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IDENTIFICATION OF SOCIAL COMMERCE SERVICE QUALITY (SCSQ) DIMENSIONS FOR MALAYSIAN MODEST FASHION INDUSTRY

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to identify emerging themes in the *Social Commerce Service Quality* (SCSQ) that are appropriate for the Malaysian modest fashion industry to improve the online shopping experience for Malaysian consumers. This qualitative research applied semi-structured online interviews that include nine respondents from Malaysian modest fashion sellers, direct and indirect distributors, and buyers. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the participants' responses in determining and identifying the SCSQ dimensions. Eight themes are identified which are Social Interaction Quality, Functional Quality, Design Quality, Information Quality, Privacy and Security, Responsiveness, Personalization, and Communication Quality. Notably, Personalization and Communication Quality are two newly discovered in the Malaysian modest fashion industry context. The results offer helpful guidance for Malaysian modest fashion businesses to allocate their resources prudently.

Keywords: Malaysian modest fashion industry, Social Commerce Service Quality, social commerce, social media, e-service quality

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Excellent service quality attracts and satisfies customers and effectively increases loyalty, company's overall profitability, and actual market share (Shi et al., 2018). Meanwhile, as e-commerce has grown

in popularity and market competition, researchers have begun to focus on the entire online shopping experience. Since the shift from product to service-based businesses has been accelerated by digitalization (Suarez et al., 2013), how businesses compete and conduct business with customers has been fundamentally altered (Ting et al., 2021), especially with the rise of social media.

It is true that the rise of social media and its impact on communication efficiency and effectiveness have drawn businesses to the goal of engaging more closely with their customers (Zhao et al., 2021), which has resulted in social commerce becoming a critical component of an organization's success. It is primarily because customers spend a significant amount of time on social media in their everyday lives (Zhang et al., 2017; Liu, Xue & Liu, 2021). Apart from that, through various social media functions, customers are increasingly turning to social media to find information about brands they are interested in, according to Handarkho (2020). Sellers are using this trend to market their products and services and establish communication (Handarkho, 2020).

Social commerce is a relatively new concept that emphasizes e-commerce transactions that are made possible through the use of social media (Zhang et al., 2020). The recent growth of social media has provided the impetus for transforming a product-based e-commerce system into a social-based commerce system, which is becoming increasingly popular (Tran, Muldrow & Ho, 2020). Due to its popularity, social media enables an advanced channel for branding at the heart of customer engagement (Ahmad & Laroche, 2017), thereby altering business practices and service delivery (Bazi et al., 2020). Indeed, businesses must abandon traditional commercial methods and embrace new internet-based technologies to increase their chances of success (Pour et al., 2020).

In accordance with the rise of the social commerce market, fashion brands have noticed the trend and started to use it. One of great examples of a growing market is the modest fashion industry, which many have rushed to capitalize on this relatively untapped global billion-dollar industry (Limam & Berjikian, 2020). According to recent market statistics, modest fashion is the fastest-rising segment of the global fashion market, with a potential growth of $311 billion in 2024. It is expected to grow at a 5% compound annual growth rate in revenue over the forecast period, reaching US$88.35 billion in 2025 (State of the Global Islamic Economy Report, 2021). According to Tarofder et al. (2021), modest fashion has shifted dramatically over the last few decades, owing to two critical forces: growing Muslim customer income and a burgeoning participation among young Muslims in looking fashionable itemswithout jeopardizing their Islamic faith.

Tarofder et al. (2021) define modest fashion as garments that drape the entire body loosely and turbidly. According to Islamic rules, women should wear apparel that covers their entire body except for their face and palms (Hassan et al., 2018). Meanwhile, Hassan et al. (2018) claim that over time, international brands and high-street brands have given modest fashion a niche that includes not only religion but also a fashion-conscious society that attracts non-Muslims as well. As modest fashion gains popularity and consumption demands, it celebrates diversity, participation, and a sophisticated interpretation of modesty as less religious (Hassan et al., 2018). As a result, fashion designers, both Muslims and non-Muslims, around the world have chosen to respond to these requests by laying the foundation of Islamic clothing for non-Muslims.

In recent years, the modest fashion sector in Malaysia has grown at an unparalleled rate. The market is expanding more quickly than it has in the past thanks to social commerce, a platform that allows business transactions to occur through social media platforms. Malaysian modest fashion enterprises have significantly contributed to the expansion of the industry, largely due to their adaption to digitalization. Despite the industry's steady expansion, it is ironic that, in the modest fashion category, it fell from position four in the 2020 OIC Halal Economy edition to number six in the 2022 edition. To become more accessible to custmers, one of the report's recommendations was to have a strong online presence, which may include an eCommerce and social media selling platform. This emphasizes the value of social commerce applications for the development of the Malaysian modest fashion industry.

Unfortunately, lack of research on social commerce and e-service quality for this industry pose difficulties for entrepreneurs to have a proper guidelines on utilizing such application. This highlight the need to explore a case of Malaysian perspective in both social commerce and e-service quality subject.

Social commerce offers a variety of benefits and is even more effective when combined with e-service quality, which is known for perceived loyalty and customer satisfaction. According to Zhou et al. (2023), the field of social commerce is currently in its early stages and requires significant enhancements in its supervision. Furthermore, there is a dearth of empirical studies on social commerce (Rahman et al., 2023).Unfortunately, little research has been conducted to investigate the e-services quality in social commerce (Liu, Xue & Liu, 2021; Tran, Muldrow & Ho, 2020; Attar et al., 2021; Hajli, 2020). Most studies on e-services quality in the context of e-commerce have ignored the interaction aspects of Web 2.0 technologies (Attar et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2020; Demir et al., 2020; Vásquez & Martnez, 2020; Pour et al., 2020). There is a dearth of research on identifying the dimensions and sub-dimensions of Social Commerce Service Quality (Pour et al., 2022; Pour et al., 2020). Thus far, scholars have primarily explained the phenomenon of users' adoption of social commerce by examining their propensity to embrace it through the lens of technology acceptance (Wang et al., 2023) while overlooking the notion of e-service quality.

Furthermore, while earlier studies produced a number of models, one-size-fits-all e-service quality instruments have the potential to give confusing results (Ghazaleh & Zabadi, 2020; Shi et al., 2018), which cultural differences among customers may exacerbate. So far, little attention has been paid to assessing e-service quality features alongside social commerce, specifically in non-Western nations (Lari et al., 2020). It is not always accurate when measuring service quality across cultures, especially in Malaysia, where consumer awareness and behavior shift over time (Lari et al., 2020; Wang & Kim, 2019). Also, no clear-cut measurements can be used in the case of modest fashion social commerce sellers in Malaysia. It is also important to evaluate e-service quality dimensions in the contexts beyond websites, given the advent of technology as a medium in online purchases (mobile apps, social media) (Pour et al., 2020; Chen et al., 2018; Murfield et al., 2017). As a result of the preceding scenario, the study proposes to identify various dimensions of Social Commerce Service Quality from the perspective of the Malaysian modest fashion industry.

