

# Understanding consumers' post-consumption behaviors in C2C social commerce: the role of functional and relational customer orientation

Customer  
orientation in  
social  
commerce

Received 6 December 2020  
Revised 27 May 2021  
17 October 2021  
7 February 2022  
Accepted 7 February 2022

Wilson K.S. Leung

*Division of Science, Engineering and Health Studies,  
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University College of Professional and Continuing  
Education, Kowloon, Hong Kong*

Man Kit Chang

*Department of Finance and Decision Sciences, Hong Kong Baptist University,  
Kowloon, Hong Kong*

Man Lai Cheung

*Department of Marketing, The Hang Seng University of Hong Kong,  
New Territories, Hong Kong and  
Central Coast Business School, University of Newcastle, Ourimbah, Australia, and*

Si Shi

*Faculty of Business Administration, School of Business Administration,  
Southwestern University of Finance and Economics, Chengdu, China*

## Abstract

**Purpose** – Social commerce (s-commerce) is an online business model combining commercial and social features. Vendors may engage in a business-oriented relationship with customers and/or establish a personal relationship with customers. The role performed by the vendors may not match customer expectations and needs, resulting in low repurchase intention. Drawing on role theory in the context of customer orientation, this study integrates functional customer orientation (FCO) and relational customer orientation (RCO) with the expectation–confirmation model (ECM) to propose a theoretical framework for explaining customers' post-consumption behaviors. This study also examines how product-specific attributes moderate the effect of FCO and RCO on customer satisfaction.

**Design/methodology/approach** – This study analyzed 273 survey responses from WeChat users by using PLS-SEM.

**Findings** – The results confirmed that the confirmation of customer expectations positively affected FCO and RCO. Additionally, FCO and RCO had different effects on customer satisfaction, depending on product type and brand awareness, and their effects on customers' post-consumption behaviors also varied.

**Research limitations/implications** – The findings suggest that both business and social roles are important to customers in C2C s-commerce. This study also demonstrates product characteristics moderating the effectiveness of customer orientation on customer satisfaction.

**Practical implications** – This study provides empirical support for vendors and platform developers to implement appropriate selling strategies and manage customer expectations in C2C s-commerce.

**Originality/value** – This study is the first to incorporate FCO and RCO into the ECM theoretical framework to obtain new insights into vendors' selling approaches in C2C s-commerce, thus contributing to the marketing literature.

**Keywords** Social commerce, Role theory, Customer orientation, Functional customer orientation, Relational customer orientation, Expectation–confirmation model, Product type, Brand awareness

**Paper type** Research paper



## 1. Introduction

With an increase in commercial activities on social networking sites (SNSs), a new type of online business called social commerce (s-commerce) has emerged. S-commerce refers to the leveraging of online social capital to support commercial transactions and activities on SNSs (Liang *et al.*, 2011). The two major types of s-commerce are business-to-customer (B2C) and customer-to-customer (C2C) s-commerce (Leung *et al.*, 2019). Differing from well-established firms with the guarantee policies of B2C s-commerce (Wongkitrungrueng and Assarut, 2020), vendors in C2C s-commerce mainly rely on their social networks on SNSs to conduct retail activities without institutional protection (Sun *et al.*, 2016). Therefore, only a few vendors succeed in the highly competitive and fragmented C2C s-commerce market (Yahia *et al.*, 2018). Lim *et al.* (2012) reported that 60% of customers had negative shopping experiences in s-commerce and 50% of them would not repurchase from the same vendor. One of the reasons for this result could be that the mix of commercial activities and development of friendship on SNSs, the role performed by vendors may not always match customer expectations and needs (Weitz and Bradford, 1999). Therefore, it is critical for practitioners and scholars to understand customer expectations with regard to vendor roles that affect consumers' post-consumption behaviors in C2C s-commerce.

Studies on C2C s-commerce have adopted two theoretical perspectives to investigate this research problem. Some studies have limited the relationship between customers and vendors to a functional perspective (e.g. Bai *et al.*, 2015; Wongkitrungrueng and Assarut, 2020; Wu and Li, 2018; Yahia *et al.*, 2018). Others have adopted a relational view to examine the effects of customer–vendor relationships on shopping intentions (e.g. Lin *et al.*, 2018; Lin *et al.*, 2017). In addition to the functional role of being a vendor, vendors are also SNS users who develop a personal relationship with customers by posting daily activities and interacting with customers' personal posts (Sun *et al.*, 2016). However, previous studies on s-commerce have not examined which vendor role has a greater effect on the success of a C2C business. To fill this gap, drawing on role theory, this study explicitly distinguishes between two vendor roles (i.e. a businessperson and a friend) and measures the behaviors for these two distinctive vendor roles on the basis of customer orientation.

Customer orientation (CO) is a set of selling behaviors for achieving long-term customer satisfaction (Saxe and Weitz, 1982). Previous studies in marketing have suggested that there are two types of selling behaviors for vendors, functional customer orientation (FCO) and relational customer orientation (RCO), that represent the task-oriented selling behaviors and the relation-oriented selling behaviors, respectively (Wieseke *et al.*, 2014). Our review of the literature on CO revealed that most studies have examined CO in the offline business-to-business (B2B) context and have mainly evaluated it from the salesperson's perspective (see Appendix A). To the best of our knowledge, no study so far has investigated CO in s-commerce or the distinction between FCO and RCO and their relative importance. There are calls for exploring the effects of FCO and RCO on the new sales environment (Homburg *et al.*, 2011; Weitz and Bradford, 1999). In response to these calls, we examine the effects of FCO and RCO on customer relationship outcomes in s-commerce.

Role theory posits that expectations regarding others' roles may differ considerably depending on the situation (Heide and Wathne, 2006). Studies in marketing have advocated that the effectiveness of customer-oriented behaviors could be contingent on different retail situations (Saxe and Weitz, 1982), particularly product characteristics (Ho *et al.*, 2015; Sheth, 1975). Although a few studies have investigated this moderating effect on FCO and RCO, they have been limited to vendor evaluations, and have suggested that future studies examine customer evaluations of product characteristics

---

(Homburg *et al.*, 2011). This study investigates the moderating role of two product characteristics (i.e. product type and brand awareness) in C2C s-commerce as perceived by customers.

According to role theory, if there is a discrepancy between expectations and actual behaviors with regard to a person's role, the divergence in role expectations creates a strong tension between the exchange parties, which has a negative consequence on the relationship (Ivey and Robin, 1966). In the selling environment, customers may have divergent expectations regarding the roles of vendors during their interactions. Owing to a mismatch, selling approaches may fail to meet customer expectations, leading to discouraging post-consumption behaviors (Hennig-Thurau *et al.*, 2006; Homburg *et al.*, 2011). Therefore, this study adopts the expectation–confirmation model (ECM) to explain how customers confirm their expectations with regard to two vendor roles (i.e. FCO and RCO), which in turn affects their post-consumption behaviors.

Overall, this study contributes to three aspects of the literature. First, through the theoretical lens of role theory in the context of CO, we explicitly distinguish between the role of a friend and the traditional role of a businessperson to enhance the theoretical understanding of vendor roles in C2C s-commerce. Second, we examine the moderating effects of two product-specific factors (i.e. product type and brand awareness) as perceived by customers, on the relationship between CO and customer satisfaction, thereby revealing the implications of the effectiveness of CO under different conditions. Third, we believe that this study is the first to incorporate FCO and RCO, as post-consumption expectations with regard to vendor roles, into the ECM to examine their effects on customer satisfaction and subsequent post-consumption behaviors (i.e. repurchase and word of mouth (WOM) intention). The findings will help vendors understand customer expectations with regard to vendors' roles. The results will also offer new insights into the effectiveness of CO, thereby helping vendors develop adaptive selling strategies in C2C s-commerce.

## 2. Theoretical background

As discussed in the introduction, in the s-commerce environment, vendors offer to assist customers in making a shopping decision when they are interested in their products (i.e. the role of a businessperson), and they may simultaneously attempt to develop friendships with customers to take advantage of their social networks to promote their business (i.e. the role of a friend). Previous studies in B2B marketing have adopted role theory to investigate the importance of the roles of vendors. Some areas merit further exploration, especially in the context of s-commerce. In this section, we first discuss role theory in the context of a vendor's customer-oriented selling behaviors. Then, we present a summary of previous studies on CO. Finally, we discuss how the ECM can be incorporated with the perspective of CO to develop a theoretical framework.

### 2.1 A role theory-based perspective of CO

Role theory is theoretically well-developed in the sociology and marketing literature. Merton and Merton (1968) first proposed that the social status of an individual involved multiple roles rather than being limited to a specific role. Biddle (1986) applied a theatrical metaphor that regarded the individual as an actor performing a specific role within a particular context. Role theory posits that roles can be explained by assuming that an individual who has a particular social position has specific expectations related to their own behavior and that of other individuals (Biddle, 1986). For example, as a nurse, an individual will be expected to perform a set of associated duties and obligations (e.g. monitoring a patient's condition and assessing their needs to provide the best possible care in the hospital) to fulfill the requirements of the

---

social position to the satisfaction of others' expectations (Solomon *et al.*, 1985). As a result, the behaviors of individuals can be predictable and context-specific depending on their social position and situation (Hindin, 2007).

Researchers in relationship marketing have applied role theory to gain a better understanding of customer–vendor interactions. Heide and Wathne (2006) suggested that customers shaped the role of a vendor based on different decision-making patterns. Applying the logic of consequences, customers aim to maximize the benefits resulting from a business relationship with vendors. Applying the logic of appropriateness, however, customers aim to create a relationship with vendors in exchange for friendship and enjoy the social exchange of the relationship over economic benefit (Jones *et al.*, 2008). Therefore, consumers have two general expectations (i.e. the role of a friend and the role of a businessperson) in the context of vendor roles (Jones *et al.*, 2008).

Homburg *et al.* (2011) were the first to explicitly classify vendors' customer-oriented sales behaviors as FCO and RCO in the B2B marketing context, based on role theory. Unlike consumer value theory, which explains how consumers make purchase decisions based on the assessment of multiple value dimensions of a product/service (e.g. functional and social) (Sweeney and Soutar, 2001), role theory focuses on customers' expectations related to the roles of vendors (i.e. role of a businessperson or role of a friend) rather than the product/service itself (Homburg *et al.*, 2011). Therefore, Homburg *et al.* (2011) defined FCO as a vendor playing the role of a businessperson to perform a set of task-oriented behaviors to resolve customers' shopping problems. They defined RCO as a vendor playing the role of a friend who established a personal relationship with customers. These two roles of the vendor have been discussed in studies on personal selling. Vendors in the traditional role of businesspersons serve as problem solvers who address customers' shopping problems and need to develop a business relationship with customers (Weitz and Bradford, 1999). The role of a vendor as a friend has only recently received scholarly attention. Maintaining friendships is considered an intrinsic motivation as customers enjoy the relationship with vendors and these social relationships trigger expressive responses such as advocacy and altruism in customers, directly benefiting vendors (Jones *et al.*, 2008).

## 2.2 The literature on CO

Appendix A provides a summary of the studies on CO in the salesperson–customer interaction. We searched the Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI) to identify studies that investigated the effects of CO on customer-related outcomes (e.g. customer satisfaction and loyalty) and the effects of FCO and RCO on different variables. Studies involving the following topics were not included: firm-level CO (e.g. the sub-dimension of market orientation; Narver and Slater, 1990) and website-level CO (e.g. Poddar *et al.*, 2009), CO serving only as a dependent variable, customer–service provider relationships in a call center, hospital, restaurant, or the hospitality industry, and examinations of the effects of only a single CO dimension on the vendor or firm performance (e.g. job satisfaction or sales performance). After scanning the abstract and the research model section of all of the papers found, we retained 23 of the 427 studies in the search results.

All except one of the studies listed in Appendix A were conducted in an offline business context across B2B and B2C settings; the exception is a recent study that examined one CO dimension in e-commerce (i.e. Wang and Zhang, 2016). This result implies that no study so far has investigated CO and its effects in s-commerce. Most of the studies used a one-dimensional CO measure developed by Saxe and Weitz (1982) that mainly measures the functional dimension of CO as evaluated by salespeople. The different effects of the functional and relational dimensions of CO on customer relationship outcomes have been largely ignored in the literature. Although a few studies on CO have examined the different effects of FCO and

---

RCO on customer loyalty (Homburg *et al.*, 2011), vendor creativity (Miao and Wang, 2016) and sales performance (Zang *et al.*, 2020), they have been limited to the B2B context. It is important to understand the effects of FCO and RCO on a new sales environment that combines commercial and social features, such as C2C s-commerce, because this combination of features makes it difficult to predict the effects of the two types of CO (Weitz and Bradford, 1999).

Researchers in marketing have criticized the evaluation of CO measured by salespeople because although salespeople may believe that their selling behaviors are highly customer-oriented, customers may not agree, resulting in bias (Donavan and Hocutt, 2001; Homburg *et al.*, 2011). Only two recent studies in the B2C context have measured FCO and RCO from the customer's perspective. Wieseke *et al.* (2014) examined both types of CO as moderators in the relationship between negotiation intention and discount. However, the direct effect of CO on customer relationship outcomes has not been examined. Bateman and Valentine (2015) manipulated both FCO and RCO by using vignettes rather than measuring them. Thus, few studies have measured FCO and RCO from the customer's perspective. An investigation of the associations between the two types of CO and customer-related outcomes (e.g. satisfaction, repurchase intention and WOM intention) on the basis of customers' perceptions can advance our understanding of CO.

