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## PERCEIVED USEFULNESS AND PERCEIVED TRUST IN FACEBOOK AS A SOCIAL SEARCH ENGINE AND ITS IMPACT ON THE PURCHASE INTENTIONS OF RESTAURANTS' CUSTOMERS

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MOAMEN KAMEL ABOUELEZZ

FACULTY OF TOURISM AND HOTELS, MINIA UNIVERSITY, EGYPT

### ABSTRACT

*Access to the internet makes it possible to access big amounts of information online. Social search is the process of finding related data on the Internet using social media platforms such as Facebook. There is an increasing appeal to online social systems especially with the vast amounts of information are present on the internet every day. This study examines the use of Facebook as an engine for social search for restaurants' services. An online survey was developed and distributed among Facebook users to investigate their use of Facebook platform to search for restaurant services. The sample included a total of 317 participants. Data was analyzed using Smart PLS 3. The results showed that both perceived usefulness of and perceived trust in Facebook data about restaurants had a positive impact on customers' purchase intentions. The study suggests some practical recommendations for restaurant managers regarding the use of Facebook platform to positively influence purchase intentions of their customers.*

**KEYWORDS:** Social search, Facebook, Purchase intention, Restaurants.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

According to Statista (2022), there are about 2.9 billion individuals effectively interacting on Facebook on a monthly basis. According to researches, 50 percent of people borne in the year 2000 and later travel arranging are influenced or inspired by social networking platforms like Facebook. Consumers' ability to receive information, exchange of experiences and ideas, assess and pick services and products, involving hospitality services and providers, is substantially influenced by social media (Zeng & Gerritsen, 2014; Chung and Koo, 2015; Huang, 2016; Ge and Gretzel, 2018). People are growingly interacting with all forms of content that produced by their friends regarding services and products on numerous SM channels like Facebook and Instagram (Bilgihan *et al.*, 2016 and Filieri *et al.*, 2021). People always sharing posts about services and products that has a positive, negative, or neutral valence on Social Networking Platforms (SNPs), which are seen, affected upon, and

conducted on by others and relatives, forming the engagement forms of electronic word-of-mouth communications. Users can engage with people while posts amazing events on SNPs, allowing them to communicate their uniqueness while also spreading service data (Wang *et al.*, 2021). Lusch and Vargo (2006) Assured that people co-create 'value in-use' through sharing consumption experiences on SNPs, which includes advantages derived from the consuming of items and services.

Facebook is considered one of the important search engines as it has caught up with the most typical search engines. Furthermore, it has started implementing keywords in its database and algorithm. It may be estimated that the monthly searches through Facebook have reached more than 1.1 billion searches from among Facebook users throughout the world by the end of 2021 along with more than 600 million business user pages every day. This explains the importance of understanding the value of Facebook for local business discoverability on the platform. Thus, advancement is done in area of interesting of searching for information by Facebook and other channels of social media. Accordingly, the term of social search has appeared (Wang *et al.*, 2021).

Bulencea and Egger (2014) argued that Facebook is commonly used by tourists as a search engine for getting more information related to tourist attractions. Hussain *et al.*, (2017) conducted research to find out the extent of the commonality of Facebook and Twitter as search engines, that may overtake Google in the near future. Results indicated that Google still dominates in the field of search engines, followed by Facebook and Twitter.

Facebook and other social media platforms have pulled numerous people who have absorbed these platforms into their day-to-day practices (Lewandowski, 2012). Until recently, Facebook was used as a search engine for people, and then it was used for obtaining information about people. Afterwards, Facebook was used as a social search engine through which participants and their personal experiences are observed (Scale, 2008). There are two primary web patterns that have a great effect on hospitality and travel (Xiang and Gretzel, 2010). The important pattern is stamped by the rise of social platforms that includes some diverse forms of customer-created content. The other pattern is involved in network search, for this reason using social search is an appropriate search engine for people who look for traveling or reserve a hotel room (Xiang and Gretzel, 2010).

It is worth noting that no study has ever investigated adopting Facebook as a social search for choosing a restaurant to dine in. As such, this article lays great emphasis on restaurants related information that can be explored

on Facebook, what is the main usefulness of dining out related information that can be obtained, and what is the potential of social searching by Facebook for restaurants.