The paper proceeds as follows: the Literature Review section reviews previous research on the Social Commerce, e-SERVIE Quality and Social Commerce Service Quality concept. Research Methods explains the methods used in obtaining respondents' responses. These responses will be further discussed in Results section, followed by the Discussion, Conclusion, Implications and Recommendations for Future Research.

## 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Social Commerce

Social commerce is on rise due to the existence of social media applications. It is true that the rise of social media and its impact on communication efficiency and effectiveness have drawn businesses to the goal of engaging more closely with their customers (Zhao et al., 2021). It is primarily because customers spend a significant amount of time on social media daily (Zhang et al., 2017; Liu, Xue & Liu, 2021).

Social commerce is any business activity made possible or done with the help of social media and Web 2.0 platforms in the context of a customer's online shopping experience or a company's relationships with its customers (Lin et al., 2017). Social commerce, which enables business transactions via social networking sites, is a major factor in the rapid expansion of the market. Recent revenue growth has drawn more attention to social commerce, which is still a relatively new subset of e-commerce but is quickly gaining momentum and attracting the attention of academics and industry professionals where there is a wealth of uncharted territory to be discovered in this branch of e-commerce (Liu, Xue & Liu, 2021; Tran, Muldrow & Ho, 2020; Attar et al., 2021; Hajli, 2020; Pivec & Macek, 2019). Numerous studies have emphasized the importance of having an excellent social commerce system that facilitates interaction and communication between users (buyers or sellers) in order to increase purchase intention (Mazzarolo et al., 2021; Attar et al., 2021; Hajli, 2020; Zhang et al., 2020a). By adding social interaction to the online context, companies hope to increase customers' purchasing intentions (Zhang et al., 2020a) where e-service quality dimensions may add value to customer experience on social commerce.

e-Service Quality

It began with the creation of service quality created by Parasuraman et al. (1985), which is defined as the discrepancy between consumers' perceptions of services offered by a particular firm and their expectations about firms offering such services. By the time the internet was discovered and vastly grown, as per Figure 1, Zeithaml et al. (2000) created e-service quality to adapt to the online world that defines a website facilities efficient and effective shopping, purchasing, and the delivery of the products and services. E-service quality may bring enormous value to social commerce success because it plays an important role in preserving customer loyalty and satisfaction, which will promote organizational growth (Al-dweeri et al., 2018). However, even though some of the models, as per Figure 1, have a strong base on examining e-service quality, its capabilities in social commerce applications has been in doubt as some models are no longer suitable in current advanced technology.

Most studies incorporated insights from established service quality literature, particularly SERVQUAL, in their original or adapted forms (Barnes & Vidgen, 2000; Bauer et al., 2006; Ding et al., 2011; Francis & White, 2002). SERVQUAL has been described as a skeleton scale or generic quality measure applicable to all types of conventional services (Parasuraman et al., 1988). Still, critics argue that it is not adaptable for all services. The constant technological changes along with the growing externalization of service deliveries, call for greater attention to be paid to the time dependency of research on electronic services (Bauer et al., 2006)

Figure 1 E-service Quality Model Timeline
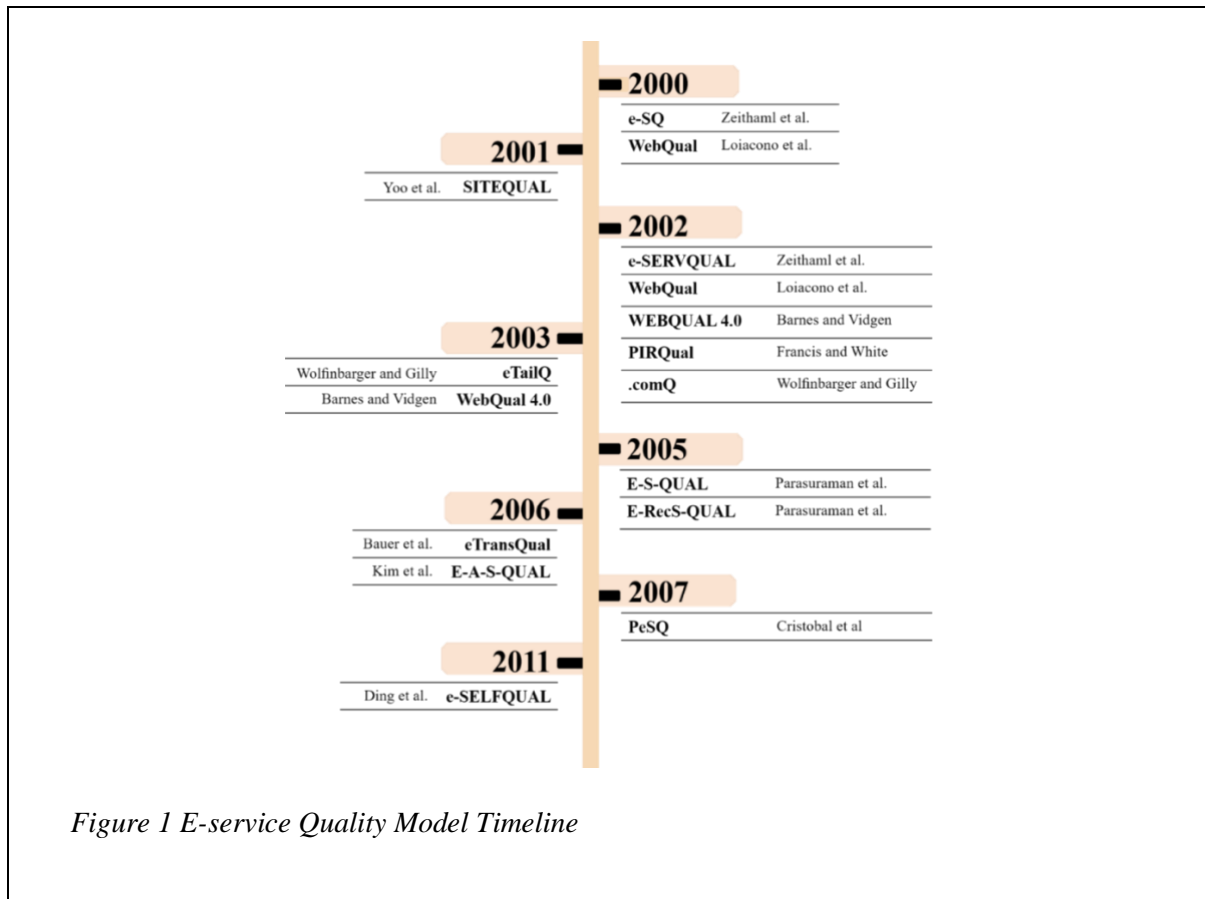
Social Commerce Service Quality

