

Understanding Social-Commerce Shopping Behavior: A Study in the Chinese Context

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ABSTRACT

While numerous researchers have identified factors that explain social commerce-shopping behaviors, they have left one type rather understudied—trait-based antecedents. The ways consumer behavior is affected by their personal trait—this study therefore proposed and tested hedonic shopping tendencies. Findings indicate that hedonic shopping tendencies are a robust predictor of social support, consumer engagement, and impulse buying. Also, social support and consumer engagement affect social commerce intention and consequently social commerce frequency. Analysis of the results demonstrated a positive relationship between social support and consumer engagement, and the positive relationship between impulse buying and social commerce frequency.

Key words: *Social Commerce, Hedonic Shopping, Social Support, Consumer Engagement, Impulsive Buying*

1. INTRODUCTION

The explosive growth of social media and the rapid development of Web2.0 capabilities provide the right conditions for e-commerce to transform itself from a product-centered commerce to a socially centered and customer-driven marketplace [1]. Social commerce may be characterized as commercial activities mediated by social media [2], [3]. Social media is indeed considered a promising shopping channel. For Chinese consumers, engaging and pleasing experience through social interaction in online shopping drives positive brand experiences and purchases [4].

In China, a leading platform of social commerce is WeChat. The term We-commerce (Wei Shang) is used to describe C2C commerce on WeChat Moment (a WeChat function similar to “timeline” on Facebook or Instagram). Any WeChat user can display his/her own goods on “Moment”, so friends can look at, chat about, and even purchase what they see on “Moment.” WeChat has also cooperated with the Chinese e-commerce company JD (Jingdong) to develop a “shopping” function in the social media platform. Social and purchasing behaviors are now intertwined more than ever through social media.

The continuous and significant growth of social commerce in China is drawing the attention of scholars and practitioners. Past studies on social commerce have investigated factors that influence social commerce intention (e.g., purchase intention, word-of-mouth intention, continuance intention, etc.). The overall theoretical model of the prior research suggests that social commerce characteristics (e.g., social commerce site characteristics such as website quality, social support, perceived interactivity, perceived personalization, perceived sociality, etc.) affect consumer trust, relationship quality, and customers’ virtual experiences, which consequently influence consumer behavior in social commerce [5]-[8]. Prior research has shed a good deal of light on the marketing implications of this relatively new commerce channel. Compared, however, to consumer research in other platforms such as e-commerce or offline settings, social commerce research is still lacking some necessary research. For example, one of the central issues in consumer behavior research, shopping motivation, has rarely been explored in a social commerce context. In fact, consumer behavior research has long adopted a dual approach to shopping motivation. Scholars call the cognitive motivation utilitarian and the affective motivation hedonic. Utilitarian values represent the task-oriented, efficient, and rational aspect of shopping behavior. This aspect stresses getting a thing purchased or completing a task. On the other hand, hedonic values refer to the playful and subjective side of shopping. Less concerned about getting a thing purchased, hedonic consumers enjoy the shopping process of “increased arousal, heightened

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involvement, perceived freedom, fantasy fulfillment, and escapism” [9].

Considering the unique nature of the social commerce-shopping environment (e.g., WeChat) leading to the mingling of social and purchasing behavior, research on hedonic shopping motivation should be given more attention. The current study, therefore, scrutinizes social commerce consumer behavior focusing on hedonic shopping tendencies in the context of mainland China. First, we explore how consumers’ hedonic shopping tendencies are related to consumer behavior including social support, consumer engagement, and impulse buying. Second, we look into how these consumer behaviors are related to one another. Finally, this work investigates how these consumer behaviors are related to social commerce intention and consequently social commerce shopping frequency.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Hedonic Motivation

Shopping research has long focused on the utilitarian motivation of shopping behaviors. Researchers often characterize the utilitarian motivation as goal-focused, efficient, task-related, and rational [9]. Scholars gradually found, however, that the totality of the shopping experience was not fully captured by the notion of utilitarian motivation. Hence, they came up with the concept of hedonic motivation, which refers to a more subjective and personal desire for fun and enjoyment through shopping [9].