Although there have been many studies conducted on the use of social media to market restaurants (Kim *et al.*, 2015; Lepkowska, 2017; Leung, 2022) or review positive or negative customer comments on social media about restaurants (Kim *et al.*, 2016; Yaris & Aykol, 2021; Kumar *et al.*, 2021, no study has ever investigated the adoption of Facebook as social research engine for choosing a restaurant to eat. As such, this article focuses largely on the information about restaurants that can be explored on Facebook, what is the main benefit of dining from relevant information that can be obtained, and what are the potential for social search by Facebook for restaurants.

Facebook was chosen over other search engines for the present study as it is the most common used social search in the world. According to Destination Management Organizations (DMOs) Facebook is the most utilized social search channel (Hays *et al.*, 2012; Dwivedi *et al.*, 2012). Hays *et al.* (2012) argued that social searching by Facebook achieves the purpose of both social media search and internet search.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1. SOCIAL SEARCH**

The concept of social research refers to “a group of methods that depend on adopting the behavior of previous customers, in order to provide the information that current customers are looking for, the required information is often queried in the form of a question or inquiry by retrieving some units of information” (Brusilovsky *et al.*, 2018). Using social mechanisms to search for information on the internet is known as social searching on social platforms. Most of search engines offers a social search merit of classifying outcomes and offers an interface of webpage (Owen, 2009). Moreover, the output of social tagging systems social tagging frameworks may be utilized as a basis for internet social searching such as Trivago. Morris *et al.*, (2010) conducted a study on a group of social media users and found out that most of them use Facebook. Evans & Chi (2009) provided a clear description of the steps of the search process in situations where people can communicate with others.

Moreover, Evans and Chi (2009) indicated that social results assist people heavily due to the social steps. Social engagement is the first step in search process to assist people to set the foundation of crucial search mission. Through searching process, particularly for self-encourage information research, people always ask each other for counsel, using the responses and

discussion in a manner that develop their search scheme and inquiry keywords choices. Following the search process, people on social platforms always desire to interact with each other for collecting more responses or for sharing experiences.

However, this refers to the idea of social search may simplify the procedures of gaining the information through search process. There is a unique technique for strengthening social search i.e., over immediate message process access to your personal networking contact beside the search box. Moreover, it may take advantage of online presence society in order to identify specified field experts who may be help and response to people inquires. Hussain *et al.*, (2017) argued that present-day net search engines are not fit to discover related information obtainable on the social platforms. Accordingly, people may tend to use social platforms for obtain the information.

Xiang and Gretzel (2010) attempted to appraise social platforms for traveling enquiries. The main concentrate of their research is to survey the range which social media outcomes show in search engine outcomes within the subject of traveling-relevant searches. Their study layout stimulated travelers utilize of a search engine; it was used for arranging of travelling through utilizing a group of pre-determined keywords relative to nine United States tourist destinations. comparative results of study findings indicated that the function perform by social media includes an important part of search outcomes, as presently users depend on and utilizes social platforms extra than before.

## **2.2. FACEBOOK AS A SOCIAL PLATFORMS AND RESTAURANT**

Social media as, a new set of media, have various uses of the Internet, which share the availability that users have all or some of the following characteristics: 1) participation in discussing and sharing knowledge and experience with others with similar interests, 2) openness to others, and to communication programs other social networks without the need for secret codes, or private keys, 3) talk to others through correspondence, or through recordings different visual and audio, 4) the formation of different human groups sizes, and interests to meet social networking requirements at its members, 5) linking with many websites and electronic services available on the Internet to increase the effectiveness of the means social media (Mayfield, 2008).

There are a wide range of definitions developed by academics and researchers about the concept of social media (Carr and Hayes, 2015). The definition of Boyed and Ellison (2007) is the first in this regard, as they defined social networking sites as the services that depend mainly on the

Internet, which enables users to (a) create personal profiles, (b) create a record of the group of friends associated with them on the same network, (c) Making a list of contacts to be dedicated to them within the same platform through which they are connected, search on social networks can be referred to as “social search”.

