

Exploring the critical success factors of s-commerce in social media platforms: The case of Jordan

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ABSTRACT

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The unprecedented growth of social media imposed fierce competition on business companies. That is investors found new methods to expand their business activities, and, in turn, boost their revenues. While there has been a plethora of research done to examine the critical success factors of social commerce (s-commerce) in developed countries, there is a dearth of studies conducted in developing countries. Meanwhile, it has been evident that the significance of these factors may vary across cultures. Therefore, this study, following the social cognitive theory, aims to explore the critical success factors of s-commerce from the perspective of consumers in a developing country. To achieve that, this study utilized a questionnaire that sought information related to factors driving consumers' intention to purchase in s-commerce. Seven hundred and fifty-seven subjects completed the survey. Structural equation modeling techniques were utilized to analyze the data. The findings of this study show that trust in sellers, sociability, electronic Word-Of-Mouth (eWOM), perceived economic benefit, and informational fit-to-task positively influence the intention to purchase in s-commerce. In addition to that, it was found that sociability and eWOM positively influence consumers' trust in sellers. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to the theoretical and practical areas of s-commerce. They are expected to make a significant contribution to the literature on s-commerce adoption from the perspective of a developing country. From a practical point of view, the results of this study should help stakeholders in s-commerce in developing business strategies to better their competitive advantage, retain existing consumers and attract new ones, and, in turn, increase sales and profits.

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1. Introduction

Ongoing advancements in ICT have been revolutionizing all aspects of human lives including how people and business organizations engage with commercial activities (Kerpedzhiev et al., 2021). The evolution of Web 2.0 technologies has led to the development of a wider range of ICT tools (Andriole, 2010). These tools empowered the development of social media and networking platforms and enabled the establishment of electronic commerce (e-commerce) (Huang & Benyoucef, 2013). While social media platforms started attracting people rapidly and their number of users has been growing exponentially (Van Dijck & Poell, 2013), business organizations found a new venue for expanding their commercial and marketing activities to boost their sales (Sohn & Kim, 2020; Christa & Kristinae, 2021). That is most business organizations, if not all, started expanding their commercial and marketing activities beyond their own digital platforms to include social media platforms (Dwivedi, Ismagilova, Hughes, et al., 2021). This resulted in the emergence of social commerce (s-commerce), which is considered a subset of e-commerce (Liang & Turban, 2011; Han et al., 2018). s-commerce has dramatically reshaped the

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business practices that are common within e-commerce. That is whereas the tactics of commercial activities used to be in the hands of sellers only, consumers now have gained bargaining power (Um, 2019). Such that, the user-generated content in s-commerce, enabled by social media platforms, enabled consumers to post, share reviews, compare information about products and services, and sell and buy in global marketplaces (Osatuyi & Turel, 2019).

Despite being around since 2005 (Wang & Zhang, 2012), the definition of s-commerce remains a controversial issue (Busalim & Hussin, 2016; Nina et al., 2021). This is mainly because s-commerce activities appear on both social media platforms and typical e-commerce platforms which provide social networking features to facilitate collaboration among users (Busalim & Hussin, 2016). However, for the purpose of this study, s-commerce is defined as a type of commerce that relies on using social media platforms, like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc., to enable consumers and organizations to carry out commercial activities by engaging in a collaborative-social-virtual environment (Wu & Li, 2018).

The pervasiveness of social media platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, along with affordable ICT tools contributed to the expansion of s-commerce (Bürklin et al., 2019). As of April 2022, Worldwide, five billion people, 63% of the world population, were active internet users. Among them, 4.65 billion people were social media users (Statista, 2022). In Jordan, as of June 2021, 8.7 million people, 84.7% of the population, were internet users. Among them, 6,541,000 people, 63.7% of the population, were social media users (Internet World Stats, 2021).

s-commerce has become an integrated part of today's business environment. From a commercial point of view, the use of social media is increasingly becoming an important space for converting interactions to sales (Guesalaga, 2016). That is companies are increasingly turning "likes", "retweets", and even "subscriptions" into actual sales (Ahearne & Rapp, 2010; Salameh, 2020). However, the success of s-commerce depends mainly on consumers' behavioral intention and engagement (Goyal et al., 2021).

