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FACTORS AFFECTING SOCIAL COMMERCE INTENTION: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

SCAN ME

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Abstract

Recently, there has been a significant increase in the use of social media, especially among the new generation of users. In parallel with this increase, social media platforms have highlighted the concept of social commerce - an extension of e-commerce - and put it on the current agenda. In social commerce, social media platforms are used to share, create, and request product information, perceptions, and views, with customers also making purchases.

The social commerce intention of the new generation via social media platforms is the focus of this study. This study investigates the social commerce intention of students at a public university in Yalova, Turkey, to purchase products via Instagram and the factors that affect this intention. 296 students participated in the study. Findings suggest that the price and reputation of social commerce vendors positively affect user trust. Also, habit, perceived ease of use, and hedonic motivation also positively affect social commerce intention. Trust in the social vendor positively affects social commerce intention. Other hypotheses are rejected. This study contributes to the literature by analysing the role of different factors in social commerce intention.

1. Introduction

Social media has changed the world in many ways and has become an integral part of everyday internet use. In April 2023, the number of global internet users was 5.18 billion, representing approximately 64.6 per cent of the total world population. Among these internet users, approximately 4.8 billion people, 59.9 per cent of the world population, are active social media users. The average daily time spent on social media and messaging applications is 144 minutes (Statista, 2023). This rapid development and widespread use of social media has led to changes in many areas, from the way people access information to the way they demand political change. These changes have also impacted commerce, improving customer relationships and leading to the emergence of new electronic marketplaces (Ortiz-Ospina, 2019; Vatanasakdakul et al., 2023).

The rapid development of technology and internet access that enables online buying and selling has accelerated and facilitated the transition from traditional shopping methods to online shopping. In the new market environment known as electronic commerce (e-commerce), online shopping has become possible on many different platforms. As a result, online shopping has become a part of social life with the rapidly increasing use of the internet and mobile devices. Through the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic, by 2020, 4 out of 5 people in the world who use the internet in 2020 experienced e-commerce. Also under the influence of the Covid 19 pandemic, the frequency of e-commerce purchases by e-commerce consumers has increased. The number of companies participating in e-commerce in Turkey has increased by 42 per cent since 2015, expanding the local ecosystem. E-marketplaces have facilitated the transition of businesses to e-commerce and have become an important shopping channel for consumers. Looking at the final consumption expenditure of domestic households, e-commerce accounted for 8 per cent. 63 per cent of e-commerce purchases were made through mobile applications (TÜBİSAD, 2021). According to the results of the Household Information Technology Use Survey conducted by the Turkish Institute of Statistics, 94.1 per cent of households had access to the internet from home in 2022. While the rate of households with internet

access from home was 7 per cent in 2004, it was 94.1 per cent in 2022. On the other hand, the rate of households with portable computers such as laptops, tablets and netbooks increased from 0.9 per cent to 46.6 per cent, and the rate of households with mobile phones increased from 53.7 per cent to 99.2 per cent (TÜBİSAD, 2022; TÜİK, 2022). In January 2023, there were 71.38 million internet users in Turkey. Turkey's internet penetration rate was 83.4 per cent of the total population at the beginning of 2023. According to January 2023 data, there are 62.55 million social media users in Turkey. At the beginning of 2023, the proportion of individuals using social media in Turkey stood at 73.1% of the total population, as documented by Datareportal (2023). With the widespread adoption of internet connectivity, mobile technologies and social media, these platforms have become a conducive arena for consumers to make quick and convenient purchases.

Social media platforms provide new opportunities for businesses and consumers, and different types of social media are being used to create virtual commerce platforms (Holsapple et al., 2018). However, consumers' sharing and commenting on the products and services they have experienced has led companies to produce content on social media platforms. Companies continue both promotional and marketing activities through these channels, enabling consumers to more easily participate in social commerce activities through these applications (Friedrich, 2015). The increasing use of social media has led to the emergence of numerous businesses that were initially founded on social platforms and have subsequently shifted their focus to social commerce (Cha, 2009). Social media platforms have contributed to the emergence of social commerce, which is an extension of e-commerce (Lin et al., 2019). Social media platforms have become popular channels for social commerce due to their large user base and features that facilitate product discovery, sharing, and purchasing. Social commerce has emerged as a new e-commerce due to the technological developments triggered by the popularity of social media on various platforms and social networking sites (Liang & Turban, 2011; Hajli, 2015; Al-Kubaisi & Abu-Shanab, 2022). These technological developments have brought more customer interaction and greater social impact via social media platforms. (Hajli, 2013; Hajli et al., 2014).

