

ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

## Knowledge-based trust and citizens' social commerce: the moderating role of citizens' purchase attitude

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### ABSTRACT

**BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES:** Social commerce is a subset of electronic commerce and refers to transactions that are conducted through social commerce media. Social commerce creates new channels for consumers that improve not only their purchasing decisions but also their shopping experiences. The attitude of consumers is one of the factors that influence the behavioral intention of consumers. As long as the customer does not have confidence in the social business, he does not want to buy, and the trust that the buyer gains is based on the information, knowledge, transparency and capabilities that social business provide to customers. So, this paper aims to investigate the moderating role of attitude toward purchasing in the relationship between knowledge-based trust and citizens' social commerce and for this purpose, citizens of the east and southeast of Iran are considered as the case of study.

**METHODS:** In terms of purpose, the present study is applied and based on the nature and method, it is descriptive-survey. The statistical population of the present study consisted of 361 citizens of the east and southeast of Iran who use social network and were selected by random sampling. Required data were collected by a questionnaire whose validity and reliability were confirmed and analyzed by structural equation modeling and partial least squares method.

**FINDINGS:** Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability and Spearman correlation coefficients were greater than 0.7 and Communality was greater than 0.5, which indicated the high reliability of variables in the model. Also, the Average Variance Extracted square root of all variables was greater than the correlation of them with other variables. So, Discriminant validity of the model was appropriate. Average Variance Extracted was more than 0.5, which indicated the appropriate convergent validity of the variables. According to T-value, knowledge-based trust had a significant and direct effect (0.745) on citizens' social commerce. Knowledge-based trust explained 55.5% of changes in citizens' social commerce. According to T-Value, the attitude toward purchasing had a positive (+0.106) reciprocal role in the relationship of knowledge-based trust and social commerce.

**CONCLUSION:** The findings showed that knowledge-based trust plays a positive role in social commerce; So, strengthening knowledge-based trust can lead to improved social commerce. Also, the attitude toward purchasing is positive moderator in the relationship between knowledge-based trust and social commerce; So, in order to change from a weak attitude to a strong attitude toward purchasing, the relationship between knowledge-based trust and citizens' social commerce is strengthened..

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## INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) have become one of the most important parts of daily life, improving knowledge sharing and accelerating the flow of information and communication. ICT has increasingly entered the society and caused people to shape their lives around its possibilities, this is called digitalization process (Bieser and Hilty, 2020). Technology and its developments and changes have added to the complexity of current markets and led to the creation of new ways to provide goods and services to organizations (Tadayon et al., 2021). This type of technology has had a great impact on human life, because it increases the sharing of knowledge and information (Al-Rahmi et al., 2020). ICT has created an e-marketplace for goods and services, which has led to the development of Electronic Commerce (e-commerce) and its benefits to society (Belwal et al., 2020). Information Technology (IT) is recognized as one of the most important tools for implementing business strategies for organizations (Heydari et al., 2020; Dabir and Azarpira, 2017; Jehan et al., 2020). E-commerce is one of the most important phenomena of information and communication technology that has provided platforms and markets for both groups of buyers and sellers of products and services (Qin et al., 2020). Nowadays, business and commerce environments are fast changing (Abbasi and Radfar, 2022). Together with the development of the Internet all around the world, social media has become so popular that it has blurred the line between e-commerce and social media (Raka and Godse, 2017). In the last two decades, internet platforms have played an important role in commerce and business. In addition, consumers count social media a more up-to-date and reliable source of information than traditional marketing communication tools. Online shopping is a growing phenomenon all over the world, especially in countries where the necessary internet infrastructure is available. In Iran, due to the widespread use of smartphones and social networks and its unique features, online shopping is rapidly becoming widespread. The proliferation of social media and its combination with e-commerce is leading to the creation of social commerce (Baethge et al., 2016). By using social commerce, companies can interact with consumers and seek their feedback (Oh et al., 2016). Social commerce

encourages customers to participate in marketing processes and turns customers into active actors in transactions (Busalim et al., 2019). Social commerce has improved users' purchasing decisions and experiences by creating new channels for customers, which is the result of user interaction and the content that social commerce provides (Wang et al., 2019). One of the most important factors in the success of e-commerce, e-business and social commerce is trust (Morid and Shajari, 2012; Kim et al., 2005), especially in social commerce, trust plays an important role in users' purchasing decisions (Yahia et al., 2018). The concept of trust is very important because it helps consumers overcome perceptions such as risk and uncertainty (Wang and Herrando, 2019). Trust leads the consumer to see the products offered by the seller online and motivates them to buy online from the seller (Gefen, 2002). In online trading, people read other people's reviews in relation to products and services, and their familiarity with the transaction becomes more. This acquaintance builds trust (Hajli, 2015). In the same direction, knowledge-based trust is known as user's belief in the trust and confidence of others and includes building customers' belief in competence and trustworthiness in social commerce (Talatu et al., 2014). Another important issue that plays a role in social commerce and the user's purchase from this platform is the attitude toward purchasing. Nowadays, predicting and understanding consumer behavior is very important because it can be used to influence consumer behavior. Attitude is the desire of people for a particular thing and is expressed by a degree of pleasant and Unpleasant (Maggon and Chaudhry, 2018; Daliri et al., 2014). Consumers' attitude toward purchasing are recognized as the main factor influencing shopping behavior. Attitude directly affects the decision and is also of particular importance in the buyer's buying behavior. Nowadays, the use of mobile phones and social networks has spread among different sections of society and most people spend most of their time around the using social networks. Considering that the issue of entrepreneurship has become an important issue in society; and Due to the lack of stable and long-term employment conditions in offices or companies, people tend to have their own business; they are trying to start a business with the least facilities they have. So, people prefer to offer a product or service to customers in the same way,

