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## What is the Role of T.E.A Concept Between Positive Recommendation and Behavioural Intention to Purchase in Social Media?

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### Abstract

**Research Aims:** This study explores the antecedents of customers' behavioural intention to purchase on the social media platform. In addition, the T.E.A concept, the group of consequences of positive recommendation (PR), is developed by amalgamating trust (T), easiness (E), and amusement (A).

**Design/Methodology/Approach:** The data was collected from 260 random social media users from Myanmar. Both exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) were employed to examine the observed variables, and structural equation modelling (SEM) techniques were used to estimate the hypotheses in AMOS software.

**Research Findings:** The results disclose that the T.E.A concept is fully mediating between positive recommendation and customers' purchase intention.

**Theoretical Contribution/Originality:** This study gives clear direction for future research studies, notably, in the online shopping context by providing the T.E.A concept.

**Managerial Implication in the South East Asian Context:** The retailers on social media develop effective marketing strategies based on T.E.A concept to attract more customers, especially from South East Asian countries.

**Research Limitations & Implications:** The vivid limitation of this study is focusing on only the positive recommendation as an antecedent of the T.E.A concept and the findings of this study implicate both theoretically and practically the future research studies about customers' behaviour in the online shopping context.

**Keywords:** positive recommendation, purchase intention, social media, online shopping

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## **INTRODUCTION**

During the recent pandemic, with technological advancement, the popularity of social networking sites (SNS), and the emergence of online shopping which has been one of the most widely engaging on the SNS platforms. Social media technology, nowadays, has become vital for every aspect of daily life and, most notably, Facebook, one of the popular social media, has become a platform for seeking, comparing, purchasing, and selling products and services anytime and anywhere (Tun, 2012). SNSs have become a popular platform for online shopping and magnified the capability for communication between online sellers and customers. Social media provides a new channel for businesses to display, present and sell their products and services, therefore, understanding social media marketing has become necessary.

The emergence of social media, advanced technological development of software and hardware, and unavoidable circumstances such as the COVID-19 pandemic lead to the growth of social commerce (Tun, 2021). Jiang et al. (2014) expressed that the willingness of customers to share information and experiences is one of the key points of the growth of social commerce. The more communication made by users through SNS, the more information exchanges, and SNSs will expand. Moreover, social media users are motivated to widely interact in social commerce by buying, selling, recommending, finding, and sharing specific products and services (Maia et al., 2018). Consequently, for online vendors from SNS platforms, it is vital to learn communication factors, one of the most important aspects that affects SNS users' behaviour (Barreda et al., 2015).

Acquiring and inquiring information about products or services are also a major purpose of using SNSs nowadays. Among SNS platforms, TikTok application, short video platform with one billion users, has become the new trend of not only entertainment with short video clips but also obtaining the products' information (Hasena & Sakapurnama, 2021). Many online shop owners are attempting to convey the business message to their customers and endeavour to transform the consuming behaviour of their customers through TikTok platforms. Nevertheless, Facebook and Instagram are prominent SNSs among social media users (Ventre et al., 2021). Instagram has risen as an SNS especially for sharing photos, being the pioneer of its kind; today, it has 1.2 billion users. Whatsoever, Facebook is the superior and enormous SNS with 2.93 billion users.

The rapid growth of social media technologies leads to the era of social commerce which will eventually become indispensable in the online mainstream. Akman and Mishra (2017) explained that social media platforms provide an effective tool for collaboration and communication for the ecosystem of businesses, customers, and suppliers, in the way of innovation for higher sales, lower

cost, and acquiring more customers. The rising number of social media users has given the opportunity to grow social commerce, particularly in major social media such as Facebook and Twitter. Similarly, Shen and Eder (2011) described that social commerce is a new type of e-commerce which performs on social media platforms that enable social activities such as communication, contribution, interaction, and sharing during buying or selling.

In the social commerce context, most of the prior empirical studies on behavioural intention did not build their research model based on a unified concept. Some studies focused on trust (Yin et al., 2019; Phungphol, 2019), some paid attention to amusement (Momani et al., 2018; Akman & Mishra, 2017), some researchers studied easiness (Samarasinghe & Maddumarala, 2019; Biucky et al., 2017), and others investigated on positive recommendations (Ying et al., 2021; Wang & Yu, 2017). Furthermore, Sukhu, Zhang, and Bilgihan (2015) used a research framework which is similar to the T.E.A concept in their study; however, they emphasised intention to share as the outcome and did not consider antecedents of the T.E.A concept in the SNS context.

