

*Social Inclusion and*

# THE FUTURE OF WORK

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# CONTENTS

<b>Prologue</b> .....	5
<i>Sánchez-Gutiérrez, José</i>	
<b>Employment is more than a Job. It Is the Essential Pedestal Underpinning Social Inclusion and Democracy Itself</b> .....	7
<i>Argyriades, Demetrios</i>	
<b>Innovation for the Future of National Well Being</b> .....	25
<i>Galicia-Haro, Emma-Frida; Coria-Páez, Ana-Lilia and Ortega-Moreno, Irma-Cecilia</i>	
<b>Socioeconomic Development: The Steel like a Crucial Key</b> .....	39
<i>Espinoza-Parada, Lourdes-Fabiola; Cavazos-Salazar, Rosario-Lucero and Cruz-Álvarez, Jesús-Gerardo</i>	
<b>Generation of Employment and Digital Age in the Hotel Sector of Peru</b> .....	57
<i>Espinoza-Vilca, Sofía; Blanco-Jiménez, Mónica and Terán-Cázares, María Mayela</i>	
<b>Digitization of Economic Activities for Job Creation and Social Stability and Competitiveness</b> .....	71
<i>Morales-Alquicira, Andrés; Rendón-Trejo, Araceli and Guillen-Mondragón, Irene-Juana</i>	
<b>Film Industry International for the Future of Work and Social Inclusion</b> .....	89
<i>González-Alvarado, Tania-Elena; Kubus, Renata and Sánchez-Gutiérrez, José</i>	

<b>Impact of Open Data on the Creativity for Innovation.....</b>	<b>107</b>
Estrada-Zamora, Carlos	
<b>The Trust on Social Networks and the Increased Social Commerce.....</b>	<b>121</b>
Robles-Estrada, Celestino; de la Torres-Enríquez, Diana-Isabel and Suástegui-Ochoa, Alberto-Alejandro	
<b>Adaptability of Small and Medium-Sized Businesses and E- Commerce.....</b>	<b>149</b>
Bellon-Álvarez, Luis Alberto	

# Chapter 8

## The Trust on Social Networks and the Increased Social Commerce

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# The Trust on Social Networks and the Increased Social Commerce

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## INTRODUCTION

**T**he use of social media has seen a tremendous increase in the last few years. Social media platforms have played a major role in content marketing by sharing information and opinions about products and services (Cha, 2009), users are motivated by fulfilling emotional, social, functional, self-oriented, and relational needs (Davis, Lang & San Diego, 2014). These social media platforms are based on openness, cooperation, co-creation, trust, and commitment between users (Constantinides, 2014).

Recently, social commerce (s-commerce) gained major attention from both academics and practitioners. Numerous studies have been conducted to understand s-commerce and examine their impact. Since 2010 the published studies on s-commerce increased.

Busalim and Hussin (2016) conducted a systematic review of s-commerce research and identified 110 studies that address s-commerce published from 2010 to 2015. The results from their study show that the studies addressing s-commerce increased during the last 6 years.

They observed that the current studies covered numerous research themes under s-commerce, such as user behavior, business models, s-commerce website

design, adoption strategy, social process network analysis, and firm performance. Social media usage may be a good strategy for businesses to increase sales by retaining current customers and developing new customers (Hajlia *et al.*, 2015; Eikelmann, Hajj, & Peterson, 2008).

In today's challenging business environment, social media tools have been actively used for firms to present their business online and achieve marketing values (Stephen & Toubia, 2010; Gefen, 2000). For example, firms may have a fan page on Facebook that allows management to interact directly with customers to improve and manage customer relationships.

As such, social commerce has facilitated new channels that enhance communications between business enterprises and customers, thus, providing an innovative approach for changing business practice (Kera & Kaynak, 1997; Lin, Le & Wang, 2017).

## **SOCIAL MEDIA**

The emergence of Web 2.0 applications transferred the human approach to the web and interconnectivity among users (Mueller *et al.*, 2011; Drury, 2008).

Nevertheless, the terms Web 2.0 and Social Media are new terms in the Internet and Marketing lexicon and there is no consensus as to their exact meaning (Constantides, 2014). O'Reilly (2005) popularized the term Web 2.0 as the next stage in the Internet evolution by referring to it as a wide collection of online applications sharing several common interactive characteristics.

According to Constantides (2014) "Web 2.0 is a collection of interactive, open-source and user-controlled Internet applications enhancing the experiences, collaboration, knowledge and market power of the users as participants in business and social processes.

Web 2.0 applications support the creation of informal users' networks facilitating the flow of ideas, information, knowledge, and promote innovation and creativity by allowing the efficient generation, dissemination, sharing, and editing of content".