A considerable amount of research has been conducted to examine the critical success factors of the intention to purchase in s-commerce (Esmaili & Hashemi G, 2019). Meanwhile, most of these studies were carried out in developed and emerging economies (Busalim & Hussin, 2016; Abdelsalam et al., 2020). However, it is well established that the impact of cultural and economical-related constructs in s-commerce, more specifically, trust, eWOM, sociability, and intention to purchase, varies across different cultures (Chu & Choi, 2011; Ng, 2013; Goodrich & de Mooij, 2014; Xu-Priour et al., 2014; K. Zhang & Benyoucef, 2016; Bianchi et al., 2017). Thus, conducting studies in different cultures and contexts may yield new and different insights and understanding of s-commerce's antecedents (Busalim & Hussin, 2016).

Therefore, this study, following the social cognitive theory, aims to thoroughly and rigorously examine the critical antecedents of the intention to purchase in s-commerce by consumers in the context of Jordan. Such that, this study will explore factors that have been found to show varying results across cultures in s-commerce, along with other factors that are deemed to be critical in this domain. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to the theoretical and practical areas of s-commerce. They are expected to make a significant contribution to the literature on s-commerce adoption from a perspective of a developing country. From a practical point of view, the results of this study should help stakeholders in s-commerce in developing business strategies to better their competitive advantage, retain existing consumers and attract new ones, and, in turn, increase sales and profits.

2. Literature review

2.1. Theoretical background

Studies examining consumer behavior in s-commerce have adopted several theories as theoretical frameworks (K. Zhang & Benyoucef, 2016). However, the social cognitive theory is considered very robust in modeling human behavior in social contexts (Bandura, 1986). Therefore, the social cognitive theory will provide the theoretical framework for this study. Social cognitive theory theorizes that an individual's intention to adopt any piece of technology is a function of not only behavior but also of personal cognitive processes and external environmental factors (Olson et al., 2014). This means that an individual's behavioral intention is linked to the feelings and thoughts of the individual as well as the surrounding social-environmental factors. The social environment could be either real-world or virtual (Schunk, 2012).

The social cognitive theory argues that outcome expectations influence the behavioral intention of individuals. Outcome expectations refer to an individual's judgment of the outcomes of her or his actions (Compeau et al., 1999). In the context of this study, social and economic outcome expectations, represented by eWOM and perceived economic benefit variables, respectively, are believed to influence consumers' intention to purchase in s-commerce (Lee et al., 2012). Social and economic outcome expectations are cognitive factors that judge the social consequences of an individual's behavior. In the s-commerce context, the consequences of the way consumers perceive others' eWOM, for example, credible or not, impact consumers purchasing decisions (Daowd et al., 2021). In addition to that, the consequences of whether consumers believe that they would be better off, economic-wise, as a result of being involved in commercial transactions in s-commerce impact their purchasing decisions (X. Chen et al., 2021).

Moreover, the social cognitive theory contends that people's social expectation of encountering new friends impacts their behavioral intention when getting involved in a community (Bandura, 1999). People who get involved in s-commerce are not only seeking bargains on products and services; they also try to get the advantage of the virtual communities as a place to meet new friends. In other words, they attempt to develop social relationships with other people inside the community (Goraya et al., 2021). Therefore, sociability is believed to increase consumers' engagement and participation in s-commerce (Sorooshian et al., 2013).

The social cognitive theory posits that facilitating conditions related to accomplishing a task impact individuals' behavioral intention (Schunk, 2012). Facilitating conditions represent how an individual perceives the conditions that pertain to a particular task accomplishment, as facilitating or hindering (Luszczynska & Schwarzer, 2020). Therefore, facilitating conditions are believed to influence the behavioral intention of individuals. In the context of this study, facilitating conditions, informational fit-to-task, are believed to influence consumers' intention to purchase in s-commerce (Yang & Forney, 2013).

Social cognitive theory theorizes that individuals perceiving high levels of trust are expected to rely on their counterparties to fulfill their part of an agreement (Holmes, 2002). Trust refers to the extent to which a trustor believes that the trustee will behave in a good manner toward fulfilling an agreement (Zheng et al., 2019). Therefore, in the context of this study, trust is believed to impact consumers' decisions to purchase in s-commerce.

