THE ROLE OF SOCIAL COMMERCE CONSTRUCTS, SOCIAL SUPPORT, AND TRUST IN COMMUNITY ON SOCIAL COMMERCE ACTIVITIES

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze social commerce constructs, social support, and individual trust in the community in social commerce activities. Social support includes emotional support and informational support. The population was social media users, while the samples were social media users who had made purchase at least two transactions through social media. The sampling technique was convenience sampling. Totally, 162 respondents were involved. Hypothesis testing was done using WarpPLS. This study reveals that individual trust in the community can be built directly through the social commerce constructs. These constructs affects both emotional support and information support, in which they will ultimately affect the individual trust in the community. Furthermore, social commerce intention is influenced by individual trust in the community and emotional support. However, information support does not affect the social commerce intention.

Keywords: Social Commerce, Social Commerce Construct, Social Support, Emotional Support, Informational Support, Social Commerce Intention

Introduction

Today, it is predicted that sixty-three million people in Indonesia are already connected to the internet, and 93% of them are active social media users. In fact, Indonesia comes in 4th place when it comes to the country with the largest number of Facebook user, only behind USA, Brazil and India. Moreover, Indonesia has the fifth largest number of twitter users in the world. Other popular platforms of social media are path, google+, and Linkedlin (http://kominfo.co.id).

The popularity of social media among the Indonesians is inevitable. It has altered people behavior in carrying out their daily activities, including trading activities. Furthermore, this behavioral change has indirectly encouraged business actors (producers) to develop new business models (Lu et al., 2010). It is indicated from the shift in the focus of online shopping, from product-oriented to consumer-oriented (Wigand et al., 2008). Furthermore, the overwhelmed

attachment on social media also gave rise to a new paradigm in commerce, i.e., social commerce (Ashur, 2016; Huang & Benyoucef, 2013; Zhou et al., 2013; Shin, 2013; Liang et al., 2012; Stephen & Toubia, 2010; Denison et al., 2009). Basically, social commerce is defined as commerce activities mediated by social media (Hajli, 2014a; 2014b; Kim & Park, 2013).

One of the factors that affect consumer's intention to purchase online is the trust in the website. Accordingly, consumer decision to purchase online is affected by their trust in the website (Ponte et al., 2015). It has been reaffirmed by Kim et al., (2008; 2011) in which trust in website plays an important role in social commerce. Moreover, Hajli (2015) has also revealed that trust is a major component in the online community.

Hajli (2015) developed a model known as the Social Commerce Constructs. It identifies constructs that shape individual trust in online communities. The constructs are

forums and communities, ratings and reviews, recommendations and referrals. Furthermore, Hajli (2015) divulged that individual intentions to purchase online were driven by information displayed by social commerce platforms and communities. Likewise, Shanmugam et al., (2016) also confirmed similar finding: social commerce constructs have significant effect on social support that ultimately builds individual trust in online forums/communities.

Social support is stimulated by communication via dynamic platforms, i.e., online communities. These communities offer social support, both emotional and informational supports (Hajli, 2014a; 2014b). Emotional support is manifested in the presence of sympathy, empathy and trust among the members of the community. Meanwhile, informational support is realized in the provision of advice, guidance, suggestions, and recommendations (Hajli et al., 2015).

In the present study, Hajli's social commerce constructs is used to build a social commerce model which indirectly links individual trust in online communities. The aim of this study is to analyze the role of social commerce constructs, social support, and individual trust in social commerce activities. The dimensions of social commerce constructs include forums, communities, ratings, reviews, referrals and recommendations (Shanmugam et al., 2016). Meanwhile, the dimensions of social support include emotional support and informational support (Hajli, 2014a; 2014b).

The present study is possibly the earliest study to use the model of social commerce constructs in Indonesia. Therefore, it is expected that it will contribute significantly in testing social commerce construct models developed by Hajli (2015) in the context of social commerce in Indonesia.