Finally, researchers in marketing have long argued that the effectiveness of CO is contingent on different retail situations (Homburg *et al.*, 2011; Saxe and Weitz, 1982). For example, customers may perceive task-oriented selling to be more preferable when they need more shopping advice and suggestions from the vendors to help them evaluate complex products (Thompson *et al.*, 2005), whereas their perception of the usefulness of functional selling behaviors may be different in other selling contexts. However, only Homburg *et al.* (2011) investigated the moderating effect of product characteristics on the influence of FCO and RCO. A limitation of their study was that the product characteristics were assessed by sales managers, not customers. They suggested that future studies could evaluate the product features based on the perspectives of customers. This study fills this gap by examining the moderating effects of product-specific features on the relationship between the two types of CO and customer-related outcomes from the customer's perspective in C2C s-commerce.

### 2.3 Extended ECM

As discussed, in the customer–vendor relationship, tension and confusion may arise when vendors fail to meet the customer's expectations of appropriate vendor behavior, and this situation can result in negative consequences such as dissatisfaction (Hennig-Thurau *et al.*, 2006; Matta *et al.*, 2015). Therefore, a theoretical framework is needed to explain how customers confirm their expectations with regard to FCO and RCO affects their satisfaction and post-consumption behaviors in C2C s-commerce. Expectation–confirmation theory (ECT) (Oliver, 1980) was developed to explain customers' product repurchase and service continuance behaviors. ECT posits that repurchase intention is affected by the satisfaction of customers' prior use of the products or service. Customer satisfaction is affected by the confirmation/disconfirmation of their expectation of performance. First, customer satisfaction is a psychological state in relation to a cognitive assessment of the expectation–performance discrepancy (i.e. (dis)confirmation) (Oliver, 1980). Second, customers' confirmation of expectation is jointly determined by the discrepancy between pre-consumption expectation and the perceived performance of a specific product or service. Third, based on the expectation–performance discrepancy, different (dis)confirmation situations will occur. In recent information systems (IS) studies on the ECM, researchers have used the terms “disconfirmation” and “confirmation” interchangeably (Bhattacharjee, 2001;

Liao *et al.*, 2017). Following this practice, in this study, the construct of confirmation in the ECM is used to refer to the confirmation and disconfirmation status.

Bhattacharjee (2001) revised Oliver's (1980) ECT by removing pre-consumption variables, as it was argued that the influence of pre-consumption expectations was captured within confirmation and satisfaction, whereas the revised ECM only focused on post-consumption expectations (Liao *et al.*, 2007). In the IS literature, post-consumption expectations in the ECM have usually been represented by the cognitive belief of perceived usefulness. The reason for this theoretical refinement is that the original ECT overlooked potential changes in customers' expectations over time and the way in which these changes affected subsequent continuance decisions (Bhattacharjee, 2001). Therefore, the addition of post-consumption expectations to the ECM reflects the change in customers' initial expectations to a modified expectation after the experience of using a product (Bhattacharjee, 2001).

Many studies on the ECM have criticized the original post-consumption expectation (i.e. perceived usefulness) because it only represented the benefits resulting from IS usage in the organizational context. To overcome this deficiency, perceived usefulness was replaced by different variables such as perceived social capital (Chang and Zhu, 2012), perceived benefits (Lin *et al.*, 2012), perceived value (Hsu *et al.*, 2015), and perceived online group-buying characteristics (Zhang *et al.*, 2015) in different research contexts. Furthermore, additional theoretical extensions in the ECM are needed to broaden the scope of customer behavior in the post-consumption stage and to enhance the applicability of the model in C2C s-commerce (Thong *et al.*, 2006). Therefore, this study adopts two types of CO based on role theory (i.e. the role of a businessperson and the role of a friend), which serve as the customers' post-consumption expectations in the ECM, and explores how confirmation of customers' expectations affects their satisfaction and post-consumption expectations.

### 3. Research model and hypothesis development

Figure 1 shows the research model. In the proposed model, first, the positioning of FCO and RCO represents customers' post-consumption expectations related to vendor roles (Homburg *et al.*, 2011). Second, post-consumption behaviors are expanded to include repurchase

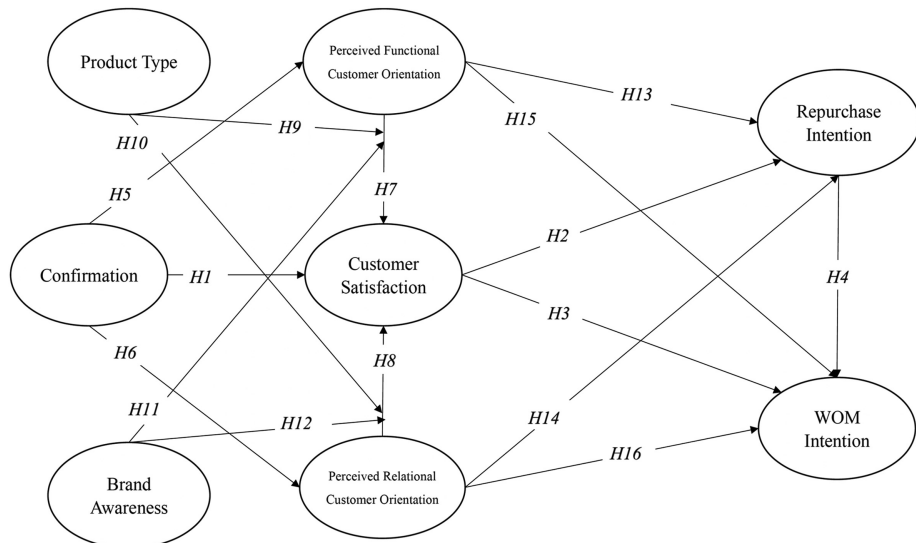


Figure 1.  
Research model

---

intention and WOM intention to explore two important customer responses in the highly competitive C2C s-commerce environment (Li and Liu, 2014). Third, product type and brand awareness are key contextual factors in the shopping situation because customers' evaluation process varies depending on these factors (Lemmetyinen *et al.*, 2016; Park and Lee, 2009; Xiao and Benbasat, 2007; Yigit and Tigli, 2018).

### 3.1 Confirmation, customer satisfaction, repurchase intention and positive WOM

According to the expectation–confirmation theory, expectation serves as a baseline or standard of comparison for consumers to evaluate the actual performance of the product or service (Bhattacharjee, 2001; Oliver, 1980). Expectation could be positively disconfirmed (i.e. perceived performance goes beyond expectation), confirmed (i.e. perceived performance is equal to expectation), or negatively disconfirmed (perceived performance falls below expectation) (Jin *et al.*, 2009). Positive confirmation leads to customer satisfaction because the expected benefits of using the product or service are realized, whereas negative confirmation hinders the achievement of customer satisfaction (Bhattacharjee, 2001). In this study, when customers perceive that the actual vendor service is consistent with their expectations (i.e. positively confirming their expectations regarding the roles of the vendor), this confirmation leads to satisfaction because the expected benefits are realized. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

- H1.* The extent of confirmation of customer expectations positively affects customer satisfaction.

Subsequently, when customers confirm their expectations with regard to a product or service, their satisfaction increases, which leads to a boost in continuance intention (Bhattacharjee, 2001) or repurchase intention (Jin *et al.*, 2009; Oliver, 1980). For instance, in the case of mobile applications, the likelihood of a repeat purchase by the customer largely depends on customer satisfaction with positive usage experiences (Hsu and Lin, 2015). Similarly, when customers are satisfied with the service or product offered by e-stores, they are likely to purchase from the same store again (Liao *et al.*, 2017). Drawing on social exchange theory, positive or satisfying shopping experiences secure future returns and benefits and reduce uncertainty, which encourages repeat purchases from customers (Wieseke *et al.*, 2014). Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

- H2.* Customer satisfaction positively affects customers' repurchase intention.

When consumers are satisfied with the performance of online product or service providers, they will eagerly encourage others to use the products or services (Li and Liu, 2014). Similarly, customers are likely to exhibit brand advocacy behaviors such as WOM intention when they are satisfied with the experience of using the brand's fan page (Huang and Chen, 2018). This positive relationship can be explained based on motivation theory. Customers with a high level of intrinsic motivation, such as altruism or enjoyment, are likely to promote a company when they are satisfied (Arndt, 1967; Dichter, 1966). Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

- H3.* Customer satisfaction positively affects customers' WOM intention.

Li and Liu (2014) incorporated WOM intention as an important post-consumption behavior in the ECM and argued that users would recommend e-service providers to others when they had a high continuance intention to use. Their study confirmed the positive effect of users' continuance intention on their WOM behavior. When customers have a greater tendency to make a repeat purchase from the same service provider, their intention to recommend the

---

provider to others will be higher (Olaru *et al.*, 2008). Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

*H4.* Customers' repurchase intention positively affects their WOM intention.

### *3.2 Confirmation, FCO, and RCO*

Confirmation is a cognitive assessment of the discrepancy between expectation and performance (Bhattacharjee, 2001). Drawing on cognitive dissonance theory, Bhattacharjee (2001) suggested that rational individuals would adjust their post-consumption expectations (e.g. post-adoption perceived usefulness of IS usage) when they found a discrepancy between expectation and performance (Festinger, 1957). Positive confirmation (i.e. better than expectation) elevates individuals' post-consumption expectations, whereas negative confirmation (i.e. worse than expectation) reduces these post-consumption expectations (Bhattacharjee, 2001).

Studies on the ECM have demonstrated positive relationships between confirmation and post-adoption (post-consumption) expectations across different contexts. Using motivation theory, Lin *et al.* (2005) proposed that perceived usefulness and perceived playfulness served as users' post-adoption expectations, which represented the extrinsic and intrinsic benefits of using web portals. They also found that when user expectations regarding the benefits of using web portals were confirmed, their continuance intention increased. Hsu and Lin (2015) expanded the original post-consumption expectation (i.e. perceived usefulness) to four dimensions – performance value, emotional value, social value and value for money – based on customer value theory. They argued that when the value received from mobile applications positively fulfilled customers' expectations, customers' intention to reuse the applications would increase. Their results confirmed the positive effect of confirmation on these four value-related dimensions in the context of mobile application use.

Given these propositions, this study expands post-consumption expectations into FCO and RCO based on role theory. FCO represents the role of a businessperson, who offers a set of task-oriented selling behaviors for customers, including product recommendations or customer assistance (Homburg *et al.*, 2011). Drawing on cognitive dissonance theory, when customers perceive that the performance of vendors' task-oriented selling behaviors is better than their expectation, the positive confirmation elevates their post-consumption expectations, that is, the subsequent perceptions regarding the functional role of vendors after the interaction (Bhattacharjee, 2001). Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

*H5.* Confirmation of customer expectations positively affects perceived FCO.

RCO represents the role of a friend who aims to develop a personal relationship with customers by sharing common interests and aspects of personal life (Beatty *et al.*, 1996). According to cognitive dissonance theory, when customers confirm that vendors' relational selling behaviors match their expectations, customers reinforce their perceptions of RCO to align with their experiences at the post-consumption stage to be more consistent with reality (Bhattacharjee, 2001). Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

*H6.* Confirmation of customer expectations positively affects perceived RCO.

### *3.3 FCO, RCO, and customer satisfaction*

Saxe and Weitz (1982) asserted that vendors with a high level of CO aimed to create long-term customer satisfaction and avoid customer dissatisfaction. In other words, when the needs of customers are met by vendors' customer-oriented behaviors, customers will be satisfied (Stock and Hoyer, 2005). Studies in marketing have demonstrated the positive relationship between functional dimensions of CO and satisfaction (e.g. Goff *et al.*, 1997; Homburg *et al.*,



---

2009; Mullins *et al.*, 2014; Stock and Bednarek, 2014; Stock and Hoyer, 2005; Susskind *et al.*, 2003). Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

*H7.* Perceived FCO positively affects customer satisfaction.

In C2C s-commerce, customers expect vendors to play not only the role of a businessperson, helping customers solve shopping problems (Bai *et al.*, 2015), but also the role of a friend, developing social relationships and maintaining connections in groups of friends (Sun *et al.*, 2016). Studies have suggested that relational selling behaviors, such as showing great interest in customers' personal situations or discussing personal issues with them, fulfilled customers' social needs, which increased customer satisfaction (Reynolds and Beatty, 1999). Thus, when customers perceive that a higher level of RCO is offered by s-commerce vendors, this important personal relationship with sellers satisfies their social needs. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

*H8.* Perceived RCO positively affects customer satisfaction.

### *3.4 Moderating effects of product type*

Researchers in marketing have argued that the effectiveness of CO depends on the characteristics of the selling situation, such as the contact time with customers (Donavan *et al.*, 2004), customers' communication styles and product characteristics (Homburg *et al.*, 2011). Second, role theory posits that although there is a common expectation regarding appropriate role behaviors in the customer–vendor relationship, customers' affective responses may vary in different encounters and are likely to be moderated by the purchase situation (Czepiel *et al.*, 1982; Solomon *et al.*, 1985). Third, the effect of customer-perceived value on customer's affective state may vary depending on the type of products (Wongkitrungrueng and Assarut, 2020). Fourth, although previous studies have examined the moderating role of product characteristics in the offline retailing context (Homburg *et al.*, 2011), the sales environment has changed substantially. In particular, the moderating role of product features in customer–vendor interaction has not yet been explored for the online shopping environment, specifically for C2C s-commerce (Weitz and Bradford, 1999); therefore, there is an urgent need to investigate the moderating effect of product characteristics in C2C s-commerce.