2.2. Sociability

Sociability, in the context of s-commerce, is defined as the degree to which s-commerce environment and activities enable consumers to build close social relationships with one another (Animesh et al., 2011; Ko, 2020). Social media plays a major role in socially connecting customers in s-commerce (Harrigan et al., 2018; Li, 2019). That is through sharing information, reviews, ratings, and opinions about companies, products, and services, customers are engaged in interactive social activities (Huang & Benyoucef, 2017; X. Yang, 2019). Thus, social relationships and interactions are a distinguishing characteristic of s-commerce when compared to traditional e-commerce (H. Zhang et al., 2014; Friedrich et al., 2016). Social interactions and relationships among consumers can impact the intention to buy as well as the trust of consumers in s-commerce (Yahia et al., 2018; Anaya-Sánchez et al., 2020; Fang & Li, 2020; Handarkho, 2020; Nadeem et al., 2020). Furthermore, previous research revealed that sociability has a statistically significant positive direct effect on the intention to purchase by consumers in s-commerce (Rashid et al., 2020; Hsiao, 2021). Therefore, the following two hypotheses are proposed:

Hypothesis 1 (H1): *Sociability positively influences the intention to purchase in s-commerce.*

Hypothesis 2 (H2): *Sociability positively influences consumers' trust in sellers in s-commerce.*

2.3. Trust

In general, trust is defined as “the willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other will perform a particular action important to the trustor, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control that other party” (Mayer et al., 1995, p. 712). In the domain of information systems acceptance, trust is a multidimensional trait (Hwang & Lee, 2012; Polites et al., 2012). That is, in the context of s-commerce, trust has been examined from different perspectives including trust in sellers, social media platforms, and community members (Mou & Benyoucef, 2021). In the context of this study, trust is defined as the degree to which a consumer believes that a seller would fulfill his/her commitment in any conducted commercial transaction.

Trust impacts consumer behavioral intention to use s-commerce (Akman & Mishra, 2017; Dwivedi, Ismagilova, Sarker, et al., 2021). That is, by helping consumers overcome perceived insecurity and risk associated with s-commerce, trust is considered a prerequisite for a successful s-commerce-based business (Y. Wang & Yu, 2017; Benson et al., 2019). Such that consumers are unwilling to conduct any shopping transaction through an s-commerce environment unless they trust all elements involved in the shopping process including sellers, social media platforms, and members of virtual communities (Shin, 2013; Lin et al., 2019).

While many studies revealed that trust in virtual community members has a statistically significant positive direct effect on the intention to purchase by consumers in s-commerce (J. Chen & Shen, 2015; Agag & El-Masry, 2016; Lal, 2017; Liu et al., 2019; Handarkho, 2020), other research studies did not find a significant effect (Ng, 2013). Moreover, previous studies revealed that trust in s-commerce platforms has a statistically significant positive direct effect on the intention to purchase by consumers (Hajli, 2015; Hajli et al., 2017; Gibreel et al., 2018; Cheng et al., 2019; Liu et al., 2019; Goraya et al., 2021). Finally, trust in sellers was found to have a statistically significant positive direct effect on the intention to purchase by consumers in s-commerce (Yahia et al., 2018; Dabbous et al., 2020). That being said, increased trust of consumers in sellers is believed to be the most important dimension of trust in the purchase decision process in s-commerce. That is, consumers' fear of sellers' behavior may hinder the success of s-commerce which mainly relies on its benefit to consumers (Rouibah et al., 2021). Consequently, increasing trust and reducing risk related to the consumers-sellers relationship should overcome consumers' uncertainty toward sellers, and, in turn, positively influence consumers' intention to purchase in s-commerce (Hsiao, 2021). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 3 (H3): *Trust in sellers positively influences the intention to purchase in s-commerce.*

2.4. eWOM

eWOM has been defined as "any positive or negative statement made by potential, actual, or former customers about a product or company, which is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via the Internet" (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004, p. 39). In this study, eWOM refers to reviews and interactions within social media platforms. eWOM is more important to consumers than the advertisements made by vendors. That is, consumers tend to trust other consumers' eWOM more than vendors' generated content (Coulter & Roggeveen, 2012; Akram et al., 2021). Research revealed that eWOM has the potential to help consumers overcome their perceptions of insecurity and risk in s-commerce (Phan et al., 2020; Shankar et al., 2020). Thus, eWOM can have an impact on consumers' purchase decision process in s-commerce as it relates to credibility and trust (Cheung et al., 2009; Chow & Shi, 2014; Noori et al., 2016; Aghakhani et al., 2018).

