



Adapting the UTAUT2 Model for Social Commerce Context

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ABSTRACT

Social commerce (SC) became a major channel for conducting business as a result of the ban adopted by many countries because of COVID-19. The simplicity of the unified theory of acceptance and use of technology (UTAUT) and its extended version (UTAUT2) invites researchers to explore other options that can yield better explanation of the adoption of SC. This study extended the UTAUT2 with perceived value, trust, and a SC-related construct. In addition, the study re-structured the UTAUT2 to fit with SC environment. The study utilized 463 surveys distributed in Qatar and analyzed the data using SEM. Results fully supported the proposed model, where trust, perceived value, facilitating conditions, and hedonic motivation significantly predicted behavioral intentions with an R² value equal to 72%. The model supported the role of performance expectancy and SC constructs in predicting perceived value and the role of effort expectancy and habit in predicting hedonic motivation.

KEYWORDS

Perceived Value, Qatar, Social Commerce, Technology Adoption, Trust, UTAUT2

1. INTRODUCTION

Social media is becoming the preferred channel for communication, entertainment and even business (Alquraan et al., 2017). The popularity, ease of use, and mobility of social media applications, are shaping the way we transact, communicate, and live our lives in the 21st century. Such social environment opened doors for humans to interact and socialize without location and time challenges. The top ranked popular social media platforms exceeded the populations of many countries. Facebook reported 2.2 billion users in 2019, YouTube reported 1.7 billion users in 2019, and Twitter reported 1.2 billion users in 2019 (Smart Insights, 2019).

The popularity of social media made it necessary for businesses to adopt such open platforms for reaching their customers. A smart practice is to target your customers wherever they are and follow them through the favorite channel they prefer. Social media is considered by many a revolution that changed our lives and influenced many practices (by businesses) and behaviors (by customers). Based on that, businesses tried to utilize such channel to conduct business and offer their products and services through social media platforms. Such practices are called social commerce. It includes all business transactions conducted on social media.

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Utilizing social media for commerce is new for many businesses and for customers as well. The evolution from traditional brick and mortar business, to click and mortar business changed the business environment and how businesses compete. Still, the majority of research conducted focused on electronic commerce, where transactions are made online, but not on a social platform. Building a proprietary social platform makes it impractical for businesses as they will lose the advantage of population size, and will limit their exposure to existing customer base. Based on that, businesses tried to benefit from existing social media platforms to reach existing and new customers.

This study tried to adapt the UTAUT2 for the purpose of social commerce. The original model focused on the moderation influence and utilized 8 predictors of behavioral intentions. This proposed model extended the UTAUT2 with trust and adapted the model to the social commerce environment. The study tried to answer the following research question:

RQ: What are the factors influencing the intention to use social commerce?

The following section will try to explore the literature for the purpose of building the research model and summing the factors that are expected to influence the intention to use social commerce. Section three will describe the details of the research method conducted. Section four will describe the data analysis and discuss the results. The discussion will report the implications of research and the limitations and future work. Finally, section five will summarize the conclusions of research.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This study aimed at exploring the context of social commerce, founding its investigation on the UTAUT2 model. The UTAUT2 model was proposed by Venkatesh et al. (2012) and extended the UTAUT with major changes. The study explored both models and the major indicators used and tried to adapt the UTAUT2 to social commerce environment with structural changes.

2.1 Social commerce

Web 2.0 is characterized by opening a conversation channel between different parties (Blank & Reisdorf, 2012), where users enjoy dynamic platforms that enabled them to create content, socialize with users with similar profiles, and enjoy new business models (Lai & Turban, 2008). Such environment was well noticed by businesses and offered great opportunities, but also included some risks as well (Parise & Guinan, 2008).

Social media is a public communication platform, where users share thoughts, views and opinions with people with similar profiles (friends) or publicly with others (Kose & Sert, 2015; Alquraan et al., 2017). Others defined social media as a platform over the Internet to share and communicate views and thoughts between users (Ahlqvist & Tutkimuskeskus, 2008; Bandyopadhyay, 2016) or an Internet-based technology and application that is built on the foundation of Web 2.0 and enabled users to create and exchange content (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). The previous definitions indicate that Web 2.0 technologies are the main drivers of social media applications. In this study we define social media to be a web-based platform that connects people who have a common interest, where they can create, share and disseminate content.

Conducting commerce over the Internet started since its inception (i.e. the Internet), where it provided many advantages to businesses and consumers like reduced cost, broad reach, and convenience (Zhang, Mukherjee & Soetarmann, 2013). Adopting such channel for commerce was the focus of many studies with diverse factors ranging from context, technology type, behavioral factors, and cultural factors (Li, Wu & Lai, 2013; Mazzarol, 2015; Riantini et al., 2018; Suh & Han, 2003; Wymer & Regan, 2005; Yoon, 2009). New trends in research tried to link social media with

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