It is obvious that, there is an understanding among many people about the concept of the social media site due to the close association of individuals with technology and media. They summarized most of the concepts presented in the following definition as a group of channels and platforms that depend mainly on the presence of the Internet, in addition to their dependence mainly on the interaction of people and each other, whether at the same moment or at a later time, and derived from the form of the content that he created one of them (Carr & Hayes, 2015). In the same context, He (2017) defined social networking sites as “a group of human gatherings on a network of virtual world networks in order to share contributions, experiences, skills, ideas and beliefs in the form of content published on these platforms” .Social platforms such as Facebook are now greatly interfered in the users’ purchase decision making, especially by exchanging information, experiences and different experiences for users, as well as purchases on social networking sites, influencing attitudes and opinions, and finally, evaluation processes after the purchase of products or obtaining the service. (Mangold and Faulds 2009). In addition, reviews on social media pages often influence users who want to make arrangements for a particular travel, book a hotel, or choose a particular restaurant for dinner (Kim *et al.*, 2011; Kimes, 2011; Jeong and Jang, 2011). After the strong spread of social networking sites, it was found that it has a significant impact on customers with regard to building trust and making purchasing decisions about those websites that are run by agents and stores (Pantelidis, 2010).

Social platforms do an important job when it comes to choosing a particular restaurant or hotel, as well as traveling to a particular country, as it provides users with many experiences of other people who have gone through this process and share their experiences on social networking sites, especially the Facebook platform (Kwok and Yu, 2013). As such, hospitality companies have to find effective ways to benefit from social platforms. Facebook is ascendant among those social media tools. Accordingly, the most popular platform by users was Facebook.

### **2.3. SEARCH ON FACEBOOK**

Many explanations and definitions of social search have been proposed. Users collect information about services and products that they want to purchase by asking various inquiries from their friends, acquaintances, or

other people they do not know on social networking sites (Evans and Chi, 2009; Morris *et al.*, 2010; Kim *et al.*, 2018). Users can also conduct their search for services and products through a search using content, which greatly influences consumer decisions. Users may find social networking sites more useful than those resulting from the use of the Internet and the various search engines on the World Wide Web like asking network connections and collaborative search (Morris *et al.*, 2010).

Facebook's search tool acts as a search engine that may help the user find specific information. The search bar provides suggestions at the time the user types on the keyword. Then, below the type head bar, the most common results which correspond to the requested search keywords appear (Bulencea & Egger, 2014). Facebook has gained a significant research interest in many disciplines that is the most utilized platform by social media users. But a few researches have concentrated on how Facebook may be utilized as an efficient tool in communication (Kwok & Yu, 2013, Bulencea & Egger, 2014).

#### **2.4. PERCEIVED USEFULNESS**

Facebook may provide valuable information about traveling on holidays (Cho & Jang, 2008). Little research has been conducted on the perceived information usefulness for tourism and hospitality arrangement (Cho & Sung, 2012). Cho & Jang (2008) have studied research related to the benefits that accrue to users as a result of using social media platforms and found that the communication sites have a huge set of positive effects for individuals represented in achieving a degree of entertainment and entertainment as well as social harmony and communication with positive individuals and avoiding the risks related to boredom and psychological exhaustion.

A recent study conducted by Frimpong *et al.*, (2022) on the benefit that can be achieved through social media platforms, particularly on Facebook as a new search engine used by customers. Results of social media search are always supported by multiple content such as images and videos that achieve for customers a comprehensive understanding about the advantages and characteristics of each product and the nature of each service, which increases the customer's connection to these brands and increases the process of mutual interaction between the customer and the institution.

Hypotheses 1: Perceived usefulness has a positive impact on social search on Facebook

Hypotheses 2: Perceived usefulness has a positive impact on purchase intentions

## **2.5. PERCEIVED TRUST**

With the increase in the spread of electronic stores and the increase in the movement of buying and selling via the Internet, and the provision of many facilities to customers and delivery services to the customer, the concept of trust appeared, which is the main point in the subject of electronic commerce, without which the purchase process may not occur in the first place (Vasic *et al.*, 2019). Therefore, when social networking sites spread and the ability of users to interact, express opinions and benefit from the experiences and experiences of others about the products and services provided, it became more confident and safer when dealing with such social platforms (Zhang *et al.*, 2022).