Theoretical Review
1. Social Commerce and Social Commerce Constructs

Social commerce is a relatively new concept in *e*-commerce thus its definition is still relatively varied. According to Stephen and Toubia (2010), social commerce is commerce that involves using social media and allows people to participate actively in the marketing and selling of products and services in online communities and marketplace. Two years later, Wang and Zhang (2012) defined social commerce as commerce activities mediated by social media. Therefore, it

allows the buying and selling activities facilitated by offline and online social environment.

Stephen and Toubia (2010) explicated the four characteristics of social commerce, namely: (1) the sellers are more individual than companies/organizations, (2) it allows sellers to make assorted types of products that have been organized as personal online stores, (3) it allows sellers to create hyperlinks between their personal stores, and (4) seller's incentive is based on the commission payments that occur in their stores.

The social commerce constructs are derived from social commerce, i.e., forums, communities, ratings, reviews, referrals and recommendations (Hajli, 2015). Furthermore, it is claimed that social commerce constructs are used to identify constructs that can shape individual trust in online communities. Intention to purchase online is affected by the information on social commerce platform and communities (Hajli, 2015). It is reasserted by Shanmugam et al., (2016) in which social commerce constructs can indirectly build consumer trust through social support. The dimensions of social support consist of emotional support and information support. As consumers have a trust in the information provided by the platform, their intention to buy will increase (Ponte et al., 2015; Kim et al., 2008; 2011).

2. Social Support

Social support emerges when there is a communication via a dynamic platform, e.g., within online communities. The presence of online communities allows individuals to provide support, both emotional support and information support (Hajli, 2014a; 2014b). Emotional support is manifested when individual listens to others, expresses sympathy, and trusts others. Meanwhile, information support is realized in advice, guidance and suggestions (Hajli et al., 2015).

Ali (2011) argued that social support is a social interaction carried out by individuals on a network hence it enables them to pay attention to each other, answer questions, and support each other. Such a network includes online communities, discussion forums, chat forums, and other networking sites (e.g., Facebook and Twitter) (Daneblack & Platin, 2008; Lacoursiere, 2001). Additionally, Riding and Gefen (2004) asserted that people join virtual communities to exchange social support and/or relevant information.

3. Trust in Community

The important element in the development of online communities is trust (Hajli, 2015). Successful business relationship is built on trust (Salam et al., 2015), including to build trust in community. This trust refers to the individual's perception towards online community. Essentially, online community is perceived as a reliable and capable online platform for providing quality services for social commerce (Chen & Shen, 2015; Lu et al., 2010). Therefore, the public's view towards social commerce focuses on social commerce platforms, as well as their capacity to meet individual expectations of online communities (Gefen et al., 2003a; Gefen et al., 2003b).

Theoretical Framework and Hypothesis Development

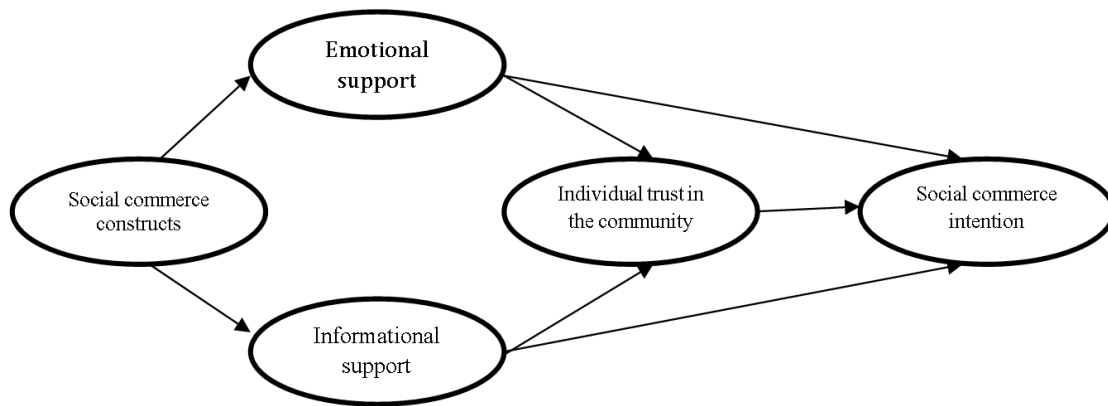Based on the literature review, a theoretical framework of this study is devised as follows:

Figure 1. Theoretical Framework

1. Relationship between Social Commerce Constructs and Social Support

The constructs of social commerce are *forums* and *communities*, *ratings* and *reviews*, and referrals and *recommendations* (Hajli, 2015). Accordingly, people can take advantage of social commerce platforms through virtual interaction. Curty and Zhang (2011) argue that users interact in social commerce platforms in an online collaborative environment. According to Hajli (2014a; 2014b), social commerce constructs is social commerce platform used to share ideas or information between members. It is essentially a form of social support for online communities.

Riding and Gefen (2004) explain that social support becomes the reason for users to join social commerce platforms. Such social support can be in the form of emotional support and informational support (Hajli, 2014a; 2014b; Riding & Gefen, 2004). Emotional support entails the provision of empathy and trust, and being good listeners (House, 1981). Meanwhile, informational support is manifested in advice, direction, guidance, and recommendations (Hajli, 2015).

It is highly expected that social commerce constructs will provide social support to consumers. It refers mainly in the support to make the right decisions when making transactions (Hajli, 2015). The interconnectivity established between group members on social commerce platforms leads to emotional support and information support. It is confirmed by Shanmugam et al., (2016) that social commerce constructs generate greater emotional support and information support. Based on the description, the first and second hypotheses of this study are as follows:

H_1: Emotional support affects social commerce construct

H_2: Informational support affects social commerce construct

2. Relationship between Social Support and Trust in Community

Social support is an interaction carried out by individuals in a network. In this network, they pay attention to each other, answer questions, and support each other (Ali, 2011). Such network includes online communities, discussion forums, chat forums, and other networking sites (e.g., Facebook and Twitter) (Daneblack & Platin, 2008; Lacoursiere, 2001).

According to Riding and Gefen (2004), people are attracted to join virtual communities due to the provision of social support, as well as to share relevant information. Social support is a multidimensional construct in which it is distinguished into emotional support and informational support. In the context of online communities, social support is one of the most influential factors (Shanmugam et al., 2016; Madjar, 2008; Coulson, 2005).

Trust is one of the crucial issues in social commerce. Among consumers, trust is increasingly critical particularly due to the existence of social commerce platforms, such as the widespread use of Facebook (Hajli, 2013). It is the most important element in the online environment (Pavlou, 2003; Mutz, 2005). Meanwhile, individual trust in the online environment can be enhanced by social support (Gefen et al., 2003a; 2003b). Shanmugam et al., (2016) and Reychav and Weisberg (2010) also has suggested the significant effect of social support on trust. Likewise, Crocker and Canevello (2008) and Hajli (2014b) emphasize the positive influence of social support on consumer's trust. Based on this explanation, the third and fourth hypotheses are as follows:

H$_3$: Emotional support affects individual trust in community

H$_4$: Informational support affects individual trust in community

3. Relationship between Social Support and Social Commerce Intention

The concept of social commerce is the use social networking websites for commercial activities. Hence, individual behavior is affected by social support and commitment that lead to communication and collaboration between members. Social support leads to sharing of activities among members, both information and experiences (Liang et al., 2012).

According to Hajli (2015), social support arises when individuals communicate with each other by utilizing a dynamic platform, i.e., online communities. Individual will be able to support others through such communities. Lal (2017) argues that that informational support is a significant factor influencing the decision to use social commerce.