Studies have reported that product type and brand awareness were two important determinants in customers' shopping processes (Ho *et al.*, 2015; Lu *et al.*, 2014). As customers' decision-making process during shopping differs based on product characteristics, their affective states such as customer satisfaction may vary (Lemmetynen *et al.*, 2016; Parente *et al.*, 2002). Therefore, this study examines the moderating role of product type and brand awareness in the relationship between the two types of CO and customer satisfaction.

Studies in marketing have discussed two major product types: search products and experience products. Search products are characterized by product attributes (e.g. price, size and color) that customers can obtain complete information about the product prior to purchase (Nelson, 1974). For example, the attributes of search products such as furniture, computer equipment, and electronic appliances can be obtained through information search before shopping (Chiang and Dholakia, 2003). In contrast, experience products are products whose attributes (e.g. taste, smell and touch) cannot be determined until purchase or products for which information search related to their attributes is difficult and/or costly (Klein, 1998). For instance, consumers find it difficult to evaluate food, movies and perfume before using these products (Senecal and Nantel, 2004).

Several studies have considered product type as a moderator for customers' decision-making. For instance, Park and Lee (2009) suggested that when customers found it difficult to evaluate product attributes, the demand for information about the product increased. In

---

online marketplaces, customers require more online product reviews to reduce uncertainty when evaluating experience products than when evaluating search products. Similarly, [Xiao and Benbasat \(2007\)](#) argued that when evaluating an experience product, customers usually relied more on help from others, such as suggestions and assistance from sales agents, to make a shopping decision than they would when evaluating a search product. [Xiao and Benbasat \(2007\)](#) postulated that product type moderated the effect of the use of a recommendation agent on users' trust of the recommendation agent in such a manner that the effect on trust was higher in the case of experience products than in the case of search products. Similarly, [Ho et al. \(2015\)](#) examined the moderating effect of product type on the relationship between blog type and advertising attitude. They found that in the case of experience products, expert blogs could offer professional recommendations and appraisals to customers and that customers relied more on experts' comments to form a better opinion of the product than on typical blogs, suggesting that customers needed help from experts to evaluate experience products. In contrast, customers were more confident about evaluating the information on search products by themselves. Thus, customers could form a better advertising attitude by viewing typical consumer blogs rather than expert blogs, which implied that they required less information from experts when shopping for search products.

[Homburg et al. \(2011\)](#) proposed product complexity as a moderator of the relationship between CO and customer loyalty. Customers require greater cognitive effort to assess complex products than to assess simple products ([Thompson et al., 2005](#)). As a result, customers accord more value to vendors' FCO (e.g. assistance in product assessment) when purchasing complex products. Therefore, FCO has a stronger influence on customer loyalty in the case of complex products than in the case of simple products. This study argues that the positive relationship between FCO and customer satisfaction is lower for search products than for complex products because search products are similar to simple products and therefore, customers can evaluate the features themselves, requiring less assistance from vendors. Based on this discussion, we propose the following hypothesis:

- H9.* Product type has a moderating effect on the relationship between perceived FCO and customer satisfaction such that the positive effect of perceived FCO on customer satisfaction is weaker for a search product than for an experience product.

However, customers are also susceptible to overlooking product attributes that may reduce their confidence when vendors attempt to exhibit relational behaviors to sell complex products ([Heitmann et al., 2007](#)). When buying simple products, customers place emphasis on relational selling behaviors to determine their loyalty towards vendors ([Homburg et al., 2011](#)). This occurs because customers tend to focus less on understanding the features of the product and pay more attention to the shopping environment ([Andrews and Shimp, 1990](#)). Therefore, we argue that the positive influence of RCO on customer satisfaction is greater when buying search products than when buying experience products because customers have a greater focus on relational aspects in simple shopping situations. Based on this discussion, we propose the following hypothesis:

- H10.* Product type has a moderating effect on the relationship between perceived RCO and customer satisfaction such that the positive effect of perceived RCO on customer satisfaction is stronger for a search product than for an experience product.

### *3.5 Moderating effects of brand awareness*

Brand awareness refers to the strength of the brand in the minds of customers, manifested in their ability to recall and recognize the brand in different situations ([Rossiter and Percy, 1987](#)). The brand name provides valuable information for customers to assess product quality and

---

reduce shopping risk (Keller, 1993). Consequently, given a basket of products, consumers tend to buy products with a reputable brand name when making a shopping decision. Ho *et al.* (2015) stated that brand names represented complete information about a product and provided an extrinsic cue for consumers to determine product quality. In contrast, consumers found it hard to determine the product quality of lesser-known brands; therefore, they required more information and sources from experts to justify choosing lesser-known products. According to Wang and Yang (2010), given perceived credibility and familiarity, customers were more willing to purchase products offered by brands with higher brand awareness, thus suggesting that a credible brand may have a greater influence on purchase intention when customers believe that the brand has high awareness. Yigit and Tigli (2018) examined the moderating effect of brand awareness on the relationship between perceived risk and online impulse-buying behaviors. Their results showed that when customers had limited time to make a purchase decision, the effects of perceived risk on their online impulse-buying behavior might be weaker when brand awareness was high, suggesting that brand awareness provides an extrinsic cue for customers to justify product quality.

Homburg *et al.* (2011) examined whether the relationship between CO and customer loyalty was moderated by brand strength in traditional B2B industries. They found that task-oriented selling behaviors were more important to customers when buying a product with a weak brand than one with a strong brand because in the case of a weak brand, customers would seek more information before making shopping decisions (Erdem and Swait, 1998). Therefore, the authors stated that when buying a product with a higher level of brand awareness within C2C s-commerce, the relationship between FCO and customer satisfaction would be weakened, as customers knew the brand well and their reliance on vendors' assistance was low. Based on this discussion, we propose the following hypothesis:

- H11.* Brand awareness has a moderating effect on the relationship between perceived FCO and customer satisfaction such that the positive effect of perceived FCO on customer satisfaction is weaker when brand awareness is stronger.

In contrast, when a lesser-known brand is sold using relational selling behavior, customers may perceive vendors to be insincere and the purchase to be risky, which negatively affects customer loyalty (Homburg *et al.*, 2011). However, to develop loyalty, customers are likely to expect relational selling behaviors, given that a stronger brand is associated with an emotional value (Keller, 1993). Therefore, we posit that the relationship between RCO and customer satisfaction will be positively moderated by products with higher brand awareness as customers experience an associated emotional value, which increases satisfaction. Based on this discussion, we propose the following hypothesis:

- H12.* Brand awareness has a moderating effect on the relationship between perceived RCO and customer satisfaction such that the positive effect of perceived RCO on customer satisfaction is stronger when brand awareness is stronger.

### *3.6 FCO, RCO, repurchase intention, and WOM intention*

Repurchase intention and WOM intention are two critical outcomes of a long-term customer–vendor relationship. In the highly competitive online marketplace, maintaining a relationship with repeat customers is critical for business survival, as these customers are a stable source of profit (Zhang *et al.*, 2011). In addition, companies regard WOM as a valuable and reliable asset because customer referral is a powerful tool that generates sales (Liu *et al.*, 2016). Trusov *et al.* (2009) claimed that WOM might help service providers attract new customers because it had a long-lasting effect and a high response elasticity. To achieve these relationship outcomes, researchers in marketing suggested that offering functional and social benefits to customers might encourage loyalty to vendors (Reynolds and Beatty, 1999).

---

Homburg *et al.* (2011) suggested that FCO might help customers make better shopping decisions and fulfill their shopping needs by offering suitable products. When vendors offer functional benefits to customers by performing a set of task-oriented services, the likelihood of the customer revisiting the same store (Reynolds and Beatty, 1999) or purchasing from the same salesperson (Homburg *et al.*, 2014) increases. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

*H13.* Perceived FCO positively affects a customer's repurchase intention.

---

RCO may lead to the creation of a trusting and personal relationship with customers, which in turn cultivates customer loyalty such as repurchase and WOM intention (Homburg *et al.*, 2011). For example, when vendors demonstrate care for customers, such as by sharing personal experiences with customers and expressing concern about customers' personal situations, the warmth and care may encourage customers to make a purchase from the same vendor in the future (Homburg *et al.*, 2014). Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

*H14.* Perceived RCO positively affects a customer's repurchase intention.

With regard to WOM intention, offering functional benefits to customers will increase their willingness to share their purchasing experiences with friends (Reynolds and Beatty, 1999). When customers believe that functional selling behaviors, such as a detailed explanation of the product usage and an accurate description of a product, help them in making a better-informed shopping decision, their willingness to spread positive WOM to others will increase (Homburg *et al.*, 2014). Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

*H15.* Perceived FCO positively affects a customer's WOM intention.

Furthermore, when vendors make an effort to maintain a good relationship with customers, customers are more willing to recommend the vendors to others (Homburg *et al.*, 2014). In this study, we suggest that when customers' social needs are satisfied through vendors' relational selling behaviors, the customers' intention to encourage others to shop from the vendors will increase. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

*H16.* Perceived RCO positively affects a customer's WOM intention.

## 4. Research methodology

### 4.1 Sample and data collection

In this study, the targeted respondents were WeChat users who had purchased products or services from WeChat social-commerce vendors. WeChat is the most popular social-commerce platform in China, with more than 1.2 billion active monthly users in 2020 (Statista, 2020). China is the world's largest s-commerce market, with an estimated market value of 2,419 billion yuan in 2022 (Fung Business Intelligence, 2019). In particular, 15 million users used WeChat to exchange product-related information and conduct sale activities through a reliable circle of friends (iResearch, 2017). The relationship between vendors and customers under these circumstances may either be a friendship or a business relationship. Therefore, WeChat was considered an appropriate C2C s-commerce platform for data collection. We used Sojump's (<https://www.wjx.cn/>) paid sampling service to collect primary data from s-commerce users on WeChat. Sojump, a credible online survey platform, had 2.6 million sample resources from different Chinese cities, thus ensuring the randomness of data collection. Researchers may find it difficult to directly collect data from SNS users because of privacy settings implemented by SNS developers. Therefore, we followed the approach used in previous empirical studies on s-commerce to collect data from s-commerce users (e.g. Zhou *et al.*, 2013; Zhang *et al.*, 2016; Lien *et al.*, 2017; Chi, 2018). If a registered member responded to

the survey invitation through email or mobile applications, Sojump awarded each valid respondent with virtual points for redeeming gifts or monetary rewards after survey completion. Depending on the complexity of the questionnaire, Sojump charged clients approximately RMB6 to RMB100 per valid response (Lien *et al.*, 2017). After removing responses completed in an unreasonably short amount of time and those with identical answers to all questions from a total of 315 responses, 273 valid responses remained. Table 1 presents the characteristics of the respondents. In this study, potential non-response bias was tested by comparing the responses of early and late respondents because if the perceptions of the respondents did not represent the entire sample to which the questionnaire was distributed, non-response bias would be present (Armstrong and Overton, 1977; Jiang *et al.*, 2004). This study adopted the approach of previous studies by treating the first and the last 70 questionnaires received as the early and late responses (Armstrong and Overton, 1977; Kwahk and Lee, 2008). The chi-square test did not show significant differences ( $p > 0.05$ ) between early and late respondents across all of the demographic variables, including gender, age, education, and s-commerce shopping experience (Kwahk and Lee, 2008). Therefore, there was no response bias in this study. Table 2 shows the percentages for the categories of the demographic variables for early and late respondents, as well as the  $p$ -values for the Chi-square tests.

#### 4.2 Instruments of measurement

The constructs in this study were adopted from previous studies and the terms were modified to suit the s-commerce context. The term “WeChat shopping” – the purchase of products or services from WeChat vendors – was used to simplify sentence structure and improve the readability of measurement items. The measurement items and their sources are available in Appendix B. The questionnaire was translated from English to Chinese and then translated back to English through the back-translation process with the assistance of four IS and marketing professors to ensure consistency in meaning (Bhalla and Lin, 1987). A five-point Likert scale was used to measure all constructs.

### 5. Data analysis and results

We used SmartPLS 3.2.8 for data analysis through partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM). We chose PLS-SEM because of its advantages (Hair *et al.*, 2017). First, it

Attributes	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	96	35
	Female	177	65
Age	18–24	34	12
	25–30	101	37
	31–40	103	38
	41–50	28	10
	Above 50	7	3
Education	High school or below	8	3
	Diploma or relative course	44	16
	Bachelor’s degree	205	75
	Master’s degree or above	16	6
S-commerce shopping experience	Less than 1 year	53	19
	1–2 years	108	40
	3–5 years	88	32
	More than 5 years	24	9

**Table 1.**  
Demographic  
characteristics  
( $N = 273$ )

Attributes	Category	Early response ( <i>n</i> = 70)	Late response ( <i>n</i> = 70)	<i>p</i> -value for the Pearson's Chi-square test
Gender	Male	38.6%	38.6%	1.00
	Female	61.4%	61.4%	
Age	18–24	15.7%	7.1%	0.24
	25–30	35.7%	42.9%	
	31–40	32.9%	41.5%	
	41–50	10%	7.1%	
	Above 50	5.7%	1.4%	
Education	High school or below	0%	1.4%	0.37
	Diploma or relative course	17.1%	11.4%	
	Bachelor's degree	74.3%	82.9%	
	Master's degree or above	8.6%	4.3%	
	Less than 1 year	18.6%	18.6%	
S-commerce shopping experience	1–2 years	42.9%	37.1%	0.87
	3–5 years	31.4%	34.3%	
	More than 5 years	7.1%	10%	

**Table 2.**  
Analysis of non-  
response bias

is suitable for studies with many constructs. Second, it complements exploratory research with a combination of explanation and prediction. Third, it is appropriate for a small sample size (e.g.  $\leq 500$ ) (e.g. [Leung et al., 2022](#); [Shi et al., 2022](#)).