A recent study conducted by Johnson *et al.*, (2022) Confirmed that there is a significant effect of social presence through online social networks with regard to the extent of trust in the products and services offered by retailers. The study also found that the social media platforms provided users, in addition to trust, a great pleasure as a result of the mutual interaction between the retailers and the customer. This is considered missing in the buying and selling operations that take place through other Internet sites. The information provided on social media by online customers, according to Dutta and Bhat (2015), builds confidence among future customers. Social media referrals and recommendations have become key sources of trust. Based on the literature review presented (Dutta & Bhat, 2015; Johnson, 2022; Zhang *et al.*, 2022) and formulated the following hypothesis:

Hypotheses 3: Perceived trust has a positive impact on social search on Facebook

Yeon, *et al.* (2019) pointed out that online shoppers have trust in the product and buy it through social media platforms, as well as the intention to buy it again. As a result, goods sales have grown on social media. According to the above literature review, we formulated the following hypothesis

Hypotheses 4: Perceived trust has a positive impact on purchase intentions

## **2.6. PURCHASE INTENTION**

Search on social media now has a massive effect on customer information search and customer purchase intentions and, accordingly, intermediates the way customers realize and react with travel products, tourism destinations, and hospitality services (Park *et al.*, 2010; Di Pietro *et al.*, 2011; Sigala *et al.*, 2012). These forms of communication and information are becoming more prominent and effective in directing customer purchase decisions. (Wang *et al.*, 2012). Recent studies on the effect of social search

on customer purchase intention clear that social media, especially Facebook positively impact on consumers' intentions (Huang, 2016; Narangajavana *et al.*, 2017; Önder *et al.*, 2020; Dwivedi *et al.*, 2021; Onofreia, 2022). Social search can be utilized to determine the features of the customers, the operation of arrangement, data sources, technique of data search and processing, and the components impacting these purchase intentions (Pan & Fesenmaier, 2006; Gretzel *et al.*, 2012). Based on the literature review presented in the previous section (Huang, 2016; Narangajavana *et al.*, 2017; Önder *et al.*, 2020; Dwivedi *et al.*, 2021; Onofreia, 2022), this study assumes the following hypothesis:  
Hypotheses 5: social search on Facebook has a positive impact on purchase intentions.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1. MEASUREMENT**

The study relied on a quantitative approach and used the questionnaire as a tool for collecting primary data. The questionnaire included six main sections. Presenting and presenting the objectives of the research, explaining the voluntary nature of participation, expressing the identity of the participants, their personal data. Section two characteristics of respondents including gender, nationality and age group. The other five sections provided metrics for measuring study variables where is the third section measured Perceived usefulness from searching by Facebook, section four perceived trust of information gained from searching by Facebook, section five social search on Facebook, and lastly section six purchase intentions.

All items used to measure the constructs of these previous studies have been adapted, specifically, while perceived usefulness was measured by six items form the study of Frimpong *et al.*, (2022) while perceived trust was measured by nine items form the study of Johnson *et al.*, (2022) while social search on Facebook were measured by four items form the study of Bulencea & Egger (2014) while purchase intentions were measured by five items form the study of Onofreia (2022). Some items were slightly modified to fit the study. All scales were anchored with a different main statement and were on a five-point Likert scale.

#### **3.2. DATA COLLECTION**

An electronic questionnaire was made through the Google Forms in order to collect the data related to this study. The questionnaire was in the form of closed questions using the Five-Likert scale, each question in it contains five closed questions ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (always). Then the questionnaire was sent to a three of academic experts in order to judge this



questionnaire to ensure the accuracy and consistency of the questions. Based on their directions, the necessary modifications were made to ensure the accuracy of the questionnaire. The sample method was used due to the lack of knowledge of the size of the study population (San and Herrero, 2012). In business research, convenience sampling by questionnaire is one of the most utilized, rapid, and low-cost data collection ways. A link to the survey was then sent to academics, students, friends, family, and other people in Egypt using WhatsApp groups. The goal of the research, the data collection process, as well as data protection and ethical concerns were all stated on the cover page of the questionnaire. The number of returned and valid electronic questionnaire was 317.

