Attitude towards Social Commerce: A Conceptual Model Regarding Consumer Purchase Intention and its Determinants

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Abstract: The evolution social commerce has changed the World of a business into online transaction. The changes has allows people communicate in an online network. With the advance of information technology, social commerce has quickly emerged as a new platform for buying activities. It represents a shift in consumers' thinking from the individual decision to collaborative decision. However, due to expansion users in the platform exposed to information exchange easily. Hence, the wide communication has potential exposed towards inaccurate information. Social commerce sites is a new platform for social networking based technology media to enable users to participate in the buying activities furthermore, the users can compare as well as sharing the information about the products or services in the online marketplace and communities. The aim of this paper is to propose a conceptual model regarding consumer purchase intention and its determinants. Some of the variables consist of social commerce constructs, social support, and purchase intention. The hypotheses are developed based on the previous studies and finally, a conceptual model of the study is proposed. In so doing, this paper expects to contribute to achieving a better understanding of purchase intention in social commerce.

Keywords: Social commerce, social media, social support, purchase intention

I. INTRODUCTION

Social media such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and WhatsApp has created new business in electronic commerce [1]. Recently, [2] reported that the users of social networks such as Facebook and Twitter are increasing as a tool for engagement. The combination of socialization and information sharing has increased the number of internet users for searching goods and services including, the process of buying and selling activities [3]

The usage of Internet users confirmed that 49.7 percent of users in Asia while 17 percent in Europe, 10.4 percent in Latin America, 10 percent in Africa, 3.8 percent in the Middle East, 8.2 percent in North

America and 0.7 percent in Australia [4]. Apart from these percentages, the largest usage subscriber of social media was Facebook and reported that Malaysia user was 92.21 percent following with the second largest social media was Twitter 2.43 percent, Pinterest reported 2.37 percent, YouTube 1.23 percent and Instagram stated 0.64 percent [5]. The researcher[6] identified Facebook as a leader in social media in the market and reported 1.5 billion users worldwide. The increase of social media has facilitated lots of interaction and knowledge transferred [2].Since then, social media as a platform for online communication channels [7]. Additionally, social media identified as a tool for consumers as well as business purposes sharing their information and knowledge into a new form of social commerce. Social commerce is a phenomenon, where organizations and people are falling into it and relying on network power. The background of this phenomenon begins with the idea that commercial activities can be stimulated through social activities. Unlike other technologies, social commerce has had a rapid intention. The usage of social commerce has allowed people to participate in new platforms of marketing, selling, reviewing, comparing, buying as well as sharing of products experiences [8]. Generally, consumers join social commerce as to seek the information when their less knowledge regarding products or services. Based on the information in social commerce platform this, would influence them in purchase intention. In fact, not only purchase intention but, the increasingly engage in social commerce indirectly would influence them to share with others that finally benefits to consumers.

Indeed, there are already many established organizations such as H&M, Dell, Selfridge, Channel, Dior and others already join a social commerce and ask their consumers to like and share their comments feedback about the products which help them to introduce their products to the new consumers at the same time [9] by so doing, it will influence them to purchase in social commerce. Moreover, such retailers of Amani Exchange, Tom's and Samsung and other service providers such insurance, airlines, and banks successfully used social commerce to enhance their profitability of the company [10]. Additionally, the benefits gained from s-commerce depend on the individual perception towards the information delivered and shared via such platforms [11]. However, the expansion user in the platform makes the information changed easily [12]thus, leading to inaccurate information [13]. Unfortunately, by identifying factors consumers purchase intention in socialcommerce are crucial as it generates more profitability in future. Since this community is free andconvenient, this may influence the users' interest to join and participate in discussion groups as well as confident [14]. In addition, consumers use social commerce platforms is to develop their relationship longer. Furthermore, they may look into good information product when participating in the platform's community and may share their knowledge, experiences and product expertise.

The fact that the users choose to participate in the platforms when they found that community has lots of information during adiscussion[15]. The discussion is more valuable and useful when social support exists. Social networking becomes crucial when the users' needs such social support [16]. Indeed, online social support identified as an important element that users may find on the social network. When consumers have less information, this social support might use to overcome this obstacle way.Social support has strong influences and complex in nature, especially when it involves in social commerce site. Whether it is affected by consumers' characteristics or the social environment these may influence them to purchase in social commerce.In fact, social support has not been clearly defined and unsystematically in the context of online network. Indeed, social support is needed by social commerce to enhance user-generated content in the community. When consumers have less information towards certain products or services, they may

force themselves to search and seek the information in various platforms like social commerce. In reality, consumers are influenced to use social commerce when social support perform at the same time [9].