Numerous social media platforms exist, each serving distinct usage intentions and possessing distinctive attributes, and there is limited information on the effects of these platforms on platform users' purchasing behaviour and perceptions of social commerce activities (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Bolton et al., 2013; Hajli et al., 2017; Yahia et al., 2018). In addition, although social commerce is an important trend worldwide, it is only effectively used for marketing activities in Turkey (TÜBİSAD, 2021). Recently, there has been a notable increase in the use of social media in Turkey, especially among the younger generation. Considering all these developments, it is of great importance to determine the factors affecting social commerce in the local ecosystem and their effects, especially to identify the trends of social commerce among the new generation users who are known to use the technology very frequently. Platform users' perceptions are directly related to online shoppers' experiences and perceptions, trust and other related issues (Wang et al., 2016). The intention of the new generation to engage in e-commerce through social media platforms is the focus of this study due to the lack of research on the trust perceptions of the new generation users in the e-commerce environment. This study focuses on the social commerce intentions of a specific group of consumers using social media platforms. More specifically, this study examines the product purchase intentions of students studying at a state university and the factors that influence them via Instagram. In this regard, a questionnaire was designed by reviewing the existing literature. The research model and hypotheses are tested in the light of the data collected through this survey.

2. Theoretical Framework

Social commerce is an emerging trend that has transformed the online shopping experience by enabling online retailers to build long-term relationships with customers and increase sales (Dhaigude & Mohan, 2023). The term social commerce was first mentioned by Yahoo in 2005 and refers to websites where people can share personal experiences, give each other advice, search for and then buy products and services (Wang & Zhang, 2012). In the last decade, the development of smartphones, social networks, and applications has led to an increase in social commerce (Dincer & Dincer, 2023; Paramita, 2023). Social commerce refers to the use of social media platforms to buy and sell products or services, combining the social elements of online interactions with the benefits of e-commerce. Engaging in e-commerce activities and transactions within the social media environment, typically via social networks, is referred to as social commerce. Essentially, social commerce can be described as a subdivision of e-commerce that enhances e-commerce operations and transactions while fostering favorable interactions between companies and a broad spectrum of customers, including those from remote locations (Liang and Turban, 2011; Park & Kim, 2014; Pouti et al., 2020).

Social commerce is one of the major innovations in online commerce (Yadav et al., 2013; Zhou et al., 2013; Dorfleitner & Scheckenbach, 2022). Various social media platforms have incorporated social networking tools into e-commerce. Social commerce differs from mirror trading, which involves copying and reflecting the investment strategies of other traders, including

signalers, signal providers or trade leaders. The intention of social commerce has increased due to benefits such as reduced user costs, professional manner and information transparency (Glaser & Risius, 2018). Social commerce platforms characterise a unique context of social media platforms, as there is a lack of understanding of the role of customers' previous experience with social commerce, especially from the perspective of trust (Reith et al., 2020). Thus, social commerce platforms, through social media platforms, allow a free flow of information between market actors, allowing financial markets to reach a higher level of transparency (Forcellini & Vivoli, 2019).

Social commerce customers create exchange-related activities within their computer-mediated social networks by satisfying the need for recognition, purchase, pre-purchase and post-purchase stages of a transaction process, primarily using social network sites for social interactions. Online customers act as the main opinion seekers in social commerce (Kang & Johnson, 2013). Social commerce customers seek an informative, transparent and engaging shopping experience at the best price (Yahia et al., 2018). In this regard, social commerce is a new e-commerce stream that enables consumers to generate content based on social interactions (Hajli, 2015). Online communities, including social network sites, interact to share opinions, information and personal experiences. The future of social commerce looks promising, as most companies support the development of online communities as a new social commerce strategy. Online communities share their information and perceptions about the products and services they experience (Hajli, 2015).

