Title: How flow drives engagement and loyalty

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Abstract: Recognizing the tourism industry's reliance on e-commerce, this study aims to examine factors driving customer satisfaction and repeat purchase intentions therein. Using flow theory and the expectation-confirmation model (ECM), it explores how flow and the perceived usefulness of social shopping shape satisfaction and repurchase intentions. It also investigates the role of consumer engagement and perceived usefulness, alongside how information mediates the relationship between flow and social shopping.

Design/methodology/approach This study used a self-reported questionnaire distributed via online platform, Prolific. It specifically targeted individuals in the UK who had previously purchased tourism and hospitality products via social shopping platforms. Overall, 800 survey responses were collected, with partial least squares structural equation modeling deployed to evaluate the conceptual model developed herein.

Findings The findings contend that flow increases consumer engagement in social shopping by enhancing focus and efficiency, making it easier to compare destinations and book services, which increases perceived usefulness. Perceived usefulness drives engagement, increasing satisfaction and continuance intentions. Both engagement and perceived usefulness mediate the effects of flow on satisfaction and repurchase intentions. Informational influence enhances the relationship between flow, engagement and perceived usefulness.

Originality/value Combining flow theory and ECM, this study suggests that individuals reach an optimal state of engagement when fully immersed in social shopping. The design of tourism platforms enhances user experiences, boosting engagement, perceived usefulness, and ultimately satisfaction and loyalty. Results further highlight the interaction between flow and ECM, where greater immersion in a well-designed platform enhances satisfaction and strengthens continuance intentions.

Key words: Social shopping, Flow, Engagement, Informational influence, Perceived usefulness

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