

TRUSTED FOLLOWER MODEL THAT INFLUENCE PURCHASE INTENTION
IN SOCIAL COMMERCE

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my beloved family, emak, ayah, along and adik.

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ABSTRACT

Social commerce is e-commerce where customers can shop online through social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. There are many factors that influence customers to make a purchase through social commerce and one of the factors is follower. The follower is a social commerce user that can communicate with another follower through like, comment, and share another follower's post. There are many types of follower in social commerce, such as trusted and untrusted follower. The follower can influence a customer's trust to purchase in social commerce. However, customers usually do not know which follower is the trusted follower. Therefore, the aim of this study is to develop a trusted follower model for social commerce that can influence purchase intention. In order to achieve this aim, trusted follower factors that can influence purchase intention in social commerce are identified from the literature review. The identified trusted follower factors are self-presentation, self-confidence, social sharing, social interaction, and self-expressive. Based on the identified trusted follower factors, a trusted follower model is developed. In order to evaluate the model, a questionnaire has been developed and distributed to respondents who have the knowledge and experience regarding purchasing in social commerce. Based on the collected data from 33 respondents, SmartPLS software is used to analyze the data. The results show that all trusted follower factors are reliable and significant. In order to prioritize the trusted follower factor, expert's judgments have been collected and TOPSIS method has been applied. The rank by applying TOPSIS method shows that self-presentation is receiving the highest rank, followed by social sharing, self-confidence, social interaction, and self-expressive. Significant from this study is, customers can recognize and identify the trusted follower of social commerce.

ABSTRAK

Perdagangan sosial adalah e-dagang di mana pelanggan boleh berbelanja secara dalam talian melalui platform media sosial seperti Facebook, Instagram, dan Twitter. Terdapat banyak faktor yang mempengaruhi pelanggan untuk membuat pembelian melalui perdagangan sosial dan salah satu faktor adalah pengikut. Para pengikut adalah pengguna perdagangan sosial yang dapat berkomunikasi dengan pengikut lain melalui butang suka, mengulas, dan berkongsi pos pengikut yang lain. Terdapat banyak jenis pengikut dalam perdagangan sosial, seperti pengikut yang dipercayai dan tidak dipercayai. Para pengikut dapat mempengaruhi kepercayaan pelanggan untuk membeli dalam perdagangan sosial. Walau bagaimanapun, pelanggan biasanya tidak tahu pengikut mana yang menjadi pengikut yang dipercayai. Oleh itu, tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk membangunkan model pengikut yang dipercayai untuk perdagangan sosial yang boleh mempengaruhi niat pembelian. Untuk mencapai matlamat ini, faktor pengikut yang dipercayai yang boleh mempengaruhi niat pembelian dalam perdagangan sosial dikenal pasti dari kajian literatur. Faktor pengikut yang dikenal pasti adalah persembahan diri, keyakinan diri, perkongsian sosial, interaksi sosial, dan ekspresi diri. Berdasarkan faktor pengikut yang dikenal pasti, model pengikut yang dipercayai telah dibangunkan. Untuk menilai model, soal selidik telah dibangunkan dan diedarkan kepada responden yang mempunyai pengetahuan dan pengalaman mengenai pembelian dalam perdagangan sosial. Berdasarkan data yang dikumpulkan dari 33 responden, perisian SmartPLS digunakan untuk menganalisis data. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahawa semua faktor pengikut yang dipercayai adalah dipercayai dan penting. Untuk mengutamakan faktor pengikut yang dipercayai, pertimbangan pakar telah dikumpulkan dan kaedah TOPSIS telah digunakan. Kedudukan dengan menggunakan kaedah TOPSIS menunjukkan bahawa pembentangan diri menerima pangkat tertinggi, diikuti dengan perkongsian sosial, keyakinan diri, interaksi sosial, dan ekspresi diri. Yang penting dari kajian ini ialah pelanggan dapat mengenali dan mengenal pasti pengikut perdagangan sosial yang dipercayai.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