and eventually a business is formed that operates in the field of social networks, which is called social commerce. On the other hand, a person who as a customer in the social commerce environment tries to buy goods or services in this area, as long as she/he does not trust the social business environment, does not want to buy in this area; And the trust that a customer or buyer gains based on the information, knowledge, transparency, and capabilities that social commerce provide to the customer. Therefore, the result and its generalization to other citizens who use social networks can be an effective guide and help for the success of active businesses in online platforms, in other words, social business. As mentioned, social business is developing rapidly and its traces can be seen in all service and non-service activities. There are several factors that can affect its growth. By examining the studies conducted in the field of commerce and similar fields, and also considering the non-face-to-face nature of social commerce, it can be guessed that the existence of trust as well as the type of people's attitude toward receiving goods or services in non-face-to-face manner can play a role in the development of jobs that are based on social networks. In order to ensure confidence and trust, acquiring information and knowledge in the relevant field plays a fundamental role. Therefore, the current research examined the three variables of knowledge-based trust, attitude toward purchasing and social commerce at the same time, and according to the researchers' search, no research was found with this characteristic, whose results can play a significant role in the development of social commerce; so, the present study seeks to answer that "Does the attitude toward purchasing play a moderating role in the relationship between knowledge-based trust and social commerce"? In this regard, two goals are defined:

- Examining the role of knowledge-based trust in citizens' social business.
- Investigating the moderating role of purchase attitude in the relationship between knowledge-based trust and social commerce.

#### *Literature Review*

##### *knowledge-Based Trust*

The concept of trust in social life is very important. Existence of trust facilitates the exchanges by lowering transactions costs (Choi and Storr, 2020).

One of the most important factors in the success and development of e-commerce, e-business and social commerce is the concept of trust (Morid and Shajari, 2012). The most important role of trust in social commerce is its impact on customers' purchasing decisions (Yahia *et al.*, 2018; Akman and Mishra, 2017). An essential element that shapes the behaviors of online users and has a significant impact on their buying behavior is knowledge-based trust (Lin, 2011). By participating in online forums, people read reviews and ratings of others about a product or service, and their familiarity with that social networking site increases. This familiarity and increase in knowledge, brings confidence and reliance in the transaction (Hajli, 2015). Lin says: "Knowledge-based trust is a function of individual perceptions of the competence (ability), benevolence and integrity of a product, service, or person" (Lin, 2011). In the opinion of Wingreen and Baglione (2005): "A knowledge-based trust scale was adopted to measure the consumer's trust in the online vendor". One of the most important psychological needs is competence, which is related to the performance of individuals. Perceived competence is the belief that in trusty relation to both parties, they have the necessary skills and knowledge to fulfill their obligations and role fully and correctly (Wang, Min and Han, 2016). Perceived competence has a significant impact on purchasing decisions and behavior of potential customers (Lin, 2011). Benevolence is the belief that the other party, in addition to the desire to make a profit, wants to do good to the customer and does not only seek her/his own personal benefit (Viot and Benraiss-Noailles, 2018). Perceived benevolence refers to the extent to which the seller is willing to act in favor of the buyer (Lin, 2011). If the trustor believes in the benevolence of the trustee, it will increase trust between them (Robert *et al.*, 2009). Integrity is the perception of trustor that has in observing the moral principles of the trustee person (Cheng *et al.*, 2014). Perceived Integrity indicates that the trustor believes that the other party will be honest, truthful and keep his/her promise (Wang *et al.*, 2016). In order to introduce the backgrounds done in this field, it is possible to proposed a new approach that relies on endogenous signals, namely, the correctness of factual information provided by the source (Dong *et al.*, 2015). They proposed a way to distinguish errors made in the extraction process

