Constructing the Impact of Social Commerce on Customers' Electronic Loyalty with an Emphasis on the Ethical Values of the Organization

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Abstract

Introduction: Considering that it is necessary to pay attention to ethical values in marketing and also limited research has been done in this field in our country. The present research aims to study the impact of social commerce on the electronic loyalty of customers with an emphasis on ethical values among customers of Shahre Ketab in Iran.

Material and Methods: This research includes two qualitative and quantitative phases. In the qualitative phase, the community included all managers of Shahre Ketab Institute and the statistical sample included 12 managers of Shahre Ketab. The method used in the qualitative phase was the meta-synthesis. In the quantitative phase of the research, the statistical population included experts selected in the qualitative phase. The techniques used included fuzzy Delphi and interpretive structural modeling. Excel and MATLAB software were used to analyze the data of this section.

Results: The findings of the qualitative section indicated the extraction of 196 primary codes and 23 components for the variable of social commerce and 64 primary codes and 15 components for the electronic customer loyalty variable. Based on the findings of the quantitative phase, among the 23 components of social commerce, 6 components were approved, and among the 15 components of electronic ethical loyalty of customers, 5 components were approved. Based on the results of interpretative structural modeling, the components of social business were placed in three levels.

Conclusions: Considering the importance of the role of moral values of customers in creating electronic loyalty in the context of social commerce, it is necessary to pay attention to the role of ethical values and the effects of this variable on creating electronic loyalty of customers.

Keywords: Social Business, Electronic Loyalty, Interpretive Structuring, Ethical Values of Customers

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INTRODUCTION

Social business is the newest branch of electronic business, which is the result of the increasing popularity and development of social networks such as; Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Wikis and microblogs [1]. In the meantime, the increasing popularity and development of social networks have led to the attention of consumers and companies to the category of social business. Social business is a combination of social media and electronic business, and its basis is to carry out various commercial activities using online social capital in social media [2]. In social commerce, consumers share their knowledge, information and experiences about products and services with others [3]. Also, companies use social commerce to create closer relationships with consumers and improve the quality of relationships and, as a result, increase sales and customer loyalty [4]. Over the past two decades, many organizations have become aware of the importance of customer loyalty and have realized that retaining existing customers for repeat purchases is far less expensive than attracting new customers. In addition, the existence of a strong relationship between customers repurchases and profitability has been accepted, and providing and promoting customer loyalty in order to repurchase has become a very important operational goal of most companies [5].

The rationale behind the idea of focusing on ethical values as a means of influencing customers' e-loyalty is that customers can be expected to act in accordance with the organization's values [6]. Ethical values are the basis for understanding the ethical decision-making process. One of the experts defines the ethical values of customers as stable beliefs about specific and preferred social behaviors or recognition of existing conditions in the social business environment [7]. As another thinker points out, the ethical behavior of an organization has a great impact on the ethical behavior of its customers, and social business, due to its characteristics, is considered one of the important environments and platforms for the implementation of the organization's ethical values [8]. Ethical values in this assumption are rules and regulations that refer to the field of social business performance, which itself, directly or indirectly originates from the foundations [6]. Research shows that customers' perceptions of moral values have a positive effect on moral beliefs and making them loyal [9]. The ethical values of the organization in the social business environment increase the general responses of customers and their reaction to the organization [10]. Ethical values help maintain and establish standards that can influence the direction of customers towards actions that are desirable for the organization, such as e-loyalty in the social business environment [11].