UTM	-	Universiti Teknologi Malaysia
TOPSIS	-	Technique for Order Preference by Similarity to Ideal Solution
ISM	-	Interpretative Structural Modelling
ELECTRE	-	Elimination and decision Translating the truth.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

Social commerce is a subset of electronic commerce that involves social media as a based platform to assist customers in their commerce transactions and activities of buying and selling products and services (Salvatori and Marcantoni, 2015). Moreover, social commerce is an online marketing model that use online social network that supports social interaction to encourage user to buy products in the context of e-commerce transactions (Lin *et al.*, 2017). Social commerce also can encourage many sellers for sell their products easily by post the products photos and information regarding the useful of their products and how effective the products it is to attract many customers to buy it.

The term of social commerce is describes about online shopping tools such as user ratings and reviews, shared pick lists and other user generated content sharing of the online products information (Lin *et al.*, 2017). Then, it includes collaborative of e-commerce tools that enable online shoppers to find goods and services from the trusted sellers to purchase them. The scope of social commerce refers to exchange related activities but not limited to the transaction (Yadav *et al.*, 2013). Furthermore, social commerce has changed the environment which can attract customers to purchasing the products (Sensuse, Pratama, Satria, Noprisson & Ramadhan, 2017). Besides, the customers also easy to compare the selling products based on the provided information and can make decision to purchase the products from the seller. Then, the sellers need to know and understand about factors that influence to purchase intention (Sensuse *et al.*, 2017).

Purchase intention is including customer attitude towards products, customer predisposition and preferences (Sensuse *et al.*, 2017). Many customers nowadays use

social commerce for online shopping because they feel comfortable and easy with that. In social commerce, there are people generally give and receive influence with other customers to purchase the products (Kim *et al.*, 2013). Purchase intention is one of the customer trends nowadays which is customer will consider the follower seller account before they buy the products (Sensuse *et al.*, 2017). If they found the reviews or feedback is good from other followers or experienced users, it will build trust and self-confidence to purchase the products. Purchase intention of customer's buying behavior in social commerce can be influenced by many factors.

There are many factors that influence customers to make a purchase through social commerce where they need to deal with seller that might be someone that they don't know. The factors include review and rating, recommendations and referrals, feedback, trust, forum and communities, communication, word of mouth, perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, and follower (Lin *et al.*, 2017). The major factor is customers to exert influence on product recommendations through their buying experience after they completely using the product (Kim *et al.*, 2013). Besides, affective influence refers to value of likes, comment, and share done by friends in social commerce (Hammouri and Abu-Shanab, 2017). These factors is a something that customers always looking forward when they want to purchase some products online.

The term of follower is used to describe user's audience. In social commerce, the users can be followed or follow any account that they want which is called as a follower (Hofer and Aubert, 2013). Follower is important and can give affect in social commerce because human easily influenced by other people (Sensuse *et al.*, 2017). It is believe when the seller have a higher number of followers, it will increase the trust of customers to the legitimacy of the sellers. Customers will more trust to the seller that has a million followers because it perceived as more trustworthy and reputable rather than seller have a thousand followers only.

There is some follower factors that customer need to know because the trusted follower can influences customer's trust to purchase. Trusted follower is means how customer views and looks at them, and then can influences to buy the products online. Quality of each follower is not same because different follower has

different attitude and appearance. Customer need be careful with the follower factors before want to purchase something. It is because there are maybe some followers is a fake follower that the seller buy the followers to make them look valuable and trustworthy.

1.2 Problem background

Follower is a social commerce user that can see another user's post in their content feed every day. They also can communicate with other users through like, comment, and share another user's post. However, there is still less of study about the follower. Getting more followers is a benefit for influences customer to purchase but that's doesn't mean the followers is trusted.

There are some sellers that can buy the followers from account that already have a lot of followers to make they look like trusted individual who sell the products (Cresci *et al.*, 2015) . But actually, they are not really know who are the followers and their background that follow the account. When customers want to purchase something, they will look at the number of followers because they can know how much customers buy from that seller account (Sensuse *et al.*, 2017). But there's might be some followers that they don't know their background which is fake account and dangerous. When the account has a lot of followers doesn't mean the followers are trusted individual and right people. Besides, there are some accounts that have a lower number of followers but they are trusted. So, the important thing is not only the number of followers but the trusted followers that we must focus on to influences purchase intention.