### 5.1 Measurement model

As shown in [Table 3](#), factor loadings were greater than or equal to 0.70 for all of the measurement items except FCO2, FCO5, and RCO2, and therefore, these three items were removed. From [Table 3](#), the values of AVE were greater than 0.5 and ranged from 0.59 to 0.88. In addition, the composite reliability ranged from 0.82 to 0.94, which was greater than the 0.7 thresholds ([Hair et al., 2017](#)), thus confirming convergent validity. Discriminant validity was satisfied with the [Fornell and Larcker \(1981\)](#) criterion; the square roots of all of the AVEs were larger than the corresponding correlations (see [Table 4](#)). Discriminant validity was also verified using the Heterotrait and Monotrait (HTMT) ratio ([Henseler et al., 2015](#)). As shown in [Table 5](#), all of the HTMT values were lower than the 0.90 criterion except for the CS–RI pair of constructs. Although the degree of discriminant validity was fair, multicollinearity could be a point of concern. Therefore, a variance inflation factor (VIF) test was performed to assess the potential issue of multicollinearity. The statistical results indicated that the VIF values for all of the constructs ranged from 1.16 to 2.43, which were much lower than the threshold of 5 ([Diamantopoulos and Winklhofer, 2001](#)), thereby indicating that multicollinearity was not a concern. Harman's single-factor test was performed to check the potential issue of common method bias (CMB) because the samples had been collected from a single source and were self-reported ([Podsakoff et al., 2003](#)). The results revealed that the single factor accounted for 35% of the variance, which was less than the 50% threshold. Furthermore, the unrelated marker variable was added to the model to examine the CMB ([Podsakoff et al., 2003](#); [Tehseen et al., 2017](#)). We compared the change in the  $R^2$  values of the endogenous constructs before and after adding the marker variable for repurchase intention (i.e.  $0.523-0.531 = -0.008$ ) and for WOM intention (i.e.  $0.490-0.491 = -0.001$ ). Differences of 0.008 and 0.001 were found in the  $R^2$  value of two endogenous constructs (i.e. repurchase intention and WOM intention)

Customer orientation in social commerce

Constructs	Items	Factor loading	Mean	Median	SD
Perceived Functional customer Orientation (FCO) CR = 0.82, AVE = 0.60	FCO1	0.70	3.56	4.00	0.77
	FCO3	0.83	3.62	4.00	0.70
	FCO4	0.79	3.34	3.00	0.80
	RCO1	0.71	3.77	4.00	0.67
Perceived Relational customer Orientation (RCO) CR = 0.83, AVE = 0.62	RCO3	0.81	3.36	3.00	0.94
	RCO4	0.83	3.44	4.00	0.89
	CF1	0.85	3.64	4.00	0.74
	CF2	0.77	3.67	4.00	0.81
Confirmation (CF) CR = 0.86, AVE = 0.67	CF3	0.84	3.82	4.00	0.68
	CS1	0.80	3.95	4.00	0.57
	CS2	0.73	3.84	4.00	0.74
Customer satisfaction (CS) CR = 0.85, AVE = 0.59	CS3	0.75	3.84	4.00	0.75
	CS4	0.81	3.96	4.00	0.67
	RI1	0.81	4.11	4.00	0.65
	RI2	0.83	3.69	4.00	0.83
Repurchase Intention (RI) CR = 0.86, AVE = 0.67	RI3	0.81	3.85	4.00	0.82
	WOM1	0.78	3.80	4.00	0.76
	WOM2	0.72	3.94	4.00	0.80
	WOM3	0.80	3.87	4.00	0.76
Word-of-Mouth Intention (WOM) CR = 0.87, AVE = 0.62	WOM4	0.84	3.72	4.00	0.81
	BA1	0.87	3.75	4.00	0.66
	BA2	0.89	3.85	4.00	0.70
	PT1	0.94	3.81	4.00	0.71
Brand Awareness (BA) CR = 0.87, AVE = 0.77	PT2	0.93	3.58	4.00	0.97
	Product Type (PT) CR = 0.94, AVE = 0.88				

**Note(s):** FCO2, FCO5 and RCO2 were deleted because of low factor loading (<0.7)

**Table 3.** Reliability and validity

Constructs	FCO	RCO	CF	CS	RI	WOM	BA	PT
FCO	<i>0.77</i>							
RCO	0.37	<i>0.79</i>						
CF	0.52	0.28	<i>0.82</i>					
CS	0.50	0.34	0.69	<i>0.77</i>				
RI	0.47	0.29	0.66	0.71	<i>0.82</i>			
WOM	0.42	0.38	0.60	0.64	0.62	<i>0.79</i>		
BA	0.34	0.34	0.42	0.47	0.44	0.37	<i>0.88</i>	
PT	0.30	0.11	0.35	0.30	0.36	0.27	0.38	<i>0.94</i>

**Note(s):** The italic diagonal is the square root of AVE

**Table 4.** Discriminant validity: Fornell-Larcker criterion

Constructs	FCO	RCO	CF	CS	RI	WOM	BA	PT
FCO								
RCO	0.55							
CF	0.72	0.39						
CS	0.69	0.47	0.90					
RI	0.65	0.40	0.88	0.93				
WOM	0.56	0.52	0.77	0.82	0.80			
BA	0.49	0.49	0.57	0.64	0.60	0.50		
PT	0.39	0.14	0.43	0.37	0.44	0.33	0.49	

**Table 5.** Discriminant validity: HTMT ratio

after partialling out the marker variable; these differences were not significant (less than 0.10), indicating that CMB was not a concern.

Endogeneity is a potential problem in PLS-SEM when an independent variable is correlated with the error term of the dependent variable to which it is related (Bascle, 2008). We followed the steps in the study by Sarstedt *et al.* (2020) to check the issue of endogeneity by using a Gaussian copula approach. First, we verified whether our variables, which potentially exhibited endogeneity, were non-normally distributed. We performed the Lilliefors-corrected Kolmogorov–Smirnov test on the latent variable scores of the independent variables for WOM intention (i.e. FCO, RCO, CS, and RI) in the PLS path model's regressions. The results showed that none of the independent variables had normally distributed scores, thereby supporting the use of Park and Gupta's (2012) Gaussian copula approach. Table 6 presents the results of the Gaussian copula test for 15 model combinations. None of the values of the Gaussian copula for each construct was significant ( $p > 0.05$ ), suggesting that endogeneity was not present in this study.

### 5.2 Hypothesis testing

Figure 2 shows the results of the test of the structural model. Figure 2 illustrates that confirmation positively affected FCO ( $\beta = 0.52, p < 0.001$ ) and RCO ( $\beta = 0.28, p < 0.001$ ), thus providing support for H5 and H6, respectively. Confirmation explained 27 and 8% of the variance in FCO and RCO, respectively. The model explained 58% of the variance in customer satisfaction. Confirmation had the strongest significant effect ( $\beta = 0.54, p < 0.001$ ), followed by RCO ( $\beta = 0.12, p < 0.05$ ) and FCO ( $\beta = 0.11, p < 0.05$ ). Therefore, H1, H7 and H8 were supported. In addition, the model explained 52% of the variance in repurchase intention, which was significantly affected by customer satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.63, p < 0.001$ ), followed by FCO ( $\beta = 0.15, p < 0.05$ ), thus providing support for H2 and H13, respectively. However, RCO was not significantly related to repurchase intention ( $\beta = 0.02, p > 0.05$ ), thus leading to the rejection of H14. The model explained 49% of the variance in WOM intention, which was significantly affected by customer satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.35, p < 0.001$ ), repurchase intention ( $\beta = 0.30, p < 0.001$ ), and RCO ( $\beta = 0.16, p < 0.01$ ), thus providing support for H3, H4, and H16, respectively. FCO had no effect on customers' WOM intention ( $\beta = 0.04, p > 0.05$ ), thus leading to the rejection of H15.

The moderating effect of product type on the association between FCO and customer satisfaction was non-significant ( $\beta = 0.09, p > 0.05$ ), thus leading to the rejection of H9. Product type was found to have a significant negative moderating effect on the relationship between RCO and customer satisfaction ( $\beta = -0.16, p < 0.01$ ), i.e. the positive effect of RCO on customer satisfaction was found to be weaker for search products than for experience products, contradicting the positive moderating effect assumption, H10, leading to its rejection. The moderating effect of brand awareness on the relationship between FCO and customer satisfaction was negative and significant ( $\beta = -0.12, p < 0.05$ ), thus providing support for H11. Brand awareness was found to have no moderating effect on the relationship between RCO and customer satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.09, p > 0.05$ ), thus leading to the rejection of H12.

## 6. Discussion and implications

This study, based on the integration of role theory with the ECM, is one of the first to explicitly explore how customers' confirmation affects post-consumption expectations with regard to vendor roles (i.e. FCO and RCO). We also investigated how FCO and RCO affect customer satisfaction and post-consumption behavior (i.e. repurchase intention and WOM intention) in C2C s-commerce. Drawing from studies on adaptive selling, we examined the moderating effects of product characteristics on the relationship between CO and customer



Test	Construct	Coefficient	<i>p</i> -value
Gaussian copula of model 1 (endogenous variables: FCO)	FCO	-0.02	0.87
	RCO	0.15	0.00
	CS	0.35	0.00
	RI	0.30	0.00
	<sup>c</sup> FCO	0.06	0.60
Gaussian copula of model 2 (endogenous variables: RCO)	FCO	0.04	0.40
	RCO	0.18	0.21
	CS	0.35	0.00
	RI	0.30	0.00
	<sup>c</sup> RCO	-0.02	0.86
Gaussian copula of model 3 (endogenous variables: CS)	FCO	0.05	0.36
	RCO	0.15	0.00
	CS	0.45	0.00
	RI	0.30	0.00
	<sup>c</sup> CS	-0.09	0.26
Gaussian copula of model 4 (endogenous variables: RI)	FCO	0.04	0.41
	RCO	0.16	0.00
	CS	0.35	0.00
	RI	0.32	0.00
	<sup>c</sup> RI	-0.01	0.88
Gaussian copula of model 5 (endogenous variables: FCO, RCO)	FCO	-0.07	0.65
	RCO	0.25	0.14
	CS	0.35	0.00
	RI	0.30	0.00
	<sup>c</sup> FCO	0.11	0.44
Gaussian copula of model 6 (endogenous variables: FCO, CS)	<sup>c</sup> RCO	-0.09	0.56
	FCO	-0.13	0.39
	RCO	0.15	0.00
	CS	0.51	0.00
	RI	0.30	0.00
Gaussian copula of model 7 (endogenous variables: FCO, RI)	<sup>c</sup> FCO	0.16	0.21
	<sup>c</sup> CS	-0.14	0.11
	FCO	-0.05	0.73
	RCO	0.15	0.00
	CS	0.35	0.00
Gaussian copula of model 8 (endogenous variables: RCO, CS)	RI	0.34	0.00
	<sup>c</sup> FCO	0.09	0.50
	<sup>c</sup> RI	-0.03	0.65
	FCO	0.05	0.37
	RCO	0.14	0.36
Gaussian copula of model 9 (endogenous variables: RCO, RI)	CS	0.45	0.00
	RI	0.30	0.00
	<sup>c</sup> RCO	0.02	0.90
	<sup>c</sup> CS	-0.09	0.27
	FCO	0.04	0.40
Gaussian copula of model 10 (endogenous variables: CS, RI)	RCO	0.18	0.24
	CS	0.35	0.00
	RI	0.31	0.00
	<sup>c</sup> RCO	-0.02	0.89
	<sup>c</sup> RI	-0.01	0.91
Gaussian copula of model 10 (endogenous variables: CS, RI)	FCO	0.05	0.33
	RCO	0.16	0.00
	CS	0.50	0.00
	RI	0.23	0.06
	<sup>c</sup> CS	-0.13	0.19
	<sup>c</sup> RI	0.06	0.47

(continued)