In recent years, as practitioners have recognized the potential enjoyment and emotional gratification brought by e-commerce and social commerce, researchers have shown increased interest in hedonic motivations. Prior scholars have demonstrated that hedonic motivations in virtual environments carried more predictive and explanatory power [10], [11]. Hedonic motivations affect subsequent online shopping behaviors [12]-[14]. Kim and Eastin [14] explored how hedonic motivation tendencies are related to the following online (e-commerce) shopping behaviors: exploratory information seeking, impulsive buying, as well as pre- and post-purchase communication. Hedonic shopping tendencies were found to positively affect exploratory information seeking and impulsive buying.

In particular, in the context of social commerce shopping, hedonic shopping motivations have been found as one of the major shopping motivations to use social shopping sites [15]. Further hedonic-oriented motivations have been explored along with utilitarian-oriented motivations focusing on different consequences by the two types of motivations. For example, Pöyry, Parvinen, and Malmivaara [16] suggest that the two types of motivation to use companies’ Facebook pages (hedonic vs. utilitarian) produce behavioral differences demonstrating that hedonic motivations show a higher propensity to participate in the community of the company whereas utilitarian motivations are more strongly related to browsing the community page. According to the findings by Anderson, Knight, Pookulangara, and Josiam [17], while hedonic shopping motivation (i.e., experiential shopping)

influences loyalty for consumers who connect to retail Facebook pages, utilitarian shopping motivation (i.e., information access) affects time saving and loyalty. Mikalef, Giannakos, and Pateli [18] further suggest that while both hedonic and utilitarian motivations affect product browsing in company-hosted social media sites and subsequently, influence word-of-mouth intention and purchase intention, the effect of utilitarian motivation is stronger than hedonic motivation. Motivations behind shopping behavior is not a novel subject, however, research in social commerce contexts is still relatively scarce. In addition, it is important to explore both hedonic and utilitarian aspects of shopping motivation simultaneously in order to understand shopping process holistically, however, it is also necessary to give attentions to the particularities of respective motivation in shopping process. Thus, focusing on hedonic shopping motivation, the current study will demonstrate how it is related to specific consumer behaviors in a social media platform (i.e., WeChat).

2.2 Social Support in Social Commerce

A major social value that internet users are able to gain from participating in online communities is, according to research, social support [19]. Being defined as an individual’s experiences of being cared for and helped by other members in his/her social groups, social support is found to be useful in helping people fulfill social needs and reduce stress [20]. According to Liang and colleagues [5], a major support mechanism for social interactions in online communities is social support. Such support can come in two forms, informational support (i.e., providing messages, in the form of recommendations, advice, or knowledge that could be helpful for solving problems) and emotional support (i.e., providing messages that involve emotional concerns such as caring, understanding, or empathy).

In a shopping context, such a social interaction can be drawn from hedonic motivation [12]. In fact, one of the indispensable dimensions of hedonic shopping values is socializing [21]. In the traditional shopping setting, people could satisfy their social needs through shopping with families or friends, chatting with sellers and other buyers, aiming at socializing and bonding with others. The forms of social shopping, however, have been transformed by the interactive features of Web 2.0 and the advent of social commerce. The essence of social shopping still remains. It differs, though, from traditional e-commerce, which focuses on maximizing efficiency. The business goal of social commerce is more oriented toward social goals, and develops various interactive approaches to help customers express themselves, share information with each other, facilitate networking and collaborating [3]. Technological features in social media platforms expand social contacts and social interaction among users, helping meet the social needs for enjoyment [22]. Hedonic shopping tendencies, perhaps may more respect social values of social commerce including informational and emotional support from social interactions in the social media platforms. Thus, the following hypothesis is put forward.

H1: Hedonic shopping tendencies are positively related to social support.

When social media users obtain social support, this enhances friendship and trust among the users of social media platforms. Given such a supportive climate, as an extension of their sharing of other supportive information, commercial information and recommendations are likely to be shared, and thereby facilitating their intention to conduct commercial activities in social media platforms [5].