Today, due to the pervasiveness of information technology and the use of electronic commerce at a significant speed, as well as the increase in competition, customer loyalty has become a necessary thing for social commerce activists [12]. In this regard, the issue of customer loyalty is important; because it can be said that the most important assets of many companies are their loyal customers [13]. In some businesses, some stores find a way to use the capacity of social commerce to create exceptional value for customers, and these stores are trying to strengthen sustainable relationships with their key customers [14]. On the other hand, recent research has shown that the perception of appropriate organizational behavior, such as organizational ethical values, can positively affect the customer's buying behavior and loyalty. One of the potentially important consequences of ethical behavior is the emergence of loyalty and satisfaction [8]. E-loyalty of customer is one of the best studies in marketing, because it is considered as a main factor in achieving organizational goals and as a basic standard in any organizational performance and excellence [15]. The concept of E-loyalty of customer is generally based on the concept that a business in the context of social commerce must meet the needs of its

customers from the perspective of sustainability and profitability [16]. E-loyalty occurs when customers strongly feel that the organization can best meet their needs in the social business environment, so that the organization's competitors are left out of the customer's consideration set and buy from the organization exclusively. [17]. According to the preliminary results of the review of previous studies, it can be concluded that most of these studies have investigated the role of social business features on customer decision making and purchase intention, but limited and scattered features of social business have been investigated. In the present research, while examining the capabilities of social business more comprehensively, its impact on customer loyalty based on customers' moral values will be evaluated. This research seeks to provide a model to measure the impact of social commerce on the electronic loyalty of customers with an emphasis on the moral values of customers in Shahre Ketab Institute and seeks to answer the following questions:

A) What are the structure and dimensions of existing theoretical models in the field of social commerce, electronic payment of customers and ethical values of the organization?

B) How are the casual relationships and the levels of influence of social commerce on the electronic loyalty of customers with an emphasis on the ethical values of customers (conceptual model)?

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The aim of this research is to develop a conceptual model. Therefore, the present research is of developmental nature. Since it seeks to solve an important problem in the real world, it is also considered applied research. The intended research is considered to be an exploratory mixed research project. In general, the philosophy of the current research is positivism. Because it has been in line with the design of a model for the influence of social commerce on the electronic loyalty of customers. Therefore, the research approach can be considered mixed (qualitative-quantitative), which are described separately below.

A) Qualitative phase of the research

The statistical population in the qualitative phase includes; the managers and officials of Shahre Ketab Institute, faculty members and experts in the field of social business, electronic loyalty of customers and ethical values of the organization. To determine the sample size in the qualitative phase, the snowball method was used and based on that, 12 experts were selected. The research experts were all senior and middle managers of

Shahre Kitab Institute, whose traditional average was 42 years and their average work experience was 16.3 years. Also, 30% of the experts were women and 70% were men. In the qualitative phase, the meta-composition technique was used. In order to understand and accurately analyze the effective indicators of social commerce and electronic loyalty of customers, in the first step, extrapolation to previous studies was done. In this research, Sandelowski and Barros (2007) meta-synthesis method was used in seven steps. To measure the validity and reliability of the results in the qualitative phase, the triangulation method and survey of members and participants were used. The software used in the qualitative phase was Excel for coding.

B) Quantitative phase of the research

In the quantitative phase of the research, the statistical population included experts selected in the qualitative phase. The tool for data collection in the quantitative stage was an electronic researcher-made questionnaire, and the techniques used included fuzzy Delphi and interpretive structural modeling, and Excel and MATLAB software were used to analyze the data in this section. For this purpose, in the first step of the quantitative phase, after defining the operational variables (indices calculated from the qualitative phase of the research), the calculated components and processes were screened using the fuzzy Delphi technique, and the interpretive structural modeling technique used to evaluate and design a conceptual model. In the quantitative phase, content validity was investigated in two ways. First, through a wide review of the research literature (which was the result of a review of valid articles and sources) and secondly, the validity of the content of the measurement tool was done through the analysis and announcement of experts' opinions.

RESULTS

In the following, the findings of the research are described separately in the qualitative and quantitative phases:

A) Findings of the qualitative phase

At first, the variable of social business was investigated with meta-synthesis technique. A systematic review of texts and determination of valid and relevant documents in the appropriate time frame has been carried out as follows, and articles, books, and websites of reliable foreign and domestic organizations were reviewed. For this purpose, the word social business, together with words such as model, framework, methodology and tools, individually or in combination, was examined in Farsi and English. The data collection tool was internet search. After library and electronic search, 389 accessible documents were identified and selected for further review. Then the mentioned documents were qualitatively examined and screened based on the stated criteria and conditions, and 56 titles were obtained. It should be noted that in the coding process, 196 references were identified for the codes, which led to the identification of 23 components. The results of the meta-synthesis of social business are given in Table 1.