### 3.3. DATA ANALYSIS

Partial least square structural equation modelling PLS-SEM was utilized to analyze data using smart PLS 3. A hypothesized model (Figure 1) was developed based on the study hypotheses presented in the literature. The reliability and validity of measures were ensured through considering several tests such as Cronbach’s Alpha test, rho A test, composite reliability (CR), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). The model was tested using PLS algorithm and bootstrapping features which provided various statistical tests including beta value, t-value, R<sup>2</sup>, and F<sup>2</sup>.

## 4. RESULTS

### 4.1. SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

The results, as presented in Table 1, showed that the majority of the participants were Egyptians (98.7%) and only 4 people were non-Egyptians. Also, a large portion of the sample were males (about 63%) while males composed about 34%. Most of the participants were categorized among the age group between 20 and 30 years old followed by the age group of 31 to 45 years old. Lastly, regarding the education level of the participants, the sample included 211 (about 67%) university or college undergraduates and 60 people with bachelor’s degree.

**Table 1: characteristics of the sample**

<b>Nationality</b>	<b>Freq.</b>	<b>%</b>
Egyptian	313	98.7
Non-Egyptian	4	1.3
<i>Total</i>	317	100
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Freq.</b>	<b>%</b>
Male	199	62.8%
Female	118	37.2%
<i>Total</i>	317	100

<b>Age group</b>	<b>Freq.</b>	<b>%</b>
Less than 20 years	27	8.5%
Between 20 to 30	277	71.6%
Between 31 to 45	48	15.1%
46 years to 60	15	4.7%
<i>Total</i>	317	100
<b>Education level</b>	<b>Freq.</b>	<b>%</b>
Specific education & High school	6	1.9%
University undergraduate	211	66.6%
Bachelor's degree	60	18.9%
Master's Degree	20	6.3%
PhD	20	6.3%
<i>Total</i>	317	100

#### **4.2. RELIABILITY, VALIDITY, AND DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS**

Both validity and reliability of the measures were confirmed through several statistical tests, as presented in Tables 2 and 3. Reliability of the measures was confirmed as the results of the Cronbach's Alpha test, rho A test, and composite reliability (CR) were all above 0.7 (Table 2). The validity of the measures was also asserted as the scores of the Average Variance Extracted AVE (Table 2), in addition to the loading of the indicators were above 0.7 (see Table 3).

**Table 2: Reliability and convergent validity of measures**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Alpha</b>	<b>rho_A</b>	<b>CR</b>	<b>(AVE)</b>
Perceived usefulness	0.743	0.746	0.824	0.44
Perceived trust	0.729	0.789	0.806	0.343
Social search on Facebook	0.828	0.83	0.885	0.658
Purchase Intentions	0.713	0.711	0.813	0.466

Descriptive statistics, as presented in Table 3, revealed an overall positive attitude where the mean of all measures' statements ranged between 3.11 and 4.02 on a five-point Likert scale (1 = never and 5 = always) with standard deviation between 1.03 and 1.34.

**Table 3: descriptive statistics and factor loading for study variables**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Loadings</b>	<b>t-value</b>	<b>VIF</b>
<b><i>Perceived usefulness</i></b>					
Facebook pages of restaurants provide the information I want to know	3.842	1.075	0.658	14.859	1.319
Friends on Facebook provide useful information about the restaurants they have tried	3.662	1.127	0.617	13.157	1.312
When I travel out of my city, I use Facebook to search for restaurants around me	3.521	1.377	0.637	16.045	1.284
Searching through Facebook can be considered a strong alternative to searching for the Google search engine in relation to restaurants	3.681	1.16	0.611	13.608	1.239
New and constantly updated information, photos, videos and news that are provided from the restaurants Facebook pages affect the formation of a clear image of the products and services provided by these restaurants	3.861	1.035	0.726	19.496	1.735
The form of content displayed by restaurants (news, photo or video) on their Facebook pages affects my full understanding of the services and products provided by these restaurants	3.77	1.149	0.72	20.828	1.712
<b><i>Perceived trust</i></b>					
Photos of foods that restaurants post on their Facebook pages are credible	3.372	1.098	0.626	13.554	1.312
I trust information posted by people I don't know on Facebook about their personal restaurant experiences	3.117	1.203	0.676	16.212	1.543