However, social commerce is scattered and limited sources [17]. Furthermore, there are few studies looking at social commerce[18]. Some other researchers identified social commerce is still in early stages of development and limited in an online industry [9],[10].On the other hand, [17] revealed that social commerce is scattered and limited sources. Hence, this area of research is deserved to be studied. The main objective of the paper is to propose the model on social commerce constructs such as recommendations and referrals, ratings and reviews, forums and communities, social support as well as purchase intention. The proposed hypotheses are also provided. Finally, this study proposes a conceptual model to explain overall in social commerce.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This study uses social support theory and highlights important factors those may influence purchase intention in social commerce. Since the theory of social support is the most appropriate theory for explaining the purchase intention as a precursor a behavior, hence, this theory is selected for study the factors influence purchase intention in social commerce. The literature review will focus on the underpinning theory and will discuss the proposed hypothesis of this study.

(A) Social Commerce

Social commerce is a form of new business internet transaction based social media that allows the community to interact with users and the platform[20]. The concept behind social commerce has proved the community platform is valuable in the ocnsumers mind. The quality of information gathered in the platform might influence long-term relationships with customers, increasing company sales as well as encouraging loyalty to the business and products or services. This technology enhancement makes a huge difference with a new way of business from brick-and-mortar to brick-and-click such as Alibaba, Tenecentt, Amazon, and Groupon [21]. Generally, the increasing popularity of social networks has changed the concept of e-commerce into social commerce [22]. Previous study [23] posit that social commerce is a new way of online communication that involves text, picture, sound or moving image. Unfortunately, social commerce is crucial as it involves multiple of users' participation that makes friendship community longer. The collaboration among friends in social commerce network act as the best recommendations of the great advantages in social commerce that spreads quickly and faster's feedback which helps them in a purchase decision. In social commerce, consumers are linked to social groups that may result in purchase collectively rather than purchase in online individually[24]. Therefore, social commerce nowadays becomes crucial for researchers and scholars for those who are interested in this online technology[12].

Specifically, social commerce also helps in consumer's decision and intention as well as creates economic value when the process can easily browse and access by finger click. Previous literature argued the mission of social commerce is to expose consumers to join in online communities and sharing their interests, activities, experiences, and knowledge to other people around the world [25]. Additionally, social commerce is consistently growing daily. [26] reported that 96% of Americans have made an online purchase compared than Malaysia about 65.7% users' penetrated online market and expected will increase by 76.8% in 2021. The statistics portal Malaysia 2017 reported that revenue in the "Online Commerce" market amounts to

US$1,121m in 2017 and the revenue is expected to increase by 23.2 % resulting in a market volume of US$2,585m in 2021 and these statistics overall showsthat the largest contribution of Malaysian online commerce revenue was "Electronics & Media"with a marketvolume of US$425m in 2017. For this circumstance, it is proved the new big boom of social commerce may engage in purchases [10]

Despite rising concern of social commerce, there are various definitions of social commerce by previous researchers. [27] defined social commerce is a new platform that allows consumers in selling and buying activities of products or services that offers in an online marketplace. Meanwhile, [28] conceptualized social commerce is platforms where people can review base on ratings and reviews, recommendations and consumers suggestions as well as to help people know about the system that available in the online market. On the other hand, [29] identified social commerce is mediated by social media between online and offline environments. Furthermore, [8]defined social commerce as advancement technology media that allows the activities such selling and buying as well as sharing and comparing products or services. Some have defined social commerce as an advanced technology of web 2.0 thatenable events and participation between people such as blogs that involve article written by the community[30]. From above definitions of social commerce, it shows that the notion of social commerce is social media advantages that offer such commercial activities by getting long-term friendship community that enhances sales as well as purchase intention. This study defined social commerce as new advanced technology system that creates activities such selling and buying as well as sharing and entertainment that finally contribute to purchase intention.

Social commerce is based on three dimensions in social commerce constructs such as recommendations and referrals, forums and communities, ratings and reviews [31],[9]. However, [32] categorized social commerce constructs under six categories such as social media, rating and reviews, social shopping, social advertising, forum and communities and recommendations, and referrals.

Previous literature argued, most consumers are likely to use social commerce constructs as to get valid information based on consumer experiences[33]. Some other researcher mentioned that people are likely seeking to the online environment because multiple of users participate in social communication whereby they can easily respond when the question arrives [9]. In fact, these three constructs have strong voices and justifications on the internet for those who applyand join online social commerce [34]. Recommendations and referrals defined as suggestions based experiences that contribute to buying process [31].

Furthermore, [35] that recommendations platform would reduce consumers time and cost as well as helps in people decision. Therefore, this study explains recommendations and referrals as consumer suggestions about the product based on their experiences. Furthermore,forums and communities defined as combination platform to enable people sharing their experiences and suggestions products performance.The platform is more towards on sharing information regarding looking at the status of products or services [36]. Meanwhile, ratings and reviews, defined as indicators assessment towards products performance as well as sharing mechanism that would benefit other consumers to purchase. Since then, the effectiveness and information valuable social commerce in the platform, this would enhance consumers in purchase intention.