Understanding the combination of both social commerce and e-service quality terms is critical in the context of Social Commerce Service Quality. Online companies seek new e-service marketing strategies to improve online shopping customer experience. At the same time, they recognize that having a regular or basic e-commerce website is insufficient because it lacks interaction and engagement value (Mostafa, 2021). Due to the sheer popularity of social media, it is now essential for businesses to have a social media presence and blend it with e-service quality elements. While Social Commerce Service Quality is a subset of e-service quality, there are distinctions between the two that reinforce the provision of services via social commerce platforms (Wu et al., 2015), making exploring Social Commerce Service Quality critical. Thus, the concept of Social Commerce Service Quality in this research refers to the ability to creatively and efficiently utilize social commerce platforms and their behavior in serving and assisting customers during the shopping process, which will ultimately result in an improved shopping experience, interaction, and engagement.

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study used qualitative methods via semi-structured online interviews. This approach is employed as it leaves room for respondent's opinions and ideas since it aims to acquire rich and detailed answers (Anis et al., 2018). Interviews with different groups of players in the Malaysian modest fashion industry were conducted.

Sampling

The various players' diverse responses will strengthen the study findings (Anis et al., 2018). In this case, purposive sampling is used to identify respondents from specific target groups who can provide the needed information, either because they are the only ones who have it or because they meet the selection criteria (Anis et al., 2018; Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). In addition, the best way to comply with COVID-19's "social distancing" policies is to collect data via an online video conferencing platform. Online interviews make respondents feel more comfortable and non-intrusive, and the absence of a researcher makes them more eager to communicate (Dodds & Hess, 2020). As displayed in Table 1, the respondents have a balanced distribution comprising retailers, intermediaries, and customers. This group was selected as they work together and have direct connections and true experiences (Anis et al., 2018). Table 1 shows the profiles of the interview participants.

Table 1:

Profile of the Participants

Category	Frequency	%	Code	Role	Product	Gender	Race	Years involvement
Direct Distributors (Retailers)	3	33.33	R1	Social Commerce Executives	Apparel	Female	Malay	5 years
			R2	Sales Executive	Scarf	Female	Malay	4 years
			R3	Social Commerce Executives	Apparel and scarf	Female	Malay	5 years
Indirect Distributors (Intermediaries)	3	33.33	R4	Dropshipper	Apparel and scarf	Female	Malay	3 years
			R5	Dropshipper	Apparel and scarf	Female	Malay	3 years
			R6	Personal Shoppers	Apparel and scarf	Female	Malay	4 years
Customers	3	33.33	R7	Customer	Apparel and scarf	Female	Malay	5 years
			R8	Customer	Apparel and scarf	Female	Malay	5 years
			R9	Customer	Apparel and scarf	Female	Malay	5 years

Data Analysis

The basic question asked to the interviewees was the following:

What factors (dimensions) contribute to the improvement of the level of service provided by social commerce in Malaysia's modest fashion industry?

The interviewees' responses were transcribed and evaluated thematically. The thematic analysis discovered problem-related themes, representing underlying meaning in the data set (Braun & Clarke, 2012). This procedure was simplified by using NVivo, a qualitative data analysis tool. The current study

used Braun and Clarke's (2006) six steps of theme analysis in Table 2, to determine the dimensions and sub-dimensions of Social Commerce Service Quality in Malaysia's modest fashion industry.

Table 2:

Thematic Analysis phase

Phase	Task
1. Researcher familiarizing with the data	Familiarization of the data for this study is achieved through repetitive reading of the 9 respondent's transcriptions.
2. Generating initial coding	Initial coding is systematically carried out through NVivo application with the 100 frequency and six minimum length, generating 100 codes from the entire data set.
3. Searching for themes	Themes grouped codes. All linked coded data was grouped within the themes to create major themes. NVivo was used to classify the 100 codes from Phase 2 into 21 themes, as seen in Table 3.
4. Reviewing themes	At this point, prospective themes in Table 3 were reviewed and refined, with some concepts integrated and others enlarged or deleted. The goal is to find themes and subthemes that appropriately characterize the data collection. Combining, expanding, and eliminating has reduced the 21 viable topics to eight relevant themes, as seen in Table 4. In this step, thematic mapping was created to show the structure of the final themes and their sub-themes for this study (Figure 2).
5. Defining and naming themes	The eight identified themes were defined and named at this stage as presented in Table 5. Defining and naming the themes are guided by the themes (dimensions) and sub-themes (sub-dimension) identified as seen in Table 4 in phase 4 and matched with dimensions that exist in past literature.
6. Producing the reports	This phase entails the final analysis and write-up report for the eight identified themes. In the following result section, the dimensions and its corresponding sub dimensions are described together with the participants' verbatim tape scripts.

Table 3:

The initial and final identified themes (dimensions)