**Table 6.**  
Assessment of  
endogeneity test using  
the Gaussian copula  
approach

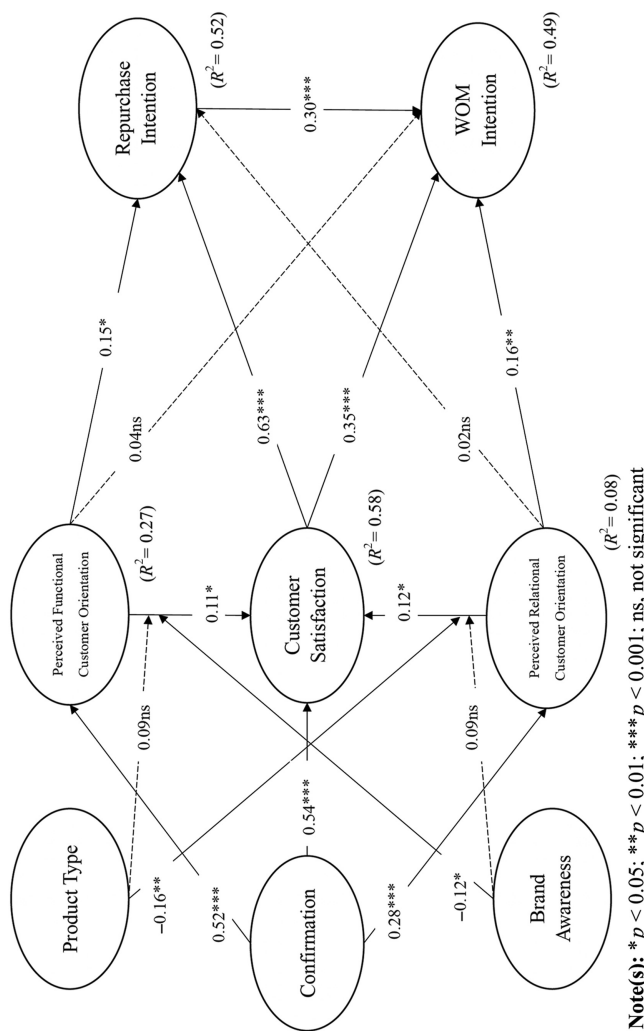
Test	Construct	Coefficient	<i>p</i> -value
Gaussian copula of model 11 (endogenous variables: FCO, RCO, CS)	FCO	-0.18	0.30
	RCO	0.25	0.14
	CS	0.51	0.00
	RI	0.30	0.00
	<sup>c</sup> FCO	0.21	0.17
	<sup>c</sup> RCO	-0.09	0.55
Gaussian copula of model 12 (endogenous variables: FCO, RCO, RI)	<sup>c</sup> CS	-0.14	0.11
	FCO	-0.10	0.56
	RCO	0.25	0.15
	CS	0.35	0.00
	RI	0.34	0.00
	<sup>c</sup> FCO	0.13	0.38
Gaussian copula of model 13 (endogenous variables: FCO, CS, RI)	<sup>c</sup> RCO	-0.09	0.56
	<sup>c</sup> RI	-0.03	0.66
	FCO	-0.11	0.47
	RCO	0.15	0.00
	CS	0.54	0.00
	RI	0.25	0.04
Gaussian copula of model 14 (endogenous variables: RCO, CS, RI)	<sup>c</sup> FCO	0.15	0.26
	<sup>c</sup> CS	-0.17	0.11
	<sup>c</sup> RI	0.04	0.64
	FCO	0.05	0.33
	RCO	0.15	0.31
	CS	0.50	0.00
Gaussian copula of model 15 (endogenous variables: FCO, RCO, CS, RI)	RI	0.23	0.06
	<sup>c</sup> RCO	-0.13	0.19
	<sup>c</sup> CS	0.00	0.98
	<sup>c</sup> RI	0.06	0.48
	FCO	-0.16	0.35
	RCO	0.25	0.14
	CS	0.54	0.00
	RI	0.25	0.04
	<sup>c</sup> FCO	0.20	0.20
	<sup>c</sup> RCO	-0.10	0.54
	<sup>c</sup> CS	-0.17	0.11
	<sup>c</sup> RI	0.04	0.63

**Table 6.** Note(s): *c* indicates the value of Gaussian copulas in the model

satisfaction. The research model also revealed findings that have not yet been extensively discussed in the literature.

First, the findings reinforce the importance of confirmation in strengthening customer satisfaction and, subsequently, influencing post-consumption behavior in C2C s-commerce. These results are consistent with those from prior studies on the ECM (Bhattacharjee, 2001), suggesting that when customers confirm their expectations after evaluating the actual performance of vendors against their pre-consumption expectations, the level of satisfaction increases, which encourages repeat purchase and WOM in C2C s-commerce. The results also indicate that customers are likely to share positive shopping experiences with others when they have a high intention to repurchase; these findings are consistent with those in the study by Li and Liu (2014) on e-service post-adoption behavior.

Second, confirmation has a significant influence on customers' post-consumption expectations (i.e. FCO and RCO). These findings are consistent with studies on extended ECMs. For instance, Lin *et al.* (2005) found that confirmation exerted a positive effect on both extrinsic and intrinsic post-adoption expectations when using web portals. This finding indicated that when users' pre-consumption expectations were confirmed, after adoption,



**Note(s):** \*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ ; ns, not significant

**Figure 2.** Structural model testing results

---

their perceived usefulness and playfulness when using web portals would increase to converge with reality. [Hsu and Lin \(2015\)](#) found that users' post-adoption expectations with regard to four values in the context of the usage of mobile applications were significantly affected by confirmation, suggesting that users' post-adoption perceived values would be elevated after the actual performance of mobile applications was realized. Our results show that when customer expectations and vendors' actual performance are consistent, customers' post-consumption expectations regarding the role of a businessperson (i.e. FCO) and the role of a friend (i.e. RCO) will be elevated to match their experience, which is consistent with cognitive dissonance theory ([Festinger, 1957](#)).

Third, this study found a positive relationship between the two types of CO (FCO and RCO) and customer satisfaction and the effects of FCO and RCO on customer satisfaction were similar. Studies on traditional marketing have reported that customers were satisfied with vendors' services or products when they perceived high functional and social benefits ([Reynolds and Beatty, 1999](#)). Our empirical results are consistent with those from previous studies, suggesting that both vendors' business and social roles are important for customer satisfaction in C2C s-commerce. Although the main characteristic of s-commerce is its ability to help customers improve their own shopping experiences in the future by seeking opinions and information from other SNS users and friends ([Ng, 2013](#)), the initial design of SNSs aimed to facilitate social interaction and social support between users to help them build close relationships with each other ([Hofer and Aubert, 2013](#)). Therefore, although customers engaging in social shopping expect their vendors to perform the role of a businessperson to satisfy their shopping needs, they also seek personal relationships.

Fourth, this study found that the two types of CO had different effects on customers' post-consumption behavior. Repurchase intention was found to be positively influenced by FCO but not RCO. Similar results were reported by [Grenler and Gwinner \(2000\)](#), who demonstrated that the personal connection between customers and service providers, such as caring for and interacting with each other, had no effect on customers' continuance intention. One interpretation of these results could be that customers' intention to repeat purchases depends on how vendors help customers evaluate their shopping needs. In C2C s-commerce, this help may be in the form of offering the right products or assisting in making a satisfactory shopping decision rather than interacting socially. However, WOM intention was significantly influenced by RCO but not FCO. Studies have suggested that after customers have committed to a relationship with vendors at a personal level, they would be more concerned about the vendors and might even help other customers. This results in advocacy and altruistic behaviors such as spreading positive WOM ([Jones et al., 2008](#); [Price and Arnould, 1999](#)). Customers share their positive consumption experiences with others after perceiving that the vendors are engaging in relational behaviors such as social sharing and sharing personal interests rather than functional behaviors alone.

The results showed that product characteristics did not have moderating effects on the relationship between FCO and customer satisfaction, consistent with the findings by [Homburg et al. \(2011\)](#). However, product type had a negative moderating effect on the relationship between RCO and customer satisfaction ( $\beta = -0.16, p < 0.01$ ), i.e. the positive effect of RCO on customer satisfaction was weaker for search products than for experience products. This finding, however, contradicts the finding by [Homburg et al. \(2011\)](#). We found that when buying search products (i.e. product attributes can be assessed prior to use), customers would feel less satisfied if vendors engaged too strongly in relational selling behaviors. According to [Maier et al. \(2015\)](#), social media users felt more exhausted and less satisfied when subjected to intensive and frequent social interaction. Drawing on the concept of social overload, a possible explanation for these findings is that when customers can easily evaluate product attributes, relational selling behaviors such as social interaction and relationship development may not be necessary or may even interrupt their shopping, which

---

lowers satisfaction. However, when buying experience products, whose attributes are not known until purchase (Klein, 1998), the customer may rely on vendor trust that is established through the relationship-building process.

The results also demonstrated that brand awareness negatively moderated the relationship between FCO and customer satisfaction, suggesting that when purchasing a product with a high level of brand awareness, the relationship between vendors' functional selling behaviors and customer satisfaction was weakened. This finding is consistent with that of Homburg *et al.* (2011), who established that customers relied less on vendors' assistance when buying a known brand. In this study, brand awareness had no effect on the relationship between RCO and customer satisfaction, whereas Homburg *et al.* (2011) found a positive moderating effect. To explain the positive moderating effect, Homburg *et al.* (2011) contended that customers of strong brands were more likely to expect affective sales behaviors. Unlike in B2B selling, vendors in C2C s-commerce may not represent the brand. In s-commerce, customers may have very moderate expectations with regard to vendors engaging in affective salesperson behaviors even though they may be selling a strong brand.

### 6.1 Theoretical implications

First, although studies have extensively investigated customers' acceptance of the intention to participate in social shopping, few studies have examined post-consumption behaviors in the s-commerce context. This study contributes to a better understanding of customers' post-consumption behaviors in C2C s-commerce, where competition between vendors is high and intense, by incorporating the ECM with the CO perspective.

Second, although previous studies on s-commerce have examined the customer-vendor relationship from either a functional perspective (Yahia *et al.*, 2018) or a social perspective (Sun *et al.*, 2016), a theoretical extension to customers' expectations of different vendor roles does not exist in the s-commerce literature. To the best of our knowledge, no study has distinguished between the role of a friend and the traditional role of a businessman played by a vendor in s-commerce. It is critical to understand which role is more important in improving customer-related outcomes (e.g. customer satisfaction), as C2C s-commerce is a new sales environment in which customers may rely more on a specific role of a vendor (Weitz and Bradford, 1999) or may even be contingent on different selling situations (Homburg *et al.*, 2011). Furthermore, Chen and Shen (2015) suggested that future studies on s-commerce should explore different relationship-related antecedents of post-consumption behaviors. To fill these gaps, this study makes the theoretical contribution of extending the ECM by replacing the perceived usefulness of IS usage with CO constructs – in the form of two post-consumption expectations (i.e. FCO and RCO) – from the perspective of role theory. The results of this study confirmed that both FCO and RCO positively affected customer satisfaction, suggesting that both business and social roles are important to customers in C2C s-commerce. In addition, the findings revealed that customers' repurchase intention was determined by vendors' functional selling behaviors, whereas WOM intention was affected by relational selling behaviors. Thus, this study contributes to the s-commerce literature by demonstrating that different post-consumption expectations with regard to vendor roles affect customers' post-consumption behaviors differently.

Third, in this study, we measured both FCO and RCO from a customer's perspective to reflect customer expectations. CO evaluation by salespeople is likely to result in bias as salespeople may believe that they are highly customer-oriented but customers may not agree (Donavan and Hocutt, 2001). In only two previous studies, FCO and RCO were measured from a customer's perspective, but they were used as moderators (Wieseke *et al.*, 2014) or manipulated in vignettes without being measured (Bateman and Valentine, 2015). Thus, this study offers fresh insights into applications of CO within the C2C marketing literature.

---

Finally, given that the effectiveness of CO depends on the shopping situation (Homburg *et al.*, 2011), this study further contributes to the adaptive selling literature by empirically examining the moderating role of product characteristics (i.e. product type and brand awareness) in the CO–customer satisfaction relationship in a social shopping environment, thus enhancing the theoretical understanding of CO effectiveness in different situations.

---

### 6.2 Managerial implications

Studies have reported customers' reluctance to repeat purchases from the same s-commerce platform (Lim *et al.*, 2012); therefore, practitioners of s-commerce, including vendors and platform developers, are devoting considerable effort and resources to maintain business viability. This study offers empirical support for practitioners to implement selling strategies and customer expectation management in C2C s-commerce. First, the results showed that customers' perceptions of FCO behaviors enhanced customer satisfaction and repurchase intention. Therefore, vendors should exhibit a set of task-oriented behaviors such as product recommendations and customer needs assessment to increase the level of customer satisfaction, which will encourage customers to purchase more products or services. Specifically, vendors should determine the needs of customers rather than presenting advanced sales pitches and offering products that customers do not want.

Second, the results showed the positive influence of RCO on customer satisfaction and WOM intention. Therefore, vendors should develop a personal relationship with customers because it can improve customer satisfaction and WOM intention. To develop friendship with customers, vendors could share interesting information, including travel and dining experiences, through social sharing functions on s-commerce platforms. Vendors may also be able to attract customers' attention and determine common topics of interest by sharing interests and hobbies on news feeds.

Third, the results confirmed a negative moderating effect of product type on the relationship between RCO and customer satisfaction. When selling search products to customers, vendors should pay attention to the effect of their relational selling behaviors on customer satisfaction. Vendors should avoid excessive relational behaviors, such as sharing common interests or interesting topics with customers, and should place greater focus on functional selling approaches. Furthermore, as the relationship between FCO and customer satisfaction is negatively moderated by brand awareness, in the case of a product with a low level of brand awareness, customers are more receptive to FCO behavior and value advice and suggestions from vendors. When selling a product with a high level of brand awareness, vendors should avoid excessive functional selling behaviors as customers are aware of well-known brands. In this situation, a mismatch between the expected and actual functional behavior will weaken the level of customer satisfaction.

Finally, managers of s-commerce platforms will benefit by focusing on improving commercial and social sharing functions as both FCO and RCO have positive effects on customer satisfaction and post-consumption behavior. For example, the commercial functions of platforms enable vendors to explain product features. Managers could add tool functions that enable customers to measure the size of products, or they could use tags that explain product features in posts. Interactive features within sharing functions such as live-streaming and short-video sharing for vendors and customers may help in the development of relationships.

## 7. Limitations and future research

Although the findings of this study are interesting, it has several limitations, which could be addressed in future studies. We collected data from a relatively small sample of WeChat users in China, which may limit the generalizability of the results. Future studies could test the

---

generalizability of these findings by collecting a sample that is larger and is drawn from other s-commerce platforms, such as Facebook and Instagram, and other countries. Another limitation of our study is that the product type and brand awareness were measured using 2-item scales. Future studies could use scales with more items to facilitate the assessment of scale dimensionality.