Hajli's [23] empirical study suggests that social support, in a Facebook context, induces social commerce intention. Social commerce intention here is defined as an individual's intention to use commercial opportunities in social media platforms with his social networks/communities (i.e., commercial information sharing/exchanging). Likewise, Liang and colleagues [5] also found that the perception of social support in social media, leads to social commerce intention and loyalty to the social commerce platform, and further suggested that the perception of social support is a stronger antecedent than social commerce website quality. In the Chinese context, Zhang et al. [7] found the positive effect of social support on social commerce intention through strengthening perceived interactivity, perceived personalization, and perceived sociability. Previous findings indicate the more informational support and emotional support consumers receive from social media platforms, the more they are willing to request and share commercial information in the social commerce environment. Based on the review of literature, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H2: Social support is positively related to social commerce intention.

2.3 Consumer Engagement in Social Commerce

Just in recent years, "engagement" has begun to generate a significant interest among practitioners and researchers in the marketing domain due to its predictive and explanatory power of consumer behavior outcomes [24], [25]. Although consumer engagement has attracted widespread attentions from both the practical and academic world, there is still a lack of consensus regarding its definition, dimensionality, and forms. Some scholars prefer defining consumer engagement as a psychological state, including cognitive and emotional levels, "characterized by a degree of vigor, dedication, absorption, and interaction" [26]-[28]. Others conceptualize consumer engagement as the behavioral manifestation, including both non-transactional and transactional behaviors of a customer toward a brand or a firm which goes beyond purchase behavior [29], [30]. Based on such diverse conceptualizations, there began to emerge a three-dimensional perspective (i.e., cognitive, emotional/affective, behavioral). With subtle distinctions that varied across specific contexts, this perspective came to be widely cited in the literature [31]. The idea was formulated that consumer engagement is a multi-order latent construct. The cognitive dimension of consumer engagement emphasizes active, sustained cognitive processing, such as attention and immersion [32]-[34]. The emotional dimension reflects the nature of intrinsic enjoyment, enthusiasm, and passion [28], [35], [36]. The behavioral dimension stresses participation, vigour, and activation [26], [28], [36]. Consistent with prior literature [25], [37], [38], it is assumed in this study that consumer engagement consists of these three dimensions.

The popularity of Internet and social media allows firms to engage, with ease, a much larger number of consumers who do not have to put forth too much physical or cognitive effort [39]. The interactive features of social media make it easy for consumers to become highly involved in a product or service and to derive satisfaction from it. They are then more driven to engage in community activities such as viewing or posting information, spreading word-of-mouth communication, engaging in proactive communication of anticipated problems. We are interested in understanding how this prominent consumer behavior in social media is related to a single personal trait—hedonic tendencies.

Some scholars argue that intrinsic enjoyment motivates personal engagement in websites [35]. In commerce-based virtual communities, hedonic motivation is found to promote an individual's participation. Dholakia, Bagozzi, and Pearo [40] found that, in virtual communities built by marketers, perceived entertainment value, which was derived from fun and relaxation through social interaction, could significantly enhance the social identity of the virtual community, and ultimately promote participation behavior in the community.

To highlight the importance of the experience of consumption, Holbrook and Hirschman [41] made use not of hedonic value but of experiential value. That is to say, hedonic consumers enjoy the shopping process itself and the consumption experience can be pleasure for its own sake [42]. The experience of shopping can bring to consumers the gratifications of escapism, pleasure, and arousal [43], [44].

Such experience has "carry-over effects on the next experience encountered" [44], [45]. That is, if consumers are enjoying their shopping experience, then they are more likely to engage in subsequent shopping-related behaviors. That is, they are more likely to seek pre-purchase information, share pre-purchase information, and ultimately purchase more products [45]. Based on the findings that hedonic motivation value experiences and participations in social media [16], [17], we assume that hedonic shoppers are likely to enjoy the experience of social media platforms through actively engaging in community activities in social media platforms.

H3: Hedonic shopping tendencies are positively related to consumer engagement.

Based on multiple interactive affordances, such as instant messaging, location-based service (LBS), tagging, liking, blogs and microblogging, etc., social commerce enables consumers to "share information, experiences and opinions about what, where and from whom to buy" [2], [46]. In other words, such desirable technological features of social media not only offer great convenience for consumers to acquire guidance for shopping through interaction, but also enhance collaborative efforts in value co-creation in order to help other community members make purchase decisions [1], [47], [48]. Because of the richness of interaction and value co-creation provided by consumer engagement in social media platforms, social media can be monetized as a successful commercial channel. Based on this logic, we propose the following hypothesis.