I trust Facebook as a social search engine for restaurants I've never tried before	3.47	1.144	0.765	28.368	1.7
I trust information about restaurant reviews on public Facebook pages by ordinary people	3.278	1.167	0.713	17.355	1.651
People who post their opinions on Facebook pages about their experiences about restaurants are objective	3.382	1.031	0.671	17.353	1.445
Negative posts on Facebook about a restaurant affect my trust of this restaurant	3.814	1.115	0.438	6.328	1.274
New and updated information, photos, videos, and news that are provided by restaurants' Facebook pages affect the degree of trust in these products and services	3.763	1.128	0.633	13.53	1.517
I don't trust a restaurant that doesn't have a Facebook page	2.757	1.344	0.281	3.822	1.095
<b><i>Social search on Facebook</i></b>					
I search for restaurants that I decide to eat at through Facebook	3.47	1.299	0.81	33.46	2.378
I search for restaurants that I decide to order food from through Facebook	3.521	1.309	0.808	29.229	2.397
I browse the Facebook pages of restaurants that I am interested in	3.823	1.197	0.825	38.318	1.951
I follow many restaurants' Facebook pages to find out about the latest offers and services for restaurants	3.58	1.275	0.801	34.684	1.814
<b><i>Purchase intentions</i></b>					
Quality of the service posted by restaurants through their Facebook pages affects my decision to order this service	3.637	1.076	0.721	18.375	1.524
Promoting restaurant' products and services through Facebook affects my decision to repurchase	3.666	1.078	0.714	17.586	1.465

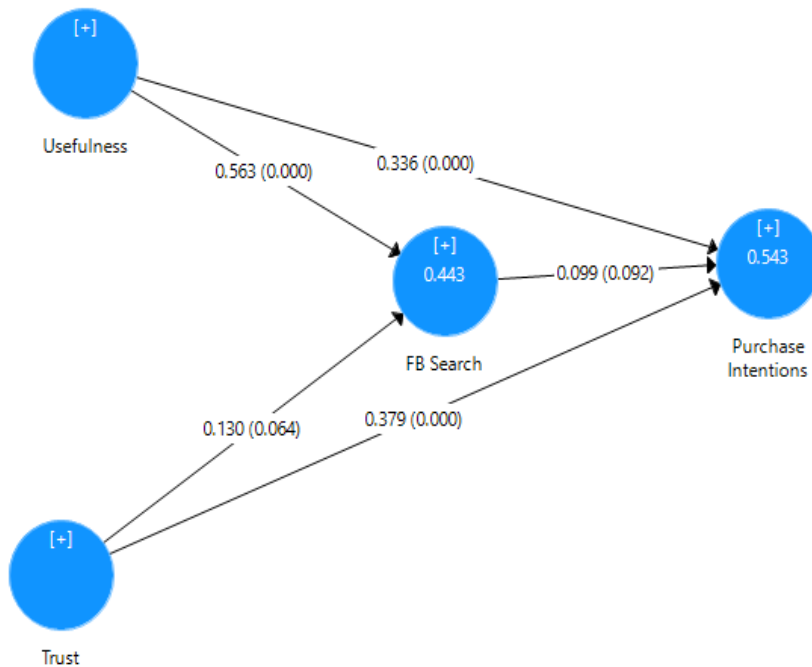
Positive reviews on Facebook pages from my friends about their successful experience of a restaurant directly influence my purchase decision from this restaurant	4.028	1.061	0.669	14.198	1.391
Positive reviews on Facebook pages from people I do not know about their successful experience of a restaurant directly influence my purchase decision from this restaurant	3.681	1.108	0.622	11.642	1.153
I encourage my friends and family to follow restaurants pages on Facebook to make a purchase decision	3.467	1.299	0.683	14.526	1.524