In today's e-commerce practices, social media plays a fundamental role in creating value for customers (Rahman et al., 2020). Social commerce is growing rapidly thanks to Web 2.0 and Web 3.0 applications that are widely used in e-commerce. These advanced web technologies encourage active user interaction and the use of social media. (Esmaeili & Hashemi 2019; Rahman et al., 2020). Social commerce is a fast-growing e-commerce platform that uses social media and digital social interaction to increase brand awareness and drive sales. This practice of buying and selling via social media creates a reliable and sustainable platform for both buyers and sellers, serving as an alternative to traditional online methods. Consumers interact with social media platforms to make informed purchasing decisions and search for the best prices. This is where social commerce comes in. Social commerce uses social media platforms to buy and sell various products and services (Liang & Turban, 2011; Kim & Park, 2013). In e-commerce, value creation is achieved by facilitating connections among actors. In contrast, in social commerce, the primary source of value is a network of interactions among buyers and vendors (Hajli et al., 2017). In social commerce, social media platforms have been used to share, create, and enquire about product information, perceptions and views with making purchases by the customers. Consumers can access important information on social commerce platforms through published ratings, reviews, recommendations, and referrals (Hajli, 2015).

Leading social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube offer features that allow users to share their opinions about purchased products or services. These features increase user engagement and facilitate electronic word-of-mouth communication, social interaction, and sharing, all of which can have a significant impact on online sales (Khan, 2017; Phang et al., 2013). At the same time, this interaction fosters an increased level of trust among users. In social commerce research, purchase intention is often studied as a dependent variable, and trust is a critical factor in this context (Gibreel et al., 2018). In the research model proposed in this study, trust is included as a mediating variable between social vendor (s-vendor) characteristics and social commerce intention. In the following section of the study, the hypotheses related to the proposed research model (Figure 1) are explained along with the relevant literature.

2.1. Social Commerce Intention

Intentions are motivational factors that reveal how much effort people are willing to make to perform a behaviour and how much effort they plan to make. As a general rule, the stronger the intention to engage in a behaviour, the higher the probability of performing that behaviour. However, in order for a behavioural intention to find expression in behaviour, the behaviour in question must be under voluntary control, that is, the person must be able to decide whether or not to perform the behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). Studies in different fields in the literature have revealed the effect of behavioural intention on usage behaviour (Pavlou & Fygenson, 2006; Venkatesh et al., 2012; Jeyaraj et al., 2022). According to the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology 2 (UTAUT2), behavioural intention and usage behaviour are two different variables (Venkatesh et al., 2012). In this study, the variable "social commerce intention" is used in the sense of "behavioural intention to shop on Instagram in the future". There are studies investigating the effect of social commerce and behavioural intention in the literature (Sheikh et al., 2019; Rahman et al., 2020; Jeyaraj et al., 2022). Measuring the behavioural intentions of online customers in social commerce has been quite challenging (Zhang et al., 2014). In this study, the social commerce trend refers to a consumer's intention to purchase products from social media platforms. Various studies have used user participation and purchase intention to measure social commerce intention (Liang et al., 2011; Hajli, 2015; Bhat & Singh, 2018; Wu & Horng, 2022; Zhou et al., 2023).

2.2. S-vendor Characteristics

Social commerce has a number of unique features that make it easier to build trust, even though it is a subset of e-commerce. What sets social commerce apart from conventional e-commerce platforms is its incorporation of social components. Within social commerce sites, there exists an array of attributes like customer ratings and reviews, user endorsements and referrals, tools for social shopping, and virtual communities. Collectively, these attributes cultivate a dependable atmosphere where various individuals - spanning from friends and family to acquaintances - actively contribute content that shapes the endorsement and transaction of products and services. This participation spans a spectrum of feedback that includes both positive and negative sentiments, reviews, ratings and testimonials that reflect their past and current experiences (Linda, 2010). Social commerce users rely on social evaluations, or insights shared by other users, as a cornerstone of their purchasing decisions. Therefore, the quality of information, the effectiveness of communication between users and sellers, and the dynamics of word-of-mouth exchange are of paramount importance in shaping the evolution of trusted social commerce platforms (Kim & Park, 2013).