The meaning of the term Social Media is different from the meaning of Web 2.0 although the terms are often used interchangeably (Kim & Bae, 2008; Constantides, 2014).

Social media can be defined as any form of online publication or presence that allows interactive communication, including, but not limited to, social networks, blogs, Internet websites, internet forums, and wikis (Akman & Mishra, 2017).

The use of social media sites is gradually increasing and, over the past few years, social networking has attracted people in such a way that it has become a daily part of their daily lives (Gayathri, Thomas & Jayasudha, 2012).

Progressively, the use of social media evolved and many social media-based businesses have emerged, giving rise to social commerce. Social Commerce refers to “the delivery of e-commerce activities and transactions via the social media environment, mostly in social networks and by using Web 2.0 software.

Thus, social commerce “is a subset of e-commerce that involves using social media to assist in e-commerce transactions and activities” (Liang & Turban, 2011, p. 6). It enables businesses to reach global and distant customers and to build a good relationship with them (Cho *et al.*, 2014).

Social media represents one of the most important platforms for electronic e-commerce and amplifies the ability for communication with large numbers of consumers – be it organization to consumers or consumer to consumers (Mangold & Faulds, 2009; Sago, 2010; Evans, Bridson. & Rentschler, 2012).

It has one of the most metamorphic impacts on business (Aral, Dellarocas, & Godes, 2013) and remarkably revolutionizes the way the consumers and organizations interact (Todri & Adamopoulos, 2014).

Social media tools provide improved communication and collaboration between firms and their stakeholders (e.g. customers, suppliers, business partners) (Culnan, McHugh, & Zubillaga, 2010), an innovative way for firms to identify products with high selling potentials (Liang & Turban, 2011), and a better channel for attracting and retaining online customers (IBM, 2018).

The rapid growth of social media has made it also challenging to follow the trend and understand the operating of the different social media platforms to perform business tactics.

For instance, there is a lack of information on how the perception of the platform usage, influences the purchase behavior, whereas there are endless social media platforms for different usages and unique characteristics (Hajli *et al.* 2017; Peters *et al.*, 2013). Thus, there is an urgent need to understand social commerce shoppers’ shopping behavior while considering the specificity of the social media platform.

Social media represents an important platform for e-commerce and has one of the most metamorphic impacts on business. Therefore, investigating the usage of s-commerce concerning important behavioral factors could provide valuable information for companies in establishing policies and strategies.

It could also be useful for management studies and researchers in understanding the consumers’ attitude towards the usage of social media for commercial purposes. S-commerce creates opportunities for firms. Based on findings this research provides insights with major implications for marketers, who would like to generate direct sales on social network platforms.



## **SOCIAL COMMERCE**

The social interactions of people on the Internet, especially in social networking sites (SNSs), have created a new stream in e-commerce. This new stream is social commerce (Mahmood, 2013).

The concept of social commerce emerged through Web 2.0 in 2005 amid the growing commercial use of social networking sites and many other social media websites (Curty & Zhang, 2011; Liang *et al.*, 2011). It ushers a new form of e-commerce (Wang & Zhang, 2012).

Social commerce is often considered as a subset of e-commerce (Curty & Zhang, 2013; Liang *et al.*, 2012), however, unlike traditional e-commerce where consumers usually interact with online shopping sites separately, social commerce involves online communities that support user interactions and user-generated content (Kim & Srivastava, 2007).

Prior research has broadly characterized s-commerce with two essential elements: social media and commercial activities (Liang *et al.*, 2012; Kim & Park, 2012).

Stephen and Toubia (2010) defined s-commerce as a form of Internet-based social media, which enables individuals to engage in the selling and marketing of products and services in online communities and marketplaces.

Dennison, Bourdage Braun and Chetuparambil (2009) adopted a definition provided by IBM and explained it as the marriage of e-commerce and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM). Marsden and Chaney (2012) conceptualized social commerce as the selling with social media websites, such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Pinterest, and YouTube (the "Big Five"), which support user-generated content and social interaction.

According to Liang and Turban (2011) and Chen, Su and Widjaja, (2016), s-commerce is the use of Web 2.0 and social technologies to support interactions in an online context to support consumers' acquisition of services and products on the Internet.

Social commerce can also be defined as word of - mouth applied to e-commerce (Dennison, Bourdage-Braun & Chetuparambil, 2009), and it involves a more social, creative and collaborative approach than is used in online marketplaces (Parise & Guinan, 2008; Jiang *et al.*, 2014).

Recent research identified two major types of social commerce: (1) social networking sites that incorporate commercial features to allow transactions and advertisements; and (2) traditional e-commerce websites that add social tools to facilitate social interaction and sharing (Huang & Benyoucef, 2013; Liang & Turban, 2011).