from factual errors in the web source per se, by using joint inference in a novel multi-layer probabilistic model. In this study, the trustworthiness score that computed called Knowledge-Based Trust (KBT). [Talatu et al. \(2014\)](#) attempted to examine the impact of integrating Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) with Knowledge-Based Trust (KBT) on the adoption and acceptance of cashless economy among Nigerian populace. The results indicated that the integration of KBT with TAM has a significant relationship on intention towards the adoption and acceptance of cashless economy in Nigeria. [Haghshenas Kashani et al. \(2014\)](#) investigated the factors affecting innovation and knowledge-based trust in the adoption of mobile banking and concluded that perceived relative advantage, perceived ease, perceived compatibility, perceived competence and perceived completeness have a positive and meaningful effect on the attitude toward the acceptance of mobile banking. [Lin \(2011\)](#) has confirmed the role of innovation attributes and knowledge-based trust in mobile banking adoption in her research, and has introduced Perceived Competence, Perceived Benevolence and Perceived Integrity as dimensions of Knowledge-Based Trust. [Cosner \(2010\)](#) examined and conceptualize ways that principals cultivate within-school trust as a means of advancing understanding and practice. This research considered two important within-school trust referents that are directly or indirectly responsive to principal activity: trust in leader and trust between colleagues. This study explored organizational benefits derived by trust in leader and by trust in colleagues. [Robert et al. \(2009\)](#) manipulated team member characteristics and team member behavior to empirically test a two-stage theoretical model of trust formation and the influence of ICT on trust formation. The results indicated that category-based processing of team member characteristics and an individual's own disposition to trust dominated the initial formation of swift trust. Once individuals accumulated sufficient information to assess a team member's trustworthiness, the effects of swift trust declined and knowledge-based trust formed using team members' behaviors (perceived ability, integrity, and benevolence) became dominant.

#### *Social Commerce*

With the growth of the Internet and new technologies such as Web 2.0 technology, people

have preferred online social media to traditional media such as television, radio, magazines and newspapers, and have shown a greater preference for social media ([Oh et al., 2016](#)). The advent of Web 2.0 technologies and social media has changed the way people communicate, live, and do business ([Busalim and Hussin, 2016](#)). The important role of social media in increasing trade and economic development is undeniable. Social media offers new ways for both organizations and customers to exchange information and do business with each other ([Lin et al., 2015](#)). Social networks are considered important for individuals and businesses, social media has facilitated increased interactions and knowledge transfer, and reduced the lack of social interaction between customers and e-commerce businesses ([Noori et al., 2016](#)). Social commerce is highly connected or based on social media ([wang et al., 2019](#)). In recent years, the use of social media has increased a lot and people prefer to get product and service information through social technologies. With the growth and development of social media, e-commerce shifted to social commerce; because potential customers can interact with each other and be aware of the opinions of others ([Shen et al., 2019](#)). Social commerce is a combination of social media and e-commerce or social commerce is known as the evolution or innovation of e-commerce ([Wang et al., 2011](#)). Social commerce has been defined as any commercial activities facilitated by or conducted through broad social media and Web 2.0 tools in consumers' online shopping process or business' interactions with their customers ([Wang and Herrando, 2019](#)). In social commerce, consumers interact and their social interaction affects other consumers. Consumers are able to participate in the process of selling, comparing and sharing products and services. Consumers seek suggestions from others, evaluate products and services, and share their experiences ([Gan and Wang, 2017](#)). Including studies conducted in the field of social business, we can refer to the research of [Pacheco and Jaipaul-O'Garro \(2020\)](#) which have redefined the determinants of consumer attitude toward social commerce sites. This study examined perceived usefulness of the social networking sites and perceived product risk as critical mediators of social presence's effect on attitude to the social networking site. [Maia et al. \(2019\)](#) conducted a study to analyze the effects of trust and competitive price

on the intention of Brazilian consumers to buy in social commerce. Result identified trust as the main predictor of consumer purchase intention in social commerce followed by competitive prices. [Yeon et al. \(2019\)](#) determined whether the trust of both platform and individual vendor affects customers' attitude and accumulates customer loyalty. They categorize word-of-mouth into heuristic and systematic groups and investigate the effect of those factors on the intention to buy and on actual purchasing behavior. The results showed that the individual vendor's trust has no significant effect but customer loyalty is accumulated by individual vendors. In addition, heuristic factors have a significant effect on purchasing behavior, whereas systematic factors have a significant effect on attitude and intention to buy. [Hu et al. \(2019\)](#) conducted research with the aim of reaching unified view of integrative qualities and dimensions of social commerce, and they introduced five concepts of Quality (TQ), Service Quality (SQ), Experience Quality (EQ), Customer Co-Created Value (CCV) and Relationship Quality (RQ) as dimensions of Social Commerce. [Liu et al. \(2019\)](#) showed that trust toward social commerce site and trust toward site members are determinants of purchase intention and consumers' social presence has a moderating effect on the relationship between trust toward site members and purchase intention.