On the other hand, there were several studies of customers' behaviour regarding online shopping in mobile commerce (Lin & Theingi, 2019) and social commerce (Tun, 2021) in Myanmar. Lin and Theingi (2019) employed the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology 2 (UTAUT2) model in their study and Tun (2021) used a formulated research model based on previous literature. Therefore, the present study is the first-time endeavour to formulate a concept by unifying the three different perspectives, trust (T), easiness (E), and amusement (A), with positive recommendation (PR) as an additional factor. The research gaps of prior studies pave a clear path for the research objectives of this study as follows:

- a. To investigate the role of the T.E.A concept between positive recommendation and behavioural intention.
- b. To inspect each dimension from the T.E.A concept and disclose the individual's role.
- c. To identify the effect of positive recommendation on behavioural intention

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### ***Positive recommendation (PR)***

Wang and Yu (2017) asserted that customers heavily rely on informal information (e.g., comments, ratings, and suggestions), not the customised messages (e.g., reviews of social influencers, ordinary advertising content, formulated marketing messages), from their social peers regarding products or services before purchasing. Therefore, prior shopping experience

and purchase decisions are deeply rooted in online shopping nature. Informal or verbal communication also known as word-of-mouth, is an important information source generated by independent individuals (senders) and delivered to other individuals or potential customers (receivers) without control or manipulation by firms (Engel et al., 1969). The study of Barreda, Bilgihan, and Kageyama (2015) highlighted the significant effect of positive word-of-mouth on behavioural intention and their finding confirmed that customers' positive experience in shopping will generate positive recommendation. Moreover, the cognitive judgement of customers on the service such as the degree of ease of using the service heavily relies on the information contained in word-of-mouth (Sweeney et al., 2012). The new customers can perceive the experience of existing customers about the services from comments, feedback, and suggestions that are diffusing in the market. Positive recommendation is a robust origin of influence to support the customers in forecasting the purchasing experience (Ismail, 2011). Positive recommendation can be considered as an expression of two parties such as “receiver” and “recommender”. The customers can perceive the value of social media such as being easy to use, through the recommendations of the recommender. In this study, positive recommendation is adopted from the concept of positive word-of-mouth. Hence, the following hypotheses are proposed:

**H1:** Positive recommendation has a significant positive effect on trust.

**H2:** Positive recommendation has a significant positive effect on easiness.

**H3:** Positive recommendation has a significant positive effect on amusement.

**H4:** Positive recommendation has a significant positive effect on behavioural intention.

### ***Trust (T)***

Trust is pivotal in building a relationship between businesses and consumers, especially in the online business context (Tun, 2020; Athapaththu & Kulathunga, 2018). Likewise, Izogo and Jayawardhena (2018) referred to trust as the performance of online vendors to execute their commitments and the willingness of customers to be vulnerable based on their past experience in the manners of online retailers. Positive attitudes towards online trust will arise because of the degree of prior online shopping experience of customers such as trustworthiness, reliability, sincerity, and honesty of vendors, and receiving valuable and helpful information from online sellers (Arnilawati et al., 2020). Moreover, trust can overcome social and technological barriers, and decrease risks. Beldad, Jong, and Steehouder (2010) asserted that the variations of online trust excessively depend on the outcome of the shopping experience. Also, Hajli (2013) explicitly stated that trust is one of the essential determinants of intention to purchase which leads to the following hypothesis:

**H5:** Trust has a significant positive effect on behavioural intention.

### ***Easiness (E)***

Venkatesh and Davis (2000) defined ease of use as the belief of the individual that using a specific system would be effortless. In this study, easiness can be referred to as the degree to which a customer accepts that it is easy to learn and purchase products or services through social media (Venkatesh et al., 2003). If customers know that online shopping platforms are easy to purchase products, they are more likely to adopt them. In the social commerce context, the previous findings suggested that easiness plays a critical role in making a purchase decision (Tun, 2021; Cho & Son 2019; Um, 2018). Moreover, Lu and Su (2009) found that easiness is positively related to purchase intention on online shopping websites. Therefore, this research focuses on investigating the plausibility of a positive effect of easiness on the intention to purchase on social media. Thus, the following hypothesis is developed:

**H6:** Easiness has a significant positive effect on behavioural intention.

### ***Amusement (A)***

In the present study, amusement, which catches the concept of enjoyment, refers to the degree to which purchasing through social media is perceived as being interesting, exciting, and enjoyable (Davis et al., 1992). He and Bond (2013) asserted that the impact of word-of-mouth can predict the actual enjoyment of consumption; therefore, the positive recommendation can improve amusement in the marketplace. Cho and Son (2019) also confirmed that the information which customers received can deliver a sense of amusement. Further, amusement is proposed as one of the key determinants of customers' intention to purchase on social media. Shen (2012) stated that online purchasing usually occurs from customers' intrinsic motivation as the result of frequently experiencing fun and entertainment during shopping. Hence, the following hypothesis has been formulated:

**H7:** Amusement has a significant positive effect on behavioural intention.

### ***Behavioural intention (BI)***

Athapaththu and Kulathunga (2018) recommended that social media is an information technology platform; therefore, purchase intention in social media should be determined by the behavioural intention construct developed by Davis (1989). Behavioural intention is based on certain beliefs and the prerequisite of the actual behaviour. Davis (1989) adopted the construct from the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) which explains technology usage based on two major beliefs (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). The major purpose of this study is to identify

customers' behavioural intentions to purchase on social media, and investigate positive recommendation that affects the T.E.A concept, and lastly how that proposed concept affects purchase intention. Several prior studies (Ying et al., 2021; Samarasinghe & Maddumarala, 2019; Akman & Mishra, 2017) have confirmed the influences of trust, easiness, and amusement on behavioural intention to purchase. Therefore, to achieve the research objectives of this study, a research model (Figure 1) is proposed by combining the different constructs: positive recommendation, trust, easiness, amusement, and behavioural intention, based on prior literature reviews, and then it will be processed to test the theoretical chain (PR → T.E.A → BI). Thus:

**H8:** Trust is mediating between positive recommendation and behavioural intention.

**H9:** Easiness is mediating between positive recommendation and behavioural intention.

**H10:** Amusement is mediating between positive recommendation and behavioural intention.

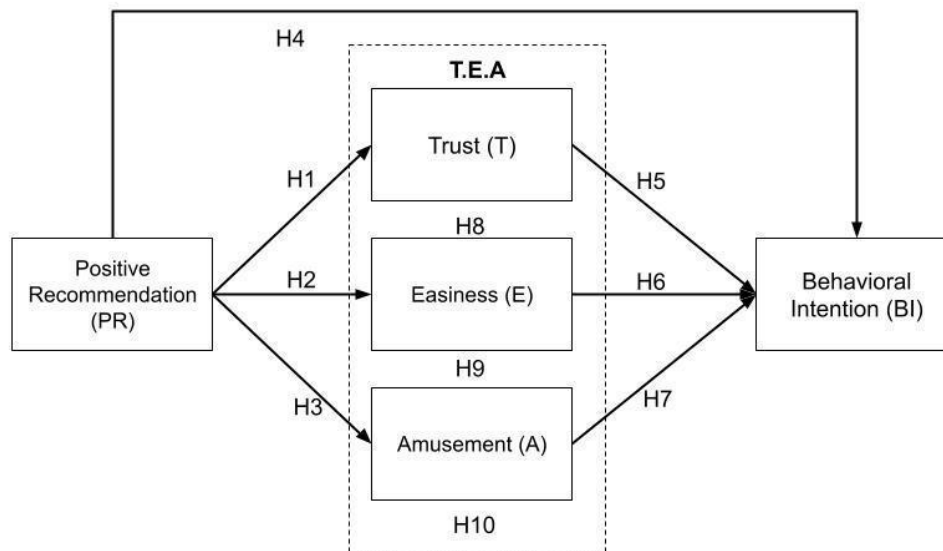


Figure 1. Research Model with T.E.A Concept

## RESEARCH METHOD

An inductive reasoning quantitative research approach was employed by using a survey questionnaire with statements adapted from previous studies. The inductive study assists to formulate the hypotheses and ideas through knowledge and insights (Neuman, 2014). The question statements are measured by the five-point Likert scale to determine the attitude of respondents. Target respondents for this study are Facebook users from Myanmar with prior purchasing experience via social media for the following reasons: Facebook is a luminary social media in Myanmar; the majority of social media users are on Facebook, therefore, they have a high potential

to have experience in purchasing products or services through social media before; and there could be avoided physical contact with respondents by using Facebook during the pandemic for collecting data by using the snowball sampling technique. In this study, both exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) are used to examine the validity and reliability of indicators and respective constructs. Also, structural equation modelling (SEM) is used to validate the hypothesised model and research hypotheses in SPSS and AMOS software. Hoelter (1983) suggested that the minimum data sampling size for calculating in SEM is 200, however, Stevens (2002) recommended that researchers should consider 15 data sampling sizes per indicator for SEM. Hence, a minimum data sampling size of 225 was considered sufficient to analyse fifteen observed indicators (Appendix) in the present study.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### *Profile of respondents*