Previous studies revealed that eWOM in s-commerce has a statistically significant positive direct effect on the intention to purchase by consumers (C.-H. Wu et al., 2018; Yusuf et al., 2018; Danniswara et al., 2020; Ying et al., 2021). Meanwhile, while other studies examined the impact of trust and security on eWOM (Chow & Shi, 2014; Qu et al., 2017; Gibreel et al., 2018; Cheng et al., 2019; Cheng et al., 2021), there have been no studies that examined the reverse relationship between them eWOM and trust except few of them that examined the indirect effect of trust and security on eWOM (Hassan et al., 2018; Rouibah et al., 2021). Nonetheless, it's believed that eWOM might have an impact on trust (Pihlaja et al., 2017; Rao & Rao, 2019). Therefore, the following two hypotheses are proposed:

Hypothesis 4 (H4): *eWOM positively influences the intention to purchase in s-commerce.*

Hypothesis 5 (H5): *eWOM positively influences consumers' trust in sellers in s-commerce.*

2.5. Perceived economic benefit

Perceived economic benefit refers to all advantages that consumers get as they elect to shop via s-commerce platforms. This includes cheaper prices, convenience, time-saving, the speed and ease of comparing prices, and exposure to a wider range of products and services (Baubonienė & Gulevičiūtė, 2015). In this study, perceived economic benefit refers to the amount of money consumers can save on the prices of products and services they purchase via s-commerce platforms. Previous studies revealed that perceived economic benefit has a statistically significant positive direct effect on the intention to purchase by consumers in s-commerce (Dabbous et al., 2020; Sohn & Kim, 2020; Barakat et al., 2021; Kaushal & Prashar, 2022). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 6 (H6): *Perceived economic benefit positively influences the intention to purchase in s-commerce.*

2.6. Informational fit-to-task

Informational fit-to-task is defined as "the extent to which a Website provides accurate, up-to-date and appropriate information for users" (Oh & Zhang, 2010, p. 230). In the context of this study, informational fit-to-task refers to the degree of accuracy, relevance, and sufficiency of information available on social media platforms to carry out shopping tasks by consumers. Informational fit-to-task is an attribute of a website that impacts consumers' attitudes toward using that website (Wismantoro et al., 2020; Longstreet et al., 2021). Information fit to task impacts consumers' behavior in s-commerce (Xiang et al., 2016; Giao et al., 2020). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 7 (H7): *Informational fit-to-task positively influences the intention to purchase in s-commerce.*

2.7. Intention to purchase

Intention to purchase refers to consumers' interest in products or services and the likelihood of purchasing them from sellers who operate on social media platforms (Yeon et al., 2019). Therefore, the intention to purchase is associated with the consumers' willingness to consider the act of buying, the act of buying itself, and the intention to repurchase the same or other products and services in the future (Gan & Wang, 2017; Szymkowiak et al., 2021).

Finally, as discussed above, several factors could influence consumers' intention to purchase on social media platforms. Therefore, building on the above literature the following research model is proposed in Fig.1.

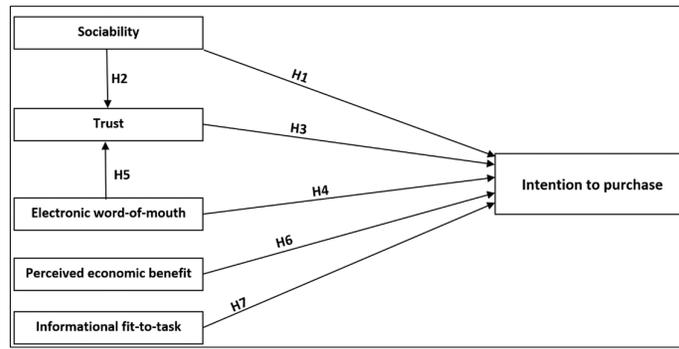


Fig. 1. Research model

3. Research methodology

3.1. Measures

Trust was operationalized using three items adopted from (Pavlou & Gefen, 2004). eWOM was measured using three items adopted from (Cheung et al., 2009). Sociability was measured using three items adopted from (Animesh et al., 2011). Perceived economic benefit was operationalized using three items adopted from (Caruana & Ewing, 2010). Informational fit-to-task was measured using two items adopted from (Loiacono et al., 2007). Intention to purchase was operationalized using three items adopted from (Salisbury et al., 2001; Animesh et al., 2011). All the constructs were operationalized using a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (“strongly disagree”) to 5 (“strongly agree”).