Informational support is an individual's perception. It can be an advice, recommendation, or simply one's experience of using any product or service (Savolainen, 2015; Hajli, 2015). In addition to informational support, social support also entails emotional support. It is reflected when people listen and/or sympathize or trust others (House, 1981). Based on this explanation, the fifth and sixth hypotheses of this study are as follows:

H$_5$: Emotional support affects social commerce intention

H$_6$: Informational support affects social commerce intention

4. Relationship between Trust in Community and Social Commerce Intention

Trust in the online communities is an individual's perception towards the online community as a reliable and capable online platform, which provides quality services for social commerce or social interaction (Chen & Shen, 2015; Lu et al., 2010). Furthermore, Gefen et al., (2003a; 2003b) explicate that people view an online community based on the brand of social commerce platform, and its ability to meet the individual's expectations belonging to that community. Thus, individual who has a positive testimony on the online community will be encouraged to engage in social commerce. Based on this explication, the seventh hypothesis of this study is as follows:

H$_7$: Trust in community affects social commerce intention

Methodology

The population in this study is social media users. Meanwhile, samples were selected from social media users who had made at least two purchases via social media. A convenience sampling technique was employed in which it involves the sample being drawn from that part of the population that is close to hand. Subsequently, a computer delivery survey technique was also used with the assistance of google form facilities. Variable definition and scales of variable measurement are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Definition of Variables and Scale of Measurement

Variable	Definition	Reference	Scale of measurement	Reference
Social commerce	The constructs of social commerce, namely: forums, communities, ratings, reviews, referrals and recommendations.	Hajli (2015)	2 items measured by 5 point Likert scale.	Hajli (2015)
Emotional support	Emotional support is a dimension of social support. Meanwhile, social support is an affective and sentimental attitude. Emotional support is reflected when people listen to and sympathize or trust in other individuals as members of a community.	Hajli (2015)	3 items measured by 5 point Likert scale.	Hajli (2015)
Informational support	Informational support is a dimension of social support. Meanwhile, social support is an affective and sentimental attitude. Informational support can be an advice, guidance, and suggestion.	Hajli (2015)	2 items measured by 5 point Likert scale.	Hajli (2015); Shanmugam et al., (2016)
Trust in community	Individual's perception towards online communities	Chen and Shen (2015); Lu et al., (2010)	2 items measured by 5 point Likert scale.	Lal (2017); Chen and Shen (2015); Liang et al., (2012)
Social commerce intention	Individual intention to engage in commercial activities through social platforms. Social commerce is defined as commerce activities mediated by social media.	Hartono (2007, p. 26); Wang and Zhang (2012)	3 items measured by 5 point Likert scale.	Kim et al., (2012)

The hypothesis testing used WarpPLS as statistical tool. Furthermore, Partial least square (PLS), a form of structural equation modeling (SEM), is used to simultaneously test the measurement model and structural model. The measurement model is used for testing the validity and reliability of the instruments, while the structural model is used for testing causal hypotheses with predictive modeling (Hartono & Abdillah, 2014).

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

1. Respondents

As many as 162 respondents were involved in the present study, specifically 103 female respondents (63.6%) and 59 male respondents (36.5%). Most of the respondents aged are 21-25 years (48.8%). Social media utilized by respondents for social commerce are Instagram (50%), websites (32.1%), Facebook (16%), and others (1.9%).

2. Hypothesis Testing

A pilot study was carried out before hypothesis testing. It was done to determine to what extent the items in the questionnaire are understood by respondents. The method was by distributing questionnaires to a few respondents. Hypothesis testing was done using WarpPLS as a statistical tool. Partial least square (PLS), a form of structural equation modeling (SEM), is used to simultaneously test both the measurement model and structural model (Hartono & Abdillah, 2014).

3. Results of Measurement Model (Outer Model) Testing

The stage of purification must be done hence the concept and research model can be tested in the predictive modeling of relational and causal relationships. The measurement model is carried out for testing construct validity and instrument reliability (Hartono & Abdillah, 2014).

