

The Relationship Between Social Media Trust and Purchase Decision in the Fashion Industry

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ABSTRACT

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This study aimed to examine the impact of perceived trust in Facebook on online purchasing decisions for fashion products in Jordan. The target population consisted of young Jordanian Facebook users aged between 18 and 35 years, totaling approximately 2.1 million individuals (Department of Statistics, 2024). A non-probability sampling technique, specifically the Snowball Method, was employed for this research. The initial recommended sample size was 386 participants, which was later increased to 515. A quantitative research method was deemed most appropriate for this study and is part of descriptive research. Primary data was collected using a questionnaire designed with a Five-Point Likert Scale. The questionnaire was created via Google Drive and distributed to the target sample through WhatsApp and various social media platforms. The study concluded that perceived trust significantly influences the online purchasing decisions of young Jordanians using Facebook. Based on these findings, the study recommends that businesses focus on electronic social platforms to attract new customers, monitor competitors, and enhance customer engagement. Additionally, there is a need for a national non-profit training center for social media marketing (SMM) to ensure the availability of skilled human resources to meet local and regional demands

Keywords: Trust, Social Media, Buying Decision, Online Purchase, Fashion Industry, Facebook, Jordan.

1. Introduction:

Successful businesses understand that restricting their brands to small, confined markets can limit their ability to expand into new markets and achieve growth and profitability (Seo & Park, 2018). These brands must adopt modern approaches to international advertising, address customers' unique needs, and outperform their competitors (Ashley & Tuten, 2015). As a result, many organizations have improved their communication systems with target customers, implemented competitive pricing strategies, and diversified their international business practices, even during economic downturns (Tung et al., 2017). They have utilized modern technologies to better serve customers and expanded their distribution channels (Paquette, 2016). The Internet has played a crucial role in achieving these objectives and accelerating growth across various industries and sectors. Communication theory suggests that the Internet simplifies people's lives by enhancing their ability to quickly gather and store information with minimal effort and cost (Pratama et al., 2019).

As methods of interaction among consumers, businesses, and marketers evolve, communication has become faster and more accessible (Kaplan & Heinlin, 2010; Patria, 2018). The Internet has introduced numerous platforms and virtual sites that facilitate research, organization, and information production, while also increasing interaction and the ability to provide information on demand (Godey et al., 2016). These platforms have acted as intermediaries in the physical distribution of goods, allowing businesses to reach a global audience (Al-Qahtani & Al-Nsour, 2025; Al Kailani & Kumar, 2011). Social media has emerged as a key Internet-based communication tool that enhances peer interactions and influences decision-making among individuals with similar interests, opinions, and emotions

(Alalwan et al., 2017). It acts as a valuable source of information on various societal topics (Kohli, Suri & Kapoor, 2014).

Social media encompasses a variety of electronic applications designed to achieve these goals, including blogs, microblogs, podcasts, photos, videos, content platforms, virtual worlds, gaming sites, news sites, and forums (Erdogmus & Cicek, 2012). These applications have transformed the way people interact and exchange interests across diverse sectors, resulting in significant changes in education, sports, friendships, medicine, engineering, economics, and social gatherings (Arshad, 2019). Businesses have developed online communication strategies, refined their objectives, and updated internal performance indicators (Zarella, 2010). From a marketing perspective, social media has become one of the most effective mechanisms for reaching and influencing the public, serving as a vital tool for business growth and enhancing interactions between marketers and customers (Alalwan et al., 2017). It influences purchasing intentions and decision-making processes (Grubor, Djokic & Milovanov, 2017) and facilitates the sharing of experiences among users (Kozinets et al., 2010). By integrating social media into their marketing efforts, businesses can easily reach larger audiences, increase brand awareness and reputation, and boost sales and profitability (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