H4: Consumer engagement is positively related to social commerce intention.

2.4 Impulse Buying

Impulse buying is conceptualized as a consumer's tendency to buy spontaneously, unreflectively, immediately, and kinetically [49], [50]. Impulse buying is generally characterized as irrational, risky, immature, wasteful and lacking in behavioral control [51]-[53]. Research on drivers of impulse buying has long focused on individual characteristics such as demographic factors (e.g., gender) or personality (e.g., extraversion, conscientiousness, and autonomy; [54]-[56]). Some scholars show that impulse buying is also triggered by hedonic desires [14], [49], [57], [58]. This is because, by arousing emotions, hedonic shopping tendencies disrupt self-regulation. Self-regulation consists of three sub-functions: self-monitoring, judgmental process, and self-reactive influence [59]. Deficient self-regulation leads to further impulsive purchases [60]. Hence, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H5: Hedonic shopping tendencies are positively related to impulsive buying.

Research on impulse buying suggests that a shopping environment influences impulse buying. The ease of purchase implementation and immediate gratification determines the urge to purchase impulsively [61]. In this sense, relative to a traditional shopping setting, social commerce shopping environments are favorable settings to activate impulse buying. That is, commercial cues shared in social media platforms are more likely to stimulate individuals with strong impulse-buying tendencies. Hence, building on H6, it is expected that impulse buying is more vulnerable to environmental cues in social commerce platforms, which leads to more purchases.

H6: Impulse buying is positively related to social commerce frequency.

2.5 Other Relationships between Social Commerce Consumer Behaviors

If hedonic shopping tendencies are positively related to social support, consumer engagement, and impulse buying, then these subsequent consumer behaviors in the social commerce setting ought to be related to one another. Social support within a social network in social media platforms enhances closeness, friendship, and trust among social friends. Such relationship quality positively affects social interaction in social media. That is, strong and reliable relationships among social friends lead to active engagement with social media platforms [62]. Therefore, it is assumed the more people feel

that they are cared for, responded to, and helped by others in social media platforms, the more likely they are to be engaged with information created or shared by the others. The following hypothesis is thus formulated.

H7: Social support is positively related to consumer engagement.

Like emotions aroused by a personal tendency to shop hedonically, consumer engagement can also disrupt self-regulation. For instance, the excitement generated by information sharing on new products may overwhelm self-monitoring of one's spending behavior, while recommendations from social network community might negate judgmental comparisons with one's budget and counteract self-reactive feelings of guilt for exceeding it [60]. The previous finding that exploratory information seeking is likely to induce impulse purchases [14] further justifies the positive relationships between consumer engagement and impulse buying. A great deal of exposure to a variety of marketing information through interactive engagement will boost impulse buying. Further, the credible perception of the marketing information given/sent by individual's social network (e.g., WeChat friends) will facilitate impulsive purchases. This paper thus proposes the following hypothesis.

H8: Consumer engagement is positively related to impulse buying.

Commercial information sharing through a social network in social media platforms provides not only product/brand information but also endorsement or assurance in commercial activities in social media platforms. Electronic information sharing lessens the perceived risk [63] and increase purchase intention [64]. Further, browsing a variety of promotional information and consumer-generated contents increases online buying frequency [14]. In a social commerce context, we expect consumers to be more willing to share commercial information with a social network and to thus be more likely to conduct social commerce. Therefore, the following hypothesis is formulated.

H9: Social commerce intention is positively related to social commerce frequency.

The hypothesized relationships among hedonic shopping tendencies, social support, consumer engagement, impulse buying, social commerce intention, and social commerce frequency are summarized in the model shown in Fig. 1.