#### *Attitude toward Purchasing*

Attitude is one of the variables that has a lot to do with people's intentions and is a reasonable predictor of behavior ([Chen and Wang, 2021](#)). Individuals' purchases are affected by various factors, including cultural, social and psychological factors. One of the psychological variables that influences the consumer purchase decision-making process is attitude ([Jin et al., 2015](#)). Attitude toward purchasing or online shopping attitudes can be defined as the mental state that consumers have when shopping online or the extent which consumers like online shopping ([Hsu and Bayarsikhan, 2012](#)). In the present study, the attitude toward purchasing is measured by three components: attitude, trust and risk. As stated earlier, attitude is one of the psychological tendencies and is the evaluation of a particular entity, which is expressed by a degree of favor or disfavor ([Maggon and Chaudhry, 2018](#)). In some sources, attitude is considered as inner feelings of a person, which indicates the pleasant

or unpleasant desire of a person towards certain things ([Sandhe, 2019](#)). Trust can be considered as the online buyer's belief in the online merchant, which strengthens the buyer's desire to participate in the online purchase transaction, even with the possibility of loss. Trust reduces uncertainty and increases a person's expectations for a satisfactory deal. As a result, it has a positive effect on consumer behavioral intention ([Yan et al., 2015](#); [Al-Nasser et al., 2014](#)). Risk has been defined as the person's belief regarding inherent risks in the online transaction. Risk includes concerns about fraud, lack of product delivery, and so forth ([Leonard, 2012](#)). Risks usually play an important role in the purchasing decision process, regardless of the nature of the purchase events, each purchase involves a degree of risk. Due to the lack of personal contact, the impossibility of evaluating physical products, the failure to conclude contracts, insecure security of transactions, and the lack of privacy, the Internet is inherently a high-risk environment. Therefore, it is necessary for each party to the transaction to take a little risk in their business ([Kim et al., 2008](#)). [Leonard \(2012\)](#) found that attitude, trust and risk are related to each other and attitude toward online purchasing is influenced by them. In the same direction, [Bhatia \(2018\)](#) indicated that value consciousness, materialism and social influence positively relate to consumers' attitude towards counterfeit fashion products which eventually leads to purchase intention. Brand consciousness and perceived risk have no significant relationship with consumers' attitude towards counterfeit fashion products. Low-income group consumers are value conscious and brand conscious and perceive a low risk which influences their attitude towards counterfeit fashion products. [Ahmed et al. \(2013\)](#) concluded in their research that usefulness and ease of use have a significant effect on online shopping attitude and attitude also has a significant effect on purchase intention. In addition, perceived risk has a negative effect on the relationship between attitude and intention. Also, in the research of [Hsu and Bayarsikhan \(2012\)](#), consumer creativity, perceived benefits and perceived risk were introduced as determining factors affecting online shopping; Thus, consumer creativity and perceived benefits have a positive effect and perceived risk has a negative effect on the consumer's attitude towards online shopping.

*Conceptual Framework*

Researches have been conducted in the areas of knowledge-based trust, social commerce, and attitude toward purchasing, including Research of Pacheco and Jaipaul-O’Garro (2020) which re-conceptualizes the factors that determine consumer attitude toward social commerce sites; Also, Soleimani et al. (2017) have examined the factors affecting social commerce and other studies that have been mentioned in the empirical background of the research. Lin (2011) introduced Perceived Competence (PC), Perceived Benevolence (PB) and Perceived Integrity (PI) as dimensions of Knowledge-Based Trust (KBT); Hu et al. (2019) introduced Technology Quality (TQ), Service Quality (SQ), Experience Quality (EQ), Customer Co-Created Value (CCV) and Relationship Quality (RQ) as components of Social Commerce (SC) and Leonard (2012) introduced Risk, Trust and Attitude as components of Attitude Toward Purchasing (ATP). Due to the prevalence of using social networks and its application in businesses, as well as by reviewing the researches, it was found that hardly any research has investigated the role of attitude or knowledge-based trust in social commerce. Therefore, considering the existing gap and with the aim of investigating the role of knowledge-based trust in social commerce, considering the moderating role of purchasing attitude, the present study has studied all three variables simultaneously,

which shows the innovation of the present study. It should be noted that the present research was conducted considering users of social networks in the east and southeast of Iran in the second half of 2022. Accordingly, the conceptual model (Fig. 1) of the present study has been developed, and based on it, the research hypotheses are presented as follows:

- Knowledge-based trust has a role in citizens’ social commerce.
- The attitude toward purchasing in the relationship between knowledge-based trust and citizens’ social commerce has a moderating role.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

*Research methodology*

This research based on its purpose is applied and in terms of nature and method of research is descriptive which is done cross-sectionally. The used instrument was a questionnaire with 57 questions in the form of a five-point Likert scale; knowledge-based trust measured by 9 questions, social commerce measured by 38 questions and attitude toward purchasing measured by 10 questions. The reliability of the questionnaire was confirmed by examining Cronbach’s alpha coefficients, composite reliability, Spearman’s correlation reliability and Community. The validity of the questionnaire was confirmed by construct validity coefficients (convergent and discriminant validity). The results