For this study, data were collected from social media users from Myanmar. Random 260 Facebook users participated in this study. After seven outliers (2.7%) were eliminated, the number of valid datasets available for analysis decreased to 253. The profile of the respondents is presented in Table 1. The sample consists of 39.5% males and 60.5% females. More than 98% of the respondents are 18 years old and above. Half of the respondents (49.4%) have a bachelor's degree, and 13.8% have a diploma or lower. Further, one-third of respondents (30.8%) obtained a master's degree and 5.9% pursued a Ph.D. Most of the respondents (36.4%) are employees, 28.9% are civil servants, 19.4% are self-employed, and only 15.4% are currently students.

Table 1. The result of respondents' profile

	Profile	Freq (N=253)	%
Gender	Male	100	39.5
	Female	153	60.5
Age	15-17 year	4	1.6
	18-20 year	21	8.3
	21-25 year	42	16.6
	26-30 year	47	18.6
	31-35 year	52	20.6
	36-40 year	45	17.8
	41 and above	42	16.6
Current Education Level	High School	15	5.9
	Diploma	20	7.9
	Bachelor Degree	125	49.4
	Master Degree	78	30.8
	Ph.D	15	5.9



Table 1. The result of respondents' profile (Continued)

	Profile	Freq (N=253)	%
Current Occupation	Student	39	15.4
	Self-Employed	49	19.4
	Employee	92	36.4
	Civil Servant	73	28.9

### *Exploratory factor analysis (EFA)*

An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was used to validate the observed variables for respective factors in the proposed research model (Figure 1) by using a Principal Components Analysis (PCA) method by using a Varimax rotation in SPSS software. The value of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) is 0.906 which indicates that data sampling adequacy is excellent for factor loading analysis. The indicator with a loading coefficient of a minimum of 0.5 was assumed as its respective construct according to the guidance of Hair et al. (2010). The values of factor loading of all the questionnaire items ranged from 0.627 to 0.856. Thus, the cross-factor loading analysis confirmed five constructs affiliated with fifteen variables (Table 2). Furthermore, Cronbach's Alpha values of all the constructs ranged from a minimum of 0.759 to a maximum of 0.882, and all the values surpassed the acceptable value of 0.7. Therefore, all these questionnaire items were considered to be suitable for further examination.

Table 2. The result of factor validity and reliability analysis

Indicators	T	A	E	BI	PR	Cronbach's Alpha
T3	.856	.216	.134	.178	.118	0.882 (Very Good)
T2	.848	.123	.172	.138	.156	
T1	.752	.198	.021	.229	.160	
T4	.734	.189	.125	.190	.174	
A1	.189	.793	.096	.275	.165	0.847 (Very Good)
A2	.279	.785	.231	.210	.224	
A3	.275	.657	.370	.183	.128	
E3	.105	.113	.788	.251	.197	0.771 (Good)
E2	.161	.110	.765	.341	.087	
E1	.084	.335	.733	-.171	.145	
BI1	.351	.218	.048	.749	.196	0.851 (Very Good)
BI3	.363	.336	.314	.648	.144	
BI2	.228	.399	.361	.627	.160	
PR1	.200	.193	.162	.192	.855	0.759
PR2	.357	.243	.291	.133	.689	(Good)

All the values of standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis do not exceed plus or minus 2 according to the descriptive statistical analysis in SPSS software. The analysis results, therefore, can be asserted that participants of this study responded to questionnaire items normally and the dataset can be assumed as normality for T-test analysis which intends to

investigate significant differences between the means of the indicators and the neutral value of 3 on their measurement scales (Table 3). The respondents strongly agree that social media enables them to find and purchase desired products or services quickly, and it is easy to learn the purchasing procedure on social media (E1, E2, E3). Social media users feel very enjoyable, exciting, and interested in purchasing products and services through social media (A1, A3, A4). Particularly, they have a negative attitude towards the vendors on social media and they doubt the information and knowledge provided by the vendors (T1, T2). Moreover, respondents think vendors on social media are not reliable, sincere, and honest (T3, T4).

