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Abstract

Social Commerce Sites (SCSs) are any online commercial activities that use social media to promote businesses. The rapid growth of the SCSs enables businesses to enhance their commercial activities to reach broad segments. Leveraging the significant growth of SCSs, the present study aims to examine the factors to elevate consumers' decision making process underpinned by the Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) of mass communication by Bandura. This paper uncovers the influence of four factors: price consciousness, deal proneness, coupon proneness, and electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) on the consumer purchase intention on SCSs. The findings revealed significant positive relationships between three factors: deal proneness, electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM), and coupon proneness on consumer purchase intention in SCSs. The practical implication suggests that marketers and firms are advised to focus on deal proneness on SCSs to attain competitive dominance in escalating consumer purchase intention. This research can assist businesses to stimulate consumer purchase intention through online transactions on SCS platforms.

Keywords: Social Commerce Sites, Social Cognitive Theory, Purchase Intention, Electronic Word-of-Mouth, Deal Proneness

Introduction

The emergence of the Internet and electronic commerce has become vital in human life. Social commerce uses networking websites such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter as platforms to promote and sell products and services. In e-commerce context, a similar use of networking has given economic benefits to stakeholders (Wang and Herrando, 2019) and is represented by Social Commerce Sites (SCSs) such as Klook, Shopee, Fave, and Lazada. The

usage of SCSs is now on the rise along with the emergence of social media usage among consumers (Lin et al., 2017). SCSs has also been a great platform for consumers to gain information before purchasing a product and to share their post-shopping experiences (Liang and Turban, 2011).

The rapid growth of SCSs has increased the competition among sites and prompted sellers to augment sales to capture consumers' interests. For example, Klook offers a platform to book travel tickets around Asia at best prices. Besides tickets, the platform informs travellers about places of attractions, activities and foods at the travel locations. This platform has become the best place for deal hunters who are motivated to find good deals to save money (Beurer-Zuellig and Seiler, 2017) while travelling around Asia. Such a platform is also useful for social shoppers who are tech-savvy, well-informed, educated and deal-seeking (Lee, 2018). In this case, the SCS has been a great platform to connect sellers and deal hunters (Kim and Kim, 2018).

A number of researchers have investigated SCS-related issues. These research works gathered insights on the role of trust and intention to purchase on SCSs (Hajli, 2013), differentiated trust between e-commerce and social commerce in terms of privacy and security concerns (Bansal and Chen, 2011), investigated the role of social support and relationship quality (Liang and Turban, 2011) and explored the behavioral factors for the adoption of SCSs (Akman and Mishra, 2017). However, little is known about what would influence the consumers' purchase intention from SCSs. To address this gap, the objectives of this study is threefold: to examine (1) the role of four factors namely, price consciousness, deal proneness, coupon proneness, and electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) guided by Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) (Bandura, 2001) in consumers' purchase intention on social commerce. Besides investigating the relationship between the four factors and the purchase intention of consumers on SCSs, this study also analyses (2) the most important factor that induces the purchase intention, and (3) identifies whether the demographic profiles have any varying significant influence on the purchase intention of consumers on SCSs.

Theoretical Foundation and Hypotheses Development

Social Cognitive Theory (SCT)

The Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) is used to predict the adaptation of individual's behavior derive by personal (e.g., cognitive, self-efficacy), environmental (e.g., social factors, feedback), and behavioural (e.g., stimulus to generate future behaviors) determinants (Bandura, 2001; Johnstone and Hooper, 2016). In a similar vein, consumers may explore good bargain value and experience benefits when they are more confident to achieve one's cognized goals by exercising internal, exterior, and social factors on social commerce. A recent study (Lim et al., 2020) has utilized SCT to predict human behavior on live-streaming game as a theoretical background. Most of prior research focus on social media in health information exchange (Lin and Chang, 2018), news sharing (Lee and Ma, 2012), and social influences (Peng et al., 2019). From the theoretical lens of SCT, Bandura (1991) suggested self-efficacy is the believe of one's capabilities in performing and executing various actions by having adequate motivation to encourage prospective behaviour. To expand understanding on consumers' decision making process in social commerce thus, this study applies SCT of mass communication by (Bandura, 2001).

