

DOCTORAL THESIS

The role of customer orientation support, individual swift trusts and trust in promoting social commerce

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ABSTRACT

Social commerce (s-commerce) relies on social media to support the buying and selling activities between customers and sellers. S-commerce sites have nowadays enabled their sellers to form their individual community, constitutes invited members of other shoppers, serving as trusted agents or targets and share shopping information and experience with their new customers. This study termed this new facet of communities as social commerce individual vendor community (SCIVC).

A recent business paradigm of s-commerce sites indicates that customers spend a little time with s-commerce sellers and/or members in SCIVC, and thus swift trust, a quickly formed trust in a new relationship, deems be more appropriate representing as a basis of their trust building formulated. From the perspective of trust transfer theory, this thesis firstly develops the swift-based trust transfer process model and then examines how both swift trusts factors of individual sellers and members in SCIVC would affect customer trust in s-commerce sites. Secondly, this thesis verifies how the social support affects the model constructs of the swift-based trust transfer process, and subsequently how they further affect relationship outcomes on s-commerce sites. In this thesis, we quantified social support based on functional customer orientation construct and relational customer orientation construct; whereas respective swift guanxi and swift credibility constructs used to measure factors of swift trust factor between a customer with their seller and between a customer with their members of SCVIC. Lastly, we measured relationship outcomes by the following factors: repurchase intention, social shopping intention (i.e. measured by WOM adoption), and social sharing intention (i.e. measured by WOM intention).

Based on a survey of 287 s-commerce shoppers from a s-commerce site - WeChat, our results revealed that the customer trust in s-commerce sites can be transferred from both respective swift trusts. This implies that their trust can be influenced by s-commerce parties, that are individual sellers and members of SCVIC. Our results also showed that the proposed social support factors, namely functional and relational customer orientation, both have mainly a positive relationship on respective swift guanxi, swift credibility, and customer trust factors, and subsequently influenced the three proposed factors of relationship outcomes. Exceptional insignificant cases included the relationship between relationship customer orientation and customer trust, the relationship between swift guanxi and WOM adoption and the relationship between swift credibility and WOM intention.

In conclusion, this thesis makes three main contributions. First, it confirms consumer trust in s-commerce sites can be transferred from their sellers via guanxi trust and members in SCVIC via credibility trust. Second, it confirms functional and relational customer orientation have a profound total effect on both the proposed relationship mediator of trust and relationship outcomes. Lastly, it confirms the proposed customer orientation constructs and relationship mediator of trust promote not only s-

commerce shopping behavior through collaborative sharing and social shopping but also individual-based repeat buying decisions.

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