Table 3. The result of descriptive statistics and t-test analysis

Indicators	Mean	t	Sig. (2-tailed)	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
E1	4.11	20.297	.000	.870	-.617	-.508
E2	3.88	14.635	.000	.954	-.582	-.057
E3	3.88	14.897	.000	.937	-.658	.164
PR1	3.22	3.596	.000	.962	-.043	-.267
PR2	3.19	3.001	.003	.985	-.028	-.272
A1	3.43	6.203	.000	1.095	-.434	-.418
A2	3.59	9.195	.000	1.026	-.587	.030
A3	3.38	5.648	.000	1.080	-.391	-.407
T1	2.74	-4.317	.000	.961	-.024	-.216
T2	2.75	-4.177	.000	.963	.177	.000
T3	2.75	-4.208	.000	.941	.027	.093
T4	2.72	-4.278	.000	1.029	.113	-.451
BI1	2.83	-2.423	.016	1.141	.168	-.691
BI2	3.33	4.935	.000	1.057	-.282	-.327
BI3	3.17	2.400	.017	1.126	-.121	-.671

According to the analysis results of the Pearson correlation between constructs from Table 4, gender has a significant correlation with amusement (A) at 0.01 level and easiness (E) constructs at 0.05 level. Amusement (A) has a significant correlation with age at 0.05 level and current education level at 0.01 level. Moreover, trust (T) and behavioural intention (BI) have a significant correlation with the age and education level of respondents at 0.01 level. Besides, trust (T) correlates with the occupation at 0.05 level. Further, positive recommendation and behavioural intention have a significant correlation with T.E.A concept at 0.01 level. It is noted that amusement has the highest correlation coefficient with behavioural intention and positive recommendation followed by trust and easiness. Hypothesised causal relationships in the proposed research model are highlighted and bolded in Table 4.

Table 4. The result of Pearson correlations analysis

	Gender	Age	Education	Occupation	PR	T	E	A	BI
Gender	1								
Age	-.070	1							
Education	.125*	.531**	1						
Occupation	.115	.488**	.477**	1					
Positive Recommendation (PR)	.045	-.152*	-.238**	-.018	1				
Trust (T)	.087	-.199**	-.181**	-.140*	.556**	1			
Easiness (E)	.129*	-.081	-.041	.035	.500**	.373**	1		
Amusement (A)	.189**	-.168**	-.158*	-.011	.576**	.564**	.552**	1	
Behavioural Intention (BI)	.087	-.162**	-.200**	-.102	.570**	.638**	.537**	.687**	1

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

### ***Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)***

As part of the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) procedure, the measurement model for the proposed research model (Figure 2) is firstly built in AMOS software to examine convergent validity and discriminant validity according to the suggestion of Fornell and Larcker (1981). The values of standardised regression weight of all the indicators exceed 0.5 and range from 0.600 to 0.908. Further, the values of average variance extracted (AVE) exceed the minimum cutoff value of 0.5 and the values of composite reliability (CR) surpass the minimum acceptable value of 0.7. Thus, the results (Table 5) can be assumed that convergent validity is established.