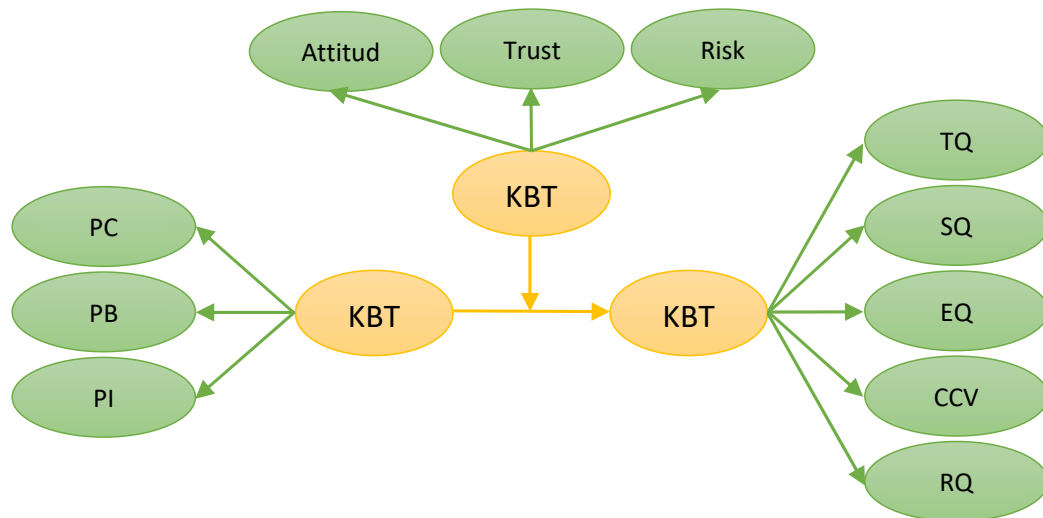


Fig. 1: Conceptual model of research (Lin, 2011; Hu et al., 2019; Leonard, 2012)

of validity and reliability are given below. Citizens who use social networks in the east and southeast of the country were considered as a statistical community. According to Morgan’s table, 384 people is Sufficient as a statistical sample; but, 422 people was considered and paper questionnaires were distributed randomly. At the end, the collected data were analysed based on 361 questionnaires (Return rate of questionnaires= 90%). The goodness of fit and the research hypotheses were investigating by the partial least square’s method and Smart PLS software.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

*Demographic characteristics*

Among 361 respondents, in terms of gender, male respondents were 35.7% and female respondents were 64.3%, who the most of them (49%) were 20-30 years old and the lowest of them (0.3%) were over 50 years old. The most people (59%) were bachelor and the least people (0.3%) had a Ph.D degree. In

terms of history of using social networks, the most of them (46.5%) had 3-6 years and the lowest of them had more than 9 years of experience using the social network who 30.2% of them used it 4-6 hours and 6.6% of them used it more than 10 hours a day. Also, 61.5% of respondents had a shopping history and 38.5% of respondents did not have a shopping history from social networks.

*Assessing the Validity and Reliability of Model Variables*

The results of measuring Reliability are shown in Table 1.

According to Table 1, Cronbach’s alpha, composite reliability and Spearman correlation coefficients are greater than 0.7 and Commuality is greater than 0.5, which indicates the high reliability of variables in the model. Table 2 also shows the results of measuring the validity of the variables.

According to Table 2, Average Variance Extracted (AVE) square root of all variables (numbers in the

Table 1: Assessing the reliability of model variables

variables	Cronbach’s alpha	CR	rho-a	Commuality
PC	0.824	0.895	0.824	0.740
PB	0.731	0.848	0.731	0.651
PI	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000
TQ	0.906	0.924	0.906	0.602
SQ	0.912	0.929	0.912	0.620
EQ	0.879	0.912	0.879	0.675
CCV	0.906	0.926	0.909	0.641
RQ	0.914	0.930	0.914	0.626

Table 2: Assessing the validity of model variables

Variables	CCV	Perceived benevolence	Perceived Integrity	Perceived competence	Experience Quality	Technology Quality	Service Quality	Relationship Quality	AVE
CCV	0.800								0.641
Perceived benevolence	0.539	0.806							0.651
Perceived Integrity	0.391	0.606	0.798						0.893
Perceived competence	0.594	0.588	0.378	0.860					0.740
Experience Quality	0.739	0.553	0.380	0.615	0.821				0.675
Technology Quality	0.699	0.541	0.343	0.626	0.714	0.775			0.602
Service Quality	0.771	0.502	0.314	0.639	0.820	0.693	0.787		0.620
Relationship Quality	0.760	0.614	0.416	0.759	0.755	0.695	0.754	0.791	0.626

original diameter of the matrix) is greater than the correlation of them with other variables. So, discriminant validity of the model is appropriate. Also, AVE is more than 0.5, which indicates the appropriate convergent validity of the variables.