Social media has turned into a crucial competitive strategy, enhancing brand loyalty, fostering positive electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), and improving customer targeting (Tiago & Verissimo, 2014). It also strengthens communication and relationship-building with customers (Erdogmus & Cicek, 2012). In conclusion, social media marketing (SMM) is the process of promoting products through social media platforms (Xie & Lee, 2015). It focuses on content, communication, web traffic, brand awareness, and dissemination (Kim & Ko, 2012). SMM actively engages consumers in controlling the brand and increases opportunities for interaction (Vijayalakshmi, Lin, & Laczniak, 2018). This approach enables brands to connect with consumers irrespective of time and location constraints, facilitating interactive, bidirectional communication (Kim & Ko, 2012). Literature and studies confirm that SMM significantly influences purchasing decisions and enhances customer satisfaction, loyalty, trust, and brand commitment (Cheung, Pires, & Rosenberger, 2020).

2. Research Significance:

- The study highlights the importance of addressing the gaps between theory and practice in the field. Its goal is to develop an integrated framework that connects marketing, communication, and technical perspectives.
- Furthermore, the research provides valuable insights and a deeper understanding of consumer behavior on Facebook. This information will benefit marketing and communication managers and company decision-makers.

3. Literature Review:

Social media has become one of the most significant communication tools of the 21st century, playing a crucial role in the success and sustainability of organizations and institutions. It fosters new visions and enhances capabilities that are vital for business survival in competitive markets (Taneja & Toombs, 2014). Furthermore, social media serves as an essential source of knowledge about products, allowing consumers to share their purchasing experiences and evaluate reviews from others before making buying decisions (Trusov et al., 2009). The marketing advantages of social media contribute to a fundamental shift in marketing philosophy (Al-Nsour & Aiaf, 2024; Trusov et al., 2008).

Additionally, social media facilitates product development and effectively meets customer needs (Ashman, Solomon, & Wolny, 2015). It significantly impacts business performance through customer feedback, suggestions, claims, and evaluations. This interactive relationship can assist proactively in product development and content modification. Moreover, it enhances organizational functions and associated processes such as communication, business value, and management of stakeholder relationships (Marketingpower.com, 2022). The various channels for obtaining information, such as email, chat rooms, blogs, discussion forums, digital audio, photos, and videos—offer further opportunities to gather valuable insights and build lasting relationships with consumers (Al-Nsour, 2023; Evans, 2010). Social media strengthens the connection between consumers and brands, promoting dialogue and fostering respect for brands and electronic word-of-mouth (Zhang, Bernard & Chowdhury, 2011). These

platforms empower consumers to become opinion leaders and influencers, allowing them to shape purchasing decisions based on their experiences and expectations (Al-Nsour, 2017; Taneja & Toombs, 2011).

Research shows that social media marketing (SMM) enables users to order fashion products and engage with brands (Labrecque, 2014). It provides insights into the factors influencing consumer behavior, including buying decisions related to fashion products, customer satisfaction, market coverage, and marketing content recommendations (Al-Nsour et al., 2021; Park & Kim, 2003). SMM effectively targets consumers and enhances market segmentation in the fashion industry, while also capturing viewer feedback and quickly responding to global fashion trends (Kohli, Melewar & Yen, 2014). It serves as an educational resource for audiences and fashion enthusiasts, providing quick resolutions for brand-related issues (Al-Nsour & Al-Sahli, 2022; Xiang & Gretzel, 2010).

In conclusion, SMM enhances user experience, facilitates information discovery, and reduces conflicts and misunderstandings between consumers and brands (Kim & Ko, 2012). The literature demonstrates that SMM promotes communication and fosters social participation among friends and followers of fashion products (Fotis, 2015). The relationships among marketers, retailers, distribution channels, and consumers have become increasingly interconnected (Woolley & Risen, 2018). Current information indicates that SMM is an essential resource for fashion retailers, with blogs significantly influencing purchasing decisions in three fashion categories: casual clothing, formal occasions, and fitness apparel (Hutchinson, 2020). Other studies reveal that social media platforms such as Facebook, Pinterest, Instagram, Tumblr, and Twitter are the most popular among consumers purchasing professional clothing (Rituraj, 2019). SMM prioritizes building customer relationship management (CRM) with fashion stores and manufacturers and retaining consumers, rather than merely executing mass marketing campaigns. It has evolved into a foundation for competitive strategies aimed at enhancing brand image and loyalty (Coon, 2010).

