statements? (Bạn đồng ý như thế nào với những nhận định sau đây?) *

	Totally disagree (Cực kỳ không đồng ý)	Somewhat disagree (Phần nào không đồng ý)	Neutral (Trung lập)	Somewhat agree (Phần nào đồng ý)	Totally agree (Vô cùng đồng ý)
Online shopping on social media is time-efficient and convenient (Mua sắm trực tuyến trên mạng xã hội tiết kiệm thời gian và thuận tiện)	○	○	○	○	○
Online shopping on social media provides a wide range of items to consumers (Mua sắm trực tuyến trên mạng xã hội cung cấp nhiều mặt hàng cho người tiêu dùng)	○	○	○	○	○
Online shopping on social media offers good deals or discounts (Mua sắm trực tuyến trên phương tiện truyền thông xã hội các ưu đãi hoặc giảm giá tốt)	○	○	○	○	○
Online shopping on social media is safe and trustworthy (Mua sắm trực tuyến trên mạng xã hội an toàn và đáng tin cậy)	○	○	○	○	○
I find it entertaining and fun to shop on social media from individual retailers (Tôi thấy việc mua sắm trên mạng xã hội từ các nhà bán lẻ cá nhân thật thú vị và thú vị)	○	○	○	○	○
It is important that social media shopping pages provide information that are of interest to me (Điều quan trọng là các trang mua sắm trên mạng xã hội cung cấp thông tin mà tôi quan tâm)	○	○	○	○	○
Others' reviews in the comment box are important and useful in aiding my shopping decisions (Đánh giá của người khác trong hộp bình luận rất quan trọng và hữu ích trong việc hỗ trợ quyết định mua sắm của tôi)	○	○	○	○	○

(Rrustemi et al. 2021; Dolan 2015)