*The result of testing hypotheses*

The research hypotheses were tested by the partial least squares method. The test results of the hypotheses are given in the Table 3.

According to T-value (which is outside the critical range of -1.96 to +1.96), the first hypothesis of the research was confirmed. So, knowledge-based trust has a significant and direct effect (0.745) on citizens' social commerce. In addition, according to Fig. 2, it can be concluded that knowledge-based trust explains 55.5% of changes in citizens' social commerce. Thus, and according to three values which introduced by Chain (1998), (0.19= Poor predictor, 0.33= Medium predictor, 0.67 =Strong predictor), the obtained value indicates that the level of predictability of citizens' social commerce

by knowledge-based trust is moderately high.

The second hypothesis of the research is based on the moderating role of attitude toward purchasing in the relationship between knowledge-based trust and citizens' social commerce, according to the T-Value (outside the critical range of -1.96 to +1.96), was approved. Fig. 3 shows the significance of the moderator variable and Fig. 4 shows the positive effect of the moderator variable (+0.106). This means that in order to change from a weak attitude to a strong attitude toward purchasing, the relationship between knowledge-based trust and citizens' social commerce must be strengthened.

*Discussion*

The data analysis showed that the first hypothesis of the research about the role of knowledge-based trust in the citizens' social commerce was confirmed, which this result is in the same direction with the research findings of Talatu et al. (2014), Maia et al. (2019) and Pacheco and Jaipaul-O'Garro (2020). The

Table 3: Hypothesis test results

Hypotheses	Without the presence of a moderator variable				With the presence of the moderator variable			
	$\beta$	T-Value	P-Value	Result	$\beta$	T-Value	P-Value	Result
H1	0.745	27.741	0.000	Confirmed	0.739	24.129	0.000	Confirmed
H2					1.967	0.106	0.000	Confirmed