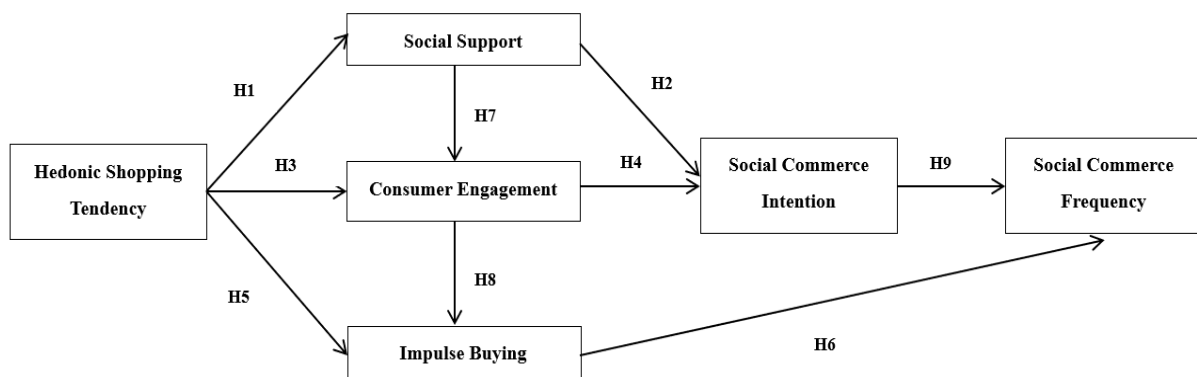


Fig. 1. The hypothesized model

3. METHOD

3.1 Sampling

Data were collected in Mainland China, through a web-based survey, administered by the Hong Kong-based market research firm SSI. To participate in this study, subjects had to meet the following prerequisite: be a WeChat user who had purchased goods from WeChat within the past 12 months. A purchase from WeChat refers to a commercial transaction like WeChat Public Account Mall, WeChat Personal Merchants, and sales and purchase agents in Moment. It excludes WeChat sticker purchases, all kinds of payment for public utilities, transportation, and so forth. After conducting a pilot study with 40 respondents, the survey questionnaire was revised. For the main study, we eliminated incomplete responses from a total of 727, leaving 707 for data analyses. The gender distribution was fairly even with 40.4 percent males and 59.6 percent females. The age ranged from 16-83 years old with the mean age being 36.5. In terms of WeChat use, on average, the subjects used WeChat 11.5 times and for 108 minutes daily, and had 207 WeChat friends.

3.2 Data Collection Procedures

A web-based survey designed for the study opened with an informed-consent notice; respondents were asked to click the “proceed” button if they agreed to participate in the study. Respondents were then presented questions measuring variables of interest (i.e., hedonic shopping motivation, social support, consumer engagement, impulsive buying, s-commerce intention, social commerce frequency). Finally, they were asked to answer demographic questions such as age, gender, education, income, residence city, and so forth.

3.3 Measures

Measured on a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree) were six variables of interest—hedonic shopping tendencies, social support, consumer engagement, impulse buying, and social commerce intention. Another variable, social commerce frequency, was assessed on a 7-point frequency scale (1 = never, 2 = once every three months, 3 = once a month, 4 = once every two weeks, 5 = once a week, 6 = twice a week, 7 = almost every day). All of the measures from the previous studies were adapted to the current study context. Specifically, Hedonic shopping tendency was measured based on a 10-item scale from Babin, et al. [9]. For social support, a 7-item scale from Liang et al. [5] was adapted to the WeChat context. Consumer engagement was assessed on a 12-item [65]. To measure impulse buying, a 9-item scale was employed [66]. Social commerce intention was measured on a 6-item scale from Liang et al. [5]. Finally, social commerce frequency was assessed with the following question: How often have you done shopping from WeChat in the past 12 months?

4. RESULTS

4.1 Scale reliability

An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was first conducted to identify weak-loading items and refine the indicators of

constructs. Based on the results, all items with a factor loading of less than |0.6| on each construct were removed. Four items from the construct of hedonic shopping tendency [*Shopping is truly a joy (factor loading = 0.587); I enjoy shopping for its own sake, not just for the items I may purchase (factor loading = 0.598); I have a good time when shopping because I am able to act on the spur-of-the-moment (factor loading = 0.534); While shopping, I feel a sense of adventure (factor loading = 0.316)*], three items from the construct of consumer engagement [*I feel like I learn a tremendous amount of information about the brand and/or product featured on WeChat (factor loading = 0.597); I click “like” (factor loading = 0.595); I do various activities on WeChat (factor loading = 0.492)*], and three items from the construct of impulsive buying [*“Just do it” describes the way I buy (factor loading = 0.550); I buy things according to how I feel at the moment (factor loading = 0.546);*