In s-commerce, consumers are active and they have social relationships with other friends, members of other communities, and e-vendors. They

communicate, rate other products, review others' opinions, participate in forums, share their experiences, and recommend products and services (Mahmood, 2013). The progressive development of technologies suggests that the era of s-commerce will eventually become the mainstream for marketing, following the success of SNS (Marsden, 2010; Stephen & Toubia, 2010).

Additionally, the benefits gained from s-commerce depend on the behavior of individuals on online platforms and the information that is shared or spread publicly via such platforms. Therefore, s-commerce has become an important area of exploration for university and industry researchers interested in online technologies and their impacts on consumers and businesses (Lee & Phang, 2015).

To analyze this commercial phenomenon, researchers have focused on finding factors that affect social commerce (Kim & Park, 2013; Wang & Zhang, 2012; Zhang, Zhang, & Hans-Dieter, 2013) and there have been several published studies seeking to understand the relationship between social commerce factors and consumer purchase intentions.

Previous studies have shown that platform technological services (Curry & Zhang, 2013; Huang & Benyoucef, 2013; Wu & Wang, 2011), interaction/information communication (Gabriela, Hor-meyll, & De Paula Pessôa, 2014) and relationships (Liang, Ho & Li., 2012; *Welbourne et al.*, 2006) have a significant influence on consumers' purchase intention.

### **TRUST IN SOCIAL MEDIA CONTEXTS: A MODEL**

The perception that leads to purchasing consumer behavior in social media context as approached in this study is in agreement with the concepts stated in the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) model by Fishbein & Ajzen (1975), the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) and the UTAUT2 (Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology 2) Model (Venkatesh, Thong, & Xu, 2012).

The identification of consumer motives is important for marketers and retailers to use to enhance the probability that the products and experiences they develop and provide satisfy consumers' needs (Kang & Johnson, 2015).

In light of these developments, the main objective of this study is to investigate the usage of s-commerce mediated by intention regarding behavioral factors that enhance trust as a key factor that influences shopping intention. These factors were selected to be in line with the available literature.

Trust is a concept studied in different disciplines such as philosophy, economics, sociology, management, and marketing (Jim *et al.*, 2014; Blois, 1999; Rousseau *et al.*, 1998).

Trust can be considered as a function of the degree of risk inherent in a certain situation (Koller, 1988). Many researchers argue that trust is a crucial issue

in online shopping environments where there may be lots of uncertainty (Pavlou, 2003; Mutz, 2005; Gefen, Karahanna & Straub, 2003).

It has been shown that trust plays an important role in the e-commerce adoption process (Aljifri, Pons & Collins, 2003), also, consumers who trust e-commerce may not necessarily trust s-commerce. Bansal and Chen (2011) claimed that consumers are more likely to trust e-commerce sites than s-commerce sites.

Trust is more important in social commerce platforms where uncertainty is higher due to the lack of face to face communications and the high level of user-generated content (Lin & Lu, 2010; Featherman & Hajli, 2015), and because it reduces "transaction cost" in business interactions (Mutz, 2005; Piller & Walcher, 2006).

It reduces the tendency to monitor other parties' activities and is an element in sanctioning systems as reliable (Mutz, 2005). Many different practitioners and researchers on e-commerce believe that social trust is a key component in a country's economic expansion and whether they can benefit from economic potential introduced by e-commerce (Mutz, 2005).

Previous studies have emphasized the important role of trust in s-commerce. Moreover, It has been confirmed that trust has a significant role in a customer's intention to buy (Shin, 2010; Han & Windsor, 2011; Lin & Lu, 2010) Having confidence in the provider and with less perceived risk, a customer will search for new items or services in the online environment and be more likely to make a purchase (Hassanein & Head, 2007; Shin, 2010).

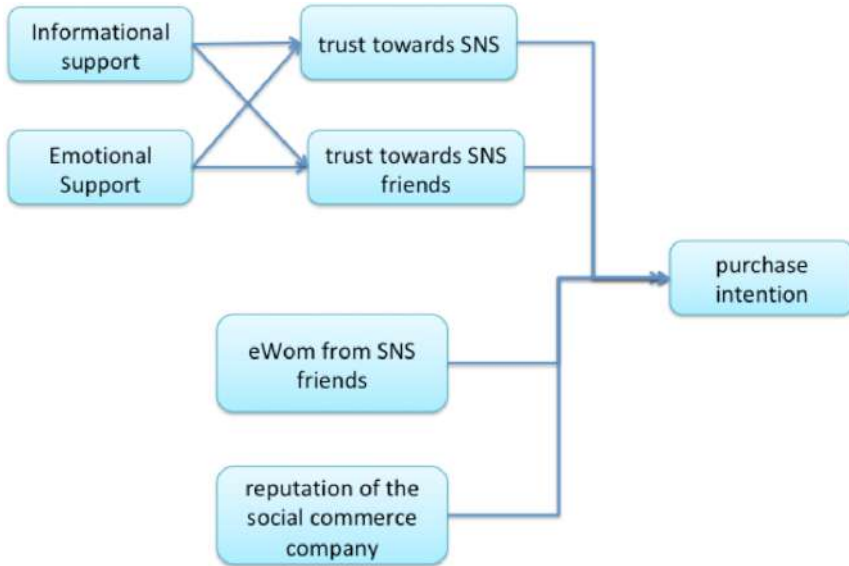
Some authors argue that s-commerce and the emergence of Web 2.0 can help customers to reduce their risk and increase social trust. Applications on Web 2.0, such as customer ratings and review, would be a good solution to overcome this barrier. Social technologies enable consumers to have social activities in SNSs (Han & Windsor, 2011), where interactions among the connected users can increase trust among the participants (Han & Windsor, 2011; Swamynathan *et al.*, 2008).