In the literature review of CO, we found that no previous study had examined the effect of FCO and RCO in the s-commerce environment. The results of our study indicated that FCO and RCO influenced customer satisfaction, repurchase intention, and WOM intention. In addition, the results showed that FCO and RCO had different effects on these outcome variables. It will be useful to conduct a more detailed investigation on this topic to gain a better understanding of how CO affects customer behavior in the s-commerce environment, particularly the swift guanxi in buyer-seller relationships.

We tested the moderating effect of brand awareness and product type (search vs experience products) in our research model and found that they moderated the effects of FCO and RCO. As discussed previously, customers may prefer different customer-oriented selling behaviors from vendors under different purchasing situations; therefore, exploring additional moderators, such as customers' involvement with the products and the perceived ability of the s-commerce sellers could further enrich the literature. Moreover, because the results in this study confirmed the importance of brand awareness in driving consumers' satisfaction and their subsequent behavioral responses, future studies could investigate the constructs associated with the Awareness, Interest, Desire and Action (AIDA) model, such as affective responses (Yeh *et al.*, 2017), perceived information quality, and searching intention (Xu and Schrier, 2019), to enhance the comprehensiveness of the study in the area of s-commerce. Although customer satisfaction is the dominant affective reaction at the post-consumption stage, other potentially negative reactions, such as regret, could be considered in future studies to explore the effects of CO on various affective reactions.

## References

- Andrews, J.C. and Shimp, T.A. (1990), "Effects of involvement, argument strength, and source characteristics on central and peripheral processing of advertising", *Psychology & Marketing*, Vol. 7 No. 3, pp. 195-214.
- Armstrong, J.S. and Overton, T.S. (1977), "Estimating nonresponse bias in mail surveys", *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol. 14 No. 3, pp. 396-402.
- Arndt, J. (1967), "Role of product-related conversations in the diffusion of a new product", *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol. 4 No. 3, pp. 291-295.
- Bai, Y., Yao, Z. and Dou, Y.F. (2015), "Effect of social commerce factors on user purchase behavior: an empirical investigation from renren.com", *International Journal of Information Management*, Vol. 35 No. 5, pp. 538-550.
- Bascle, G. (2008), "Controlling for endogeneity with instrumental variables in strategic management research", *Strategic Organization*, Vol. 6 No. 3, pp. 285-327.
- Bateman, C. and Valentine, S. (2015), "The impact of salesperson customer orientation on the evaluation of a salesperson's ethical treatment, trust in the salesperson, and intentions to purchase", *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, Vol. 35 No. 2, pp. 125-142.
- Beatty, S.E., Mayer, M., Coleman, J.E., Reynolds, K.E. and Lee, J. (1996), "Customer-sales associate retail relationships", *Journal of Retailing*, Vol. 72 No. 3, pp. 223-247.
- Bergeron, J. and Roy, J. (2008), "Pleasantly surprising clients: a tactic in relationship marketing for building competitive advantage in the financial services sector", *Canadian Journal of Administrative Sciences/Revue Canadienne des Sciences de l'Administration*, Vol. 25 No. 3, pp. 171-184.

- 
- Bhalla, G. and Lin, L.Y. (1987), "Cross-cultural marketing research: a discussion of equivalence issues and measurement strategies", *Psychology and Marketing*, Vol. 4 No. 4, pp. 275-285.
- Bhattacharjee, A. (2001), "Understanding information systems continuance: an expectation-confirmation model", *MIS Quarterly*, Vol. 25 No. 3, pp. 351-370.
- Biddle, B.J. (1986), "Recent developments in role theory", *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 12 No. 1, pp. 67-92.
- Chang, Y.P. and Zhu, D.H. (2012), "The role of perceived social capital and flow experience in building users' continuance intention to social networking sites in China", *Computers in Human Behavior*, Vol. 28 No. 3, pp. 995-1001.
- Chao, P., Fu, H.P. and Lu, I.Y. (2007), "Strengthening the quality-loyalty linkage: the role of customer orientation and interpersonal relationship", *The Service Industries Journal*, Vol. 27 No. 4, pp. 471-494.
- Chen, J. and Shen, X.L. (2015), "Consumers' decisions in social commerce context: an empirical investigation", *Decision Support Systems*, Vol. 79, pp. 55-64.
- Chi, T. (2018), "Understanding Chinese consumer adoption of apparel mobile commerce: an extended TAM approach", *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, Vol. 44, pp. 274-284.
- Chiang, K.P. and Dholakia, R.R. (2003), "Factors driving consumer intention to shop online: an empirical investigation", *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, Vol. 13 No. 1, pp. 177-183.
- Clark, M. (2020), "Converting purchase commitments into purchase fulfillments: an examination of salesperson characteristics and influence tactics", *Industrial Marketing Management*, Vol. 85, pp. 97-109.
- Czepiel, J.A., Gutman, E., Solomon, M. and Surprenant, C. (1982), A contingency approach to understanding service encounters: theoretical inputs for management action, *Paper presented at the Workshop in Research into the Management of Service Businesses*, London Business School.
- Diamantopoulos, A. and Winklhofer, H.M. (2001), "Index construction with formative indicators: an alternative to scale development", *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol. 38 No. 2, pp. 269-277.
- Dichter, E. (1966), "How word-of-mouth advertising works", *Harvard Business Review*, Vol. 44 No. 6, pp. 147-166.
- Donavan, D.T. and Hocutt, M.A. (2001), "Customer evaluation of service employee's customer orientation: extension and application", *Journal of Quality Management*, Vol. 6 No. 2, pp. 293-306.
- Donavan, D.T., Brown, T.J. and Mowen, J.C. (2004), "Internal benefits of service-worker customer orientation: job satisfaction, commitment, and organizational citizenship behaviors", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 68 No. 1, pp. 128-146.
- Erdem, T. and Swait, J. (1998), "Brand equity as a signaling phenomenon", *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, Vol. 7 No. 2, pp. 131-157.
- Festinger, L.A. (1957), *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance*, Row and Peterson, Evanston, IL.
- Fornell, C. and Larcker, D.F. (1981), "Evaluating structural equation models with unobservable variables and measurement error", *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol. 18 No. 1, pp. 39-50.
- Fung Business Intelligence (2019), "Social commerce: the new norm in China- the latest developments and implications for brands and retailers", available at: [https://www.fbicgroup.com/sites/default/files/Social\\_commerce.pdf](https://www.fbicgroup.com/sites/default/files/Social_commerce.pdf) (accessed 1 July 2019).
- Gerlach, G.I., Rödiger, K., Stock, R.M. and Zacharias, N.A. (2016), "Salespersons' empathy as a missing link in the customer orientation-loyalty chain: an investigation of drivers and age differences as a contingency", *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, Vol. 36 No. 3, pp. 221-239.
- Goff, B.G., Boles, J.S., Bellenger, D.N. and Stojack, C. (1997), "The influence of salesperson selling behaviors on customer satisfaction with products", *Journal of Retailing*, Vol. 73 No. 2, pp. 171-183.



- 
- Goudge, D., Good, M.C., Hyman, M.R. and Aguirre, G. (2017), "Modeling specialty store customers' buy/no-buy decisions", *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, Vol. 45 No. 12, pp. 1260-1276.
- Gremler, D.D. and Gwinner, K.P. (2000), "Customer-employee rapport in service relationships", *Journal of Service Research*, Vol. 3 No. 1, pp. 82-104.
- Guenzi, P. and Georges, L. (2010), "Interpersonal trust in commercial relationships: antecedents and consequences of customer trust in the salesperson", *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 44 No. 1, pp. 114-138.
- Hair, J.F., Sarstedt, M., Ringle, C.M. and Gudergan, S.P. (2017), *Advanced Issues in Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling*, SAGE Publications, Los Angeles, California.
- Hansen, J.D., Lund, D.J. and DeCarlo, T.E. (2016), "A process model of buyer responses to salesperson transgressions and recovery efforts: the impact of salesperson orientation", *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, Vol. 36 No. 1, pp. 59-73.
- Heide, J.B. and Wathne, K.H. (2006), "Friends, businesspeople, and relationship roles: a conceptual framework and a research agenda", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 70 No. 3, pp. 90-103.
- Heitmann, M., Lehmann, D.R. and Herrmann, A. (2007), "Choice goal attainment and decision and consumption satisfaction", *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol. 44 No. 2, pp. 234-250.
- Hennig-Thurau, T., Groth, M., Paul, M. and Gremler, D.D. (2006), "Are all smiles created equal? How emotional contagion and emotional labor affect service relationships", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 70 No. 3, pp. 58-73.
- Henseler, J., Ringle, C.M. and Sarstedt, M. (2015), "A new criterion for assessing discriminant validity in variance-based structural equation modeling", *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, Vol. 43 No. 1, pp. 115-135.
- Hindin, M.J. (2007), "Role theory", in Ritzer, G. (Ed.), *Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology*, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, UK, pp. 3959-3962.
- Ho, C.H., Chiu, K.H., Chen, H. and Papazafeiropoulou, A. (2015), "Can internet blogs be used as an effective advertising tool? The role of product blog type and brand awareness", *Journal of Enterprise Information Management*, Vol. 28 No. 3, pp. 346-362.
- Hofer, M. and Aubert, V. (2013), "Perceived bridging and bonding social capital on Twitter: differentiating between followers and followees", *Computers in Human Behavior*, Vol. 29 No. 6, pp. 2134-2142.
- Homburg, C., Wieseke, J. and Hoyer, W.D. (2009), "Social identity and the service-profit chain", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 73 No. 2, pp. 38-54.
- Homburg, C., Müller, M. and Klarmann, M. (2011), "When does salespeople's customer orientation lead to customer loyalty? The differential effects of relational and functional customer orientation", *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, Vol. 39 No. 6, pp. 795-812.
- Homburg, C., Bornemann, T. and Kretzer, M. (2014), "Delusive perception—antecedents and consequences of salespeople's misperception of customer commitment", *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, Vol. 42 No. 2, pp. 137-153.
- Hsu, C.L. and Lin, J.C.C. (2015), "What drives purchase intention for paid mobile apps?—An expectation confirmation model with perceived value", *Electronic Commerce Research and Applications*, Vol. 14 No. 1, pp. 46-57.
- Hsu, M.H., Chang, C.M. and Chuang, L.W. (2015), "Understanding the determinants of online repeat purchase intention and moderating role of habit: the case of online group-buying in Taiwan", *International Journal of Information Management*, Vol. 35 No. 1, pp. 45-56.
- Huang, M.H. (2008), "The influence of selling behaviors on customer relationships in financial services", *International Journal of Service Industry Management*, Vol. 19 No. 4, pp. 458-473.
- Huang, S.L. and Chen, C.T. (2018), "How consumers become loyal fans on Facebook", *Computers in Human Behavior*, Vol. 82, pp. 124-135.

- 
- iResearch (2017), "WeChat commerce industry research report", available at: [http://report.iresearch.cn/report\\_pdf.aspx?id=2985](http://report.iresearch.cn/report_pdf.aspx?id=2985) (accessed 4 May 2017).
- Ivey, A.E. and Robin, S.S. (1966), "Role theory, role conflict, and counseling: a conceptual framework", *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, Vol. 13 No. 1, pp. 29-37.
- Jha, S., Balaji, M., Yavas, U. and Babakus, E. (2017), "Effects of frontline employee role overload on customer responses and sales performance: moderator and mediators", *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 51 No. 2, pp. 282-303.
- Jiang, J.J., Klein, G., Hwang, H.G., Huang, J. and Hung, S.Y. (2004), "An exploration of the relationship between software development process maturity and project performance", *Information & Management*, Vol. 41 No. 3, pp. 279-288.
- Jin, X.L., Cheung, C.M., Lee, M.K. and Chen, H.P. (2009), "How to keep members using the information in a computer-supported social network", *Computers in Human Behavior*, Vol. 25 No. 5, pp. 1172-1181.
- Jones, E., Busch, P. and Dacin, P. (2003), "Firm market orientation and salesperson customer orientation: interpersonal and intrapersonal influences on customer service and retention in business-to-business buyer-seller relationships", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 56 No. 4, pp. 323-340.
- Jones, T., Taylor, S.F. and Bansal, H.S. (2008), "Commitment to a friend, a service provider, or a service company—are they distinctions worth making?", *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, Vol. 36 No. 4, pp. 473-487.
- Keller, K.L. (1993), "Conceptualizing, measuring, and managing customer-based brand equity", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 57 No. 1, pp. 1-22.
- Klein, L.R. (1998), "Evaluating the potential of interactive media through a new lens: search versus experience goods", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 41 No. 3, pp. 195-203.
- Kwahk, K.Y. and Lee, J.N. (2008), "The role of readiness for change in ERP implementation: theoretical bases and empirical validation", *Information & Management*, Vol. 45 No. 7, pp. 474-481.
- Lemmetyinen, A., Dimitrovski, D., Nieminen, L. and Pohjola, T. (2016), "Cruise destination brand awareness as a moderator in motivation-satisfaction relation", *Tourism Review*, Vol. 71 No. 4, pp. 245-258.
- Leung, W.K.S., Shi, S. and Chow, W.S. (2019), "Impacts of user interactions on trust development in C2C social commerce", *Internet Research*, Vol. 30 No. 1, pp. 335-356.
- Leung, W.K.S., Chang, M.K., Cheung, M.L. and Shi, S. (2022), "Swift trust development and prosocial behavior in time banking: a trust transfer and social support theory perspective", *Computers in Human Behavior*, Vol. 129, p. 107137.
- Li, H. and Liu, Y. (2014), "Understanding post-adoption behaviors of e-service users in the context of online travel services", *Information & Management*, Vol. 51 No. 8, pp. 1043-1052.
- Liang, T.P., Ho, Y.T., Li, Y.W. and Turban, E. (2011), "What drives social commerce: the role of social support and relationship quality", *International Journal of Electronic Commerce*, Vol. 16 No. 2, pp. 69-90.
- Liao, C., Chen, J.L. and Yen, D.C. (2007), "Theory of planning behavior (TPB) and customer satisfaction in the continued use of e-service: an integrated model", *Computers in Human Behavior*, Vol. 23 No. 6, pp. 2804-2822.
- Liao, C., Lin, H.N., Luo, M.M. and Chea, S. (2017), "Factors influencing online shoppers' repurchase intentions: the roles of satisfaction and regret", *Information & Management*, Vol. 54 No. 5, pp. 651-668.
- Lien, C.H., Cao, Y. and Zhou, X. (2017), "Service quality, satisfaction, stickiness, and usage intentions: an exploratory evaluation in the context of WeChat services", *Computers in Human Behavior*, Vol. 68, pp. 403-410.