| Initial theme	The final identified eight themes
1. Communicate	1. Personalization
2. Transformation	2. Social Interaction Quality
3. Message	3. Communication Quality
4. Information	4. Information Quality
5. Purchase	5. Functional Quality
6. Responsive	6. Privacy and Security
7. Personal	7. Responsiveness
8. Customers	8. Design Quality
9. Access	
10. Organized	
11. Pictures	
12. Process	
13. Design	
14. Direct	
15. Quality	
16. Engage	
17. Social	
18. Seller	
19. Friendly	
20. Provide	
21. Inquiries	
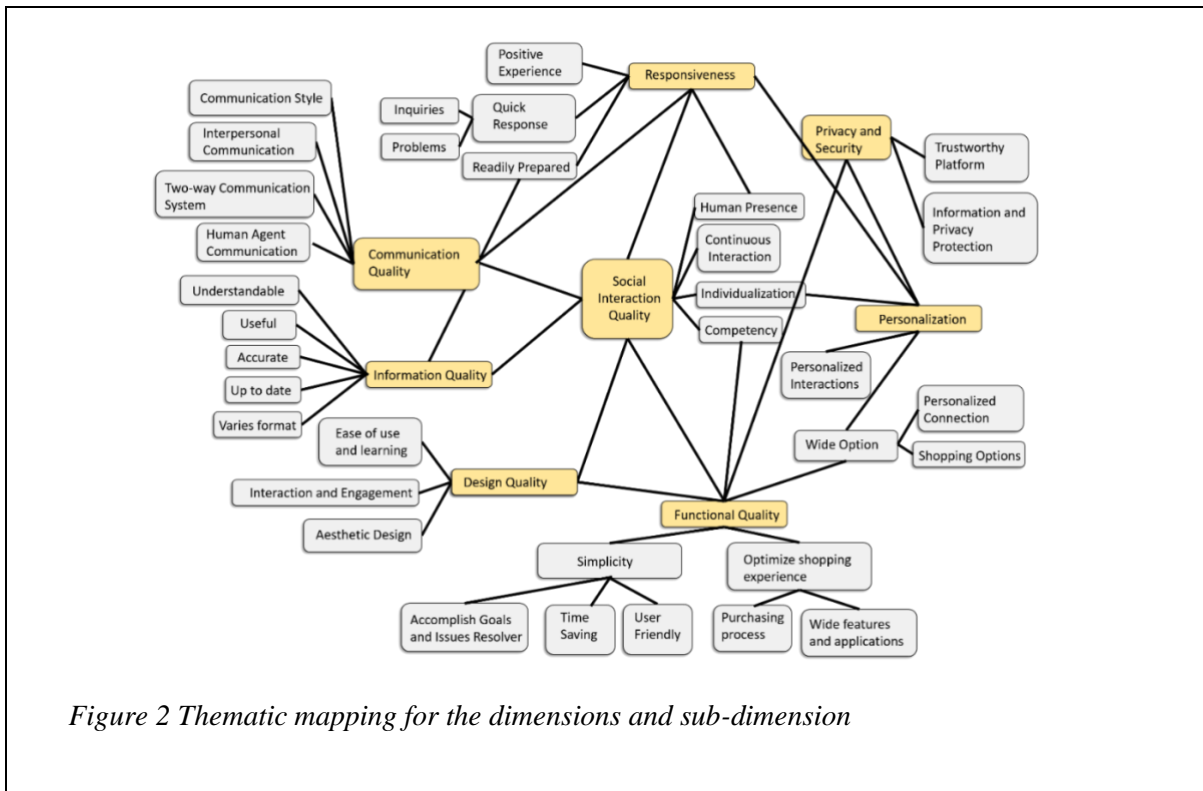
Figure 2 Thematic mapping for the dimensions and sub-dimension

Results

Data analysis of the previous section has contributed to identifying eight SCSQ dimensions for the Malaysian modest fashion industry namely *Social Interaction Quality, Functional Quality, Design Quality, Information Quality, Privacy and Security, Responsiveness, Personalization,* and *Communication Quality.*

Table 4:

The final identified themes (dimensions) and sub-themes (sub-dimension)

The final themes (dimensions)	Sub-themes (sub-dimensions)	Match with Literature Review	Found in Interviews
Social Interaction Quality		/	
	Human Presence	/	
	Continuous Interaction	/	
	Individualization	/	
	Competence	/	
Functional Quality		/	
	Multiple Purchasing Process	/	/
	Wide Features and Applications	/	/
	Accomplish Goals or Resolve Issues	/	
	Time-Saving	/	
	User-Friendly	/	
Design Quality		/	
	Aesthetic Design	/	
	Interaction and Engagement	/	/
	Ease of use and learning	/	
Information Quality		/	
	Understandable	/	
	Accurate	/	
	Useful	/	
	Up-to-date	/	
	Varies format	/	
Responsiveness		/	
	Quick Response to Inquiries	/	
	Quick Response to Problem	/	
	Positive Experience	/	
	Readily Prepared		/
Privacy and Security		/	
	Trustworthy Platform	/	/
	Information and Privacy Protection	/	
Personalization			/
	Wide Shopping Option		/
	Wide Personalization Option		/
	Personalize Interaction		/
Communication Quality			/
	Communication Style		/
	Interpersonal Communication		/
	Two-way Communication Application		/
	Human-Agent Communication		/

Table 5:

SCSQ Dimensions of Malaysia's modest fashion industry

Dimensions	Definition
Social Interaction Quality	The ability to enhance the capacity to communicate, generate social presence, and show human comprehension and individualized attention inside the customer's accumulation information process.
Functional Quality	The capacity to make full use of the social commerce platform and its many features and applications in order to provide a buying experience that is straightforward, user-friendly, and time-saving.
Design Quality	The ability to develop aesthetically pleasing and engaging informational activities that boost engagement and involvement, as well as create a social commerce system and shopping features that are simple to use and learn.
Information Quality	The ability to keep understandable relevance information up-to-date and provide sufficiently broad, deep, reliable, and precise information through various formats.
Responsiveness	The commitment to always being ready and responsive to customers' inquiries, product, and service orders, greetings, and complaints with little waiting time through individualised customer attention automatically boosts a customer's positive experience.
Privacy and Security	The ability provides a trustworthy platform and keeps a promise to protect users against the risk of fraud, financial loss, and privacy intrusion while also portraying trustworthy and compassionate interactions.
Personalization	The capability to provide customization on how customers would like to interact and with whom they would like to be connected, thereby catering to specific customer demands or implied interests to create and manage customers' unique purchase pathways.
Communication Quality	The ability to provide two-way interpersonal communication with human agent sellers through a wide application system using communication styles that are based on customer preference

Social Interaction Quality

One of the key dimensions in the delivery of Social Commerce Service Quality is the *Social Interaction Quality*. This result substantiates the significance of social connection in social commerce, where individuals interact with one another in an online setting, especially in the fashion industry. It also serves as a foundation for the success of social media, which is being increasingly used as a social commerce platform to interact with customers (Jakhar et al., 2020). The four sub-dimensions of Social Interaction Quality are *human presence, continuous interaction, individualization, and competency*. Some respondents agreed that the presence of a human in an online setting instills greater trust in the product or service being offered, thereby increasing the likelihood of continuous interaction. It appears that customers were persuaded to purchase further discussion. It meant to mimic the experience customers have at brick-and-mortar stores staffed by real people.

> Customers can purchase directly through websites, but they still choose dropship (external seller) to purchase for them. Sometimes, they might love to deal with people who need to log in to the website. They always ask, survey, and discuss with us first, and then they pay. *(R5)*

> Because the company wants to have more one-on-one interactions with their customers, they commissioned us (external sellers) to interact directly with the customers. The majority of the customers that I deal with would rather speak with a

live person than sign up for an account on the website. They require our assistance to shop for them. *(R4)*

Customers can place orders through the company's website, which relies more on computer interaction. Still, many would rather deal with a company employee or an indirect distributor, both of which rely more on human interaction. Some buyers insisted on talking to sellers right away before they would buy something. Respondents said they were more likely to buy something after a good experience with a seller. It demonstrates the importance of social interaction in shaping identities, making purchasing decisions, and generally having a pleasant flow experience.