Trust is an important determinant in considering a consumer's intention to buy (Roca, García, & De la Vega, 2009; Han & Windsor, 2011). The more trust the consumers have, the more likely it is that they will buy (Han & Windsor, 2011).

Hence, it is important to investigate exhaustively the role of trust in a social commerce adoption system. Trust can come from different sources. Linda (2010) claimed that various factors such as information quality, communication, and WOM effects could make s-commerce trustworthy because consumers themselves create them.

Kim and others (2005) claimed that gaining consumers' trust is a key factor in s-commerce and found that various constructs such as the reputation and size of the s-commerce site.

Figure 1: Conceptual research model



Source: Own elaboration.

Figure 1 demonstrates a model for research. This research model includes five constructs: informational support, emotional support, trust to SNS, trust to friends in the SNS, eWOM from friends in the SNS, the reputation of the s-commerce company are the independent variables, and purchase intention is the dependent variable. The variables included in the research model are hypothesized as follows.

*Social support*

Social support, a notion from psychology is defined as the social interaction of individuals in a network that is cared for, answered to, and supported (Ali, 2011; Albors, Ramos & Hervas, 2008).

Strong social support makes a user feel connected to friends as well as builds trust with others in an online community (Crocker & Canevello, 2008; Weber, Johnson, & Corrigan, 2004).

Social support refers to the perception of a member of a group or organization of being helped, responded to, and cared for physically and psychologically by others in the group or organization (Crocker, 2008).

In s-commerce, social support is useful in building close relationships among users and enhancing users' well being in organizations (Obst, 2010).

On social media platforms, the user receiving shared information perceives others as being caring and helpful when they provide useful life or product information.

After receiving such information, the user will be willing to acquire or share valuable shopping information with others. Frequent sharing of supportive information can enhance friendship and trust among users; which may further increase the intention to conduct commercial activities (Liang & Turban, 2011).

Previous studies have also revealed that social support exists in three forms: emotional, tangible, and informational (Schaefer, Coyne & Lazarus, 1981).

#### *Emotional support*

Emotional support includes being able to confide in and rely on another person, contributing to the feeling that one is loved or cared about or even that one is a member of the group and not a stranger. In social commerce, emotional support is present when users perceive themselves as being cared for or empathized with based on the information provided by other users. Taylor and Heejung (2004) found that the emotional support provided by others in the group may reduce stress.

Emotional support will help members open up and look for help from other members of the community. In particular, some scholars have demonstrated that caring is the basis for trust development (Ommen *et al.*, 2008).

Therefore, through emotional exchange and connection with other members within the community, people will develop their trust toward other members and the social commerce community. Therefore,

Hypothesis 1. Emotional support is positively related to trust toward SNS friends.

Hypothesis 2. Emotional support is positively related to trust toward SNS.

#### *Informational support*

Informational support refers to providing information and advice that could help another person. The various forms of UGC, including recommendations, advice, and knowledge, are all manifestations of information support.

Coulson (2005) found that information, particularly factual evaluation information, posted in response to queries by members may help to solve problems. It is not difficult to understand that if people can consistently obtain instrumental assistance, such as valuable advice and immediate help from their

online friends or the focal community, they will be more likely to have confidence on the other side's benevolence, integrity, and ability, and further form a feeling of trust toward the information providers (Pralhad & Ramaswamy, 2004; Porter & Donthu, 2008; Chen, Xiao-Liang, & Shen, 2015). Based on this reasoning, the following hypotheses emerge:

Hypothesis 3. Informational support is positively related to trust toward SNS friends.

Hypothesis 4. Informational support is positively related to trust toward SNS.

#### *Trust toward SNS*

Trust toward community refers to one's perception of the focal community as a reliable and predictable place for social interaction. Online communities often have commonly accepted standards to ensure mutual and reciprocal benefits for its members.