Getting followers in social media can increase engagement with the users to promote the brands and products to attract customers know about it. This also lead to customer's trust if the follower is trusted, it's mean that the seller can be trusted. Therefore, the follower is one of the factors that influences purchase intention because it is important for customers to know the types of followers. Customer only knows the number of followers but don't know who the trusted follower.

Previous study identified that follower is one of the factors that influences customer purchase intention through social commerce. However, less research have been done regarding trusted follower factors in social commerce that can influence purchase intention of other follower. This is opportunity for researcher to study more about the trusted follower factors that make other follower or customer to purchase in social commerce.

1.3 Problem Statement and Research Question

This study investigates the trusted follower factors that can influences customer purchase intention in social commerce. The main research question for the study is: “How to develop the trusted follower model based on trusted follower factors that can influence purchase intention in social commerce?”

Subsequently, the following three research questions were developed:

RQ1: What are the trusted follower factors that can influence purchase intention in social commerce?

RQ2: How the trusted follower model can be developed based on the identified trusted follower factor that can influence purchase intention?

RQ3: How to prioritize the trusted follower factor that can influence purchase intention in social commerce?

Follower can give impact to the social commerce and can influences customer to purchase online. Many customers look at the number of followers because they believe when the seller have many follower means the seller is trusted and can buy products from the seller. But actually customer doesn't really know whether the followers are trusted or not. Sometimes, the seller can buy the followers to make them look trusted seller. Therefore, there is a need to identify the trusted follower factors to ensure that the followers are right people and not a fake follower.

1.4 Research Objective

The objective of this study can be achieved through the following objectives:

1. To identify the trusted follower factors that can influence purchase intention in social commerce.
2. To develop the trusted follower model based on the identified trusted follower factor that can influence purchase intention.
3. To prioritize the trusted follower factor that can influence purchase intention in social commerce.

1.5 Scope of the Research

The scope of this research study is to identify the trusted follower factors that can influence purchase intention in social commerce. This study also develops the trusted follower model that can explain the trusted follower in social commerce. Then, the trusted follower model will be validated using SmartPLS. Based on the validated model, TOPSIS is used to prioritize the trusted follower factors based on their influence in social commerce.

1.6 Significant of the Research

The significant of the research is to know the impact of followers in social commerce. Followers is not only can influences customer to purchase but also can increase customers engagement for always see the products in social commerce. Therefore, this research is to study more deeply about the followers in social commerce. This is because there is still less study about the trusted followers in social commerce. This study will help to identify the trusted follower factors that can influences customer's purchase intention. There have a few factors that highlighted in this research to understand what actually the trusted followers that customer need to know because there are many types of followers in social commerce. This research will provide the customer better understanding about the importance of trusted

follower factors in social commerce. If the customers know the followers are trusted, it can help the customer to make a strategic decision to purchase and know that the follower is the trusted follower.

1.7 Structure of Thesis

Chapter 1 introduces about problem background, research question, research objective, scope research, significant of research, and structure of thesis.

Chapter 2 explains about literature review that has been analyzed to find out the follower factors in general terms and trusted follower factors that influence purchase intention, the follower model from different papers and also the ranking method that will be used in this study.

Chapter 3 presents the research design, methodology and justifies the choice and used a particular methodological approach. The research framework is proposed, detail steps and activities involved throughout the research is also describes in detail.

Chapter 4 is about the development of the trusted follower model. Measurement items were extracted from the literature for instrument developed. The questionnaire was evaluated.

Chapter 5 describes the results of main study. This chapter will show the final of trusted follower model and the ranks of the trusted follower factors in social commerce based on experts' opinions.

Chapter 6 describes the conclusion of the research with a discussion of the contribution and implication of the research results, the limitations of the study and the suggestion for future work.

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