I carefully plan most of my purchases (factor loading = 0.093)] were removed. After this removal, Cronbach’s α was calculated for the respective construct and the result showed that it ranged from .91 to .94 verifying reliability of the set of items retained in the current study. A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was then run followed by composite reliability tests for a more rigorous reliability check: $\chi^2(517) = 1995.743$, CFI = .920, IFI = .921, TLI = .914, SRMR = .047, RMSEA = .064. This assessment also demonstrated an acceptable range of composite reliability from .92 to .94. (see Table 1 for detailed items).

4.2 Hypotheses Testing

To test the proposed hypotheses, the structural model was evaluated with AMOS version 22. Fig. 2 shows the theoretically relationships among latent constructs specifying the relationships among hedonic shopping tendencies, social support, consumer engagement, impulse buying, social commerce intention, and social commerce frequency. The theoretically derived structural model did fit the data at a fairly acceptable level; $\chi^2(552) = 2073.727$, $p < .05$, CFI = .919, IFI = .919, TLI = .912, SRMR = .051, RMSEA = .062. The R^2 statistics indicate the predictive power of the structural model. The structural model explained 29 percent of the variance in social support, 62 percent of the variance in consumer engagement, 23 percent of the variance in impulsive buying, 72 percent of the variance in social commerce intention, and 13 percent of the variance in social commerce frequency.

Supporting H1 and H2, hedonic shopping tendencies were found to have significant positive effects on social support ($\beta = 0.53$), and subsequently social support positively affected social commerce intention ($\beta = 0.23$). Hedonic shopping tendencies were further a robust predictor for consumer engagement ($\beta = 0.23$), and it was further found that consumer engagement had a positive effect on social commerce intention ($\beta = 0.69$), offering support for H3 and H4. Data also demonstrated the positive relationship between hedonic shopping tendencies and impulse buying ($\beta = 0.42$), thus supporting H5. In support of H6, impulse buying was found to have a significant positive effect on social commerce frequency ($\beta = 0.18$). Social support was found to have a significant positive impact on consumer engagement ($\beta = 0.43$) and consumer engagement was

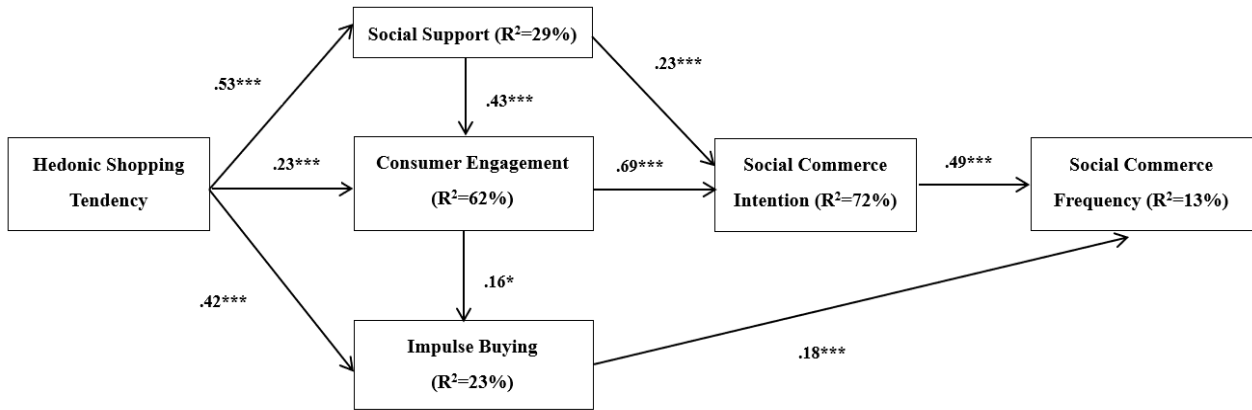
positively related to impulsive buying ($\beta = 0.16$), thus providing support for H7 and H8. Finally, H9 was supported, as

social commerce intention was found to have a positive effect on social commerce frequency ($\beta = 0.49$).