To investigate the variable of electronic loyalty of customers, as well as the meta-synthesis of social commerce, 174 accessible documents were identified and selected for further investigation after library and electronic search. Then the found documents were qualitatively examined and screened based on the mentioned criteria and conditions, and 36 titles were obtained.

In the coding process, 64 references were obtained for the identified codes, some of the identified codes had several repetitions. Ethical brand loyalty is related to repeat purchases by customers. The meta-synthesis results of customer e-loyalty are given in Table 2.

B) Quantitative phase findings

After determining the results of meta-synthesis, the fuzzy Delphi technique was used to screen the identified components. The experts were asked to determine the importance of each component using verbal variables (verbal variables of 5 degrees). In the second step, verbal variables (triangular fuzzy numbers corresponding to verbal variables; 5-degree spectrum) were converted into triangular fuzzy numbers. In the third step, the average of the experts' opinions was calculated using the geometric mean method and defuzzified and turned into definite numbers. The threshold limit at this stage to approve or reject the component was considered to be 0.63. If the component score is higher than this limit, it will be accepted and if it is lower, it will be rejected. In Table 3, the calculation results are given.

As the Delphi results showed, among the 23 components of social business, 6 components were approved by the research experts and used to continue the process. In the following, the results of the fuzzy Delphi for the electronic customer loyalty variable are given.

As the fuzzy Delphi results showed, among the 15 components of electronic customer loyalty, 5 components were approved by the research experts and used to continue the process. In the last step, in order to identify and analyze the relationships between the confirmed components, the interpretive structural

modeling method has been used. The data collection tool used in this method is a pairwise comparison questionnaire that was given to the experts and they were asked to compare the criteria two by two in one of three ways; choose the absence of a relationship, the existence of a one-way influence relationship, or the presence of a two-way influence relationship.

Also, in order to aggregate opinions, the method of maximum votes (highest average or mode of opinions) has been used. Based on the structural self-interaction matrix, the primary access matrix is obtained.

Table 1. Categories and components of social business extracted from meta- synthesis

Components	Description
Trust	Providing a reliable environment, influencing others, having trust in others, having previous acquaintances, a sense of belonging, the existence of a culture of trust, changing trust over time, having trust in other people's opinions.
Intention to buy	Having influence on purchase intention, having shared social norms, having purchase information, being a member of a group, changing purchase intention over time, having access to information and knowledge, having decision aids.
Social business intention	Having behavioral intention to buy, behavioral expectations, cultural behavioral differences, having a neighboring network
Social interaction	Having online social interactions, producing content, having social engagement, using social networks
The intention of co-creating brand value	Having an informed customer, belonging to the brand name, being a member of fan groups, engaging in the research and development process
Trust in the brand	Customer attraction to the brand, loyalty
Social shopping	Social shopping software, social shopping methods
Intention to engage in business	Having the intention to operate in social business
Consumer value	Buying with enough information, knowing the consumer's needs
Culture	Having cultural differences, having behavioral differences, having geographical differences
Purchase decision	The impact of buying others, having a buying strategy
Feelings	Creating relationships, expressing feelings, making friends, socializing with others
Social norms	Following social norms, having specific rules, having social order
Social value	Having common social values
Social and emotional support	Having social connections, launching support campaigns
Characteristics of technology adoption	A culture of resistance, having acceptance towards new technologies.
Satisfaction	Learning from others, having a good shopping experience, having the cognitive effects of shopping
Order completion	Having a complete ordering process and having order fulfillment channels
Focus on business	Using social media in e-commerce
Electronic word-of-mouth advertising	Doing electronic advertising, having a suitable environment, having a relationship, having a communication network of people, having a quality message
Web technology 2	Using Web 2 technology, having a secure payment system, having communication facilities, using new technologies, having direct and indirect interactive features, facilitating electronic commerce
Technology architecture	Having an object-oriented architecture, based on collective knowledge, the possibility of connecting with other networks, modifying old architectures, having cloud processing capabilities
Design process	Having an interactive graphical interface, customer-centricity in design, having a test execution model, having a software engineering perspective