In addition to its benefits for interactive face-to-face selling, Social Media Marketing (SMM) significantly contributes to the rapid positive outcomes of marketing communication campaigns (De Souza & Frith, 2010). SMM has legitimized casual fashion (such as youth clothing), leading to improved sales performance (Gruen, Osmanbekov, & Czaplewski, 2006) and enhancing moral values (Zahoor & Qureshi, 2017). Ultimately, SMM serves as a tool that enhances a company's reputation and customer engagement, positively influencing post-purchase behavior (Villarroel et al., 2018). It also provides retailers with the opportunity to create and share engaging stories and positive fashion experiences (Kumar et al., 2013), which fosters effective communication and improves customer relationship management (Al-Nsour & Al-Shaibani, 2024; Malthouse et al., 2013). Fashion marketers have benefited from tracking data related to attention, coverage, and focus groups (Dorado, 2011).

In addition to designing marketing communication plans that include messaging, targeting, and language, marketers adjust strategies to meet customer needs, implement pricing strategies, and execute appropriate promotions (Brake, 2009). Additionally, smart devices help customers make informed purchases by providing information on the latest global fashion trends, facilitating social engagement, and delivering instant updates on fashion products (Hutchinson, 2017). SMM has successfully generated a "positive buzz" for fashion products in both global and local markets, allowing for more precise consumer targeting. It has also emerged as an effective tool for tracking the latest fashion trends worldwide (Rituraj, 2019).

Studies suggest that celebrity casual style showcases have become daily events on social media, consisting of comments, drawings, designs, videos, and television shows (Kurutz, 2011). These events offer opportunities for self-expression, with followers acting as critics and challengers of fashion worldwide (Mohr, 2013). However, the issue of trust poses a significant challenge to the future of social platforms, as it heavily relies on individuals' self-confidence and personal perspectives (Rachbini, 2017). There is a correlation between trust and risky situations, along with elements that enhance expectations and prospects (Ratnasingam, 1998; Rousseau, 1998). Trust is closely associated with uncertainty surrounding unknown practices (Al-Qahtani & Al-Nsour, 2025; Kim & Ko, 2012). Modern marketing patterns have increased ambiguity and uncertainty in marketing practices (Al-Nsour et al., 2021).

In the context of SMM, consumers face multitasking challenges, which reduce their freedom of action and make them more cautious about new sellers, evolving technologies, hackers, and questionable vendors (Mahliza, 2020). Over time, perceived risks associated with purchasing from specific locations or sellers have increased (Muda et al., 2016). These risks include concerns about product suitability, the reliability of information, and levels of privacy

(Al-Nsour, 2021). Research confirms that perceived risks in electronic marketing are higher than those in traditional marketing due to limited communication between consumers and products (Mahliza, 2020). Consequently, fear of making online purchases can deter consumers from buying and prompt them to seek trustworthy sellers (Nagi et al., 2015). Trust is critical in consumer markets, serving as the key to purchases and fostering long-term customer relationships (Al-Nsour et al., 2021). Consumers require trust in sellers to ensure the integrity and efficiency of their buying decisions (Budyastuti & Iskandar, 2018).

As a result, trust has a positive impact on purchasing decisions, with strong relationships demonstrated in various studies (Hayuningtyas & Widiyanto, 2015). Efforts to reduce perceived risks associated with online shopping are based on the positive behaviors of sellers and their commitment to consumers (Budyastuti & Iskandar, 2018). Increasing trust opens up new marketing opportunities on social platforms (Putra et al., 2017). Additionally, perceived online trust significantly influences customers' future transactions (Pavlou & Fygenon, 2006). Ultimately, research indicates that trust is influenced by consumers' interactions with websites or apps (Thakur, 2018). This emotional connection with a brand enhances the communication process and reassures consumers about their present and future purchasing decisions (Muda et al., 2016).