As the reciprocal nature of communication lying in the center of the virtual community (Chen, Zhang, & Xu, 2009; Yadav *et al.*, 2013), the extent to which community can follow the established rules will directly determine members' participatory activities in the community.

Besides, the benevolence and integrity of a community will smooth away users' worry about opportunistic behaviors, such as deceptive advertising or inappropriate use of personal information.

The relationship between trust toward a community and customers' loyalty was well established in the literature (Schaefer, Coyne, & Lazarus, 1981; Salo & Karjaluoto, 2007; Chen, Zhang, & Xu, 2009; Wu & Chang, 2006; Shen, 2012). Therefore,

Hypothesis 5. Trust toward SNS is positively related to social shopping intent

#### *Trust toward SNS friends*

In this study, trust toward SNS friends is defined as an individual's willingness to rely on the words, actions, and decisions of friend's members in a social commerce community.

Prior studies have found that trust toward members positively affected online participatory behaviors, such as getting and giving information in the focal community (Shen, Lee, & Cheung, 2014; Ridings, Gefen, & Arinze, 2002), this is especially true if these members are also friends.

This is because, in a trusting environment, people tend to help each other and further engage in shared social activities. In particular, information obtained from credible sources is usually regarded as more useful and thus will be used as a decision aid (Sussman & Siegal, 2003).

In a similar vein, people prefer to share their product/service consumption experience when the other side has some trustworthiness attributes (i.e. benevolence, integrity, and ability). This will let them converse easily based on common knowledge background and help to reduce possible opportunistic behaviors. Therefore,

Hypothesis 6. Trust toward friends in the SNS is positively related to social shopping intention.

#### *eWOM*

WOM theory was first developed by Arndt (1967). The original WOM theory assumes that WOM information is an indispensable experienced source created by individuals or marketers, and is then diffused by consumers or marketers to their consumers (Arndt, 1967; Engel, Kegerreis, & Blackwell, 1969).

The relationships between WOM-related constructs and consumer purchase behavior have been well illustrated in the existing literature (see Cheung & Thadani, 2012).

WOM information aims to help consumers fully understand a service or a product before its consumption and might also shape expectations of service (Wang & Chang, 2013; Bansal & Voyer, 2000; Zeithaml & Bitner, 1996).

WOM referrals refer to online activities in which consumers exchange information or experiences to help others make purchasing decisions (Kim & Prabhakar, 2000; Park, Chaiy, & Lee, 1998;).

The phenomena of eWOM show that online consumers can share their experiences, opinions, and knowledge with others on popular topics (Huang, Hsieh, & Wu, 2014; Prendergast, Ko, & Yuen, 2010), and eWOM appearing in SNS can deliver brand messages to millions of SNS users, and that will reap the potential to retain existing customers and attract new consumers (Chu & Kim, 2011; Shanmugam *et al.*, 2016).

That is, online buyers, play a crucial role in promoting products or services for s-commerce firms through WOM referrals. In online shopping, as consumers do not have the first-hand experience of a product, such as touching it or smelling it, reviews provided by other customers become ever more valuable, especially if these customers do have hands-on experience of the product or service (Do-Hyung & Kim, 2008).

Their comments, reviews, and ratings become vital supports for other potential customers (Do-Hyung & Kim, 2008). Consumers are more likely to value others' information and opinions than advertising when purchasing products or services (Park *et al.*, 1998).

Previous studies of trust have demonstrated that online buyers influenced by WOM referrals are likely to have a positive trust propensity. For example,

Brown and Reingen (1987) claimed that WOM referrals represent a major factor influencing individuals' behaviors through unofficial communication channels.

Kim and Prabhakar (2000) demonstrated that WOM referrals play a major role in increasing the level of trust in e-commerce. Kuan and Bock (2007) found that WOM referrals in SNS settings are more likely to inculcate consumers' trust in online environments than in offline environments. S-commerce makes use of SNSs for WOM referrals, which differentiates s-commerce from other forms of e-commerce. S-commerce users are likely to trust other users' experiences and opinions concerning certain products and services or s-commerce sites.

Therefore, WOM referrals may play a more important role in inducing consumers' trust for s-commerce than for other forms of e-commerce. In this regard, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 7. eWOM referrals have a positive effect on consumers' intent to purchase in s-commerce sites.

*The Reputation of the s-commerce company*

The Reputation of the s-commerce firm, defined as the extent to which consumers believe that a firm is honest and concerned about its customers (Doney & Cannon, 1997; Wang & Yu, 2017).