In this study, a validity test was conducted to evaluate the construct validity. It entailed the convergent and discriminant validity. The underlying idea of convergence validity is that related constructs' test should be highly correlated. Meanwhile, the idea of discriminant validity is the measures of constructs that should not be highly related to each other (Hartono, 2008). The results of the validity test are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. The Result of Validity Test

Desc.	SC	ES	IS	IT	I	AVE
SC_1	(0.913)					0.913
SC_4	(0.913)					
ES_1		(0.850)				0.818
ES_2		(0.824)				
ES_4		(0.778)				
IS_1			(0.926)			0.925
IS_2			(0.926)			
IT_1				(0.846)		0.846
IT_2				(0.846)		
SCI_1					(0.796)	0.778
SCI_2					(0.727)	
SCI_4					(0.809)	

Source: Data, processed (2018)

Where, SC: Social commerce; ES: Emotional support; IS: Informational support; IT: Individual trust in community; SC: Social commerce intention

Table 3. The Results of Reliability Test

	SC	ES	IS	K1	NS
Composite Reliability	0.910	0.858	0.922	0.834	0.821

Source: data, processed (2018)

Table 2 shows that all items or statements in the questionnaire are valid. It is indicated by the factor loading value is 0.7 and AVE value is higher than 0.5. Subsequently, the reliability test aims to measure the internal consistency of the measure or instrument. The results of reliability test are presented in Table 3.

Table 3 shows the results of reliability testing using the composite reliability method. The rule of thumb of the composite reliability value is greater than 0.7. It implies that the constructs are reliable.
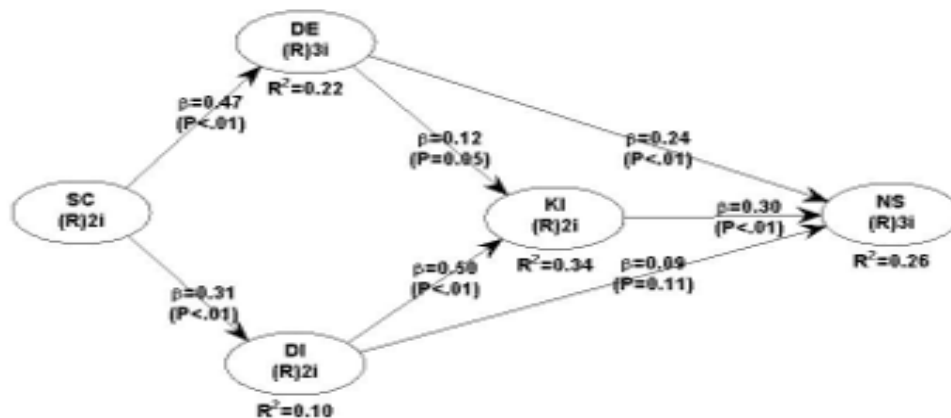
4. Results of Structural Model (Inner Model) Testing

Figure 2. *R-Square,* path coefficient, and *t*-value
Source: Data, processed (2018)

The subsequent stage after testing the measurement model (validity test and reliability test) was testing the structural model. It was done using *R-Square*, path coefficient and *t*-value of each path. The results of the structural model testing are presented in Figure 1.

R-Square (R^2) is used to evaluate the dependent construct in the structural model. It is a statistical measure representing the percentage of the variance of the dependent variable as explained by independent variables (Hartono & Abdillah, 2014).

The R^2 value of the emotional support is 0.22. It can be interpreted that 22% of the variance in the emotional support can be explained by social commerce constructs. Meanwhile, the remaining 88% can be attributed to unknown variability.

The R^2 value of the informational support is 0.10. It means that 10% of the variance in the informational support can be explained by social commerce constructs, while the remaining 90% can be attributed to unknown variability.

The R^2 value of the individual trust in community is 0.34. It can be interpreted that 34% of the variance in the individual trust in community can be explained by emotional support and informational support, while the remaining 66% can be attributed to unknown variability.

The R^2 value of the social commerce intention is 0.26. It implies that the emotional support, information support, and individual trust in community can explain 26% of the variance in social commerce intention. Meanwhile, while the remaining 74% can be attributed to the variability unidentified in this model.