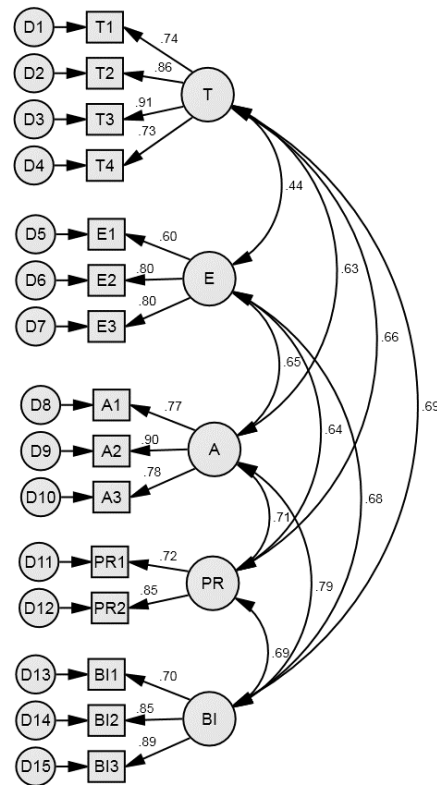


Figure 2. Measurement model for proposed research model

Table 5. The analysis results of AVE and CR

Constructs	Indicators	Std. Regression Weight	AVE	CR
Easiness (E)	E1	0.600	0.542	0.778
	E2	0.797		
	E3	0.795		
Trust (T)	T1	0.745	0.666	0.888
	T2	0.862		
	T3	0.908		
	T4	0.735		
Amusement (A)	A1	0.767	0.664	0.855
	A3	0.776		
	A2	0.896		
Behavioural Intention (BI)	BI1	0.702	0.671	0.858
	BI2	0.854		
	BI3	0.889		
Positive Recommendation (PR)	PR1	0.724	0.621	0.765
	PR2	0.847		

Discriminant validity intends to confirm the degree to which a dimension and its variables differ from another dimension and its variables. The correlations between any two factors should be less than the square root of AVE of each factor according to Fornell and Larcker (1981). As presented in Table 6, the square root of AVE of factors (shown in bold text and highlighted) is

greater than the correlation between the factors. Hence, the analysis results confirmed that the employed instrument for this study has satisfactory convergent and discriminant validity.

Table 6. The analysis result of discriminant validity

Constructs	PR	T	E	A	BI
Positive Recommendation (PR)	0.788				
Trust (T)	0.661	0.816			
Easiness (E)	0.641	0.444	0.736		
Amusement (A)	0.708	0.626	0.645	0.815	
Behavioural Intention (BI)	0.686	0.690	0.681	0.788	0.819

### *The results of hypotheses testing*

The hypotheses were examined as presented in Figure 1 by using maximum likelihood (ML) estimation in AMOS software and the analysis results are concluded in Table 7. Positive recommendation positively affected trust ( $\beta=0.710$ ,  $t=8.343$ ), easiness ( $\beta=0.699$ ,  $t=6.884$ ), and amusement ( $\beta=0.799$ ,  $t=9.061$ ), which means that H1, H2, and H3 were accepted. According to the results, trust ( $\beta=0.304$ ,  $t=3.763$ ), easiness ( $\beta=0.282$ ,  $t=3.228$ ), and amusement ( $\beta=0.433$ ,  $t=3.979$ ), all evidenced a significant positive effect on behavioural intention to purchase. Therefore, H5, H6, and H7, all the hypotheses were accepted. However, H4 was rejected because positive recommendation does not have a significant effect on behavioural intention.

Table 7. The analysis result of the effects

Hypotheses	Relationship	Std. Coefficient ( $\beta$ )	p-value	t-value	Result
H1	PR $\rightarrow$ T	.710	***	8.343	Accepted
H2	PR $\rightarrow$ E	.699	***	6.884	Accepted
H3	PR $\rightarrow$ A	.799	***	9.061	Accepted
H4	PR $\rightarrow$ BI	.003	NS	0.020	Rejected
H5	T $\rightarrow$ BI	.304	***	3.763	Accepted
H6	E $\rightarrow$ BI	.282	***	3.228	Accepted
H7	A $\rightarrow$ BI	.433	***	3.979	Accepted

Note: \*\*\* means  $p < 0.001$ , NS means No Significant

In order to identify the mediation variables, bootstrapping of 5000 samples was used and examined the indirect effects. The results of direct effects were unchanged, and the indirect effects were statistically significant, therefore, the extent of Variance Accounted For (VAF) was estimated to confirm mediation variables between positive recommendation and behavioural intention by following the guidance of Hair et al. (2016). VAF can be calculated by dividing indirect effect ( $x \rightarrow m \rightarrow y$ ) over total effect ( $x \rightarrow y$ ) and the result can be interpreted as follows: greater than 20% represents mediation and less than 20% means no mediation. Amusement has the highest mediation effect with 46% followed by trust with 28% and easiness with 26%. The analysis results (Table 8) confirmed trust, easiness, and amusement as mediator

variables. Therefore, H8, H9, and H10 were accepted. Further, trio factors had full mediation between positive recommendation and behavioural intention. Besides, the squared multiple correlations ( $R^2$ ) of each endogenous variable in the proposed model are shown in Table 8. Behavioural intention has the highest variance amount with .725 followed by amusement with .639, trust with .505, and easiness with .488, which were explained by its exogenous factors.