Numerous studies in the literature have highlighted the important role that trust plays in the context of social commerce (Kim & Park, 2013; Cheng et al., 2019; Sharma et al., 2019; Leong et al., 2020; Tseng, 2023). However, limited research has focused on exploring perceptions of s-vendor characteristics (Kim & Park, 2013). In an effort to better understand these characteristics, numerous studies have been conducted (Kim et al., 2013; Dennis et al., 2016; Hajli et al., 2017; Yahia et al., 2018). According to Kim and Park (2013), the characteristics of social commerce include trust, communication, word of mouth, information quality, security and financial feasibility. The study also emphasises that the vendor must have the competence and motivation to effectively meet consumer expectations in order to build lasting trust. The qualitative research conducted by Yahia et al. (2018) highlights that certain characteristics of a vendor should be identified in the dimensions of price advantage (the vendor sells its products online at a lower price), reputation (such as good reviews about the vendor, consumers recommend this vendor) and hedonic effort (the vendor appeals to consumers, such as promotional products, product returns, free shipping options, and takes care of communication with its followers). The studies have concluded that vendor characteristics significantly affect users' trust (Jarvenpaa et al., 2000; De Wulf et al., 2001; Janda et al., 2002; McKnight et al., 2002; Koufaris & Hampton-Sosa, 2004; Liao et al., 2006; Park et al., 2012; Kim & Park, 2013; Yahia et al., 2018). Accordingly, the hypotheses are put forward as follows;

H1a. The s-vendor price advantage positively affects users' trust.

H1b. The s-vendor reputation positively affects the user's trust.

H1c. The s-vendor hedonic efforts positively affect the user's trust.

H1d. Social interactions with the s-vendor positively affect the user's trust.

H1e. The s-vendor return policy positively affects users' trust.

2.3. Perception of the Platform

Social commerce platforms combine classical trading functions with online interaction and communication through social networks. Social commerce platforms provide the infrastructure to display traders' profiles to others, similar to social networks (Glaser & Risius, 2018). Social commerce platforms have been analysed with comparatively small datasets, and most studies focus on the financial perspective, examining the performance of traders on social commerce platforms (Dorfleitner et al., 2018). Platform perceptions represent consumers' perceptions of the environment in which they shop, as they exchange goods via social media.

Perceived ease of use of social commerce platforms and perceived hedonic motivation may be influential in understanding the adoption of social commerce platforms (Yahia et al., 2018). Perceived ease of use is defined as "the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system requires no effort" (Davis, 1989). According to Davis (1989), perceived ease of use has a direct effect on behavioural intention. In this study, perceived ease of use refers to "the degree to which a person believes that using social media to make purchases will not require effort". According to some studies, facilitating conditions, ease of use, habit and hedonic motivation directly influence behavioural intention (Pahnila et al., 2011; Venkatesh et al., 2012; Escobar-Rodríguez & Carvajal-Trujillo, 2013). People physically interact with their social environment and socialise through online networks such as Instagram, Facebook and Twitter (Pelster & Breitmayer, 2019). According to Yahia et al. (2018), the main components that make up the perception of social media platforms of users based on the UTAUT model (Venkatesh et al., 2012); habit (users perform shopping on social media as a habit), perceived ease of use (users of the belief that you can do your shopping without spending too much effort from the social media degree) and hedonic motivation (fun social platform while shopping or enjoy as) are committed. The studies have determined that perceived ease of use affects intention behaviour (Davis, 1989; Venkatesh & Davis, 2000; Lee et al., 2003; Venkatesh et al., 2012). Farivar et al. (2017) stated that habituation and hedonic motivation directly affect behavioural intention. Mikalef et al. (2013), Escobar-Rodríguez & Carvajal-Trujillo (2013), and Venkatesh et al. (2012) found that habit and

hedonic motivation positively affect behavioural intention. Accordingly, the hypotheses are put forward as follows;

H2a. Habit positively affects s-commerce intention.
H2b. Perceived ease of use positively affects s-commerce intention.
H2c. Hedonic motivation positively affects s-commerce intention.