A firm with a good reputation or image enjoys a higher level of customers' trust (Doney & Cannon, 1997; Jarvenpaa, Tractinsky & Vitale, 2000). Also, a good reputation is a valuable intangible asset for many e-retailers and provides consumers with potential cues for enhancing trust (Park, Gunn & Han, 2012).

Thus, creating a positive reputation is particularly important for those companies to be successful. Koufaris and Hampton-Sosa (2004) claimed that consumers' perception of the reputation of an e-commerce site plays a key role in building their trust in that site. Therefore, a good reputation has to be forged to increase consumers' trust.

Also, the reputation of a firm is often shared among consumers and thus plays an important role in fostering their trust (Chen, 2006; Teo & Liu, 2007). Besides, the reputation of an s-commerce firm (or a small/medium-sized firm) indicates the level of consumers' trust in the firm.

In this regard, the perceived reputation of a s-commerce firm has a positive effect on the formation of the relationship between the s-commerce firm and its customers and becomes a key determinant of trust (Jarvenpaa *et al.*, 2000; Park, Gunn, & Han, 2012; Teo & Liu, 2007).

Previous studies of e-commerce have demonstrated a close relationship between reputation and trust (Casaló, Flavian, & Guinaliu, 2007; Janda, Trocchia, & Gwinner, 2002).



S-commerce users are likely to consider a firm's reputation as an important factor in evaluating their trust in the firm when purchasing products or services. In this regard, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 8. A s-commerce firm's reputation has a positive effect on consumers' intent to buy in SNS.

#### *Intention to buy*

Intention to buy is a construct of the technology acceptance model (TAM), one of the most successful theories in predicting an individual's intention to use a system (Pavlou, 2003).

There are two core theories to test and predict an individual's intention to utilize information systems (Mathieson, 1991). These two theories are TAM and the theory of planned behaviour by Ajzen (1991).

TAM is a core theory in e-commerce studies (Martins, Oliveira, & Popović, 2014; Park et al., 2009) and many authors developed this model (Hsiao & Yang, 2011). Intention to buy in the present study is defined as a customer's intention to engage in online buying in social networking sites.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

To test the stated hypotheses, a questionnaire was developed to measure the constructs in the research model and all questionnaire items were measured on a 5-point Likert-scale, with 5 equivalent to "strongly agree" and 1 to "strongly disagree."

We implemented an online survey, which was run through the Survey Monkey web site. Survey respondents were randomly selected among Facebook users in Mexico. Facebook was selected, since, among numerous SNSs, Facebook has the largest number of users Worldwide at 2,320 million, followed by YouTube at 1,900 million, WhatsApp at 1,600 million, Facebook Messenger at 1,300 million, We Chat at 1,098 million and Instagram at 1,000 million (Statista, 2019).

Facebook not only assists communication and exchanges information but also enables businesses to facilitate and execute sales transactions. Facebook commerce (f-commerce), a form of s-commerce, refers to the buying and selling of goods or services through Facebook (Marsden, 2010).

Table 1. The operational items

Constructs	Measurement Variables
Informational support	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. On Facebook, some people offer me suggestions when I need help.</li> <li>2. When I have a problem, some people on Facebook give me information to help me overcome it</li> <li>3. When I face a difficult situation, some people on Facebook help me find the cause and give me suggestions</li> </ol>
Emotional support	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. When I face difficulties, some people on Facebook are on my side</li> <li>2. When I face a difficult situation some people on Facebook have comforted and encouraged me.</li> <li>3. When I have a problem some people on Facebook have expressed their interest and concern for my welfare.</li> </ol>
Trust in SNS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Facebook's performance always meets my ex Facebook's performance always meets my expectations</li> <li>2. Facebook is a good social networking site.</li> <li>3. Facebook is a reliable social networking site.</li> </ol>
Trust in SNS Friends	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Facebook friends always try to help me if I have trouble.</li> <li>2. Facebook friends always keep their promises.</li> <li>3. Facebook members are sincere when dealing with others.</li> </ol>
e W O M propensity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I like to present new brands and products to my Facebook friends</li> <li>2. I like to help my Facebook friends, providing information about many types of products.</li> <li>3. My Facebook friends ask me to get information about products or places to go shopping.</li> <li>4. My Facebook friends consider me a good source of information when it comes to new products or sales.</li> </ol>
Reputation of s-commerce company	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I buy at a s-commerce site because it is well known</li> <li>2. I buy at a s-commerce site because it has a good reputation</li> <li>3. I buy at a s-commerce site because it's an honest company</li> <li>4. I buy at a s-commerce site because I am acquainted with the company.</li> </ol>
Intention to purchase	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I consider the buying experiences of other Facebook members when I need to buy something.</li> <li>2. I ask other Facebook members to give me suggestions before buying.</li> <li>3. I am willing to buy products recommended by other Facebook members.</li> </ol>

Source: Own elaboration.