In the hypothesis testing, the significance level can be identified by examining the value for each path coefficient or inner model (Hartono & Abdillah, 2014). The result of the inner model testing is presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2 shows that the social commerce constructs affect social support. It is indicated by the significance value of <0.01, which is less than 0.05. It can be interpreted that when individuals are engaged in an online forum/community, they will provide support and trust to others in that forum/community. Moreover, they will listen to others as well as share their experiences. Thus, the first hypothesis of this study is accepted. This finding verifies Shanmugam et al., (2016) on the influence of social commerce constructs to enhance emotional support and informational support.

Individuals who join virtual forums or communities will provide advice, guidance, or suggestion to other members of the forums or communities. Therefore, the second hypothesis of this study is also accepted. It is indicated by the

significance value of <0.01, which is less than 0.05. The results of this study confirm Shanmugam et al., (2016) on social commerce constructs lead to higher emotional support and informational support.

Figure 2 also exposes the effect of emotional support on individual trust in community. In other words, the third hypothesis of this study is accepted. It is indicated by the significance value of 0.05, which is less than 0.1. Accordingly, individuals perceive that the members of online forums or communities are allowed to provide advice while the others will listen to that advice. It leads to the trust in the forum or community. Likewise, when suggestion is responded to by other members, the individual trust in the forum or community will increase. Therefore, the fourth hypothesis of this study is also accepted. It is indicated by the significance value of <0.01, which is less than 0.05. This findings support Shanmugam et al., (2016), Reychav and Weisberg (2010), Crocker and Canevello (2008), and Hajli (2014b), concerning social support that potentially enhances individual trust in online forums or communities.

Emotional support is manifested by listening to and sympathizing or trusting in others (House, 1981). While a member shares her/his experiences in online forums or communities, other members listen appropriately, and while she/he provides information, other members give positive responses, thus the intention through purchase online through the forum or community will also increase. In other words, the fifth hypothesis of this study is accepted. It is indicated by the significance value of <0.01, which is less than 0.05.

Informational support reveals an individual's perception. Informational support can be in the form of advice, recommendation, or simply one's experience of using any product or service (Savolainen, 2015). Therefore, when an individual are given advice or recommendation about a product, it is not necessarily she/he will automatically have social commerce intention. In fact, people will mull over the possible risks when conducting social commerce. It supports Chang et al., (2016) about the negative effect of the perceived risk on the social commerce intention. Therefore, the sixth hypothesis of the study is not supported. It is indicated by the significance value of 0.11, which is greater than 0.05

Furthermore, the individual intention on social commerce will be determined by individual trust in online forums or communities. Thus, people who have a positive view on such forums or communities are inclined to have higher social commerce intention. This findings have been reported by Gefen et al., (2003a; 2003b) in which people view an online community based on the brand of social commerce platform, and its ability to meet the individual's expectations. It will eventually encourage individual intentions to purchase online. Thus, the seventh hypothesis of this study is accepted. It is also indicated by the significance value of <0.01, which is less than 0.05.

Conclusion and Suggestion

This study reveals that individual trust in community can be directly built from social commerce. This construct has significant effect on social support. Moreover, social support is distinguished into emotional support and informational support. In addition, this study also figures out that the social commerce intention or the intention to purchase as mediated by social media was directly affected by emotional support and individual trust in community. However, informational support has insignificant effect on the social commerce intention.

It is suggested for business actors to create an online community which able to build social support as well as individual trust in community. It will encourage individual intentions to purchase online and eventually, will increase the profits gained by them.

Implication and Research Limitations

The practical implication of this study is to provide information to business actors on how to build individual trust in community that will encourage intention to purchase mediated by social media or social commerce. It is expected that trust will automatically enhance the profits gained by the business actors.

The present study has two limitations. *First*, it applied survey method, leading to a relatively low internal validity. *Second*, it emphasized mainly on a single platform of social media to observe the phenomenon of social commerce. Furthermore, it is suggested for further studies to use experimental methods, and to examine more than one platform of social media.

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