The data for this study was gathered via an online survey conducted in Jordan between August and October 2021. The survey was developed in English and translated into Arabic because it’s the language of the target population. Users of s-commerce on social media platforms in Jordan were invited, through social media, to participate in the internet-based survey. The electronic survey, which was hosted on Google forms, sought data on demographics, and information related to the examined constructs, in this study. Before completing the questionnaire, the objectives of the study were presented to participants, and they all understood that participation in the survey is voluntary.

3.2. Data analysis

R language, version 4.0.1, was utilized to code all performed statistical techniques, descriptive and inferential. The descriptive statistical analysis involved a description of the participants' demographics. The inferential statistical analysis involved a structural equation modelling to examine the relationships among the constructs composing the research model.

4. Results

4.1. Sample characteristics

The sample in this study consisted of seven hundred and fifty-seven subjects. Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the study's sample.

Table 1
Demographic data of the respondents

Criterion	Factor	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	393	52%
	Female	364	48%
Age	20-30	196	26%
	31-40	225	30%
	41-50	181	24%
	51-60	91	12%
	61-70	64	8%

4.2. Discriminant and convergent validity of the measurement model

To assess the construct validity both convergent validity and discriminant validity of the measurement model were examined. The convergent validity of the measurement model was examined based on four criteria as suggested by (Hair et al., 2009). That is, the measurement model's average variance extracted (AVE) for each construct was measured to check whether it's equal to or above 0.5. Also, the standardized Factor Loading (FL) for each item was calculated to ensure that it’s equal to or greater than 0.5, In addition to that, the composite reliability (CR) for each construct was measured to check whether it's equal to or above the lower threshold limit of 0.7. Finally, Cronbach's alpha (α) for each construct was assessed to ensure that it was

equal to or above 0.7. Table 2 presents the results of evaluating the convergent validity of the measurement model. A close examination of these results confirms that the convergent validity of the measurement model is established.

To confirm the discriminant validity of the measurement model, the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations was tested. In this test, it is stipulated that the HTMT for each pair of constructs is below the upper threshold limit of 0.9 (Henseler et al., 2015). Table 3 presents the HTMT for each pair of constructs. A close examination of these results confirms that the discriminant validity of the measurement model is established.

Table 2
Assessment of the measurement model

Construct	FL	α	CR	AVE
Trust		0.83	0.84	0.64
1. Sellers in social media websites are in general reliable	0.72			
2. Sellers in social media websites are in general honest	0.86			
3. Sellers in social media websites are in general trustworthy	0.80			
Electronic word-of-mouth		0.89	0.89	0.74
1. The information shared through my friends' posts on social media websites contributed to my knowledge of products and/or services	0.83			
2. My friends' posts on social media websites about products and/or services made it easier for me to make a purchase decision (e.g., to purchase or not to purchase)	0.89			
3. My friends' posts on social media websites about products and/or services motivated me to make a purchase decision	0.86			
Sociability		0.84	0.84	0.63
1. Social media websites enable me to get a good impression of other customers in the environment	0.79			
2. Social media websites enable me to develop good social relationships with other customers in the environment	0.79			
3. Social media websites enable me to form close friendships with other customers in the environment	0.80			
Perceived economic benefit		0.85	0.86	0.67
1. Prices of products and/or services are economical on social media websites	0.82			
2. You can buy products and/or services at a discounted price through social media websites	0.84			
3. Prices of products and/or services are comparatively lower on social media websites than on other websites and physical stores	0.79			
Informational fit-to-task		0.85	0.86	0.75
1. The information on social media websites is pretty much what I need to carry out my shopping tasks	0.84			
2. The information related to products and/or services on social media websites is effective	0.89			
Intention to purchase		0.92	0.92	0.81
1. I am likely to consider the purchase of products and/or services advertised via social media websites	0.89			
2. I am likely to continue shopping with a retailer after making a connection via social media websites	0.90			
3. Using social media websites to connect with a retailer I intend to purchase from is something I would do	0.90			

Table 3
HTMT results

Construct	Trust	EWOM	Sociability	PEB	IFTT	ITP
Trust	1.000					
EWOM	0.577	1.000				
Sociability	0.683	0.666	1.000			
PEB	0.773	0.692	0.786	1.000		
IFTT	0.553	0.605	0.723	0.669	1.000	
ITP	0.651	0.744	0.721	0.758	0.645	1.000

Note. EWOM: Electronic word-of-mouth, PEB: Perceived economic benefit, IFTT: Informational fit-to-task, ITP: Intention to purchase.