Table 2. Categories and components of customer electronic loyalty, extracted from meta- synthesis

| Components	Description
Quick response to customer demand	Designing online sales systems, neuro-verbal programming, customer understanding and customization
Easy communication	Using customer communication methods, CRM system design, customer conversation management, using social media
Facilitate electronic payment	Using well-known online payment portals, using on-site payment services, having a unique electronic symbol
Being a leader in providing new services	Providing new payment and delivery services, using new packaging approaches, providing services based on customer needs, Omni channel approaches
Fast delivery	Pay-in-place system, increase the number of employees, apply routing and routing approaches, outsource during peak hours
Appearance attractiveness	Updating the appearance of products and services, updating packaging, choosing the best product features, having a brand and logo, clarifying about services
Website customization features	Discovering audiences, planning experiences, measuring and continuous improvement, using visual cues
Accurate and up-to-date information	Accurate price updates, website content updates, service description updates
Ability to effectively search for information	Use powerful search engine, meta search tool, topic guides, site optimization
Customer trust in the brand	Providing excellent customer service, publishing customer reviews, transparency, getting feedback, planning for loyal customers, prioritizing customers
Keeping personal information and secrets	Increasing the traffic of the online store, ensuring the security of the online payment gateway, creating a safe platform for financial transactions
Respecting the privacy of customers	User-centered privacy control, avoiding multiple intrusions, using automation to prevent human intervention, establishing data security, easy registration on the site
Fame and reputation	Attracting customers' trust, solving the problem of moral loyalty of customers, faster business development, content marketing
Compliance with moral principles and values	Transparency, trust, accountability, adherence to norms, confidentiality, trustworthiness and privacy, professional commitment and organizational ethical loyalty
Product delivery guarantee	Providing after-sales services, online support, replacing and returning products, using content marketing, smart pricing, offering incentive programs
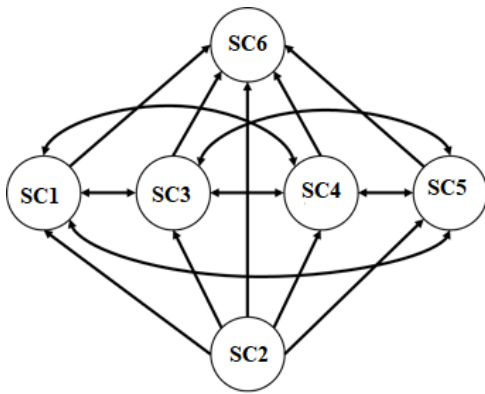
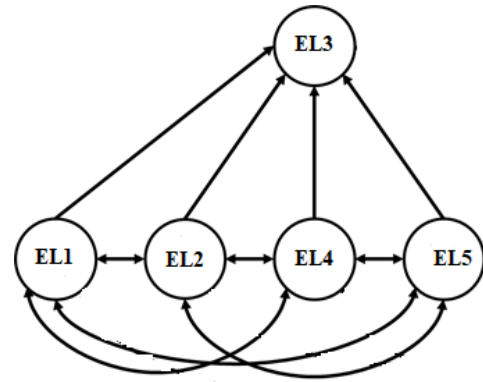**Figure 1.** Graph of the structure of relationships between social business components

Figure 2. The graph of the relationship structure between the components of electronic customer loyalty