Price Consciousness

Bandura (1991) refers personal determinant as self-efficacy or judgment of one's behaviour directed by forethought towards their purposive actions. Consequently, price has great significance to attract consumers to online stores. Showing the prices before and after discount on SCSs enables consumers to perceive the best price given for them. There are price conscious consumers representing consumers who prefer paying lower prices for any purchased items (Siahtiri and Lee, 2019). These consumers tend to exhibit the characteristics of having avid concerns on the product price. They tend to make comparisons and evaluations among market offerings to get the lowest price prior any purchase (Jeng and Lo, 2019; Rezaei, 2015). The price-conscious shopper expected the price paid worth the quality; thus, they are prone to any sales promotion in search of deals. Since price overshadows product offerings, the products with lower prices make consumers feel they are worthy purchase.

SCSs provide large discounted prices to promote products or services (Lee, 2018). Many online purchases are made during price promotions whereby huge discounts would appear to deliver great saving, which seems to attract wide market segments (Erdil, 2015). Such promotions may induce the purchase intention among price consciousness consumers while browsing SCSs. Wadera and Sharma (2018) stated that visible promotions, discounts, and abundant selection can attract deal hunters. Price-conscious consumers are more likely to purchase online when e-commerce sites offer lower prices or financial benefits (Cheah et al., 2015). This suggests that price consciousness is significantly relative to deal hunters who seek the best deals in SCSs. Drawing from these prior research findings, the researchers present the following hypothesis:

H1: Price consciousness has a significant positive relationship with consumers' purchase intention on social commerce sites.

Deal Proneness

According to Ieva et al (2018) deal proneness is defined as a psychological propensity to respond to an offer of any promotional information by making purchase decisions. Guided by SCT, behavioural determinant refers to outcome expectations to receive any benefits or rewards when performing certain behavior (Bandura, 2001). Iranmanesh et al (2017) stated that the positive effects of promotional offers have positive psychological effect on consumers with deal proneness, since they tend to feel like the purchasing deals give lots of advantages. On top of that, the high anxiety towards price variability and level of enjoyment attained by the deal proneness consumers tends to rise while planning to purchase (Vakeel et al., 2018). When the discount is heavily offered or the items are on sale, the deal proneness customers tend to simplify their decision to purchase (Iranmanesh et al., 2017). Sale promotions have also been used as marketing tools to fulfill the short-term objectives which are to make the customers purchase (Iranmanesh et al., 2017). The purchase intention of deal proneness consumers tends to increase when there are other deal forms such as gift promotion during the shopping experience since it can maximise the consumers' benefits. This suggests that consumers with deal proneness are more attracted to those gift promotions compared to the actual product and service price cut (Ieva et al., 2018).

Deal hunters in SCSs perceive themselves as game-winners when they get to find a good deal or a bargain (Lim et al., 2013). Accordingly, deal hunters would seek the best deal to get a lower price of products and services. Wadera and Sharma (2018) elaborated that special promotions or discounts can attract online deal hunters. These deal hunters tend to feel

smarter than others when they succeed to find a good deal which makes them pay at a lower price (Lim et al., 2013) on SCSs. Thus, these findings has lead the researchers to develop the following hypothesis:

H2: Deal proneness has a significant positive relationship with consumers' purchase intention on social commerce sites.

Coupon Proneness

Coupon proneness is defined as a high propensity in responding to an offer due to the attraction caused by coupons (Gonzalez, 2016). There are a bunch of e-coupons provided on SCSs thus, coupon proneness is inevitable construct to be included as environmental determinant as depicted in SCT (Bandura, 2001). Coupon-prone consumers enjoy collecting as many coupons as possible (Liu et al., 2015). In fact, mobile coupons have been one of the attractive promotional tools in online shopping (Achadinha et al., 2014). Nowadays, social coupons have been a popular shopping tool for businesses on a social network (Kumar and Rajan, 2012). Consumers tend to respond to the comparison between the initial price and the coupon values prior to any purchase since they believe the high redemption of coupons leads to high discount rates (Mills and Zamudio, 2018). Similarly, Zheng et al (2017) posited that the coupon proneness is corresponding to the redemption of coupon behavior. The researchers asserted that coupon redemption is more likely to attract coupon proneness customers to purchase since they believe it is a good deal.