- 
- Lim, J.M., Yoo, J.Y., Jang, S.J., Yoo, J.M. and Kim, S.H. (2012), "Survey on the internet usage 2012", available at: [https://www.kisa.or.kr/eng/usefulreport/surveyReport\\_View.jsp?mode=view&p\\_No=262&b\\_No=262&d\\_No=57&ST=total&SV=](https://www.kisa.or.kr/eng/usefulreport/surveyReport_View.jsp?mode=view&p_No=262&b_No=262&d_No=57&ST=total&SV=) (accessed 22 February 2013).
- Lin, C.S., Wu, S. and Tsai, R.J. (2005), "Integrating perceived playfulness into expectation-confirmation model for web portal context", *Information & Management*, Vol. 42 No. 5, pp. 683-693.
- Lin, T.C., Wu, S., Hsu, J.S.C. and Chou, Y.C. (2012), "The integration of value-based adoption and expectation-confirmation models: an example of IPTV continuance intention", *Decision Support Systems*, Vol. 54 No. 1, pp. 63-75.
- Lin, J., Yan, Y., Chen, S. and Luo, X.R. (2017), "Understanding the impact of social commerce website technical features on repurchase intention: a Chinese guanxi perspective", *Journal of Electronic Commerce Research*, Vol. 18 No. 3, pp. 225-244.
- Lin, J., Luo, Z., Cheng, X. and Li, L. (2018), "Understanding the interplay of social commerce affordances and swift guanxi: an empirical study", *Information & Management*, Vol. 56 No. 2, pp. 213-224.
- Liu, L., Cheung, C.M. and Lee, M.K. (2016), "An empirical investigation of information sharing behavior on social commerce sites", *International Journal of Information Management*, Vol. 36 No. 5, pp. 686-699.
- Lu, L.C., Chang, W.P. and Chang, H.H. (2014), "Consumer attitudes toward blogger's sponsored recommendations and purchase intention: the effect of sponsorship type, product type, and brand awareness", *Computers in Human Behavior*, Vol. 34, pp. 258-266.
- Maier, C., Laumer, S., Eckhardt, A. and Weitzel, T. (2015), "Giving too much social support: social overload on social networking sites", *European Journal of Information Systems*, Vol. 24 No. 5, pp. 447-464.
- Matta, F.K., Scott, B.A., Koopman, J. and Conlon, D.E. (2015), "Does seeing "eye to eye" affect work engagement and organizational citizenship behavior? A role theory perspective on LMX agreement", *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 58 No. 6, pp. 1686-1708.
- Merton, R.K. and Merton, R.C. (1968), *Social Theory and Social Structure*, Simon and Schuster, The Free Press, New York.
- Miao, C.F. and Wang, G. (2016), "The differential effects of functional vis-à-vis relational customer orientation on salesperson creativity", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 69 No. 12, pp. 6021-6030.
- Mullins, R.R., Ahern, M., Lam, S.K., Hall, Z.R. and Boichuk, J.P. (2014), "Know your customer: how salesperson perceptions of customer relationship quality form and influence account profitability", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 78 No. 6, pp. 38-58.
- Narver, J.C. and Slater, S.F. (1990), "The effect of a market orientation on business profitability", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 54 No. 4, pp. 20-35.
- Nelson, P. (1974), "Advertising as information", *Journal of Political Economy*, Vol. 82 No. 4, pp. 729-754.
- Ng, C.S.P. (2013), "Intention to purchase on social commerce websites across cultures: a cross-regional study", *Information & Management*, Vol. 50 No. 8, pp. 609-620.
- Olaru, D., Purchase, S. and Peterson, N. (2008), "From customer value to repurchase intentions and recommendations", *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, Vol. 23 No. 8, pp. 554-565.
- Oliver, R.L. (1980), "A cognitive model of the antecedents and consequences of satisfaction decisions", *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol. 17 No. 4, pp. 460-469.
- Parente, D.H., Pegels, C.C. and Suresh, N. (2002), "An exploratory study of the sales-production relationship and customer satisfaction", *International Journal of Operations & Production Management*, Vol. 22 No. 9, pp. 997-1013.
- Park, S. and Gupta, S. (2012), "Handling endogenous regressors by joint estimation using copulas", *Marketing Science*, Vol. 31 No. 4, pp. 567-586.
- Park, C. and Lee, T.M. (2009), "Information direction, website reputation and eWOM effect: a moderating role of product type", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 62 No. 1, pp. 61-67.

- 
- Poddar, A., Donthu, N. and Wei, Y. (2009), "Web site customer orientations, Web site quality, and purchase intentions: the role of Web site personality", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 62 No. 4, pp. 441-450.
- Podsakoff, P.M., MacKenzie, S.B., Lee, J.Y. and Podsakoff, N.P. (2003), "Common method biases in behavioral research: a critical review of the literature and recommended remedies", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 88 No. 5, pp. 879-903.
- Price, L.L. and Arnould, E.J. (1999), "Commercial friendships: service provider-client relationships in context", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 63 No. 4, pp. 38-56.
- Reynolds, K.E. and Beatty, S.E. (1999), "Customer benefits and company consequences of customer-salesperson relationships in retailing", *Journal of Retailing*, Vol. 75 No. 1, pp. 11-32.
- Román, S. (2014), "Salesperson's listening in buyer-seller service relationships", *The Service Industries Journal*, Vol. 34 No. 7, pp. 630-644.
- Rossiter, J.R. and Percy, L. (1987), *Advertising and Promotion Management*, McGraw-Hill Book Company, New York.
- Sarstedt, M., Ringle, C.M., Cheah, J.H., Ting, H., Moisescu, O.I. and Radomir, L. (2020), "Structural model robustness checks in PLS-SEM", *Tourism Economics*, Vol. 26 No. 4, pp. 531-554.
- Saxe, R. and Weitz, B.A. (1982), "The SOCO scale: a measure of the customer orientation of salespeople", *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol. 19 No. 3, pp. 343-351.
- Senecal, S. and Nantel, J. (2004), "The influence of online product recommendations on consumers' online choices", *Journal of Retailing*, Vol. 80 No. 2, pp. 159-169.
- Sheth, J.N. (1975), "Buyer-seller interaction: a conceptual framework", *Advances in Consumer Research*, Vol. 3 No. 1, pp. 382-386.
- Shi, S., Leung, W.K.S. and Munelli, F. (2022), "Gamification in OTA platforms: a mixed-methods research involving online shopping carnival", *Tourism Management*, Vol. 88, p. 104426.
- Singh, R. and Koshy, A. (2011), "Does salesperson's customer orientation create value in B2B relationships? Empirical evidence from India", *Industrial Marketing Management*, Vol. 40 No. 1, pp. 78-85.
- Solomon, M.R., Surprenant, C., Czepiel, J.A. and Gutman, E.G. (1985), "A role theory perspective on dyadic interactions: the service encounter", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 49 No. 1, pp. 99-111.
- Statista (2020), "Number of monthly active WeChat users from 2nd quarter 2011 to 2nd quarter 2020", available at: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/255778/number-of-active-wechat-messenger-accounts/> (accessed 20 August 2020).
- Stock, R.M. and Bednarek, M. (2014), "As they sow, so shall they reap: customers' influence on customer satisfaction at the customer interface", *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, Vol. 42 No. 4, pp. 400-414.
- Stock, R.M. and Hoyer, W.D. (2005), "An attitude-behavior model of salespeople's customer orientation", *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, Vol. 33 No. 4, pp. 536-552.
- Sun, Y., Wei, K.K., Fan, C., Lu, Y. and Gupta, S. (2016), "Does social climate matter? On friendship groups in social commerce", *Electronic Commerce Research and Applications*, Vol. 18, pp. 37-47.
- Susskind, A.M., Kacmar, K.M. and Borchgrevink, C.P. (2003), "Customer service providers' attitudes relating to customer service and customer satisfaction in the customer-server exchange", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 88 No. 1, pp. 179-187.
- Sweeney, J.C. and Soutar, G.N. (2001), "Consumer perceived value: the development of a multiple item scale", *Journal of Retailing*, Vol. 77 No. 2, pp. 203-220.
- Tehseen, S., Ramayah, T. and Sajilan, S. (2017), "Testing and controlling for common method variance: a review of available methods", *Journal of Management Sciences*, Vol. 4 No. 2, pp. 142-168.

- Thomas, R.W., Soutar, G.N. and Ryan, M.M. (2001), "The selling orientation-customer orientation (SOCO) scale: a proposed short form", *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, Vol. 21 No. 1, pp. 63-69.
- Thompson, D.V., Hamilton, R.W. and Rust, R.T. (2005), "Feature fatigue: when product capabilities become too much of a good thing", *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol. 42 No. 4, pp. 431-442.
- Thong, J.Y., Hong, S.J. and Tam, K.Y. (2006), "The effects of post-adoption beliefs on the expectation-confirmation model for information technology continuance", *International Journal of Human-Computer Studies*, Vol. 64 No. 9, pp. 799-810.
- Trusov, M., Bucklin, R.E. and Pauwels, K. (2009), "Effects of word-of-mouth versus traditional marketing: findings from an internet social networking site", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 73 No. 5, pp. 90-102.
- Tseng, L.M. (2019), "How customer orientation leads to customer satisfaction: mediating mechanisms of service workers' etiquette and creativity", *International Journal of Bank Marketing*, Vol. 37 No. 1, pp. 210-225.
- Wang, X. and Yang, Z. (2010), "The effect of brand credibility on consumers' brand purchase intention in emerging economies: the moderating role of brand awareness and brand image", *Journal of Global Marketing*, Vol. 23 No. 3, pp. 177-188.
- Wang, C. and Zhang, M. (2016), "Empirical study the influences of customer orientation, service quality on behavioral intention based on China's consumer-to-consumer e-commerce context", *Journal of the Balkan Tribological Association*, Vol. 22 No. 2, pp. 2152-2171.
- Weitz, B.A. and Bradford, K.D. (1999), "Personal selling and sales management: a relationship marketing perspective", *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, Vol. 27 No. 2, pp. 241-254.
- Wieseke, J., Alavi, S. and Habel, J. (2014), "Willing to pay more, eager to pay less: the role of customer loyalty in price negotiations", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 78 No. 6, pp. 17-37.
- Wongkitrungrueng, A. and Assarut, N. (2020), "The role of live streaming in building consumer trust and engagement with social commerce sellers", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 117, pp. 543-556.
- Wu, Y.L. and Li, E.Y. (2018), "Marketing mix, customer value, and customer loyalty in social commerce: a stimulus-organism-response perspective", *Internet Research*, Vol. 28 No. 1, pp. 74-104.
- Xiao, B. and Benbasat, I. (2007), "E-commerce product recommendation agents: use, characteristics, and impact", *MIS Quarterly*, Vol. 31 No. 1, pp. 137-209.
- Xu, X. and Schrier, T. (2019), "Hierarchical effects of website aesthetics on customers' intention to book on hospitality sharing economy platforms", *Electronic Commerce Research and Applications*, Vol. 35, p. 100856.
- Yahia, I.B., Al-Neama, N. and Kerbache, L. (2018), "Investigating the drivers for social commerce in social media platforms: importance of trust, social support and the platform perceived usage", *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, Vol. 41, pp. 11-19.
- Yeh, C.H., Wang, Y.S., Li, H.T. and Lin, S.Y. (2017), "The effect of information presentation modes on tourists' responses in Internet marketing: the moderating role of emotions", *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, Vol. 34 No. 8, pp. 1018-1032.
- Yigit, M.K. and Tigli, M. (2018), "The moderator role of brand awareness and brand loyalty on consumers' online impulse buying behavior", *International Journal of Research in Business and Social Science*, Vol. 7 No. 1, pp. 35-48.
- Yoo, B. and Donthu, N. (2001), "Developing and validating a multidimensional consumer-based brand equity scale", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 52 No. 1, pp. 1-14.
- Yu, T.W. and Chen, M.S. (2014), "Developing life insurer-insurance intermediary relationships", *Managing Service Quality*, Vol. 24 No. 5, pp. 455-468.

- 
- Zang, Z., Liu, D., Zheng, Y. and Chen, C. (2020), "How do the combinations of sales control systems influence sales performance? The mediating roles of distinct customer-oriented behaviors", *Industrial Marketing Management*, Vol. 84, pp. 287-297.
- Zhang, Y., Fang, Y., Wei, K.K., Ramsey, E., McCole, P. and Chen, H. (2011), "Repurchase intention in B2C e-commerce—a relationship quality perspective", *Information & Management*, Vol. 48 No. 6, pp. 192-200.
- Zhang, H., Lu, Y., Gupta, S. and Gao, P. (2015), "Understanding group-buying websites continuance: an extension of expectation confirmation model", *Internet Research*, Vol. 25 No. 5, pp. 767-793.
- Zhang, S., Zhao, L., Lu, Y. and Yang, J. (2016), "Do you get tired of socializing? An empirical explanation of discontinuous usage behaviour in social network services", *Information & Management*, Vol. 53 No. 7, pp. 904-914.
- Zhou, Z., Wu, J.P., Zhang, Q. and Xu, S. (2013), "Transforming visitors into members in online brand communities: evidence from China", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 66 No. 12, pp. 2438-2443.

