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# **The Mediating Role of Trust, Attitude and Satisfaction on the Relationship Between Perceived Usefulness, Perceived Ease of Use And Social Commerce Intention Among University Students in Saudi Arabia**

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**ABSTRACT:** Social Networking Sites (SNS) have been considered as a new and Social Networking Sites (SNS) are second generation web applications ,social commerce intention has become increasingly attractive and enhance by users of social networking sites that often-received attitudinal beliefs from contemporary users. This study is designed to test the influence of attitudinal beliefs (Perceived Usefulness and Perceived Ease of use) as well as mediating effect of trust, attitude and satisfaction on social commerce intention among university students in Saudi Arabia. Thus, a framework that seeks to test these relationships is developed. Equally, the study emphasizes that the utilization of complimentary social network sites by university students, exerts a robust consequence on their social commerce intention. Accordingly, the study establishes that this relationship is mediated by trust, attitude and satisfaction. This paper includes supportive literature to corroborate the conceptualized model in the context of Saudi Arabia.

**KEYWORDS:** Trust, Attitude, Satisfaction, Social commerce Intention, Saudi Arabia.

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

The internet has afforded many consumers opportunity to use social media such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and others, without necessarily interact with one another physically (Lu & Yang 2011; Tiwari, Lane & Alam, 2016). This milestone is achieved through Web 2.0 applications that have helped to transfer the internet to a social environment through the introduction of social media which makes it possible for individuals to interact and generate content online (Lai & Turban, 2008). As at 2013, Facebook was hosting 1 billion monthly active users while Twitter users have reached 340 million per month in the same year (Cheston, Flickinger, & Chisolm, 2013). In 2018, the number of social media users is 2.62 billion (Statista, 2018a), and it is expected to reach 3.02 billion in 2021 (Statista, 2018a). Social Networking Sites (SNSs) a representative use of Web 2.0 is the most discussed topic today and the center-nerve of environment, as they allow consumers to participate in social activities and connect on the cyberspace (Lu & Hsiao, 2010; Chinomona, 2013; Hu, Ketinger & Poston, 2015).

In Saudi Arabia, the number of transactions through online have increased by 100 per cent, from \$278 million in 2002 to \$556 million in 2005 (Al Riyadh, 2006). Currently, the transaction value in digital payment has reached \$977.46 per user, while in Saudi Arabia the number of transaction values in digital payment reached to \$13,704 million for digital advert in 2018 (Statista, 2018b). In addition, the revenue in the Social Media Advertising segment amounts to US\$128 million in 2018 in Saudi Arabia (Statista, 2018c). Previously, social media tools have gained ground rapidly and have been used widely in online business by Saudi Arabia. For instance, in the Middle East, Saudi Arabia occupies second position with 13 million users of the Internet and the highest Facebook users (5.9 million). However, although Saudi Arabia occupies the largest position in the retail market of the Middle East, online sales comprise only a small percentage of total retail sales (Khalidi, Soudodi, & Syed Sand Abdalla, 2014). Thus, the use of social media to transact e-commerce is still low. To discover the reasons causing the slow rate of growth of e-commerce in Arab world and Saudi Arabia, many studies have been conducted. The main reasons often cited for the slow growth include poor ICT



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infrastructure, cultural issues, trust and privacy issue, absence of clear legislation, rules and procedures and legislation on how to protect the rights of all parties that are involved (Agamdi, 2008; Alrawi & Sabry, 2009).

However, the amount of studies concentrating on social commerce in Saudi Arabia is inadequate (AlGhamdi, Nguyen, Nguyen, & Drew, 2012). Therefore, few studies used Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) or extend it to cover attitudinal beliefs variables by integrating the TAM with a customer experience model (e.g. Hajli, 2016). Hajli and Lin (2016) are amongst the pioneer studies that extend TAM to explain the role of social media. Their study is an attempt to cover this issue by developing a model that is comprehensive and can explain the factors influencing consumers' acceptance of and participation in social commerce within the Saudi Arabian context. Based on the previous arguments, this study proposes a conceptual model to understand the phenomenon of social commerce within the Saudi Arabian context. On another side, despite that social commerce has been widely discussed among many researchers, the studies that describe social commerce in terms of characteristics that stimulate its usage intention are limited (Stephen & Toubia, 2010; Weijun & Lin, 2011; Hajli & Lin, 2016). Additionally, many of the existing studies only focused on the analysis of the social commerce market (Kim, 2011), as well as the disparities that exist between social commerce and other forms of e-commerce, and the adoption of e-commerce (Hsiao, Chuan-Chuan Lin, Wang, Lu, & Yu, 2010; Lin & Lu, 2011; Bansal & Chen, 2011). Therefore, empirical evidence has revealed that only a limited amount of previous studies has examined trust within the social commerce context with special reference to important features of social commerce that can bring about trust performance, towards purchase intentions (Kim & Pak, 2013). Importantly, Gefen (2002) has argued that paucity of trust is one of the main issues inhibiting or making the customers to be reticent about the adoption of online purchases. This fact has been also reiterated by Jones and Leonard (2008). Since social commerce is a new form of IS and a growing set of activities, understanding those factors that can influence consumers' trust in this important platform is very essential (Kim & Pak, 2013).