2.4. Trust in Online Contexts

Trust has been studied in various disciplines including philosophy, sociology, economics, marketing and management (Rousseau et al., 1998; Blois, 1999; Jarvenpaa, 2000; Corbitt et al., 2003; Yousafzai et al., 2009). Trust in online shopping environments is critical, but the lack of face-to-face communication is becoming more apparent, and a high level of user-generated content is becoming increasingly important on social platforms (Hajli, 2015; Featherman & Hajli, 2016).

Research in the literature highlights that customers' purchase intention is largely dependent on their perception of trust (Kang & Johnson, 2013; Hajli et al., 2017). Kim and Park (2013) identified the antecedents of trust and its direct impact on purchase intention and word-of-mouth intention on social commerce platforms. In this study, size, reputation, communication, information quality, economic feasibility, transaction security and word-of-mouth were identified as critical antecedents of trust. At the same time, this study examined the impact of trust due to the fact that social commerce platforms are considered an unpredictable environment and there is no face-to-face interaction between buyers and sellers (Kim & Park, 2013). Pratono (2018) argues that trust in social commerce allows online retailers to access pricing and selling opportunities, which has a positive impact on their performance. Studies have shown that online users who trust social commerce sites are more likely to engage in shopping activities on these platforms. This trust factor encourages active participation in financial transactions and reduces psychological barriers associated with online purchases (Kim & Park, 2013; Yahia et al., 2018; Lăzăroiu et al., 2020). As a result, trust is recognized as an important component in the functioning of social networks (Hajli, 2015).

Social commerce has some unique characteristics that help to form trust. Some examples of such characteristics are communication, information quality, word of mouth, customer reviews and ratings, user referrals and recommendations (Thomas et al., 2019). Thus, social commerce relies on social reviews to make purchasing decisions. In this study, trust is taken as a critical point in an online context as a means of the sense of belief in the trustworthiness of the exchanging parties, and uncertainty is generally higher in social commerce transactions due to the lack of face-to-face interactions (Featherman & Hajli, 2016; Hajli et al., 2017). Also, trust in social commerce activities may be supported by customer experiences and reviews posted in virtual communities and forums (Hajli et al., 2017). In the literature, trust has been found to affect s-commerce intention positively (Lu et al., 2010; Shin, 2010; Kim & Park, 2013; Kang & Johnson, 2013; Zhou et al., 2013; Hajli, 2015; Teh et al., 2015; Lu et al., 2016; Shanmugam et al., 2016; Sullivan & Kim, 2018). Accordingly, the hypothesis is put forward as follows:

H3. Trust in the s-vendor positively affects s-commerce intention.

2.5. Social Support

Social support arises from interactions between consumers within online communities, which create a social atmosphere and motivate others to participate. The availability of reliable information within these virtual communities motivates consumers to share their insights, information and personal experiences about a product with their peers. This process fosters social support as individuals provide both informational and emotional assistance to fellow customers seeking such guidance (Tseng, 2023).

Social support contributes to problem solving both directly and indirectly by facilitating the exchange of information, advice and personal experiences in virtual environments (Romaniuk, 2012). It's crucial to understand how individuals perceive their social connections, particularly within the context of social media. The practice of mutual support is a common feature of support groups where effective communication is fundamental. Shopping has traditionally been associated with social experiences, and the social networks that consumers engage with allow them to connect with other consumers (Yahia et al., 2018). The promotion of social support and the encouragement of mutual assistance among customers are conducive to the growth of social commerce (Zhang et al., 2014). Liang et al. (2011) proposed social support in their social commerce intention model as a means of supportive content exchanged on the social platform, which makes users feel respected and cared for as a result of their participation. Social support has been used as a multidimensional construct with two main dimensions: informational and emotional (Chen & Shen, 2015). As a result of the emotional connection and the valuable and meaningful information received, online customers make better purchase decisions (Choi et al., 2011). Social exchange theory can be applied to the social network sites context as a platform for users in online communities as users receive informational and emotional support from other community members (Sheikh et al., 2019). Some studies on social networking sites on users' social support intention and website quality were