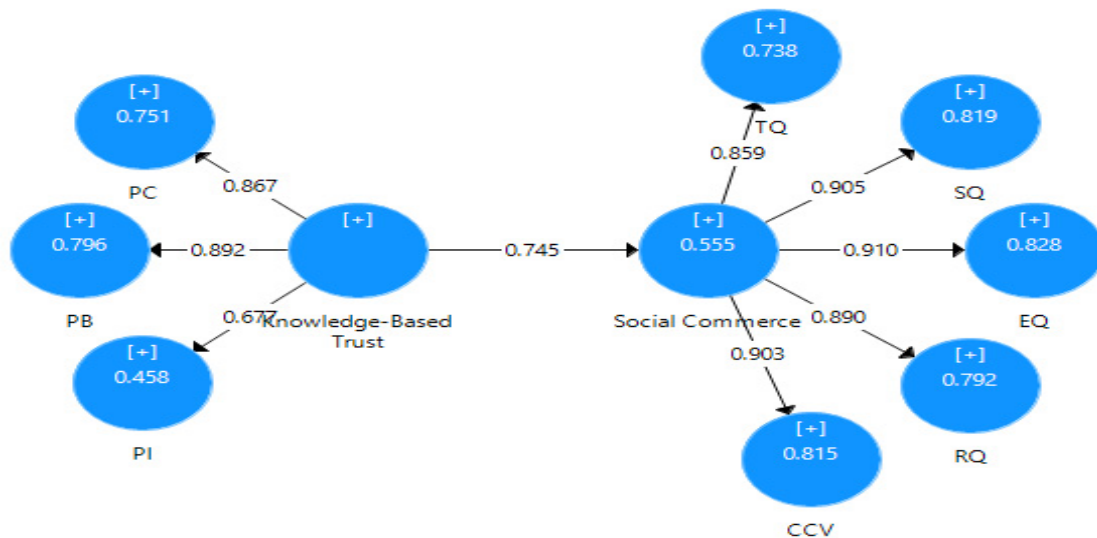


Fig. 2: Causal relationship between variables in the standard estimation mode



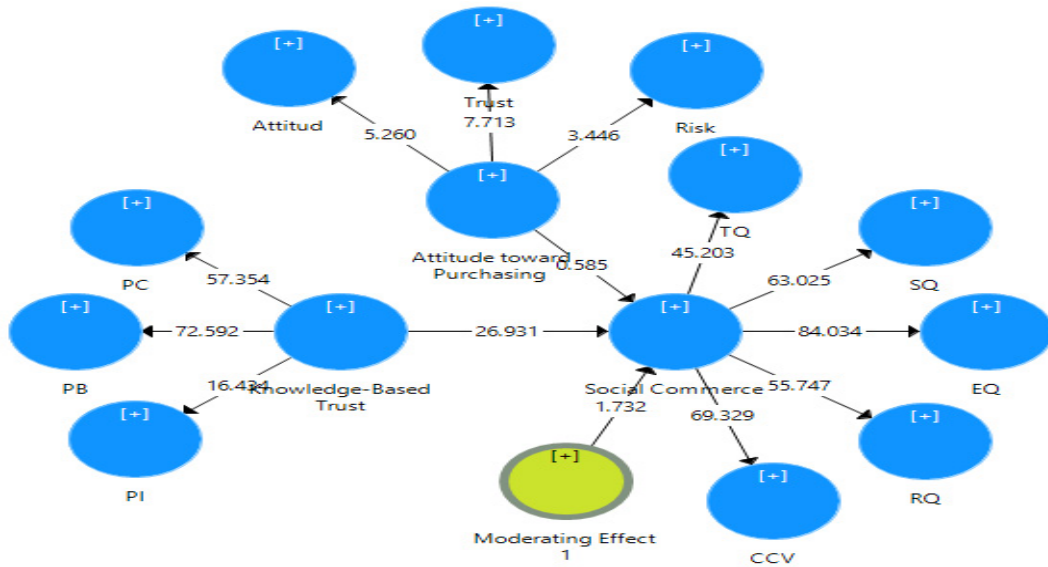


Fig. 3: Structural model in the meaningful mode

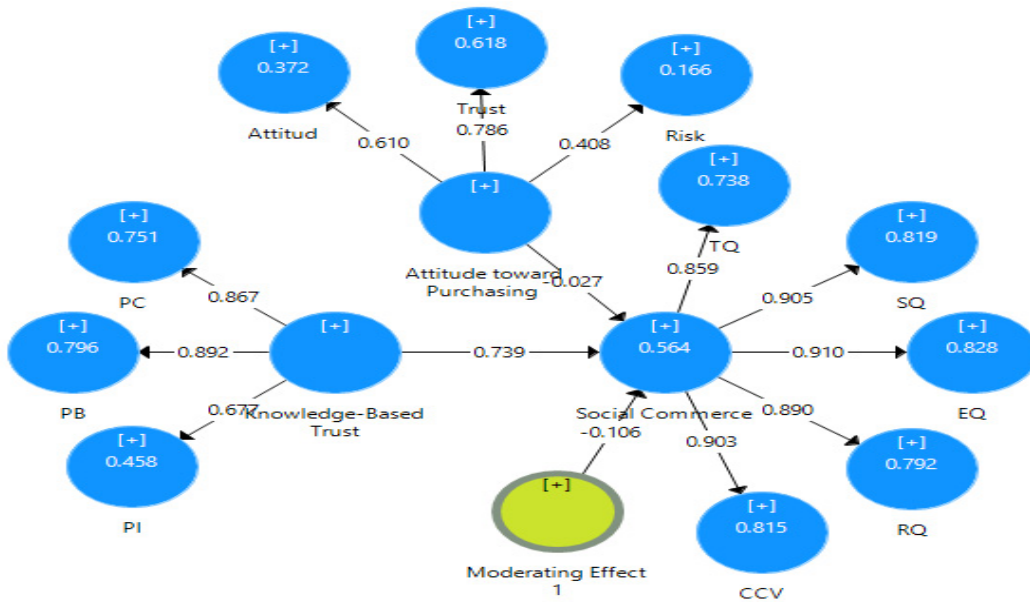


Fig. 4: Structural model in the standard estimation mode

results of [Maia et al. \(2019\)](#) research identified trust as the main predictor of consumer purchase in social commerce. In [Pacheco and Jaipaul-O'Garro](#) research, perceived usefulness and perceived product risk

were introduced as influencing factors on social commerce. The test of the second hypothesis also showed that the attitude toward purchasing has a moderating role in the relationship between

knowledge-based trust and social commerce, and thus the second hypothesis was also confirmed. The result obtained is aligned with the research findings of Hsu and Bayarsikhan (2012) and Ahmed et al. (2013). In the research of Hsu and Bayarsikhan (2012), consumer creativity, perceived benefits and perceived risk were introduced as determining factors affecting online shopping. Also, Ahmed et al. (2013) introduced usefulness and ease of use as factors that have a significant effect on online shopping attitude.