A prior literature found that coupon redemption has been used at higher rates online instead of offline (Jung and Lee, 2010). This suggests that coupon proneness most likely happens among consumers while browsing the Internet or using SCSs. Liu et al (2015) accentuated the process of coupon redemption increases the customers' satisfying feeling; thus, a coupon prone consumer has a high tendency to use the coupon in purchasing the relevant products and services. Since consumers are triggered by good deals, the redemption of the coupon influences them to make purchases without comparing the prices across market offers (Zheng et al., 2017).

Gonzalez (2016) stated that consumers who are willing to seek a good deal tend to be coupon prone. On SCSs, deal hunters who are motivated to find a good deal to save their money can experience coupon proneness. Zheng et al (2017) also explained that the psychological characteristics of individuals are linked to the tendency to purchase products and services based on promotional offers such as a coupon. Hence, based on the above findings, the researchers hypothesise the following:

H3: Coupon proneness has a significant positive relationship with consumers' purchase intention on social commerce sites.

Electronic Word-of-Mouth (e-WOM)

Electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) is defined as any statement whether it is positive or negative from potential, actual, or former customers towards the products and services via the internet (Yusuf et al., 2018). E-WOM is one of fundamental construct of social commerce (Ahmad and Laroche, 2017) and environmental forces play influential role to impinge consumers' behaviour (Bandura, 2001; Erkan and Evans, 2018) in social commerce. Yang (2019) elaborated that e-WOM is an online consumer-generated posts by strangers based on their experience in using the products and services on SCSs. Erkan and Evans (2018)

considered e-WOM as a crucial element for consumers since the information represents opinions and experiences of fellow consumers. SCSs is a platform for customers to share their thoughts towards the products and services that they have bought or engaged. Very often, potential consumers tend to read the review section which has the online reviews and ratings by other consumers to develop trust or distrust towards products and services as well as sellers (Erkan and Evans, 2018). Hernandez-Ortega (2018) concurred that e-WOM is very important for the company's performance since products and services with good reviews portray good impressions among potential consumers.

e-WOM is relatable to SCSs since the concept of involves social interactions among consumers via click-and-mortar business. Prior researchers highlighted that product and purchase related information sharing through SCSs has influenced consumers' purchase (Wu and Lin, 2017). Online consumer reviews on SCSs have enabled customers to exchange information on the products and services offered (Filiari et al., 2018). These suggests that the reviews, ratings, and recommendations would increase the sales of products and services on SCSs.

Sheu and Chu (2017) accentuated that the positive e-WOM and trust are parts of crucial elements influencing the consumer purchase intention. According to Wang et al. (2018), consumers tend to be influenced by social support when they face difficulties in making decisions. Besides, they may not have prior experience of the offered products and services. In these cases, consumers would likely use the review section to gather information on the quality of the products and services before purchasing. In other words, positive e-WOM on SCSs would attract purchase from new consumers and re-purchase from existing consumers. Thus, the researchers hypothesise that:

H4: Electronic Word-of-Mouth (e-WOM) has a significant positive relationship with consumers' purchase intention on the social commerce sites.

Consumer's Purchase Intention on Social Commerce Sites

SCSs have significantly been part of mobile commerce markets. The electronic platforms have gradually facilitated business transactions across product and service categories. Lu et al (2016) asserted that social commerce reintroduced the presence of social element in the e-commerce environment. Through SCSs, many promotional tools such as coupons, discounts, flash sales, and daily giveaways have been used to attract consumers to purchase from the sites. Several factors have motivated deal hunters to purchase on SCSs. Based on marketing literature, the social interactions on SCSs ease consumers in making their purchase decisions since they can refer to their peers who have utilized the targeted products and services (Lu et al., 2016). The customers' online reviews on experience of using particular products and services would draw other consumers' attention on the expected performance of the products and services (Lee, 2018) and the reviews are likely perceived more authentic than sponsored posts.

In short, SCSs appear to increase consumers' tendency to shop online instead of a brick-and-mortar platform. They allow consumers to make evaluation prior to making the final purchases and enable consumers to share their shopping experiences as well as attaining information from social interactions with other consumers (Liu et al., 2019). This has led SCSs amassing consumer purchases of diverse products and services categories at low prices. These consumers are also likely active to locate the promotions and best deals on SCSs.