(B) Social support theory

Social support has been studied in various studies such as psychology, sociology and health studies [37]. Social support derived from social support theory. However, this study emphasizes on psychology that

explains the level of people mind and its functions towards the information based experiences [38].Social support theory explains how thesocialrelations in the community act when received information and influences them to become well-being behavior [39]. The theory highlights social support will be effective to overcomeunstable health condition and reducing the effects of stress, in fact, assists them in a good self-confidence. Some researchers identified social support as a social value from an online community [40].

Another literature posit that social support as information discussion in the network who are more concern and support to each other [41]. Meanwhile, [42] explained social support as people being cared and feel a responsibility as well as being help based on their experiences. Furthermore, [43] indicated social support as eager respond for the purpose of being ahelp to reduce people anxiety. On the other hand, defined social support as sharing and receiving information that provided in the community [44]. Generally, this study defined social support as new information knowledge by the person, which specifically refers to the ability of the individual to support and motivates them to each other and indirectly, influence them in purchase intention. By providing supportive information this social support is crucial in social commerce since this support will influence people tointend to purchase in social commerce. Similarly to previous study argued that social support have to be measured in an online community since this support will enhance and convince information statement as well as intangible in nature [45], [46] identified social support can be categorized into four types which are emotional, instrumental, informational and appraisal [47] Meanwhile, other researcher identified social support into two types such as informational and emotional support [20]. However, this study uses informational and informational support. The previous study defined informational support as the content of information which contains cognitive feelings such as interpretations, plans, and suggestions [20]. On the other hand, defined, informational support as people suggestions, advice, ideas, opinions or knowledge that could be useful for the community[43]. Meanwhile, emotional supports defined as people reaction for those who are more caring, concern, understanding, or help to each other [48]. An instance, an emotional support is needed by someone who has suspicious towards the information in such a way would change people under good conditions. Even though social support qualified as intangible sources, but this element of support become strong when collaborating with other users on the platform. Supported by[43] social support is crucial as needed in an online commerce. When supportive statement exists in the group, this may further enhance friendship community longer as well as influence them in purchase intention.

(C) Purchase Intention

Purchase intention in social commerce is acrucial aspect for both organizations and consumers. The new technologies and communication platforms haveemerged and led to the new way of business transactions and friendship community. This advancement has influences businesses and consumers to surf in new technologies and channels compared to previous decades. A previous study [10], defined online purchase intention as consumers that are willing to engage and do online purchase from the online network. Some expert defined purchase intention as one specific task with rational decision makers and belief to the process of forming towards the behavior [49]. Some other literature identified intention is a construct of technology acceptance model [1] and classified intention with two core theories such as technology acceptance model and theory of planned behavior [50] as well as thetheory of reasoned action [51].

Purchase intention is the last option for consumers when there are prepared and belief towards the performance. When consumers satisfied and trust towards the performance of the product, purchase intention will perform to the next level. For this study, purchase intention defined as consumers are ready to perform the task and willing to engage an online network. Consumers are more confident when they are receiving social support and social commerce constructs as well as knowledge statement about products or services on the platform. According to [52] when consumers knowledge products are high, this will enhance their confidence level to purchase on the network. Furthermore, previous research indicated that the information contained in social commerce platforms will expose them towards a product that finally influences to purchase intention [53]. Consequently, in this paper use purchase intentions for the outcome construct to see the relationships in social commerce constructs as well as social support.

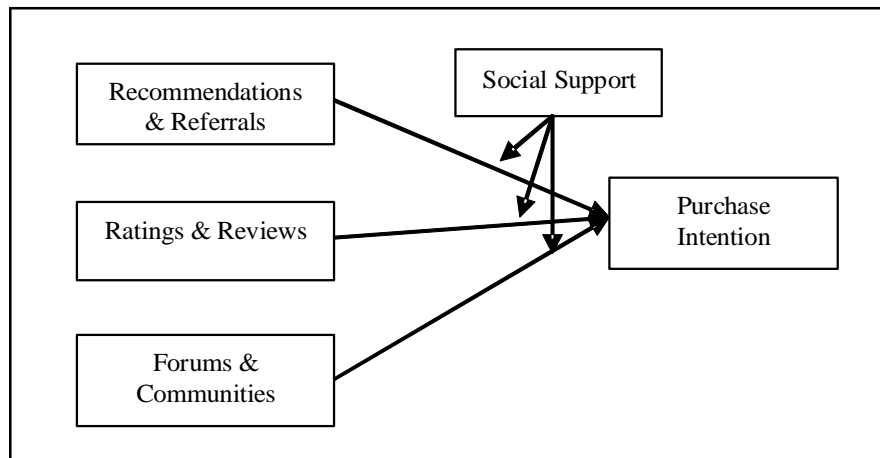## III. PROPOSED CONCEPTUAL MODEL AND HYPOTHESES

Figure 1: Proposed conceptual model

The proposed conceptual model in (figure1) provides operational relationships between the variables. In previous literature, there are numbers of determinants tested in relation to factors influencing purchase intention in social commerce. However, in this study, three determinants are proposed due to lack of effort in assessing the determinants as well as the industries. Furthermore, there is limited studies use social support as moderator. Since then, this study proposes and integrates all the variables into one model.