No restrictions were set for age, sex, educational level, or profession. Respondents were 305 young Mexicans. The mean age of the group was 24.65 years, the standard deviation of 1.257 years. We believe it is representative of Mexican Facebook users as young cohorts are the most active and frequent users of social media (AMIPCI, 2014). The operational items used to measure the problem-solving approach construct are presented in Table 1.

## DISCUSSION OF DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

To assess H1 to H8, a Structural Equation Model (SEM) was utilized. Our analyses followed Anderson and Gerbing's (1988) two-step approach whereby the estimation of a confirmatory measurement model precedes the simultaneous estimation of the structural model, as described next.

### *The Measurement Model*

Confirmatory factor analysis was performed using EQS 6.2 to confirm the variables measuring the constructs in the model. The reliability of the measurement model was examined by calculating Cronbach's alpha coefficient for each of the constructs separately.

We also report the composite reliability and AVE of the constructs because it is generally acknowledged that composite reliability is a better measure of scale reliability than Cronbach's alpha coefficient (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988).

Table 2 shows that the alpha coefficient value for all the constructs is greater than 0.7, which is considered to be acceptable for the constructs to be reliable (Hair *et al.*, 2006).

The composite reliability values of all the constructs are greater than 0.6. Following recommendations from Bagozzi and Yi (1988), this further strengthens our assessment of reliability for all the measured constructs.

The measurement model indicates an adequate model fit of the data (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988, Bearden, Sharma & Teel, 1982, Bentler, 1990). ( $\chi^2 = 557.568$  df = 208, NFI = 0.884; NNFI = 0.907; CFI = 0.923; and RMSEA = 0.074).

### *Convergent Validity*

Convergent validity was examined by calculating the average variance extracted (AVE) and the factor loadings of the measurement items on respective constructs in the model (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Table 2 shows that all the measurement variables had significant loadings onto the respective latent constructs ( $p < 0.05$ ) with values ranging between 0.453 and 0.881. Also, the AVE for each construct is equal to or greater than 0.50, but for three of the constructs ('Informational support', 'Trust in SNS' and 'Trust in SNS Friends'), which further supports the convergent validity of five of the constructs.

Table 2. Reliability and convergent validity

Constructs	Measurement Items	Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Informational support	IS1	0.453	0.844	0.702	0.451
	IS2	0.794			
	IS3	0.720			
Emotional support	ES1	0.714	0.708	0.757	0.509
	ES2	0.728			
	ES3	0.699			
Trust in SNS	TS1	0.650	0.750	0.710	0.450
	TS2	0.697			
	TS3	0.664			
Trust in SNS Friends	TF1	0.662	0.670	0.605	0.407
	TF2	0.698			
	TF32	0.543			
eWom propensity	EW1	0.629	0.858	0.768	0.410
	EW2	0.709			
	EW3	0.576			
	EW4	0.506			
Reputation of s-commerce company	RSC1	0.604	0.909	0.867	0.574
	RSC2	0.881			
	RSC3	0.762			
	RSC4	0.636			
Intention to purchase	IP1	0.619	0.853	0.700	0.439
	IP2	0.648			
	IP3	0.716			

Source: Own elaboration.

#### *Discriminant Validity*

Discriminant validity was assessed in two ways. First, as suggested by Fornell and Larcker (1981), it was assessed by comparing the average values of variance extracted for each construct with the corresponding inter-construct squared correlation estimates.

Table 3 shows that most of the AVE values are greater than the inter-construct squared correlations; two squared correlations are slightly larger than correspondent AVE –eWOM/Intention to purchase and Informational support/Trust in SNS, while Emotional support/eWOM shows a high difference to its correspondent AVE, showing with this, a problem of discriminant validity.

Table 3. Reliability and convergent validity

	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Informational support	0.451	0.460	0.083	0.271	0.130	0.069	0.143
Emotional support	0.84/0.51	0.509	0.187	0.745	0.276	0.097	0.191
Trust in SNS	0.40/0.18	0.66/0.38	0.450	0.328	0.270	0.169	0.291
Trust in SNS Friends	0.48/0.24	0.37/0.15	0.50/0.25	0.407	0.300	0.128	0.204
eWOM propensity	0.59/0.28	1.06/0.67	0.69/0.36	0.46/0.16	0.410	0.323	0.460
Reputation	0.60/0.27	0.73/0.42	0.67/0.37	0.55/0.27	0.70/0.38	0.574	0.612
Intention to purchase	0.71/0.39	0.50/0.22	0.61/0.30	0.73/0.41	0.85/0.50	0.97/0.60	0.439

Note: The upper triangle has the values of squared inter-construct correlations and the lower triangle has the inner construct correlations values with a confidence interval of 95 %; the diagonal elements are the AVE values (bold).