Table 1. Measures, factor loadings, descriptive statistics, and reliability

Factors	Items	Unstd*	Std**
Hedonic Shopping Tendency M = 5.27 SD = 1.02 AVE = 0.60 $\alpha = 0.91$	I continue to shop, not because I have to, but because I want to.	.99	.79
	Compared to other things, shopping is truly enjoyable.	.94	.83
	I enjoy being immersed in exciting new products.	.87	.76
	While shopping, I feel the excitement of the hunt.	1.02	.81
	While shopping, I am able to forget my problems.	1.01	.79
	Shopping is very nice time out.	1.00	.84
Social Support M = 5.20 SD = 0.95 AVE = 0.68 $\alpha = 0.94$	When faced with difficulties, some people on WeChat comforted and encouraged me.	1.15	.81
	When faced with difficulties, some people on WeChat are on my side with me.	1.12	.84
	When faced with difficulties, some people on WeChat listened to me about my private feelings.	1.04	.82
	When faced with difficulties, some people on WeChat expressed interest and concern in my well-being.	1.07	.86
	On WeChat, some people would offer suggestions when I needed help.	.99	.80
	When I encountered a problem, some people on WeChat would give me information to help me overcome the problem.	1.06	.83
	When faced with difficulties, some people on WeChat would help me discover the cause and provide me with suggestions.	1.00	.80
Consumer Engagement M = 5.42 SD = 0.84 AVE = 0.57 $\alpha = 0.93$	When I am on WeChat, I get mentally involved in it.	1.16	.80
	I have a much greater understanding about the brand and/or product featured on WeChat.	1.12	.78
	I find the experience with WeChat to be pleasurable.	1.13	.75
	WeChat is satisfying.	1.13	.79
	I read comments on WeChat.	1.08	.77
	I respond to comments on WeChat.	1.03	.75
	I posted a comment on WeChat.	1.09	.76
	I click "like"	1.07	.76
	I click the link/image/icon for further information.	1.00	.74
Impulse Buying M = 4.54 SD = 1.04 AVE = 0.52 $\alpha = 0.91$	I often buy things spontaneously.	1.02	.75
	I often buy things without thinking.	1.24	.87
	"I see it, I buy it" describes me.	1.23	.85
	"Buy now, think about it later" describes me.	1.26	.83
	Sometimes I feel like buying things on the spur of the moment	1.18	.80
	Sometimes I am a bit reckless about what I buy.	1.00	.73
Social Commerce Intention M = 5.26 SD = 0.92 AVE = 0.64 $\alpha = 0.91$	I am willing to provide my experiences and suggestions when my friends on WeChat want my advice on buying something.	.91	.80
	I am willing to share my own shopping experience with my friends on WeChat.	.97	.82
	I am willing to recommend a product that is worth buying to my friends on WeChat.	1.04	.82
	I will consider the shopping experiences of my friends on WeChat when I want to shop.	.98	.83
	I will ask my friends on WeChat to provide me with their suggestions before I go shopping.	.99	.76
	I am willing to buy the products recommended by my friends on WeChat.	1.00	.79
Social Commerce Frequency M = 3.63 SD = 1.41	How often have you done shopping from WeChat in the past 12 months?	n.a	n.a

Notes: * refers to unstandardized coefficient; ** refers to standardized coefficient; All coefficients are significant at $p < .001$; $\chi^2(517) = 1995.743$, CFI = .920, IFI = .921, TLI = .914, SRMR = .047, RMSEA = .064.



$\chi^2(552) = 2073.727, p < .05, CFI = .919, IFI = .919, TLI = .912, SRMR = .051, RMSEA = .062.$

Fig. 2. Parameter estimates for causal paths of the hypothesized model

5. DISCUSSION

The results of the study suggest that hedonic shopping tendencies are positively related to social support. This supports the notion that socializing is one of the dimensions of hedonic motivation [21]. The desire for socializing is manifested as social support in social media (e.g., WeChat). In particular, in a social commerce shopping setting, other social media users serve as a reference group, able to affect an individual's decision making. The findings further demonstrate that social support in social media positively influence social commerce intention and consequently lead to actual purchases. That is, if in social media platforms consumers feel that they are cared for and supported by social friends (e.g., WeChat friends), then they are more likely to engage in commercial behavior (e.g., marketing information sharing, product/brand recommendation, etc.) and subsequently make a purchase via the social media platform.