4.3. Goodness-of-fit of the structural model

Four fit indices were calculated to examine the goodness-of-fit of the model. The Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) were calculated to ensure that they are greater than 0.95. Also, the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) was measured to check whether it was below the upper threshold limit of 0.08. Finally, the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) was assessed to ensure that it was below the upper threshold limit of 0.05 (Cangur & Ercan, 2015). Table 4 presents the results of examining the goodness-of-fit of the model. A close examination of these results confirms that the model met all the specified criteria.

Table 4
Goodness-of-fit of the structural model

Fit indices	Value	Criteria
CFI	0.967	> 0.95
TLI	0.958	> 0.95
RMSEA	0.063	< .08
SRMR	0.042	< .05

4.4. Hypotheses testing

The results of the hypotheses testing indicated that sociability ($z=2.242$, $p=0.025$), trust ($z=2.701$, $p=0.007$), eWOM ($z=8.529$, $p=0.000$), perceived economic benefit ($z=4.045$, $p=0.000$), and informational fit-to-task ($z=2.411$, $p=0.016$) have statistically significant positive direct effects on the intention to purchase in s-commerce. In addition to that, it was found that sociability ($z=10.425$, $p=0.000$) and eWOM ($z=3.92$, $p=0.000$) have statistically significant positive direct effects on trust. Table 5 presents the results of the hypothesis testing.

Table 5

Assessment of the structural model

Path	Standardized coefficient	z-value	P(> z)	Decision
H1: Sociability → ITP	0.190	2.242	0.025	Significant
H2: Sociability → Trust	0.471	10.425	0.000 ***	Significant
H3: Trust → ITP	0.160	2.701	0.007 *	Significant
H4: eWOM → ITP	0.386	8.529	0.000 ***	Significant
H5: eWOM → Trust	0.147	3.920	0.000 ***	Significant
H6: PEB → ITP	0.266	4.045	0.000 ***	Significant
H7: IFTT → ITP	0.129	2.411	0.016	Significant

Note. Significance codes: 0.000 *** 0.001 ** 0.01* 0.05. eWOM: Electronic word-of-mouth, PEB: Perceived economic benefit, IFTT: Informational fit-to-task, ITP: Intention to purchase.

5. Discussion and conclusion

Understanding the behavior of consumers in s-commerce has become decisive for the sustainability of businesses that aim to utilize the power of social media platforms. Thus, this study developed a research model, based on the social cognitive theory, and empirically examined several relevant hypotheses to the intention to purchase in s-commerce context.

The findings of this study revealed that sociability positively influences the intention to purchase in s-commerce by consumers. This finding is in line with the findings of previous studies (Rashid et al., 2020; Hsiao, 2021). In addition to that, this study found that sociability positively influences consumers' trust in sellers in s-commerce. Therefore, consumers in s-commerce rely on their relationships and interactions with other members of the virtual community to make their purchasing decision. Also, sociability can reinforce consumers' trust in sellers in s-commerce. Hence, it can be concluded that the more social consumers can get in s-commerce context, the more trust they will have in sellers and the more willing they will be to purchase products and services through social media platforms.

Furthermore, in this study, trust in sellers was found to positively influence the intention to purchase in s-commerce by consumers. This result corroborates the findings of previous studies which examined the impact of trust in virtual community members (J. Chen & Shen, 2015; Agag & El-Masry, 2016; Lal, 2017; Liu et al., 2019; Handarkho, 2020), s-commerce platforms (Hajli, 2015; Hajli et al., 2017; Gibreel et al., 2018; Cheng et al., 2019; Liu et al., 2019; Goraya et al., 2021), and sellers (Yahia et al., 2018; Dabbous et al., 2020) on the intention to purchase by consumers in s-commerce. Therefore, it can be concluded that multiple dimensions of trust including trust in sellers, social media platforms, and virtual community members are significant predictors of the intention to purchase by consumers in s-commerce. Namely, the more trust consumers have in sellers, social media platforms, and virtual community members, the more they will be willing to purchase in s-commerce.