4. Population and Sampling:

The target population for this study consists of young Jordanian Facebook users aged between 18 and 35 years. This group is estimated to represent 29.1% of Jordan's population in 2024, equating to approximately 2.1 million people (Department of Statistics, 2024). The study employed a non-probability sampling technique known as the Snowball Method. The analysis focused on five online fashion retailers operating in Jordan: Fordeal, Jollychic, Noon Shopping, Vova, and Dokanati, as identified in a pilot study. The recommended initial sample size was 386, but this was later increased to 515. Initially, outreach attracted 100 active users, of whom 65 responded to the invitation. Each respondent then nominated acquaintances and friends who shared similar characteristics. To recruit additional participants, the researcher posted announcements on Facebook seeking volunteers for the study. The participant selection and withdrawal process lasted for 55 days, during which an average of 10 respondents were selected each day, from October 25, 2021, to January 10, 2022. Data collection was strategically timed to coincide with events and holidays, including Christmas, Black Friday, end-of-year sales, and regular weekly discounts offered by the websites.

5. Measurement:

For measurement, a quantitative method was deemed the most suitable approach for this study, as it focuses on collecting and analyzing numerical data while applying statistical techniques to reach conclusions (Creswell, 2013). This research is classified as descriptive research. To gather primary data, a questionnaire was utilized, employing a Five-Point Likert Scale with the following options: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Agree, and Strongly Agree. The questionnaire was created using Google Drive and distributed to the target sample through WhatsApp and other social media platforms.

6. Data Description and Testing Data:

1.6 Data Description:

- A. Independent Variable (IV): Social Media Perceived Trust consists of four items. Two items were moderated, while the other two received lower ratings. The arithmetic mean of perceived trust via social media is 3.318, with a standard deviation of 1.094. According to the survey, 46.2% of respondents indicated a moderate level of trust in social media. The confidence interval for these responses ranges from 1.094 to 3.318.
- B. Dependent Variable (DV): The E-Purchase Decision comprises six items, all of which are moderated. The arithmetic mean for e-purchase decisions is 3.185, with a standard deviation of 1.133 among young Facebook shoppers. About 40.8% of respondents reported a moderate level of agreement regarding their e-buying decisions. The confidence interval for these responses ranges from 1.133 to 3.185.

2.6 Testing Data:

Cross-loading (Individual Item Value) evaluates how items are distributed across different latent variables in the measurement model (Sam, 2013). According to statistical guidelines, an acceptable value should be higher than 0.7 (Fornell & Lacker, 1981). All items in this study exceeded the 0.7 threshold, indicating accuracy and statistical validity. Cronbach's Alpha measures the internal consistency among scale items, with values considered statistically

acceptable if they fall between 0.7 and 0.95 (Hair et al., 2014). The results indicate adequate internal consistency among the scale items. Construct reliability represents a broader measure of internal consistency among scale items (Brunner & Süß, 2005). The composite reliability value also serves as an indicator of this consistency. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) test measures the extent of variability within the measurement construct, aiming to evaluate how much of the underlying construct or latent variable is explained by the variations observed (Henseler, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2014). The minimum acceptable value for AVE is 0.5, with values above 0.7 considered excellent. In this study, all AVE values are higher than 0.5, confirming their statistical acceptability.

Table 1: Results of Composite Reliability, Average Variance Extracted, and CR

Construct	Items	Individual Item Validity	CR	AVE	Cronbach's Alpha
V (Perceived Trust)	V1	0.808	0.932	0.695	0.885
	V2	0.908			
	V3	0.871			
	V4	0.860			
Y(Online Purchase Decision)	Y1	0.767	0.933	0.701	0.914
	Y2	0.843			
	Y3	0.868			
	Y4	0.851			
	Y5	0.838			
	Y6	0.852			