Appendix A

Study	CO dimension	Theory	Context	Parties involved in the exchange	Method	Sample	Key findings
<i>CO evaluation (single dimension) by the salesperson</i> 1. Jones <i>et al.</i> (2003)	*Customer orientation	Social exchange theory, motivational theory of charismatic leadership, learning theory	Manufacturing organizations	Organizational customers – organizational salespeople	Survey	284 salespeople <sup>#</sup> , 34 sales managers, 74 customers	CO exerted a negative effect on role conflict and role ambiguity and reduced customer propensity to switch suppliers
2. Mullins <i>et al.</i> (2014)	*Customer orientation	Assimilation–contrast theory, social exchange theory	An industrial goods supplier	Organizational customers – organizational salespeople	Survey	132 salesperson <sup>#</sup> –132 customer dyads	CO exerted a stronger positive effect on customer relationship quality than on salesperson relationship quality
3. Gerlach <i>et al.</i> (2016)	*Customer orientation	Social identity theory	A variety of industries	Individual customers – salespeople	Survey	164 salespeople <sup>#</sup> , 405 corresponding customers	CO exerted a positive effect on customers' perceptions of salespersons' empathy
4. Jha <i>et al.</i> (2017)	*Customer orientation	None	Financial industry	Individual customers – salespeople	Survey	530 frontline employees <sup>#</sup> , 872 customers	The negative effect of role overload on customers' perceived interaction quality was weaker when CO was high
5. Clark (2020)	*Customer orientation	None	An international beauty-product company	Organizational customers – organizational salespeople	Survey	258 salespeople <sup>#</sup> , 258 customers	No significant difference in the relationship between customer commitment and sales fulfillment for different levels of CO.

(continued)

Customer orientation in social commerce

**Table A1.** Literature on the effects of customer orientation on customer-related outcomes

Table A1.

Study	CO dimension	Theory	Context	Parties involved in the exchange	Method	Sample	Key findings
<i>CO evaluation (multiple dimensions) by the salesperson</i>							
6. Homburg et al. (2011)	Functional customer orientation, relational customer orientation	Role theory	Financial services, logistics, health care, machine building, chemicals, and information technology	Organizational customers – organizational salespeople	Survey	195 salespeople, 56 sales managers, 538 customers	Interaction orientation $\times$ RCO $\rightarrow$ (+) customer loyalty, Task orientation $\times$ FCO $\rightarrow$ (+) customer loyalty, Product individuality $\times$ RCO $\rightarrow$ (+) customer loyalty, Product importance $\times$ FCO $\rightarrow$ (+) customer loyalty, Product complexity $\times$ RCO $\rightarrow$ (-) customer loyalty, Brand strength $\times$ RCO $\rightarrow$ (+) customer loyalty, Brand strength $\times$ FCO $\rightarrow$ (-) customer loyalty The positive effect of RCO on creativity was stronger when the level of transformational leadership was high, whereas the positive effect of FCO on creativity was stronger when the sales unit had a higher level of outcome interdependence
7. Mao and Wang (2016)	Functional customer orientation, relational customer orientation	Creativity theory	Manufacturing sector in the US	Organizational customers – organizational salespeople	Survey	192 salespeople	

(continued)



Study	CO dimension	Theory	Context	Parties involved in the exchange	Method	Sample	Key findings
8. Zang <i>et al.</i> (2020)	Functional customer orientation, relational customer orientation	Cognitive evaluation theory	A manufacturing sector	Organizational customers – organizational salespeople	Survey	399 salespeople <sup>#</sup> , 52 sales managers	The increase in a salesperson's sales performance was higher when their FCO and RCO were exhibited jointly than when they were exhibited separately
<i>CO evaluation (single dimension) by the customer</i>							
9. Goff <i>et al.</i> (1997)	*Customer orientation	Customer satisfaction model	Car dealerships	Individual customers – salesperson	Survey	522 customers	In the product model, CO exerted a positive effect on customer satisfaction in the case of the salesperson and dealer, whereas in the manufacturer model, CO exerted a positive effect on the satisfaction only in the case of the salesperson
10. Stock and Hoyer (2005)	*Customer orientation	Attitude-behavior model	Multiple manufacturing and services industries	Organizational customers – organizational salespeople	Survey	111 employee <sup>#</sup> – 222 customer <sup>#</sup> dyads	The positive effect of customer-oriented attitude on customer-oriented behavior was stronger when (a) empathy was high, (b) expertise was high, and (c) reliability was high and was weakened when the restriction in job autonomy was high

(continued)

Table A1.

Table A1.

Study	CO dimension	Theory	Context	Parties involved in the exchange	Method	Sample	Key findings
11. <a href="#">Chao et al. (2007)</a>	*Customer orientation	Service quality model	Retail industry	Organizational customers – organizational salespeople	Survey	216 organizational customers	The positive effect of service quality of the suppliers on the loyalty relationship with the suppliers was stronger when CO was high
12. <a href="#">Bergeron and Roy (2008)</a>	*Customer orientation	None	Financial industry	Individual customers – salespeople	Survey	778 clients	CO exerted a positive effect on customers' level of surprise
13. <a href="#">Huang (2008)</a>	*Customer orientation	Relationship quality model	Financial industry	Individual customers – salespeople	Survey	412 customers	CO exerted a positive effect on customer satisfaction, trust, and commitment
14. <a href="#">Guenzi and Georges (2010)</a>	*Customer orientation	Relationship marketing theory	Financial services industry	Individual customers – salespeople	Survey	150 customers	CO exerted a positive effect on customer trust and their intention to recommend
15. <a href="#">Singh and Koshy (2011)</a>	*Customer orientation	Value creation model	Trading businesses	Organizational customers – organizational salespeople	Survey	249 business customers	CO exerted a positive effect on customer value creation and relationship development
16. <a href="#">Román (2014)</a>	*Customer orientation	Cognitive evaluation theory	Financial industry	Individual customers – salespeople	Survey	210 salespeople, 630 customers*	CO exerted a positive effect on customers' commitment to the salesperson and loyalty to the company
17. <a href="#">Yu and Chen (2014)</a>	*Customer orientation	Relationship quality model	Financial industry	Organizational customers – organizational salespeople	Survey	230 insurance intermediaries (distributors)	CO exerted a positive effect on the relationship quality with life insurers (suppliers)

*(continued)*

Study	CO dimension	Theory	Context	Parties involved in the exchange	Method	Sample	Key findings
18. Hansen <i>et al.</i> (2016)	*Customer orientation	Service recovery model	Business-to-business industry	Organizational customers – organizational salespeople	Survey	123 (study 1) and 244 (study 2) purchasing professionals	The effects of CO on betrayal and search for alternative suppliers were different, depending on transgression type and recovery type CO exerted a positive effect on website quality, service quality, and behavior intention
19. Wang and Zhang (2016)	*Customer orientation	Service quality model	E-commerce	Individual customers – online shop owners	Online survey	314 customers	No significant difference found in the perception of CO by buyers and non-buyers CO exerted a positive effect on customer perceptions of insurance sales agents' etiquette, creativity, and customer satisfaction
20. Gougeon <i>et al.</i> (2017)	*Customer orientation	None	An independent brick-and-mortar setup	Individual customers – salespeople	Survey	245 customers	
21. Tseng (2019)	*Customer orientation	None	Financial industry	Individual customers – salespeople	Survey	336 insurance customers	
<i>CO evaluation (multiple dimensions) by the customer</i>							
22. Wieseke <i>et al.</i> (2014)	Functional customer orientation, relational customer orientation	Social exchange theory	Retail industry	Individual customers – salespeople	Survey	327 customers	FCO and RCO had a moderating effect on the relationship between customers' negotiation intention and discount
23. Bateman and Valentine (2015)	Functional customer orientation, relational customer orientation	None	Retail industry	Individual customers – salespeople	Vignettes in the experiment	280 adult consumers	The scenarios involving RCO exerted a more positive effect on a salesperson's ethical treatment, trust in a salesperson, and intention to purchase than the scenarios involving FCO

Note(s): \* is used to indicate the original scale of CO, developed by Saxe and Weitz (1982); # is used to indicate the people who evaluated the CO scale

Table A1.

Constructs	Questionnaire items	Sources
Perceived functional customer orientation (FCO)	FCO1: My WeChat vendors offer help to find out my actual needs FCO2*: My WeChat vendors have my best interest in mind FCO3: My WeChat vendors recommend their products that meet my needs FCO4: My WeChat vendors recommend their products that suited me best FCO5*: My WeChat vendors find out what kinds of their products meet my needs	Thomas <i>et al.</i> (2001)
Perceived relational customer orientation (RCO)	RCO1: My WeChat vendors establish a personal relationship with me RCO2*: My WeChat vendors show interest in my personal situation RCO3: My WeChat vendors often share with me about interesting issues such as their traveling and dining experiences RCO4: My WeChat vendors often share our common interests or hobbies with me	Homburg <i>et al.</i> (2011)
Confirmation (CF)	CF1: My experience with WeChat shopping was better than what I expected CF2: The service level provided by WeChat shopping was better than what I expected CF3: Overall, most of my expectations from WeChat shopping were confirmed	Liao <i>et al.</i> (2007)
Customer satisfaction (CS)	CS1: My overall experience of WeChat shopping was satisfying CS2: My overall experience of WeChat shopping was pleasing CS3: My overall experience of WeChat shopping was contented CS4: My overall experience of WeChat shopping was delighting	Liao <i>et al.</i> (2007)
Repurchase intention (RI)	RI1: I intend to continue WeChat shopping rather than discontinue RI2: My intentions are to continue WeChat shopping instead of using any alternate means RI3: If I could, I would like to continue WeChat shopping as much as possible	Liao <i>et al.</i> (2007)
Word-of-mouth intention (WOM)	WOM1: I would tell others positive things about WeChat shopping WOM2: I would provide others with information on WeChat shopping WOM3: I am likely to recommend WeChat shopping to my friends or acquaintances WOM4: I am likely to encourage others to consider WeChat shopping	Li and Liu (2014)

**Table B1.**  
Constructs and  
measurement items

(continued)

Constructs	Questionnaire items	Sources
Brand awareness (BA)	BA1: When shopping on WeChat, I can recognize the brand of the products that I purchased from my BA2: WeChat vendors among other competing brands BA3: When shopping on WeChat, I am aware of the brand of the products that I purchased from my WeChat vendors	Yoo and Donthu (2001)
Product type (PT)	PT1: When shopping on WeChat, I have the ability to judge the importance of product attributes and performance before I shopped or purchased from my WeChat vendors PT2: When shopping on WeChat, I can easily judge the importance of product attributes and performance before I shopped or purchased from my WeChat vendors	Lu <i>et al.</i> (2014)

**Note(s):** \*FCO2, FCO5, and RCO2 were deleted because of low factor loadings (<0.7)

**Table B1.**

### About the authors

Wilson K.S. Leung is a Lecturer at the Division of Science, Engineering & Health Studies, College of Professional and Continuing Education, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University. He received his PhD in Finance and Decision Sciences from Hong Kong Baptist University. His research interests include social commerce, tourism consumer behavior, and IT adoption and user behaviors. His research publications have appeared in *Computers in Human Behavior*, *Tourism Management*, *Internet Research*, *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, among other journals.

Man Kit Chang is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Finance and Decision Sciences at the School of Business, Hong Kong Baptist University. His recent research activities have focused on addressing issues related to electronic and social commerce, knowledge sharing in social media and virtual communities, the impacts of social media, Internet addiction, and information system ethics. Dr. Chang has contributed articles to the *ACM Transactions on Information Systems*, *Decision Support Systems*, *Information and Management*, *Journal of the Operational Research Society*, *Computers in Human Behavior*, *Journal of Business Ethics* and *International Journal of Production Economics*, among others.

Man Lai Cheung is an Associate Professor at the Department of Marketing, The Hang Seng University of Hong Kong. His main areas of research interest include brand management, social media marketing, social commerce, influencer marketing and co-creation, with a particular focus on issues of customer brand engagement. His research publications have appeared in *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, *Computers in Human Behavior*, *Marketing Intelligence and Planning*, *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, *Australasian Marketing Journal* and *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics*, among others.

Si Shi is an Associate Professor at the School of Business Administration, Southwestern University of Finance and Economics, China. She received her Ph.D. in Finance and Decision Sciences from Hong Kong Baptist University. Her current research interests include the business impact of IT, tourism consumer behavior, and social commerce. Her research has been published in the *Tourism Management*, *Journal of Travel Research*, *Computers in Human Behavior*, *International Journal of Information Management* and *Internet Research*, among other journals. Si Shi is the corresponding author and can be contacted at: [shisi@swufe.edu.cn](mailto:shisi@swufe.edu.cn)

For instructions on how to order reprints of this article, please visit our website:

[www.emeraldgrouppublishing.com/licensing/reprints.htm](http://www.emeraldgrouppublishing.com/licensing/reprints.htm)

Or contact us for further details: [permissions@emeraldinsight.com](mailto:permissions@emeraldinsight.com)