Table 8. The analysis result of mediations

Hypotheses	Relationship	Indirect Effect	p-value	VAF	Mediation	Result
H8	PR → T → BI	.216	***	28%	Yes	Accepted
H9	PR → E → BI	.197	**	26%	Yes	Accepted
H10	PR → A → BI	.346	***	46%	Yes	Accepted
T ( $R^2 = .505$ ), E ( $R^2 = .488$ ), A ( $R^2 = .639$ ), BI ( $R^2 = .725$ )						

Note: \*\*\* means  $p < 0.001$ , \*\* means  $p < 0.01$

The value of model fit indices for both measurement and structural models are shown in Table 9. The model fit indices aim to provide evidence of fitness between the proposed research model and the data (Hair et al., 2016; Bagozzi et al., 1991). Firstly, the measurement model (Figure 2) was assessed and the results indicate a satisfactory fit to the observed data with  $\chi^2/df = 1.780$  and, other model fit indices as follows: GFI=0.930, AGFI=0.895, NFI=0.939, CFI=0.972, RMSEA=0.056. After acquiring a satisfactory result on the measurement model, the fit indices of the research model (Figure 1) are analysed further and obtained results are as follows:  $\chi^2/df = 1.931$ , GFI=0.923, AGFI=0.889, NFI=0.931, CFI=0.965, RMSEA=0.061. According to the analysis result of model fit indices, the hypothesised model is a very good fit for the collected data.

Table 9. The analysis results of model fit indices

Model Fit Indices	Acceptable Values	Obtained Values	
		Measurement Model	Research Model
$\chi^2/df$	< 3.00	1.780	1.931
GFI	> 0.90	0.930	0.923
AGFI	> 0.85	0.895	0.889
NFI	> 0.90	0.939	0.931
CFI	> 0.90	0.972	0.965
RMSEA	< 0.08	0.056	0.061

## **MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS IN THE SOUTH EAST ASIAN CONTEXT**

From a managerial perspective, this study distinctly reveals that if vendors on social media want more customers from South East Asian countries like Myanmar, they must focus on the T.E.A concept, the result of positive recommendation. In this instance, sellers need to pay extra attention to amusement according to the findings because enjoyment and pleasure attract customers the most. Therefore, the majority of online retailers must present and launch attractive and interesting entertainment programs on their social media pages such as online photo contests, entertainment videos, live videos, and beneficial content. Besides, sellers on social media should note that giving discount coupons, offering loyalty awards, and entertainment-based marketing activities are feasible to create more amusement to attract more shoppers.

Since the social media landscape is an online platform with a lack of tangible and physical interaction; therefore, trust is necessary. Trust construct is the second most important factor to attract more customers, and sellers are needed to be reliable and honest. Thus, vendors must provide accurate product information, reasonable prices for products, and reliable customer services. Customers, most notably, from South East Asian countries always tend to find and purchase products or services in the easiest ways. Also, the result of this study indicates that customers want to purchase more if it is easy. Hence, e-retailers must formulate an uncomplicated and clear purchasing process such as easy to view the product information, the price comparison, the order placement, make the payment, and select the shipping method.

Although the positive recommendation is not directly crucial for buying decisions in this study, vendors should duly note that it is still a significant factor influencing the T.E.A concept, which will eventually lead to purchase intention. This gives the managerial tip for online sellers that they should carefully handle and respond to all the negative feedback and comments from customers. Further, online retailers should endeavour and be well-managed all possible methods like formulating referral marketing programs, creating public rating systems on the overall shopping experience, and developing review platforms (e.g., online forums, blogs, and social media groups), where potential customers can learn from positive recommendations and boost the T.E.A concept. By doing so, online retailers can gain higher customer loyalty and reduce customer acquisition costs in South East Asian countries.

## **THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS**

According to the analysis result, all the hypotheses are supported except H4, therefore, the T.E.A concept, an aggregation of factors, is valid and there can be confirmed that T.E.A is mediating between positive recommendation and purchase intention in social media. In the T.E.A concept, amusement has the highest positive effect on behavioural intention to purchase and it is the most influenced by positive recommendation, followed by trust and easiness. Nevertheless, the T.E.A concept is imperative for the customers to decide to buy the product or service through the social media platform. In a social media environment, the lack of tangible interaction between customers and vendors in online purchasing procedures creates trust as an essential factor and it assists to eliminate uncertainty and risks (Ventre et al., 2021). Besides, this study confirmed that purchase intention on social media platforms depends on the level of reliability of online vendors and it corresponded to the result of Tun (2021).