7. Research Outcomes:

Path analysis is a statistical method used to break down the relationships between latent (independent) variables and assess their impact. To evaluate model fit, researchers often examine statistical indicators such as standardized beta coefficients and t-statistics (Coffman & MacCallum, 2005). A P-value of less than 0.05 is considered statistically significant and indicates a direct relationship between two variables. The standardized beta not only shows the strength of this relationship but also its direction; a negative value (-) indicates an inverse relationship between the variables. Table 2 illustrates the direct impact of perceived trust on online purchase decisions. Our findings reveal a positive correlation between these variables, confirmed by a P-value below 0.05. In this study, the hypothesis was supported, as the positive relationship between online perceived trust (OPT) and online purchase decisions (OPD) resulted in a beta value of 0.145 and a P-value of 0.00. Additionally, the f² statistic serves as a complementary measure to the P-value (Fidler et al., 2005), assessing the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable (Kline, 2004). The results indicate a strong effect of online perceived trust (OPT) on online buying decisions (OPD) among young Jordanians using Facebook, with an f² value of 0.43.

Table 2: Path Direct Effects of First Hypothesis

H	Relationship	Std. Beta	Std. Error	T-Value	P-Value	Decision	f ²	Decision
H ₁	OPT → OPD	0.145	0.005	27.021	0.00	Supported Positive Relationship	0.43	Large Effect Size

Significant at P₀* < 0.01.

Significant at P₀** < 0.05.

The R² (Coefficient of Determination) is a statistical measure that explains the variation in the dependent variable (DV) due to the independent variable (IV). Many researchers utilize this measure for path analysis (Hair et al., 2014). Table 3 presents the R² determination coefficient related to online purchase decisions and the variation in online perceived trust (OPT). The structural model accounts for 49.1% of the differences between these two variables (R² = 0.491). According to statistical guidelines, the OPT variable strongly explains the differences in online purchase decisions (OPD). A positive relationship between online perceived trust (OPT) and OPD has been established (Beta = 0.145, P-Value = 0.00). Effective prediction relies on the R² determination coefficient and Q² indicators. The results from blindfolding yield a measure of predictive relevance, which assesses the model's ability to predict the omitted portions of the data. Q² indicates the potential for restructuring the data collected through the structural model and its performance indicators (Chin, 2010). According to statistical norms, predictive relevance exists when the Q² value is greater than 0.00. As shown in Table 3, the analysis of differences in online purchase decisions (OPD) due to online perceived trust (OPT) yields a Q² value of 0.383, exceeding 0.35, which indicates a high predictability of online purchase decisions. Finally, SmartPLS computes the Goodness of Fit (GOF) test to assess the overall performance of the model, including both the measurement and structural components (Wetzels et al., 2009). The results of the GOF test, presented in Table 3, demonstrate a high level of predictability for the overall model

Table 3: R² and Q² Coefficients

Construct	R²	Result	Q²	Decision	Goodness of Fit	Decision
<i>Online Purchase Decision</i>	0.491	Large Power	0.383	Large Predictive Relevance	0.31	Substantial

8. Discussion and Recommendations:

The arithmetic mean of perceived trust among Jordanian online shoppers is moderate, with an average score of 3.31 reported by 46.2% of shoppers. Facebook is linked to a positive shopping experience and brand recall for 51.6% of young shoppers, who rated it at an average score of 3.42. Additionally, 45.9% of these shoppers expressed interest in brands, giving them an average score of 3.34. In contrast, online stores on Facebook provide moderate purchasing benefits to only 36.6% of shoppers, earning a mean score of 3.12. About half of the shoppers, with a mean score of 3.38, advocate for moderated access to information. Trust is often associated with risky situations in an individual's perceptions, prompting individuals to seek new elements that can enhance their expectations (Alnsour, 2024; Al-Nsour, 2020).

Various uncertainties and unforeseen events can undermine trust (Kim & Ko, 2012). Trust plays a crucial role in consumer markets, as it is essential for both current purchases and future relationships (Gody et al., 2016). Indicators of trust include stable and frequent transactions (Al-Nsour, Hasnin, & Al-Johani, 2024; Hayuningtyas & Widiyanto, 2015). Consumers typically require trust for most purchasing decisions, as it reflects the seller's capability in encouraging purchases (Budyastuti & Iskandar, 2018). Consequently, trust positively affects purchases, and a strong relationship between trust and purchasing decisions has been demonstrated (Al-Nsour, Somili & Allaham, 2021; Hayuningtyas & Widiyanto, 2015). Furthermore, online consumer trust shapes a consumer's self-belief in product quality and their purchasing intentions toward a brand (Paquette, 2016).