(A) Social Commerce Constructs and Purchase Intention

There are four main components of social commerce constructs that have been discussed in the earlier; recommendations and referrals, forums and communities, ratings and reviews. Based on a study conducted by [9] that students in the UK increasingly using social commerce constructs as to share their experience and knowledge and has found the direct and significant effect of intention to buy in social commerce. Meanwhile, previous research shows that the sources that provided in the platforms have strongly influences customer behavior [54]. Similarly with [55] posit that information that provide in the platform would influence consumer intention. When social commerce constructs exists in the platform, these would enhance quick response and feedback based information provided. Specifically, individuals' activity in social commerce

constructs such as recommendations and referrals, forums and communities, ratings and reviews can expose them in the process of purchases. Therefore, these research hypotheses:

H1: Recommendations and referrals have a positive effect on purchase intention

H2: Forums and communities have a positive effect on purchase intention

H3: Ratings and reviews have a positive effect on purchase intention

(B) Social Support as moderator

Network community is crucial in determining whether consumers use a network or not. The evolution of information technology has allowed social commerce for users to participate and communicate easily. With the interaction between members of the community has influenced social support to interact and involve at the same time. The social support in a group makes consumer happy and feels more comfortable as well as confident. An instance, social support is suitable variable to use in an online community. Previous literature[31], [15] identified social support as individual characteristics in an online network. Social support significantly influences purchase intention [43]. Meanwhile, [51] identified social support significant effect social commerce intention. This social support has influences consumers to share their opinion and support the information statement about products or services. Generally, social support involves consumer's experiences and consumer's expertise by providing information statement. For this circumstance, social support can influence people belief and confident towards the statement. Many studies use social support as direct relationship towards the outcome [44], [51], [15], [43], [56] but less study uses social support as amoderator between the relationship. According to the [38] social support also can be viewed as moderating variable that may affect social stress and health. For this circumstance, social support will reduce consumer anxiety and stress towards the information and enhance confident level that contributes to purchase intention. Similarly with thestress-buffering model, revealed that social support can be a moderator effect of stress and health. However, this model requires an interaction social support as moderatorwill depend on the level of stress whether is high or low[57].Based on thestatement, examining social commerce constructs and identifying the impact of social support on purchase intention is needed and rational to be studied. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that social support moderates the relationship between social commerce constructs and purchase intention. Hence, the following hypothesesare formulated;

H5: Social support has a significant and positive moderating effect on the association between recommendations and referrals, forums and communities, ratings and reviewstoward purchase intention.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This conceptual paper wasreview and analyzed of research and data from the literature. The main purpose of this study is to propose and suggest model about the relationship between forums and communities, ratings and reviews, recommendations and referrals, social support and purchase intention.Furthermore, this study wasuse secondary data to achieve this purpose. The data have been composed fromempirical journals, government reports, industry reports, statistic website, and books. Thus, this study for future research a quantitative method is suggested.

V. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The study is to propose a conceptual model of consumer purchase intention and its determinants. Thispropose study was to increase the understanding of the relationship between the variables.Most of the studies focused on three factors under social commerce constructs such as recommendations and referrals, ratings and reviews and forums and communities [19], [9], [58], [28] but less studies use social commerce constructs, social support and purchase intention in one model.Furthermore, fewer studies use social support as moderator in social commerce and majority analyze it as adirect relationship as well as mediator function. Therefore, this paper has made an attempt to review the relationship of all the factors and has found that, all the factors can potentially lead to purchaseintention.Meanwhile, for future research plan, this study interested in studying more depth in social advertisement due to limited empirical evidence as well as theoretical supports. Even though limited researchers suggest that social advertisement play a significant role in determining consumer purchase intention, does not mean it is a not crucial area of research. Based on statement above, it is fact that social advertisement also leading to purchase intention.Similarly by previous literature [19] suggest that social advertisement also can be categorized under social commerce constructs and may have a significant influence on intention-behavior.Furthermore, by identifying all the factors, this study will benefit firm managers by recognizing the most effective factors influencing purchase intention in social commerce that plan to leverage their business in social commerce future. The managerscan use this opportunity to enhance and persuade the users join in the platform as well as support environment and promote new information about products or services that finally lead to intention and indirectly would increase firm's profitability.

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