Source: Own elaboration.

This may be due to problems in translating the meaning of the items but further research is needed. Second, to test whether the inter-construct correlation was significantly different from unity, we used the chi-squared difference tests (Bagozzi, Yi, & Phillips, 1991).

Chi-squared difference test was performed by estimating the measurement model by constraining the inter-construct correlation to unity and then the same model was estimated freely, estimating the inter-construct correlation.

The test statistic is the difference between the chi-square values of 14 more degrees of freedom, and all changes in chi-square obtained were significant at  $p < 0.05$  level of significance. In this case, eWOM/Trust in SNS show constructs overlap. Overall, we believe measurement scales utilized are reasonably reliable and valid except for the aforementioned. The Structural Model and Hypotheses Testing

The proposed hypotheses were tested using structural equation modeling using EQS 6.2. Results indicated an adequate model fit with a significant chi-square statistic (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988, Bearden, Sharma, & Teel, 1982, Bentler, 1990). ( $\chi^2 = 557.568$  df = 208, NFI = 0.884; NNFI = 0.907; CFI = 0.923; and RMSEA = 0.074) also indicated an acceptable fit of the structural model with the data.

Table 4 shows the parameter estimates of the structural model. Seven of the hypotheses were supported. Results show that the path coefficients between Informational support Trust towards SNS, Emotional support Trust towards SNS, Informational support Trust towards SNS friends, Emotional support Trust

towards SNS friends, Trust towards SNS friends → Purchase Intention, eWOM propensity → Purchase Intention, and Reputation of the s-commerce site → Purchase Intention are positive and significant at  $p < 0.05$  while the path Trust towards SNS → Purchase Intention, is not significant  $p < 0.05$  supporting H1, HIII, and HV. Hence, seven linear relationships in the model were supported.

Table 4. Estimated path coefficients

Hypothesized paths		Path coefficients	Results
Informational support	Trust towards SNS	0.259*	H1 (Accepted)
Emotional support	Trust towards SNS	0.219*	H2 (Accepted)
Informational support	Trust towards friends	0.224*	H3 (Accepted)
Emotional support	Trust towards friends	0.578*	H4 (Accepted)
Trust towards SNS	Purchase Intention	0.054	H5 (NOT Accepted)
Trust towards friends	Purchase Intention	0.202*	H6 (Accepted)
eWOM propensity	Purchase Intention	0.254*	H7 (Accepted)
Reputation of S-C site	Purchase Intention	0.538*	H8 (Accepted)

Source: Own elaboration.

## LIMITATIONS, IMPLICATIONS ANDS FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

There are some limitations of this research, which needs to be considered while interpreting our research findings. First, these findings need to be qualified with some cautionary notes due to several limitations of the research design: this study was based on a “snap-shot” questionnaire instead of a longitudinal study.

The quantitative analyses were developed from psychometric measures obtained by a self-reporting questionnaire, which allowed an empirical test of the proposed model based on statistical significance.

Investigating the usage of s-commerce concerning important behavioral factors could provide valuable information for companies in establishing policies and strategies.

It could also be useful for management studies and researchers in understanding the consumers’ attitude towards the usage of social media for commercial purposes. S-commerce creates opportunities for firms.

Based on findings this research provides insights with major implications for marketers, who would like to generate direct sales on social network platforms. Future research should use other moderating variables that may affect the shopping intention in social media commerce sites.

Further studies could apply a variant of research methods to include other techniques such as interviews, which allow for a deeper understanding of the problem and issues

## CONCLUSIONS

This study investigates the factors influencing purchase intentions in social commerce and develops a research model to study this type of commerce. Seven significant linear relationships were supported to influence s-commerce adoption among Mexican Facebook users.

Through this study, the theory that trust is a determining factor in the process of adopting electronic commerce and in the intention to purchase is confirmed.

It is expressed that the behavioral factors that are related to the purchase intention in social media are: informational support, emotional support, trust in social networking sites, which are areas in which companies and marketing specialists should give them the main interest.

Consumers are content creators, they form their brand communities in which with the information they generate, they can positively contribute or harm the brand image of companies once it becomes viral content; therefore, companies being aware of behavioral factors can take advantage of user-generated content in their favor.

It was found that users trust the informative and emotional support from other users on Facebook and that they trust the social network site as a means of communication and information and this, in turn, guides users to make a purchase, consequently the adoption of social commerce increases.

These relationships must be understood to observe the behavior of consumers, monitor what they say about companies, create strategies that generate interaction, creation, and viralization of content, stimulate trust and finally these actions lead to the realization Shopping; that in a broader sense it contributes to brand recognition, positioning and new methods and ways of purchase that have been developed through the advancement and use of technologies.

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