## CONCLUSION

Social commerce is one of the branches of e-commerce that helps consumers to improve their purchasing decisions and experience by creating new channels for them. Meanwhile, consumers' trust and attitude toward social businesses plays a significant role in their willingness to buy. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to investigate the moderating role of attitude toward purchasing in the relationship between knowledge-based trust and citizens' social commerce in the east and southeast of Iran; based on this, two hypotheses were formulated. Components of knowledge-based trust (perceived competence, perceived integrity and perceived benevolence) by creating the confidence and support that it has backed up, the citizen is attracted to the experience of buying or repeating the purchase or introducing this platform to others. When through perceived competence, the citizen becomes confident in the ability of the social commerce to meet their needs; is attracted to social commerce and prefers shopping from social commerce, because while she/he is using social networks, she/he can also visit her/his favorite and needed products. When the citizen, with the support of perceived Integrity, realizes that the business is committed and trustworthy, she/he prefers to buy from this business and social commerce platform; because at the moment, topics related to security, privacy and hacking customer's bank information or topics related to phishing, fraud and extortion in cyberspace have occupied the minds of many citizens. Perceived Integrity, which refers to reducing uncertainty and potential risks and adhering to principles and rules that are acceptable to citizens, it builds trust in social commerce as well as citizen loyalty and satisfaction into this online

shopping platform. With the support of perceived benevolence, the citizen realizes the benevolent rather than selfish and utilitarian motives of the business and she/he sees the performance of the business in the direction of the welfare and comfort of the citizen as much as possible. When the citizen perceives the trustworthiness and integrity of a business through perceived honesty, and through perceived benevolence, the business's passion and motivation for its own well-being even in adverse circumstances, and the business's ability to meet customer needs through perceived competence, her/his desire and inclination towards social business increase, loyalty and satisfaction will increase. Another result showed attitude toward purchasing is a moderating role by the positive effect in the relationship between knowledge-based trust and citizens' social commerce. A positive attitude and trust are created for citizens over time and by observing the business activities that are active in social commerce; this type of trust strengthens knowledge-based trust, which helps to expand social commerce. By constantly observing social commerce, citizens realize the extent of the risks associated with business and commerce. If the business is operating properly, the number of various risks that lead to concern of citizens is reduced and effects on attitude and increasing desire for social commerce. Finally, citizens' attitude can strengthen the relationship between knowledge-based trust and social commerce by creating a positive mental background. Positive purchasing attitude in people leads to factors that have a significant impact on customer loyalty and outperform than competitors. Among the factors influencing citizens loyalty can be the reliability of the business, which originates from the valuable communication between the customer and businesses and can lead to loyalty to the business. Trust can also lead to commitment; in other words, citizens who do not trust a business cannot become loyal customers and it is possible to change their seller at any time.

## SUGGESTIONS

According to the results obtained, it is recommended: 1) businesses operating on a social commerce platform, focus on identifying the factors that affect the citizen mentality to buy and thus the citizens attitude toward purchasing;

in this way to increase the Possibility of people buying. These factors include the quality of goods and services, up to date activities, reducing the perceived risk of citizens and reducing the cost of collecting information by the them. 2) Also, social commerce businesses can play a role in exciting citizens and creating a pleasant feeling by trying to improve the quality of the customer experience. 3) Other factors that lead to the growth and success of social commerce is that companies operating in this platform to increase their continuous communication with citizens; to gain the trust of customers in this way which leads to recommending social commerce to others. 4) It's worthwhile for the social commerce platform to easily provide the information citizens need, because citizens prefer to buy from businesses that provide the Correct and appropriate information. 5) Another suggestion is that social commerce businesses try to increase the value of enjoyable shopping in citizens through social networks; because helps to create a positive attitude and increase citizens trust and leads to more use of social commerce.

#### **LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCHES**

In this study, the moderating role of attitude toward purchasing in the relationship between knowledge-based trust and citizens' social commerce was investigated, but it is possible that other variables such as buying intention, buying behavior, culture and so on can also moderate this relation; therefore, it is suggested that this issue be considered in future research. It is also suggested that other variables that involved in social commerce (such as: business brand credibility, different cultures, citizens' perception of quality, repetitive buying behavior and so on) be examined. In addition, since social responsibility is a concept that plays an effective role in enriching societies, examining its role in social commerce can affect the results of this research. It should be kept in mind that this research was conducted in a small part of the country and in a specific period of time, therefore, taking into account the cultural differences of different societies, the use and generalization of the results should be done carefully. Also, it is possible that the personal and occupational characteristics of the respondents affected the quality of the collected data.

#### **AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS**

F. Rahmanian performed the literature review, conclusion and data collection. N. Mehdibeigi screened and analyzed the collected data and performed Research findings. N.M. yaghoubi helped in the conclusion, review and completing all sections.

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#### **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

The authors declare no potential conflict of interest regarding the publication of this work. In addition, the ethical issues including plagiarism, informed consent, misconduct, data fabrication and, or falsification, double publication and, or submission, and redundancy have been completely witnessed by the authors.

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#### **ABBREVIATIONS (NOMENCLATURE)**

ATP            Attitude Toward Purchasing

AVE	Average Variance Extracted
CCV	Customer Co-Created Value
CR	Composite Reliability
EQ	Experience Quality
KBT	Knowledge-Based Trust
<i>p-value</i>	Probability value
PB	Perceived Benevolence
PC	Perceived Competence
PI	Perceived Integrity
RQ	Relationship Quality
SC	Social Commerce
SQ	Service Quality
TQ	Technology Quality

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