the significant relational drivers of social commerce to inquire and recommend commercial offers (Liang et al., 2011; Bhat & Singh, 2018). Social commerce incorporates different layers such as individual, conversation, community and commercial levels to create value among multiple actors (Hajli et al., 2017). Several researchers have found that online social support has a positive impact on individuals' social commerce intention (Liang et al., 2011; Naylor et al., 2012; Wang et al., 2012; Tsai et al., 2012; Sheikh et al., 2017). Accordingly, we put forward the following hypotheses:

H4. Social support positively moderates the relationship between trust and s-commerce intention.

H5. Social support positively affects s-commerce intention.

The proposed research model and the hypotheses tested are shown in Figure 1.

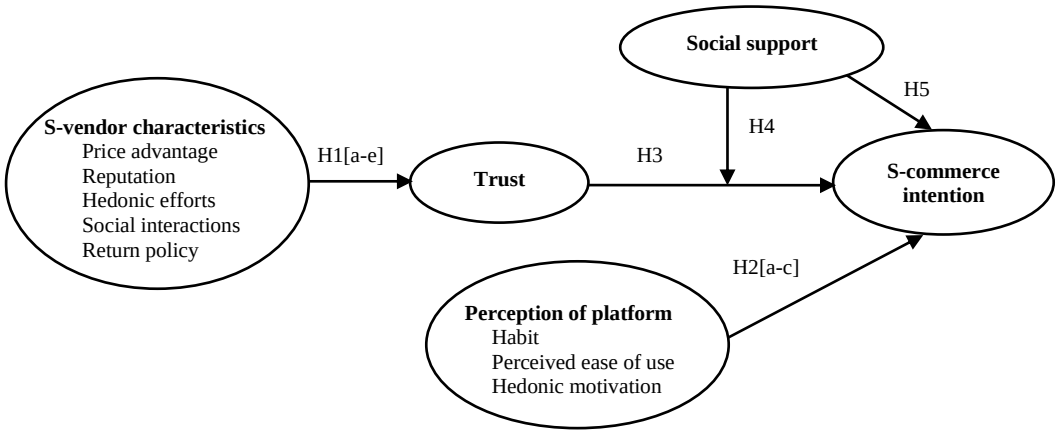

Figure 1. Research Model

3. Methods

3.1. Study Sample and Data Collection

The constructs of the model are measured by adopting items from relevant existing scales in the literature. Measures of s-vendor characteristics (price advantage, reputation, hedonic effort, social interaction), platform perceptions (habit, perceived ease of use, hedonic motivation), trust, social support, and s-commerce intention were adopted from Yahia et al.'s (2018) study. All items were measured using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree). The survey was carried out on 296 students at a state university in Yalova, Turkey.

3.2. Sample Characteristics

The descriptive statistics are shown in Table 1. As shown in the table, the rate of participants who do not have an Instagram account is 6.8 per cent. The number of participants with no online shopping experience is 20, and the rate of participants who have never shopped on Instagram is 60 per cent. 47.3 per cent of participants use Instagram 1-2 hours per day. The payment method that participants find most secure when shopping online is cash on delivery with a rate of 76 per cent.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics

	N	%		N	%		N	%
Gender			**Instagram account ownership**			**Payment type's security perception**		
Female	114	38.5	Yes	276	93.2	Cash on delivery	225	76.0
Male	182	61.5	No	20	6.8	Money order	6	2.0
Total	296	100.0	Total	296	100.0	Credit card	11	3.7
						None	54	18.2
						Total	296	100.0
Online shopping experience			**Have you ever shopped on Instagram?**					
						Time spent on Instagram		
Web sites	269		Yes	118	39.9	Less than two h in a week	15	5.1
Mobile apps	148		No	178	60.1	3-4 h in a week	41	13.9
Social media	99		Total	296	100.0	1-2 h daily	140	47.3
None	20					3-4 h daily	66	22.3
						5+ h daily	21	7.1
						None	13	4.4
						Total	296	100.0