> I generally ask before buying. I can't see if the scarf is ironless or cooling. Many reliable sources have explained everything. Some sent me high-quality photos and movies. If the vendor responds to my questions, I will have more faith in the purchase. Because of this, I use the same sellers. *(R7)*

On the other hand, individualization facilitates ongoing interaction with the vendor, ultimately leading to a purchase. Furthermore, such individualized interaction serves as the initial step towards developing a longer relationship and continuously rebuilding trust, both of which are critical in establishing continued purchasing intention (Wang et al., 2023).

> My service involves making purchases on behalf of others. Therefore, one-on-one communication is crucial. Each customer's needs must be met. In addition to offering videos and photos of the clothing, I conducted video calls with some of my customers to confirm the design and colors they desired while purchasing the product. *(R6)*

> I prefer familiar personal shoppers. It's easier when you know the individuals, and I love how I'm treated. I can buy whatever I want because personal shoppers are occasionally informed and we had a video call at the store. *(R8)*

Functional quality

The result indicates that *Functional Quality* can be referred to as its ability to optimize the purchasing experience, and its simplicity. As a result of its many useful features and applications, as well as its simplified checkout procedure, social commerce has a high *Functional Quality.* Given that customers vary their tastes and priorities, R8 says that providing access to diverse features and apps simplifies the buying process. Companies that offer a wide variety of choices to their customers are more likely to make a sale because those options can be tailored to the needs of more customers. It is in vendors' best interest to know which kinds of applications are most well-liked by buyers. Customers, according to R7, would rather shop and place orders through social networking applications (WhatsApp and Telegram) than a traditional e-commerce website because of its convenience and personalization.

> I discovered an ad while I was browsing my social media, an apparel caught my eye, so first thing I check their account; if there is a lot of interactions between the account and the customer, it lifts up my confidence, then I click a link, direct me to their Shopee account, I can check on the review section, automatically tell me that this seller is not a scam. Then, if there is anything that I would like to ask, I directly chat with the seller and buy on social media or order on WhatsApp. *(R8)*

> I browse Shopee first for points and free shipping. But occasionally, my favorite brand is unavailable on such a platform because they have their own WhatsApp order and a nice website. I like a brand with an excellent website and WhatsApp shop orders. If the new arrival item is sold out online, I can WhatsApp the store and ask if

they can bring it to my house. If I buy more and receive points, I get free shipping. I admire they do such service. It offers various options for my needs. *(R7)*

The concept of simplicity involves functions that have been provided by the seller through the use of a platform that is both user-friendly and capable of saving time, which could help users to accomplish a specific goal or resolve a problem. Some respondents explained that customers prefer purchasing through social media because they are used to the system and its effects on their daily lives. Customers may eventually quit the online shopping on a specific platform if it is not user-friendly and efficient.

Social media is being designed to ease people. (R2)

The application is easy to use. *(R5)*

A brand update on Facebook touting their new clothing caught my eye, and then I checked Instagram and saw more photos and videos promoting the same thing. I need to buy it. *(R9)*

Today, it's easy to buy something. If I saw the product on Instagram stories, I could swipe up to get to the company's website or chat about it on WhatsApp and buy it from there. *(R8)*

Design Quality

Design quality refers to the degree to which a social commerce platform provides a simple and effective usage method while retaining an appealing online appearance to customers. Respondents cite several different sub-themes that relate to *design quality, including aesthetic design, ease of use and learning, and interaction* and *engagement*. As another aspect of *Design Quality*, aesthetics has received much attention from respondents. Respondents offered a variety of descriptions for what constitutes an aesthetically pleasing layout. To begin, nearly everyone in the interviews agreed that, for optimal effectiveness in social commerce posts, product photos and videos should be presented in a visually appealing manner. Due to the integration of social media into people's daily lives, such engaging images could attract purchasers. Displaying a product's attractiveness in photos and even in live sessions will unquestionably entice consumers to buy it.

I love seeing a brand provide us with beautiful pictures and videos whenever a new arrival occurs. It gives me a goose bum seeing it. It tells me I need to grab one of that blouse. Then, they kept posting it like several posts in a day. After that, more people also shared their stories and got repost by the brand, which made me want to buy it even more. *(R7)*

I fell in love with the product at first sight. Love seeing the pictures and a good-quality teasers. I kept looking at their account, which usually let me buy one of those pieces. Most well-known brands will always present us with an excellent concept. *(R8)*

In contrast, the concepts of usability and learnability define *Design Quality* as the capacity to present people with a layout that makes the buying process less complicated for them. A well-designed e-commerce or social commerce platform is an important indicator of user experience and pleasure. Since there are many available options, it is the retailers' job to create and select the ideal application and purchasing procedure that makes life easier for the customers.

We simplify our buying process. We offer numerous ways to buy our products. We know that customers will leave a complicated buying process. Most of our customers

> use several social media, so we need to be actively engaged with them through the selected applications. *(R3)*

> Nowadays, you can purchase apparel easily; most sellers provide order through WhatsApp (text messaging). For me, the easiest way to purchase is without logging in to the website, and surprisingly, we can purchase through cash on delivery through WhatsApp orders. *(R8)*

A good design will also keep the audience engaged. A company's success depends on creating a community in which people want to spend time. Respondents advise brand sites to provide information and engaging activities that stimulate idea generation and conversation to improve consumer interactions. They incorporate interactivity into post descriptions to encourage consumer discussion and involvement or a simple post by requesting customers to mention their once they wear their product. In line with belonging sentiment, several Malaysian modest fashion brands have invented their own nicknames for their fan base to foster a sense of community and boost connection and engagement among their loyal customers. R6 named fandoms:

> Nowadays, brands start to name their fans. 'Calaqueen for Calaqisya's fan base, dUCkies for The Duck Group. It strengthens the relationships among themselves. They interact with one another on the online post comment and sometimes, when the brand repostss their pictures, and others will begin to give good comments and even complement each other. *(R6)*

> We often create a post with an intriguing statement but in a positive way so that we can interact more with our customers. We once voted on what color our customer prefers for our next collections just to know that they are still with us and at the same time to know their interest. *(R1)*

Information Quality

Since people who shop online are unable to physically examine and try out the goods before buying them, they demand specific information that is easily accessible before making a purchase decision, which makes *Information Quality* an essential dimension. The data collected on *Information Quality* generated five distinct themes that need to be understandable, accurate, useful, and up-to-date with various formats. Since customer's actions are largely determined by the information they have access to, companies need to ensure that the information regarding their goods and services is both accurate and easy to understand. It is recommended that sellers emphasize simplicity while yet preserving accuracy in the majority of situations. The seller needs to be aware that people tend to read vital messages that are brief while simultaneously being simply understandable.