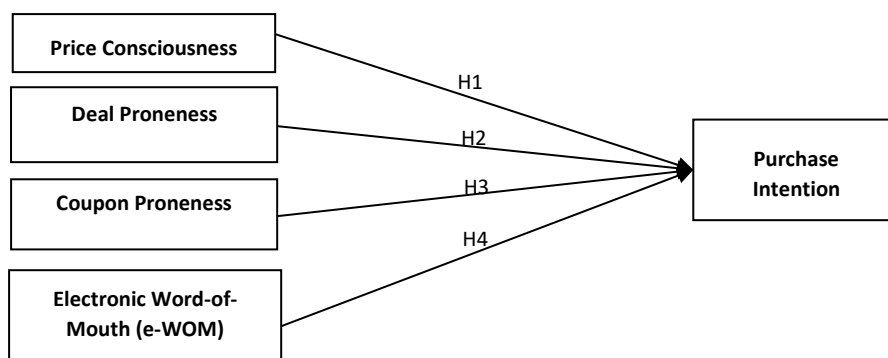


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Research Instrument

The self-administered questionnaire will be distributed through online platform. A set of questionnaire will be utilize a five-point Likert scale stating the level of agreement: strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The questionnaire consists of four sections; Section A will contain screening questions, followed by Section B covers four main constructs in this study (price consciousness, deal proneness, coupon proneness and electronic word-of-mouth). Accordingly, Section C contain dependent variable of this study which is purchase intention. At the end of this section, Section D will collect respondents' demographic questions which is age, gender, race, education background, and income. All items are adopted and adapted from relevant extant studies.

Price Consciousness [Adapted from Jeng and Lo (2019)]

1. I am not willing to go to extra effort to find lower prices
2. The money saved by finding a low price is usually not worth the time and effort
3. I would never shop at more than one website to find low prices.

Deal Proneness [Adapted from Iranmanesh et al (2017)]

1. I notice the promotion on Social Commerce Site (Klook) when purchasing tickets
2. I look at promotion on Social Commerce Site (Klook) when purchasing tickets
3. I focus on the promotion on Social Commerce Site (Klook) when purchasing tickets
4. I have favorite tourism products (food and beverages, tickets, accommodation, and SIM card travel country) but I often purchase those that are on sale

Coupon Proneness [Adapted from Zheng et al (2017)]

1. Redeeming coupons in Social Commerce Site (Klook) makes me feel good
2. I enjoy searching coupons out of the website in Social Commerce Site (Klook)
3. When I use coupons on Social Commerce Site (Klook), I feel that I am getting a good deal
4. I enjoy using coupons in Social Commerce Site (Klook) regardless of the amount I save by doing so
5. Beyond the money I save, redeeming coupons in Social Commerce Site (Klook) gives me a sense of joy

Electronic Word-of-Mouth (e-WOM) [Adapted from Wang et al (2016)]

1. When I consider new products, I read the review sections first on Social Commerce Site (Klook)
2. I like to get opinions from other people on Social Commerce Site (Klook) before I purchase tickets from there
3. I feel more comfortable buying tickets when I have gotten other opinions through review sections on Social Commerce Site (Klook)
4. I tend to search for others' opinions or comments on review sections on Social Commerce Site (Klook) regarding products that I want to buy

Purchase Intention [Adapted from: Liu et al (2016)]

1. Whenever I need to shop, I intend to purchase tickets on Social Commerce Site (Klook)
2. Whenever I need to shop, I plan to purchase tickets on Social Commerce Site (Klook)
3. I predict that I will purchase tickets on Social Commerce Site (Klook)
4. I will likely purchase tickets on Social Commerce Site (Klook)

Conclusions

This study aims to examine the relationships between price consciousness, deal proneness, coupon proneness, e-WOM, and demographic factors towards purchase intention of consumers in SCSs. This study outlines the problem statements and research objectives to address the critical gaps based on review from extant marketing literature. The present study grounded by Social Cognitive Theory by Bandura (2001) in the context of social commerce behavioural intent. It is envisaged that future findings from this study will delve into greater details on empirical findings which will benefit both theoretical and managerial implications. Notably, unlike traditional e-commerce sites, social recommendations from other consumers in SCSs are readily available for site visitors' consumption before purchase decisions take place (Stephen and Toubia, 2010). Therefore, findings from this study will assist to elicit positive attitudes in influencing behavioural intention on commercial activities in SCSs particularly in increasing volume sales by not neglecting to address any uprising issues that may occur from former consumers' negative experiences to mitigate unprecedented issues about products or services offered.

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