4. Results

PLS path modelling was used for data analysis. PLS is particularly suitable for structural measurement models with small sample sizes and exploratory research aimed at testing and validating models (Hair et al., 2011; Henseler, 2012; Ringle et al., 2015). Our study has a relatively small but sufficient sample size (n = 296), which makes PLS-SEM a robust analysis technique for our research (Reinartz et al., 2009). A two-stage analysis approach was followed, starting with the measurement model assessment to confirm validity and reliability, and then the structural model analysis (Hair et al., 2011). The data were analysed using SmartPLS 3 (Ringle et al., 2015).

4.1. Measurement Model Results

Internal reliability was assessed using composite reliability (CR) and Cronbach's alpha (Table 2). All CR values are above 0.8, ranging from 0.850 to 0.960, indicating that all constructs have sufficient reliability (Hair et al., 2017; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). The Cronbach's alpha values of the constructs, with the exception of system habit and hedonic effects, are above 0.7 and range from 0.745 to 0.938 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Nunnally, 1978). The habit and hedonic effects constructs have alpha values of 0.699 and 0.697, which are considered to be within the acceptable range (Loewenthal, 2001). The absolute standardised first-order external loadings range from 0.687 to 0.947; all items are above 0.5, with most items exceeding 0.7 (Chin, 1998; Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The validity of the measurement model was examined using convergent and discriminant validity. All constructs had AVE values greater than 0.5, ranging from 0.656 to 0.890, confirming convergent validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell-Larcker criterion. The results in the table below confirm discriminant validity as the square roots of the AVE of each construct are higher than the cross loadings (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2010) (Table 3).

Table 2. Validity and reliability

Constructs	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Habit	0.699	0.868	0.768
Hedonic efforts	0.697	0.860	0.755
Hedonic motivation	0.926	0.953	0.871
Perceived ease of use	0.745	0.850	0.656
Price advantage	0.811	0.913	0.840
Reputation	0.796	0.881	0.712
Return policy	0.793	0.906	0.828
S-commerce intention	0.938	0.960	0.890
Social interactions	0.859	0.934	0.876
Social support	0.894	0.934	0.826
Trust	0.927	0.954	0.873

Table 3. Discriminant validity (Fornell-Lacker)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Habit	0.876										
Hedonic efforts	0.119	0.869									
Hedonic motivation	0.585	0.255	0.933								
Perceived ease of use	0.367	0.365	0.549	0.810							
Price advantage	0.126	0.076	0.083	0.127	0.916						
Reputation	0.404	0.479	0.545	0.403	0.092	0.844					
Return policy	0.164	0.682	0.312	0.345	0.069	0.570	0.910				
S-commerce intention	0.521	0.308	0.742	0.500	0.118	0.472	0.315	0.943			
Social interactions	0.063	0.719	0.312	0.321	0.092	0.532	0.783	0.267	0.936		
Social support	0.271	0.098	0.278	0.173	0.071	0.169	-0.041	0.220	-0.048	0.909	
Trust	0.476	0.231	0.429	0.373	0.138	0.308	0.218	0.450	0.174	0.160	0.934

4.2. Structural Model Results

The structural model was assessed after confirming the reliability and validity of the measurement model. The predictive power of the model was evaluated with R^2 scores. The R^2 values of s-commerce intention and trust are 0.587 and 0.121, above moderate and minimum levels, respectively (Cohen, 1988; Ringle et al., 2012).

A bootstrapping technique was employed to assess the significance of path coefficients (Henseler et al., 2009). A resampling bootstrapping (5000 resamples) of 296 observations was run. The results on path coefficient, t-values and p- values are presented in the table below. Hypotheses H1a, H1b, H2a, H2b, H2c, and H3 are accepted; the other hypotheses are rejected.