> It is essential to have accurate information displayed on the advertising post for each product. On each post, we include direct information, notably in the form of pictures and videos. A concise sentence performs exceptionally effectively and has the potential to effortlessly attract people's attention. In the section on writing posts, we will compose a lengthy statement. It is essential that the facts be accurate and that the writing not be misleading. If it is written incorrectly, the results could be disastrous. *(R1)*

Additionally, providing up-to-date and useful information through various formats is increasingly important. Such measures are particularly important in the fashion business since the fabric's material, design, and sizes are often changing. If customers are not made aware of the adjustments, they will have the impression that they have been deceived. They will feel dissatisfied when they receive a product

that does not meet the standards of what they consider to be satisfactory. Then, using a variety of applications that online customers are already accustomed to is crucial because sellers focus on decreasing the prevalence of the "need to touch" among them. Sellers are advised to focus on feedback sections. The value of the feedback section is enhanced by the graphic reviews that customers upload there in the form of photos and videos.

> Let's say we produce two different apparel designs with different fabric materials; we need to give our customer an update about it. We might inform them through videos and pictures and even explain them through our live sessions, so that customers are informed about it… Besides wearing it, the whole colors must be displayed even though they didn't. So that it easy for customers to access and see the real color through live sessions. *(R3)*

> I have seen clear pictures of the material and videos of models wearing it. And if in social media or even Shoppe (social commerce marketplace), posting real videos and pictures is important for me. Sometimes, products are sent differently from the pictures they post, especially if they are sent by seller from China. Most local sellers provide us with real pictures and videos, making me more confident in buying their product. Videos and pictures from the review been left by sellers are the most crucial factors that need to be seen before I purchase. *(R9)*

Responsiveness

Similar to how *Responsiveness* is defined, the respondent's explanation offers a straightforward interpretation of the word itself. Three distinct subthemes emerged from the comments: the capacity to be well-prepared and provide prompt responses to enquiries and problems, which results in a positive experience. The situation occurred frequently through personal communication channels, where customers could contact the seller personally. With such interaction, customers expect sellers to react instantly, affecting the customer's experience and desire to engage in social commerce. Customers who have to wait too long for a response from a seller are more likely to develop doubts about making a purchase and ultimately look for another seller. Once it is responded to quickly, it definitely enhances the customer's positive experience.

> I wouldn't say I like it when sellers do not respond to my text messages or take a long time to do so. Sometimes, my questions are simple, but they still take a long time to answer. In my opinion, this demonstrates that they are not committed to providing satisfactory service to the customers. I seek for another seller. *(R7)*

> Sometimes, Shoppe has several sellers selling the same item. First, I need to ask them my questions. I chose to deal with those who answered me promptly. The same goes for personal shoppers, it is important to choose a personal shopper who promptly responds to my inquiries. *(R9)*

> We believe that customers will be satisfied and would chat longer if we had responded it quickly. Usually, the conversation keeps running and will turn into a purchase. *(R2)*

To be responsive, sellers need to be readily prepared. It is the ability to facilitate effective engagement by making information readily available. For instance, in order to provide accurate information on the brand's products, sellers can always prepare reviews and testimonials from satisfied customers, strategize several copywriting, and use customer management systems so that it is easy for the sellers to provide immediate responses (Huang & Benyoucef, 2013). Such action helps sellers give immediate assistance to foster stronger customer engagement. Sellers should always be prepared reviews and

testimonials from satisfied customers and strategize several copywriting so that it is easy for them to provide immediate responses. It is suggested that social commerce sellers compile a list of frequently asked questions (FAQs) from potential buyers and then develop a set of copywriting responses to those questions.

> I have my customer's testimonial so that it is easy for the customer to refer. I haveve created my own copywriting. Usually, customers will ask similar things; thus, I have everything prepared so that it is easy for both of us to communicate promptly. I readily share pictures and videos and copy-paste the copywriting. The most matters are I need to reply as fast as I can. *(R5)*

> Usually, customers will be asked the same things. Even if we provided FAQ sections thath they can easily read, there will alwaysbe a customers who asked the same question. So we need to prepare our won copywriting based on frequently asked questions by the customer. With that, it is easy for our staff to copy and paste the answers. It will be quick and simpl*e. (R1)*

Privacy and Security

The *Privacy and Security* topic was brought up with two discrete sub-themes that emerged from the respondents: the capacity to provide a trustworthy platform, a risk-free exchange process, and anti-fraud safeguards. The second subtheme focuses on safeguarding the confidentiality of customer's data. It is more on how sellers choose which system to provide to the customer rather than creating it themselves. According to the interviewees, *Trustworthy Platform* means as an application that is easy and they are familiar with. Usually, such system are well known and had been verified its safety.

> Usually, we will provide more options on the banking system. For now, it's easy, as the finance system has provided the system we used. Customers just need to choose which bank they prefer to continue purchasing. Apart from that, nowadays, the banking system is secured. Thus, no crucial issues arise as we depend on the system that links to our official banking account. *(R1)*

Meanwhile, *Information And Privacy Protection* refers to the information given by the customers involving their personal details, which they need to protect. They agree that being an honest seller is crucial where disclosing personal information obtained about customers with others, especially companies, is forbidden. Sellers need to ask customer's permission if they would like to use customer's information as a selling point. If they would like to use it as a selling point, for example, as a review, feedback, or testimonial, an approval from the customers is crucial. Customers will only shop if they believe it is safe to reveal private information. Otherwise, they will not.

> No, I had never been taught to share or sell customer information to others. It is wrong to do that. It isn't very ethical. I didn't do anything with the information. As for me once we share, customer will feel cheated. Once that happens, I can confirm it's hard to return to business…. It is the same as sharing pictures or videos that act as reviews. I need to get permission first to use it or to share it with other customers. I will not share if they do not allow me. *(R5)*

> Sharing customer info without their consent is a crime. I know I had their name, phone number, and address, I will not share or sell those things. For me, it's wrong. But if the feedback is given by customers in terms of pictures or videos, I will share after I get the permission to share. For me testimonials or reviews are important for me to

increase customer trust. Even it is important, I need to get permission if they don't allow me to share, I will not share. *(R6)*

The maintenance and implementation of extensive *Security and Privacy* policies are imperative for businesses and online vendors, as it significantly influences the trust that customers have in an organization (Rodriguez et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2023).

Personalization

A new theme that gained respondents' attention regarding Social Commerce Service Quality is the ability to provide a Personalized service to Malaysian modest fashion customers. It is the seller's ability to deal with customers in a personal manner and adapt its offering to meet the specific needs of customers. The most notable point by the interviewees were that p*ersonalization* is a service where customers choose a certain set of self-contained areas to explore based on their own preferences. This lets them create and manage their own unique purchasing paths. *Personalization* has been involved with two sub-themes, where interaction and wide options include shopping and personalized connection. In other words, with various functions of social commerce applications that provide wide options, customers can easily personalize how they shop. Now, it is easy for them to personalize to whom they want to deal with as well as how they want to interact and connect.