Such hedonic shopping tendencies further increase consumer engagement in social commerce platforms. For many people, shopping is not merely engaged in to satisfy a consumer's utilitarian needs; hedonic value is also an important driver. Hedonic shoppers emphasize more the "experience" of consumption and enjoy the pleasure generated through the shopping process. According to Menon and Kahn [44], such pleasant or arousing experience has carry-over effects on the next experience encountered. Hedonic shopping tendencies are positively related to exploratory information seeking in the online shopping setting [14]. In a similar vein, engaging with social media can also satisfy various hedonic needs, such as arousing experience, fantasy fulfillment, escapism and enjoyment. Hedonic shoppers are, therefore, more likely to engage in subsequent shopping behaviors, such as further browsing behaviors, communicating behaviors, and recommending behaviors.

In addition, the study findings suggest that consumer engagement is positively related to social commerce intention and consequently leads to actual purchases. Further, as noted above, social support directly affects social commerce intention,

but it also indirectly influences social commerce intention through consumer engagement. These findings imply that the success of social commerce in monetizing social media should be attributed to a social relationship construct, a key dimension in social commerce [5]. Relationship serves as an important role in consumers' decision in social commerce [67]. Social support strengthens relationship quality. More specifically, trust generated in relationships significantly affects social commerce intention [5]. Consumer engagement in social media platforms is namely done among close relationships, such as families, friends and other strong ties. Strong ties are trustworthy and the shopping information received from them is viewed as more valuable. Hence, they have positive effects on their purchase intention in the social commerce setting. Additionally, based on trust transference theory, consumers' trust towards community members (i.e., families, friends) can be transferred to trust towards the brands or products recommended by trustworthy members. Presumably, therefore, trust generated through consumer engagement with social media platforms may be a strong driver of social commerce intention. To better understand the role of consumer engagement, the quality of relationship among social friends (i.e., trust, commitment etc.) warrants future studies.

Consistent with previous findings [14], hedonic motivation serves as an important antecedent of impulse buying. Impulsiveness as a response to a stimulus can produce instant gratification [66], [68]. The data also support the positive relationship between consumer engagement and impulsive buying. Similar to the finding that exploratory seeking behavior is positively related to impulse buying [14], consumers, it seems, do unplanned behavior (i.e., impulsive purchase) by engaging with diverse information/contents available in social media platforms.

Managerially, the findings suggest that socializing is an important source of shopping enjoyment and that this is critical to a company's succeeding at commercializing social media platforms. In this regard, for social media platforms to succeed in monetizing as commercial platforms, first, social network development and maintenance (i.e., quantity and quality of social network) are critical. Enhancing social presence which refers to the feelings of other's existence would be useful for

inducing positive commercial behavior. Further, socializing can be achieved through engagement in various activities. Thus, to improve the efficiency of socializing in social media as a social commerce platform, technological features are required to strengthen interactive experiences. Along with the hardware aspect of interactivity, more importantly, a software aspect of interactivity would encourage consumer engagement. That is, noteworthy content—useful, enjoyable, target-relevant content—would facilitate social interaction and content engagement.

To extend the generalizability of the study findings, it is necessary to examine the proposed model in different contexts. WeChat is considered a comprehensive social media platform, giving more weight to its socializing functions than its commercial functions. Other social commerce platforms with more commercial characteristics (e.g., Mogujie, Meilishuo) warrant additional research. In addition, the extension of the proposed model with utilitarian shopping motivation could offer additional insights to social commerce shopping behavior by providing the means of a possible comparison with the current findings. Furthermore, to justify our rationale for supporting the finding that consumer engagement with social media platforms rather reduces impulsive buying, it would be worthwhile to explore the role of engagement with social media in cognitive elaboration on marketing information and consequently rational buying behavior.

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