Table 3. Results of fuzzy Delphi calculations of social business components

No. of Component	Component	Defuzzy	Decision
SC1	Trust	0.6120	Rejected
SC2	Intention to buy	0.4701	Rejected
SC3	Social business intention	0.6168	Rejected
SC4	Social interaction	0.6457	Accepted
SC5	The intention of co-creating brand value	0.5403	Rejected
SC6	Trust in the brand	0.6187	Rejected
SC7	Social shopping	0.6738	Accepted
SC8	Intention to engage in business	0.6074	Rejected
SC9	Consumer value	0.6594	Accepted
SC10	Culture	0.4847	Rejected
SC11	Purchase decision	0.4937	Rejected
SC12	Feelings	0.4797	Rejected
SC13	Social norms	0.7094	Accepted
SC14	Social value	0.4715	Rejected
SC15	Social and emotional support	0.7065	Accepted
SC16	Characteristics of technology adoption	0.5116	Rejected
SC17	Satisfaction	0.4921	Rejected
SC18	Order completion	0.5134	Rejected
SC19	Focus on business	0.5091	Rejected
SC20	Electronic word-of-mouth advertising	0.5033	Rejected
SC21	Web technology 2	0.4992	Rejected
SC22	Technology architecture	0.6763	Accepted
SC23	Design process	0.4862	Rejected

Table 4. The results of fuzzy Delphi calculation of customers' electronic loyalty

No. of Component	Component	Defuzzy	Decision
EL1	Quick response to customer demand	0.6826	Accepted
EL2	Easy communication	0.5394	Rejected
EL3	Facilitate electronic payment	0.6653	Accepted
EL4	Being a leader in providing new services	0.4937	Rejected
EL5	Fast delivery	0.5134	Rejected
EL6	Appearance attractiveness	0.6278	Rejected
EL7	Website customization features	0.6763	Accepted
EL8	Accurate and up-to-date information	0.6763	Accepted
EL9	Ability to effectively search for information	0.5049	Rejected
EL10	Customer trust in the brand	0.5091	Rejected
EL11	Keeping personal information and secrets	0.5580	Rejected
EL12	Respecting the privacy of customers	0.6738	Accepted
EL13	Fame and reputation	0.4992	Rejected
EL14	Compliance with moral principles and values	0.5033	Rejected
EL15	Product delivery guarantee	0.5495	Rejected

After the initial access matrix is obtained in the previous step, its internal consistency should be established. This matrix is adapted after 6 iterations. The access and reference sets of each dimension have been specified, and according to the commonality of these two sets and also the comparison of the shared set with the access set, the level of each component has also been specified. According to the levels created in the previous step and the access and reference sets of each criterion, the graph of the structure of mutual relations between social business criteria is drawn according to Figure 1.

According to the levels created in the previous step and access and reference sets, the graph of the structure of mutual relationships between the components of electronic customer loyalty is drawn, as shown in Figure 2.

DISCUSSION

The current research, which was carried out for the first time in the publishing industry in the country, with the aim of designing a model to measure the impact of social commerce on the electronic loyalty of customers, emphasizing the ethical values of the organization, includes two general phases, qualitative and quantitative. In the qualitative phase, semantic loads were identified and based on this, the categories and components of the main research variables were extracted. All the reviewed studies in the field of social business integration have passed the stage of compliance with the criteria of inclusion, non-inclusion and quality measurement, and finally by removing the studies lacking the necessary criteria, the findings of related studies have been comprehensively reviewed. The present research has created a comprehensive understanding of this phenomenon for researchers by combining and integrating the findings of studies in this field and explaining the differences of social business models. The focus of topics in the field of social business was organized by combining data analysis in the three dimensions of customer, business and web technologies. The customer dimension in social business models displayed the most abundance of concepts under it. However, less attention has been paid to the information and knowledge available in social networks. After the customer dimension, the components of the business dimension have been the focus of researchers' attention. Next, web technologies have also attracted the least attention. However, the necessary platform for the emergence of this phenomenon has been available. A systematic review of the theoretical foundations of social business models in integrating the findings and clarifying

its differences with electronic business models, along with presenting a conceptual model of localized dimensions and components with the fuzzy Delphi method, will be able to be a guiding light for academics and cyber entrepreneurs in exploiting opportunities in this field.