> I shopped online because I was drawn to Instagram fashion. Some influencers advertise their clothing brands and provide links to buy them. I'll buy it when it's easiest. If the new arrival item is sold out online, I can WhatsApp the store and ask if they can bring it to my house. If I buy more and receive points, I get free shipping. I love their service. It offers various possibilities for my needs. *(R7)*

> As a personal shopper, customers can interact through multiple options. Some even make a video call once I reach the store so that it is easy for them to choose the item in real-time. I even made a live session once I reached the store so that more customers could see and purchase in a real time. *(R6)*

Communication Quality

Communication Quality, a new concept, has been raised in response to interviewees' perspectives on how social commerce works, notably in the Malaysian modest fashion industry, which reflects constant customer-sellers communication. It appears that Malaysian modest fashion shoppers prefer two-way communication with the sellers during their online shopping process. *Communication Quality* comprises four sub-dimensions: communication style, interpersonal communication, two-way communication system, and human-agent communication. The format, ritual, or mannerism employed by the buyer or seller in the contact is referred to as communication style, and different agents employ varied communication styles due to varying adaptability among customers. Seller's communication styles must not only give customers necessary consultancy and guidance, but also interact warmly and friendly. Customers expect prompt service since they can readily communicate with the sellers.

> Customers ask similar questions. Customers will still ask the same question even with an easy-to-read FAQ section. We should greet them politely. We had our welcomes. Thus, we must create our copywriting based on customer FAQs. *(R1)*

> If they respond slowly, I think this shows they do not care about customer service. I want another seller. I always prepare a few questions before buying to feel assured. I'll pick a seller who responds quickly. *(R7)*

Meanwhile, interpersonal communication lets sellers respond effectively to client inquiries and solve difficulties. Two-way communication lets customers contact sellers at any time and anticipate a timely response via live chat, one of the famous tools of a communication app. Without a communication app, both parties cannot communicate easily. Also, human-agent communication enhances the purchase experience and streamlines the buying process. Despite the availability of bot chat and websites, some customers may choose a human agent to assist them in concluding their purchasing process because it appears to be simpler and quick. Furthermore, human agent communication can potentially improves long-term relationships between the brand, sellers, and customers.

> A well-known company's live chat and email assistance were especially effective at responding to my questions... Live chat also makes contacting my dropshipper or personal shopper easy, and I like getting rapid responses. I prefer familiar personal shoppers. It's easier when you know the individuals, and I love how I'm treated. When personal shoppers inform me about going to the store, we sometimes have video calls, making it easy for me to buy whatever I want. *(R8)*

4.0 DISCUSSION

Social Interaction Quality has been emphasized simply because human interaction is required in an online environment. Social interaction is a vital feature of s-commerce (Zhou et al., 2023). Zhou (2020) emphasizes that social interaction, which involves human–human interaction, has a significant effect on the flow experience, influencing social purchase and sharing intentions. This finding supports the relevance of social connection in the nature of social commerce, in which people engage with one another in an online setting (Chiu et al., 2022), particularly in the fashion industry. It also supports the functionality of social media, which is one of the key social commerce platforms used to engage customers by reflecting communication activities between two or more individuals (Yang et al., 2023). Throughout a service encounter, the demonstration of human comprehension and the individualized attention that service representatives provide to customers is critical because it can influence customer attitudes and behavioral intentions (Zhou, 2020). In addition, supplying a human social presence via online chat can increase customer trust in a website (Ogonowski et al., 2014) and encourage repeat customer visits (Koponen & Rtysy, 2020). When customers can obtain useful information and real-time interaction from sellers, they may prefer to purchase products or services from the same seller in exchange for the information and interaction they have received (Zhang et al., 2020).

The dimension of *Functional Quality*, observed by a number of participants, agreed with the findings of other studies where social commerce is well-known for its simplicity of use, which is one of the primary reasons for its popularity (Handarkho, 2021; Pour et al., 2020; Mc Lean et al., 2020). Furthermore, aaccording to Handarkho (2021), most people seek information through useful platforms to accomplish specific goals or resolve particular issues, increasing their need to interact and intention to use specific social platforms. This signifies a novel trend in altering customer relationship management rules, enabling companies to communicate with customers directly through cost-effective and efficient tools (Pour et al., 2022). In addition, online customers are much more likely to purchase from businesses that offer a wide variety of functions and services, mainly because their diverse needs can be fulfilled (Pour et al., 2020). Apart from that, customer satisfaction has increased due to the usage of technology, in this case, through the social commerce utilization in providing consistent and rapid response and solutions to customers (Islam et al., 2021).

The dimension of *Design Quality* uncovers the degree to which a social commerce platform provides a simple and effective usage method while retaining an appealing online appearance to customers, which reflects the findings of Pour et al. (2020) and Aljukhadar et al. (2020) on social commerce. Apart from the ease of use design and process, the participants agreed on aesthetic layout and graphics influenced

their purchase as a well-balanced set of graphic cues not only draws customers' attention to a brand's online presence but also eventually strengthens a product's credibility and reduces uncertainty, and contributes to increased satisfaction (Attar et al., 2021). Furthermore, a significant proportion of customers consider social commerce to be user-friendly devices that result in Internet users devoting over 33% of their online time to social networking and social media platforms (Xu et al., 2023). In order to enhance the online purchasing experience for customers, social commerce platforms should create user-friendly tools for the presentation of products (Zhou et al., 2023). The convenience of accessing and navigating social applications may appeal to customers as a means of simplifying their purchasing decisions, in contrast to websites that may present challenges in terms of item search and payment processing (Rahman et al., 2023).

Most of the participants agreed that social commerce *Informational Quality* provides helpful and important customer information, consistent, precise, up-to-date, constructive, and concise information, through various formats such as video, picture, text, and detailed information (Pour et al., 2020). Any inconsistencies in the provided information or communication may disrupt the buying process (Handarkho, 2021). Information quality plays an important role in e-commerce (Chen et al., 2020). The demand for easily accessible and specific information prior to making a purchase decision has increased among online shoppers who lack the ability to physically examine and test the goods (Leeraphong et al., 2016; Tseng et al., 2022). Given that customers' behaviour is significantly influenced by the information available to them, it is imperative for organizations to guarantee the accuracy and comprehensibility of the information pertaining to their products and services. Customers are more likely to establish a positive relationship with online sellers when they receive adequate and relevant information from the sellers (Zhou et al., 2023). There was widespread agreement that having clear, accurate, and current information is critical to the success of online businesses (Handarkho, 2021; Chen et al., 2020; Pour et al., 2020).