Prabowo and Aji (2021) asserted that if the customers perceive the shopping experience as pleasurable, retailers will gain purchase intention from their customers. Also, the study of Akman and Mishra (2017) reported that enjoyment was the factor that positively affects purchase intention in the online shopping context and suggested that social media should be equipped with features that render the attitude of the customers about amusement and excitement significantly. Also, the finding of the present study is consistent with the previous study of Um (2018) and social media users tend to buy more when they feel pleasant during shopping at social commerce sites. According to the analysis result, easiness is considered an important perspective that affects purchase intention in social commerce, and the finding is supported by the study of Momani, Yafooz, and Jamous (2018).

Despite having no significant direct effect on buying decisions, positive recommendation has indirect positive effects through the T.E.A concept, a group of mediators. The finding of the present study can be assumed that when customers receive an abundance of positive recommendations, they will tend to trust vendors and purchase products, Kumar et al. (2020) reported a similar result. In this study, easiness plays a mediator between positive recommendation and behavioural intention to purchase on social media, and the finding aligns with the study of Tun (2021). In addition, this study reveals that it is necessary to consider the effects of positive recommendation on amusement and easiness because the customers learned about the experiences in purchasing through informal or verbal communications (Ismail, 2011).



## **CONCLUSION**

This study manifests the role of the T.E.A concept, most notably, between positive recommendation and customers' behavioural intention to purchase products or services which are offered on social media platforms. The primary novelty of this study is the T.E.A concept by integrating trust (T), easiness (E), and amusement (A). Further, the present study can be concluded that online sellers with T.E.A will have more success in the online shopping landscape, and vendors from social media should establish the best approaches to employ the T.E.A concept, which implies that “Better TEA, Greater Sales”.

This research study emphasises factors that are appropriated to the online shopping context and proposes a productive research direction for future researchers, especially, that when the customers assume that shopping on the social media platform is pleasurable, view sellers are reliable, obtain non-muddle purchasing procedures, and perceive the positive recommendation abundantly from others, they are likely to buy the products and services on social media. In summary, sellers and vendors on social media play a crucial role in ensuring positive experience of customers, resulting in customers' decision of purchasing products or services.

One of the major limitations of this study is focusing on only the positive recommendation as an antecedent of the T.E.A concept. Other dimensions that might affect the T.E.A concept and behavioural intention in social commerce. Another limitation is that all of the respondents are Facebook users with prior online shopping experience and the shopping experience may differ on different social media platforms. Although the Facebook user sample is reasonable given that they are the major social media users in Myanmar, the findings are still limited by the representativeness issue. Users from other giant SNSs such as Instagram and TikTok were neglected in this study and can be considered as one of the limitations. The T.E.A concept implicates both theoretically and practically to forecast customers' behaviour intentions. Future research studies can extend the T.E.A concept by appending more factors to establish a broader research model with a higher capability of prediction in online shopping behaviour. Further, the T.E.A concept could be employed in different online shopping platforms such as mobile commerce or electronic commerce. Since mobile and e-commerce websites have different features and procedures, their customers' shopping behaviour may not be the same.

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## Appendix

Indicators	Statements	Literature support
T1	I believe in the information I received from the vendors on social media.	
T2	I believe that the vendors on social media are resourceful in knowledge sharing.	
T3	The information from vendors on social media is reliable.	
T4	The information from vendors on social media is sincere and honest.	(Athapaththu & Kulathunga, 2018)
BI1	I will consider social media first when I have to purchase products or services.	
BI2	I intend to continue using social media to purchase products or services in the future.	
BI3	I intend to use social media frequently to buy products or services.	
E1	Social media enables me to easily find the products and services I am looking for.	
E2	It is easy to learn how to buy products and services in social media.	
E3	It is easy to become skillful at buying products and services in social media.	(Cho & Son, 2019)
A1	Buying products and services via social media is enjoyable.	
A2	Buying products and services via social media is interesting.	
A3	Buying products and services via social media is exciting.	
PR1	I have only positive things to say about buying products and services from social media.	
PR2	I mostly tell people positive things about vendors from social media.	(Tun, 2021)