According to Friedrich (2015), of special interest to e-commerce companies today is determining which factors influence consumers' participation in social commerce. Because of lack of knowledge and dearth of studies that can aid the understanding of these emerging commerce technologies in social media, additional research efforts are urgently required to analyze and assess social commerce theoretically with the purpose of advancing the general comprehension of this expanding and important medium for both companies and individuals. The aim of this study is to identify the relevance of these factors in an online emerging market of Saudi Arabia. This study provides understanding in the phenomenon of social commerce in Saudi Arabia context by proposing conceptual framework of customers' intention to use social commerce, in trust, attitude, and satisfaction as mediating variables.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

**A. Social Commerce Intention:** social commerce is a new advancement in e-commerce which empowers consumers to generate content energetically on the Internet (Liang & Turban, 2011). Social commerce permits merchants to access various markets by taking advantage of social communication among customers (Hajli & Lin, 2016; Hajli et al. 2017). Social media is an influential tool for content generation which distinguishes social commerce from e-commerce, and it introduces new business models in the electronic commerce area because of its extreme popularity (Liang & Turban, 2011). The attraction of SNS applications is a key factor in the advancement of social media (Liang & Turban, 2011; Hajli & Lin, 2016). Effective social commerce aims to orchestrate a convincing customer experience where social communication are fully entrenched at every phase of the customer decision-making process, as argued by scholars (Huang & Benyoucef, 2013; Kim & Park, 2013). Since products have become technical in nature and increasingly complex, consumers are keen to gain recommendations (e.g., comments, ratings, and suggestions) and appropriate product information from others' experience and capability (Hajli & Sims, 2015).

This kind of information is called user-generated content and is professed to be a more trustworthy source of information than conventional media (Hajli & Sims, 2015). To facilitate the consumer's timely and perfect buying decisions, user generated content can be produced and disseminated rapidly using several social interaction activities (Hajli & Sims; Hajli, Sims, Zadeh, & Richard, 2017). Consequently, the research of social commerce seems a significant frontier for consumer research.

### **B. Linkages between Perceived Usefulness and Perceived Ease of use and trust :**

Perceived usefulness is defined as the degree to which a social networking community member believes that SNSs will enhance his or her social networking on the net. Davis (1989) asserts that individuals will nurse intention to use the site if he or she can cognitively appraise the site to be useful in achieving his/her networking performance. Bhattacharjee (2000) also posits that there is possibility that an individual will continue to use a social site if he/she perceives the site



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to be useful in connecting with other members of the community. Networkers who have accomplished the networking task of acquiring certain information in a resourceful way will likely exhibit stronger intentions for the social commerce site (Bhattacharjee, 2001).

Prior research shows that perceived usefulness has a significant effect on customer loyalty intention (Cyr, Hassanein, Head, & Ivanov, 2007). Furthermore, perceived usefulness has been proved empirically as an antecedent of trust (Liébana-Cabanillas, Munoz-Leiva, & Rejón-Guardia, 2013). This indicates that when users perceived a website to be useful, they will likely develop trust in the site since they will believe that the provider of such site is spending adequate resources to update the site in order to meet the needs of the community members (Casaló, Flavián, & Guinalfú, 2007). Trust as it were is a set of beliefs primarily comprising benevolence, competence and integrity of the SNSs provider (Casaló et al., 2007). Benevolence concept is premised on the fact that the trustee will not take advantage of the trust or at any slightest opportunity. Competence asserts that the trustee can perform according to the expectation while integrity is a strong belief that the service providers in all their dealings with their customers (Liébana-Cabanillas et al., 2013).

Several studies have established relationship between perceived usefulness and trust in different online context (Akhlaq & Ahmed, 2013; George & Kumar, 2013; Kim 2012). Perceived ease of use is regarded as believe which a social networking users hold that socializing through SNSs will be free of effort. All other things being equal, when socializing through a site is perceived to be easier to use there is every tendency that intention to use will be sustained. This is in line with the arguments of Davis (1989) who assert that improvements in ease of use may lead to increased performance.

In addition, a review of the literature on social commerce has equally revealed that trust and perceived ease of use are positively related because if the members of the community trust the web site, the networking becomes easier to perform while they also feel that they are in control of the site (Lu et al, 2016). This is also in line with the arguments of other authors who maintain that usability generally determines trust (Flavián, Guinalfú, & Gurrea, 2006), and hence trust in the electronic service. Therefore, a user-friendly SNSs will be perceived as more reliable and generate greater trust in the user if it requires less physical and mental effort to operate. Based on the above arguments, the following hypotheses are formulated:

H1: Perceived Ease of Use positively relates trust.

H2: Perceived Usefulness positively relates trust.