In addition to that, in this study, it was found that eWOM positively influences the intention to purchase in s-commerce by consumers. This finding is in line with the findings of previous studies (C.-H. Wu et al., 2018; Yusuf et al., 2018; Danniswara et al., 2020; Ying et al., 2021). In addition to that, this study found that eWOM positively influences consumers' trust in sellers in s-commerce. Therefore, consumers in s-commerce rely on other consumers' eWOM to buy or not to buy products and services via social media platforms. Also, eWOM plays a critical role in building consumers' trust in sellers in s-commerce. Hence, it can be concluded that the more positive consumers find eWOM of other consumers, the more trust they will have in sellers and the more willing they will be to purchase products and services through social media platforms.

Also, the findings of this study revealed that perceived economic benefit positively influences the intention to purchase in s-commerce by consumers. This finding is in line with previous studies (Dabbous et al., 2020; Sohn & Kim, 2020; Barakat et al., 2021; Kaushal & Prashar, 2022). Therefore, the more consumers can save on products and services in s-commerce, the higher their intention to purchase will be.

Finally, the findings of this study revealed that informational fit-to-task positively influences the intention to purchase in s-commerce by consumers. This result corroborates the findings of previous studies which examined the impact of informational fit-to-task on consumers' intentional behavior in s-commerce (Xiang et al., 2016). Therefore, it can be concluded that the clearer and more sufficient the information about products and services on social media platforms, the more willing consumers will be to purchase products and services through social media platforms.

5.1. Practical implications

Sociability was found to be a significant predictor of the intention to purchase in s-commerce by consumers. Therefore, business managers should provide and support strategies that should help consumers build and strengthen relationships within social media platforms. For example, to incent all members in the virtual community to be socially proactive, managers may want to reward consumers who exhibit a high level of social interactions and activities.

Moreover, trust in sellers was found to be a significant predictor of the intention to purchase in s-commerce by consumers. Thus, managers of firms and marketers should adopt business strategies that help consumers ensure the honesty and reliability of sellers in the s-commerce environment. Also, sellers should endeavor to win the trust of consumers. This should help consumers overcome any doubt and risk associated with the behavior of sellers. Consequently, achieving a higher rate of sales.

Furthermore, eWOM was found as a key determinant of both trust in sellers and the intention to purchase in s-commerce by consumers. Therefore, traders in s-commerce should encourage consumers to share their reviews, ratings, and comments. Meanwhile, sellers on s-commerce platforms should keep track of and moderate consumers' eWOM. A timely intervention should help count for any negative reviews and provide support for people in need of help and information. Finally, to get the best out of consumers' reviews and feedback, companies should analyze their content and find out what consumers like and dislike about products and services.

Perceived economic benefit was identified as a critical antecedent of the intention to purchase in s-commerce by consumers. So, vendors should highlight the competitive advantages related to the economic benefit of their products and services compared to other sellers in the market. Also, they can offer loyalty and reward systems for consumers, promotions, special deals, and member-exclusive discounts.

Informational fit-to-task was found to be a significant predictor of the intention to purchase in s-commerce by consumers. This implies for sellers and marketers the need to provide reliable and up-to-date information on products and services. It is also possible to support this approach with the use of a good quality image or video to project complete, clear, and easy-to-understand content.

5.2. Research implications

This research study made a theoretical contribution to the literature on the critical success factors of s-commerce from consumers' perspectives in a developing country. The theoretical implications of examining some of the social cognitive theory's constructs along with other constructs demonstrated that trust in sellers, sociability, electronic eWOM, perceived economic benefit, and informational fit-to-task positively influence the intention to purchase in s-commerce. In addition to that, it was found that sociability and eWOM have statistically significant positive direct effects on consumers' trust in sellers.

5.3. Limitations and future directions

Finally, given the scope of this research study, other variables were not included in the model. Future studies can extend the model developed in this study by including other variables, for example, perceived behavioral control, and subjective norms. Furthermore, future research might examine the mediating role of other variables like income, self-efficacy, ease of use, and others.

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