Amid recent technological advancements and emerging marketing trends, uncertainty in marketing practices has increased (Dowling & Staelin, 1994). In social media marketing (SMM), many consumers encounter risks that impede their purchasing freedom and actions (Kim & Ko, 2010). Consumers must exercise caution and remain vigilant about new sellers, applications, technologies, hackers, and counterfeit sellers (Mahliza, 2020). Over time, the perceived risk of buying from specific sites or sellers has intensified (Muda et al., 2016). Trust also involves the relevance of products and information fit, as well as privacy concerns (Al-Nsour, 2021). Studies confirm that the perceived risk in e-marketing exceeds that in traditional marketing due to the limited communication between consumers and products (Mahliza, 2020). The fear surrounding online transactions can hinder the purchasing process and drive consumers to seek trustworthy sellers (Hong, 2015).

Moreover, trust encompasses emotional and behavioral connections with the brand, affecting both current and future purchases (Muda et al., 2016). The low perceived trust reported in this study aligns with previous research, which indicates that achieving a high level of perceived trust requires enhanced online privacy (El-Khouli, 2013). The multitude of information sources necessitates careful research and quality verification before sharing or transmitting information to others (Lee & Choi, 2019). Features of SMM, such as electronic openness, unrestricted online freedom, easy access to information, unreliable information, and the spread of fake, poor, and incomplete content, have negatively impacted perceived trust (Drahošová & Balco, 2017). Evidence suggests that online perceived trust serves as a gateway to rational purchasing behavior. E-consumers evaluate brands, make informed purchasing decisions, and enhance their shopping experiences (Bicen & Cavus, 2012).

In addition, online perceived trust contributes to improving brand image by accurately identifying customer needs and preferences (Zablah et al., 2012). It facilitates product dissemination, encourages better purchasing transactions at acceptable prices, and stimulates impulsive buying (Howard & Park, 2012). Furthermore, online perceived trust enhances consumer participation in sharing information and making purchases (Pett, 2012). Based on these insights, the study recommends that businesses focus on electronic social platforms to attract new customers, monitor competitors, and engage with consumers. Additionally, it suggests developing a national plan for the fashion industry to establish a diverse range of online stores—large, medium, and small—with robust support in human, financial, technical, organizational, and legislative resources. There is also a need for a national nonprofit training center for social media marketing to address the local and regional demand for qualified marketers.

9. Conclusion:

The current study presents a conceptual framework that clarifies the relationship between Organizational Performance Theory (OPT) and Organizational Performance Dynamics (OPD). It provides practical evidence to address the complexities and misunderstandings associated with this relationship. By conducting a comprehensive review of the theoretical literature, the study consolidates evidence and contrasting theories, bringing them together into one cohesive analysis. This framework helps to reduce confusion in understanding, interpreting, and correlating variables. It highlights the strong connections between communication, marketing, and technology, improving the clarity of these variables within a unified context. The theoretical implications of this study focus on applying marketing communication theories and tailoring results specifically to the fashion industry and young people in Jordan. International studies across different cultural, civilizational, and economic contexts support the theoretical credibility of these findings. Aligning theoretical contributions with practical outcomes is essential for fostering organizational and community development. The study also offers marketing insights derived from technology and internet applications, bridging the gap between academia and practice regarding the significance of social media platforms in marketing. The overwhelming volume of research in marketing, technology, and communication often leads to confusion about their effects on young people. Therefore, further empirical evidence is needed to better understand the trust that young consumers place in the fashion industry and its behavioral implications regarding fashion products. Many studies conducted after the 2008 international financial crisis have been exploratory, focusing on redefining stakeholders and examining the relationship between culture and organizational structure in a contemporary context, in contrast to traditional marketing approaches.

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