### **C. Linkages between Trust, Satisfaction and Attitude:**

A lot of discussion has ensued about the causal-relationship of trust and satisfaction. Many authors believe trust is the precursor of satisfaction in an exchange relationship (e.g. Armstrong & Yee 2001; Flaherty & Pappas 2000). For instance, Ratnasingham (1998) and Kim (2012) opined that trust determines satisfaction and which eventually leads to loyalty in electronic commerce. The trust has direct and indirect effects on a consumer's purchase decision and has a long-term impact on consumer e-loyalty through satisfaction (Kim, Kim, & Kandampully 2009). It has also been empirically proved to impact on attitude towards behavior in e-commerce and this is likely impact in social commerce like SNSs. Moreover, several studies have proved that trust from online social activities can be transferred to attitude in terms of transactions on social networking sites (Han & Windsor, 2011; Leonard, 2012). Consequently, the hypotheses are hereby formulated as follows:

H3: Trust mediates the relationship between emotional support and attitude.

H4: Trust mediates the relationship between Perceived privacy and satisfaction.

### **D. Linkages between Satisfaction and Attitude:**

Satisfaction must do with the ability of service provider to meet expectation of the customers in terms of product or service performance. When the expectation is met, the customer is satisfied, and versa. (Zeithaml, Berry & Parasuraman, 1996). In an online context, Eid (2011) proved that e-satisfaction is an antecedent of loyalty, and it is confirmed by several researchers (Chenet et al. 2010). In social commerce, the studies of Carlson and O'Cass (2010) and Yusliza and Ramayah (2012) found that consumers' evaluations of satisfaction with a web site have a significant positive influence on attitudes towards the site. Consequently, the hypothesis is hereby formulated as follows:

H5: Satisfaction positively relates to attitude

### **E. Linkages between satisfaction, attitude and social commerce intention:**

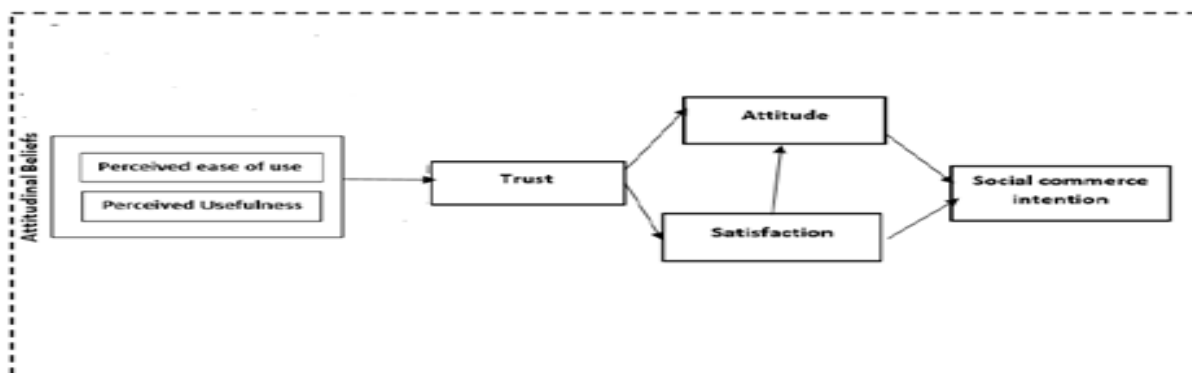
The literature has explained that satisfaction which may come in different forms such as recommendation may amplify intention to continue to use the sites (Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006; Watts & Dodds, 2007). In fact, comprehending the intentions and the purpose why the consumers use the service or network on sites has become an important assignment for marketers since the attitude of consumers are linked with these perceptions (Gursoy, Spangenberg, & Rutherford, 2006). In a traditional platform, behavioral intention is regarded as the likelihood that an individual will engage in

certain behavior, and it has been proved to be influenced by the level of satisfaction both in traditional and online settings (Ajzen&Fishbein, 1980). Hereby, it is logical to assume that when a person is satisfied with services rendered and formulate positive attitude towards social commerce, the possibly of developing intention to use the site will increase (Kim, 2013). Consequently, the hypothesis is hereby formulated as follows:

H6: Attitude mediates the relationship between trust and social commerce intention

H7: Satisfaction mediates the relationship between trust and social commerce intention.

Figure 1 illustrates the proposed framework of this study.  
attitudinal beliefs



**Figure 1. The Proposed Framework**

### III. METHODOLOGY

This is a conceptual paper which is carried out based on extensive review of literatures, articles, thesis and books. The proposed research will be a cross sectional study in which data will be collected through questioners. The respondent of the study will constitute the university's students from seven universities in Saudi Arabia

### IV. CONCLUSION

The literatures reviewed has shown that both Perceived Usefulness and Perceived Ease of use have been instrumental in enhancing a robust social network sites. The proposed framework further shows that university student in Saudi Arabia will be among the greatest beneficiaries of a robust and efficient social network sites. This hypothesize that trust, attitude and satisfaction mediate the relationship between attitudinal beliefs and social commerce intention. Further, data will be collected to examine the hypothesized relationships. In ensuring systematic and scientific value of this research, the brief procedures and sampling techniques as discussed in the Methodology section are followed.

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