Without the "glue" of the ethical principles of the organization, the best designed model for social business will not go anywhere. Creating and maintaining loyalty among Internet customers has become a challenging element in achieving a sustainable competitive advantage. Being aware of social business activists and internet stores about scientific and practical methods and solutions to improve customer loyalty can also be an important step in making customers loyal to social business services in the light of the organization's moral values. According to the dominant definition, e-loyalty based on the ethical values of the organization is defined as a lasting feeling of belonging by a customer to a specific product or service provider [18]. Due to the increasing development of e-commerce and e-businesses, the concept of e-loyalty has grown increasingly in the scientific literature in recent years [19]. These findings are in line with previous studies [13-16]. Web interface design elements improve online customers' perception of social presence. Some functions in social commerce sites are in the form of interactive areas that encourage people to support each other. Through ratings and reviews as well as recommendations and referrals, customers can build familiarity and relationships with other customers on social commerce sites [20]. The findings of the research on the variable of electronic loyalty of customers show that quick response to demand, facilitation of electronic payment, accuracy of information, respect for privacy and personalization of the website are effective on the development of electronic loyalty of customers, and the results of this finding are aligned with the results of last researches [4, 6, 9, 11].

Based on the results of the ISM technique, the components of social business were placed in three levels. The technology architecture component was placed at the first level. In the second level, the components of social interactions, consumer value, social norms and social support were placed, and finally in the last level, the component of social shopping was placed as the most effective component. Based on the results of the ISM technique, the electronic loyalty components of customers were also placed in two levels. In the first level, the website customization features were placed, and in the second level, the components; Fast

response to customer demand, facilitation of electronic payment, accurate and up-to-date information, and respect for customer privacy. Based on the results of the interpretative structural modeling technique, cause and effect relationships between the components of the research model were identified, which is shown in Figure 3 of the final research model.

Based on the results, the following suggestions are made:
1) Shahre Kitab, in line with the implementation of incentive policies to increase the electronic loyalty of its customers, it is better to periodically offer special discount coupons to its loyal customers. This action makes loyal customers pay for electronic word-of-mouth advertising in social commerce platform.

2) Creating a guide environment in the context of social commerce, so that the user can easily familiarize himself with all the social commerce facilities of Shahre Kitab and take action to meet his needs.

3) Protecting the privacy of customers and users, using methods such as; increasing security, encryption of information and use of hardware and software to protect customer information.

Since there may be other variables in addition to the variables investigated in this research as strong drivers of electronic customer loyalty, it seems that checking and completing the mentioned elements can be useful. In the end, it is mentioned that it is necessary to carry out more research on the role of ethical values of the organization on electronic loyalty. Another limitation of this research is the limited number of quality published studies in the field of social commerce, which overlaps with electronic commerce in some studies due to its emerging nature.

Therefore, it is suggested that more qualitative studies should be prioritized by researchers in order to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of social commerce and to clearly distinguish the boundaries between this phenomenon and electronic commerce.

CONCLUSION

Considering the importance of the role of moral values of customers in creating electronic loyalty in the context of social commerce, it is necessary to pay attention to the role of moral values and the effects of this variable on creating electronic loyalty of customers. Ethical values help to establish and maintain standards that can influence the direction of customers and their electronic loyalty towards the actions that are desirable for the organization in the social business environment. Several results can be obtained from this study. Social business structures increase customers' perception of social presence and social support. Depending on the nature of the organization, the level of compliance with ethical principles and professional behavior has an impact on its fate and survival.

Ethical Consideration

Ethical issues (such as plagiarism, conscious satisfaction, misleading, making and or forging data, publishing or sending to two places, redundancy and etc.) have been fully considered by the writers.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interests.

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