Table 4. Assessment of the structural model

Hypothesis		Path coefficients	T-values	P-values	Statistically Significant?
H1a	Price_advantage -> Trust	0.111	1,861	0.063	Yes
H1b	Reputation -> Trust	0.260	3,229	0.001	Yes
H1c	Hedonic_efforts -> Trust	0.150	1,600	0.110	No
H1d	Social_interactions -> Trust	-0.131	1,327	0.185	No
H1e	Return_policy -> Trust	0.063	0.658	0.511	No
H2a	Habit -> S-commerce_intention	0.100	1,798	0.072	Yes
H2b	Perceived_ease_of_use -> Scommerce_intention	0.101	2,118	0.034	Yes
H2c	Hedonic_motivation -> S-commerce_intention	0.585	10,639	0.000	Yes
H3	Trust -> S-commerce_intention	0.122	2,638	0.008	Yes
H4	Moderating Effect 1 -> S-commerce_intention	-0.054	1,485	0.138	No
H5	Social_support -> S-commerce_intention	-0.001	0.024	0.980	No

5. Conclusions and Discussion

Social commerce, the combination of social networking and online shopping, represents a significant shift in e-commerce. This new concept has the potential to shape the future of online shopping by leveraging social influence, offering personalised experiences and improving the overall shopping experience. However, it is crucial to address challenges such as data protection, maintaining customer service standards and facing strong competition. The convergence of social media and e-commerce has reshaped the shopping environment, creating new connections between consumers, brands and influencers. As companies adopt social commerce strategies and platforms continue to evolve, this transformative trend is expected to continue.

In this research, we examined different factors that influence social commerce on Instagram through the development of a conceptual framework. The research model proposed was empirically tested. This study contributes to the literature by analysing the role of different factors in social commerce intention. We used Instagram as a suitable platform for social commerce. The results demonstrate that some hypotheses have been accepted and others have not. Hypotheses H1a, H1b, H2a, H2b, H2c, and H3 are accepted; the other hypotheses are rejected. Thus, s-vendor characteristics of price and reputation positively affect users' trust. Also, habit, perceived ease of use and hedonic motivation positively affect social commerce intention. Trust in the social vendor positively affects social commerce intention. In this research the university students, who uses the internet and technology quite widely and prefers buying a product on social media platforms, has been selected. It is important to note that social commerce intention can vary among individuals and across different social media platforms. Demographics, cultural influences, and platform-specific features can impact users' intentions. Therefore, businesses and marketers need to understand these factors to effectively leverage social media platforms for social commerce. This research investigates some factors through an understanding of social commerce. Findings suggest that s-vendor price and reputation characteristics positively affect user trust. Also, trust in the s-vendor, habit, perceived ease of use, and hedonic motivation affect s-commerce intention. These results are in line with the majority of the literature (Liang & Turban 2011; Liang et al., 2011; Hajli, 2015; Teh et al., 2015; Shanmugam et al., 2016; Sullivan & Kim, 2018; Ben Yahya, 2018).

Social commerce has dramatically expanded during the last decade with social commerce strategies. The research findings have implications for both theoretical understanding and practical applications. This study adds to the academic discourse by exploring the operational aspects of social commerce within social media platforms, such as Instagram. This study also helps

to understand the effects of the social commerce characteristics on s-commerce intention. Our findings have several practical implications for companies as trust has been a critical issue in s-commerce as it plays an essential role in increasing purchase intentions. Companies involved in social commerce need to develop effective strategies to deal with the rapid expansion of social media. Based on our findings, companies should prioritise building customer trust, enhancing their reputation and synchronizing their overall business strategy with their social commerce approach on social media platforms.

This study has some limitations and recommendations for future studies. First, the context is limited to Instagram, and future studies could test the research model with other social network sites, including Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. Hence, future research could assess the validity of the model on alternative platforms and explore the impact of different platform types on the dynamics of social commerce. In this research, we relied on a cross-sectional survey; longitudinal studies would be more beneficial.

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