Be it apparel retailers or retailers in general, immediate action and service assistance should be made available to customers in order to address their needs effectively and to increase customer engagement and satisfaction (Lim et al., 2020). The desire of having a quick response to problem and inquiries occurred frequently through personal communication channels, where customers could usually contact the seller personally (Pour et al., 2022) and expect sellers to react instantly. Several researchers have stated that, as a result of the impact of technological advances on competitiveness, businesses must adopt agility and *Responsiveness* (Islam et al., 2020). Chen et al. (2021) argued that delays in the selling process could result in the loss of potential customers. The length of time customers have to wait for a response from a seller has a significant impact on their willingness to make a purchase in e-commerce transactions. This is due to the fact that extended wait times increase customer's perceived risks and uncertainties (Li et al., 2023). Customers are more likely to be happy with their purchases and buy from the same seller again if the seller responds quickly to their needs.

According to the respondents, the dimensions of *Privacy And Security* continue to be one of the most important dimensions in raising consumer satisfaction. The dimensions pertaining to *Privacy and Security* persist as crucial factors in enhancing customer satisfaction, as posited by Tseng et al. (2022). Online commerce transactions are associated with greater risks compared to offline transactions due to the unpredictable nature of the Internet environment, as noted by Wang et al. (2023). With that, it has a huge impact on customers' brand trust, which is one of the key reasons why businesses or online sellers should be urged to update and adopt comprehensive security and privacy policies continuously, according to Rodriguez et al. (2020). For instance, Rodriguez et al. (2020) state that the website must offer purchasing instructions, affirm that it is secure, convey a sense of competence and confidence, or use payment security measures. They also emphasised that a website had to ensure all users' personal information would be kept private and that the completion of a transaction would be confirmed once payment had been received.

Customer interaction channels are not one-way in social commerce; instead, everything is reciprocal, making it simple for customers to participate actively in the process (Pour et al., 2022). These technologies facilitate customers in designing and managing their individual purchasing processes, thereby enhancing the level of *Personalization.* According to Hajli (2020), social commerce allows customers to swiftly purchase their desired items through the online platform. As a result, an increasing number of individuals are inclined towards utilizing this approach, as it has been observed that numerous social media platforms have enabled easy accessibility to directly engage with entrepreneurs (Rahman et al., 2023), thereby granting customers the ability to personalize their purchasing preferences. In addition, customers can further tailor their shopping experiences by instructing indirect distribution channels like personal shoppers to make purchases whenever and from whichever stores the customers specify. Cultural factors in the modest fashion industry in Malaysia set this situation apart from previous examples of *Personalization* found in the literature. Another dimension in enabling *Personalization* in Social Commerce Service Quality was the seller's capacity to provide customers with their preferred mode of engagement (Hu & Chaudhry, 2020). Live chat technology permits instantaneous interaction between a user and a customer service agent and enables a more personalized service experience.

As a result of the interviewee's insightful comments about the efficacy of social commerce, particularly in the Malaysian modest fashion business, the *Communication Quality* has improved. It is a relatively new idea that grew out of the frequent two-way conversation between buyers and sellers in the Malaysian modest fashion industry. The term "*Communication Quality*" can describe a service's success in meeting customers' needs when it comes to establishing and maintaining two-way, person-to-person interactions with human agent salespeople via a widespread application system and a set of communication styles tailored to each consumer. Unlike previous studies, communication may be related to *Social Interaction Quality*. On the other hand, *Communication Quality* is more concerned with fostering an authentic bond between sellers and customers. Though well-trained chatbots might be as effective as skilled service professionals in the e-commerce setting, buyers still preferred talking to real people, and their purchase rate dropped by 79.7 percent if they suspected they were talking to a bot (Luo et al., 2019). Its key focus is on being able to deliver direct, individualized treatment that is suited to each individual's specific needs. Customers can obtain the necessary relevant information through social media communication, allowing them to obtain their desired information with less effort (Sayyedamiri, 2021; Laroche et al., 2013).According to Zhou et al. (2023), trust can be transferred and enhanced through interpersonal interaction and effective communication. The importance of exceptional communication and positive customer experiences in social commerce as a means of competing with other sellers is crucial (Pour et la., 2022).

5.0 LIMITATION AND FUTURE RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS

A number of limitations were identified with regards to the qualitative phase of this study. The number of participants engaged in the study was relatively small, although it complies with the requisite sample size for qualitative research. This can be seen particularly in the number of participants representing three type of respondents that range from direct, indirect sellers and customers. If the representatives from these groups were increased, the results would yield more robust data and allow more participants' experiences to be explored. Thus, a bigger sample size for future research is encouraged. Apart from that, future research may choose the same or one type of respondents. Future research may explore the opinions from sellers or consumers as one subject.

6.0 CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

Theoretical contribution:

The primary contribution of the present study is the development of Social Commerce Service Quality dimensions and their respective sub-dimensions where the model helps to reduce the limitations of various e-service quality and website efficacy measurement tools. As limited research has been conducted on the extent of e-service quality within the realm of social commerce, the model nurtures the knowledge on both subjects.

Practical contribution:

In this study, a SCSQ model has been developed to provide guidance for improving the Social Commerce Service Quality in the Malaysian modest fashion industry. Research on the Social Commerce Service Quality is limited, and research on Malaysia, a country that has its own shopping culture, is also scarce. Therefore, it is necessary to undertake this research since there is a lack of research on both of these topics. Furthermore, the research is centred on a particular significant area, which serves as one of the emerging sectors, crucial for the development of Malaysia halal industry,namely modest fashion industry. Despite the industry's significance, there is a lack of research on this particular sector. Apart from that, the identified dimensions can guide businesses in the right direction, improving the quality of social commerce services provided to not only Malaysians but the global Muslim community as a whole.

7.0 CONCLUSION

The present study intends to provide guidelines to enhance Social Commerce Service Quality among Malaysian modest fashion businesses from the multiple perspectives of direct and indirect distributors as well as customers. The findings identified eight dimensions: *Social Interaction Quality, Functional Quality, Design Quality, Information Quality, Privacy and Security, Responsiveness, Personalization*, and *Communication Quality*. The identified dimensions can guide businesses in the right direction, improving the quality of social commerce services provided to not only Malaysians but the global Muslim community as a whole. However, decision-makers may have a tough time covering all eight dimensions and selecting the best approach to invest in due to the organization's limited resources and the abundance of ineffective criteria. Therefore, future research could apply the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) or Analytic Network Process (ANP) for the prioritizing process. Decision makers can save time and energy by using this specialized ranking tool to rank items' importance and determine the connection between the identified dimensions and sub-dimensions.

To summarise, the identified dimensions and sub-dimensions of Social Commerce Service Quality can be used by others, not only established brands, but also those who are new to social commerce, as it is expected to be a guide in directing Malaysian modest fashion entrepreneurs so that the provision of quality in social commerce is enhanced.

8.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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