### 4.3. HYPOTHESES TESTING

The results of the hypotheses testing, Table 4 and Figure 1, showed that three hypotheses were accepted and two were rejected. Hypothesis 1 assumed a positive effect of perceived usefulness on social search on Facebook and it was accepted as the beta value was 0.563 with significant t-value of 8.223. Similarly, hypothesis number two was accepted indicating that perceived usefulness has a positive impact on purchase intentions ( $\beta = 0.336$  and t value = 4.551). In addition, hypothesis number 4 was accepted where the perceived trust positively impacted on purchase intentions ( $\beta = 0.379$  and t value = 5.043). On the other hand, hypothesis number 3 was rejected ( $\beta = 0.13$  and t value = 1.851) showing that perceived trust had no significant positive effect on social search on Facebook. Lastly, Social search on Facebook had no significant positive impact on purchase intentions where beta value was 0.099 with non-significant t-value of 1.639.

**Table 4: Results of hypotheses testing**

No.	Hypotheses	$\beta$	t-value	F <sup>2</sup>	Result
H1	Perceived usefulness → Social search on Facebook	0.563	8.223	0.249	Accept
H2	Perceived usefulness → purchase intentions	0.336	4.551	0.087	Accept
H3	Perceived trust → Social search on Facebook	0.13	1.851	0.013	Reject
H4	Perceived trust → purchase intentions	0.379	5.043	0.136	Accept
H5	Social search on Facebook → purchase intentions	0.099	1.639	0.012	Reject



**Figure 1: Results of testing the model**

**4.4. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS**

The study also raised an open question to the study population at the end of the survey if they have any suggestions on this issue. A set of suggestions, more than 80 responses, were suggested emphasizing the importance of all restaurants having a page on Facebook that provides all the required information about the services and products offered through it. This information should be constantly updated, displaying the price list on these pages, in addition to displaying whether these restaurants have delivery

services or not. Information must have credibility and objectivity. Some stressed on the importance of having a mobile application for every restaurant, making offers on a continuous basis and published on the restaurant's page on Facebook.

## **5. DISCUSSION**

This study contributes to the hospitality marketing literature through investigating the usefulness of using Facebook as a social search as a predictor of some critical outcomes including gathering information about restaurant that may customer want to visit or ordering food from it, especially when the customer travels outside his city, which addressed by many previous studies (Cho and Jang, 2008; Cho and Sung, 2012; Frimpong, 2022).

Regarding its hypotheses, the current study revealed some interesting results. The results confirmed that social search by Facebook is provides enough information for customers who plan to purchase from restaurants that they search for, as well as the information that restaurants publish on their Facebook pages in the form of photos and videos that increase customers' knowledge of the quality of products and services provided by these restaurants. The result of the study strongly supported the first hypotheses which was perceived usefulness has a positive impact on social search on Facebook and this is agreed with Frimpong (2022).

The study also explored the importance of perceived trust by social search including the credibility of the photos and videos that restaurants publish on their Facebook pages, as well as the extent to which they trust the reviews posted by friends, relatives, or even unknown persons on Facebook, with regard to their different experiences. These topics preoccupied many researchers who presented them in their studies about the extent of trust associated with social media platforms like (Dutta & Bhat, 2015; Yeon, *et al.*, 2019; Vasic *et al.*, 2019; Zhang *et al.*, 2022; Johnson *et al.*, 2022).

The results confirmed the importance of trust during searching for product or service via social media platforms especially Facebook, although, the emphasis on the importance of trust in social media platforms (Duta & Bhat, 2015; Yeon, *et al.*, 2019; Vasic *et al.*, 2019) but the hypotheses of trust on social search was not supported in this study. This result conflicts with previous studies (Johnson *et al.*, 2022; Zhang *et al.*, 2022; *et al.*). The hypothesis of trust impact on purchase intention was accepted which agreed with (Bhat, 2015; Yeon, *et al.*, 2019; Vasic *et al.*, 2019; Johnson *et al.*, 2022; Zhang *et al.*, 2022*et al.*).

Regarding to searching for restaurants on Facebook, the study revealed that people continuously search about restaurants they are interested in, follow their pages, and recommended it for others. This area is also discussed by many previous studies (Evans and Chi, 2008; Evans *et al.*, 2009; Morris *et al.*, 2010;

Kwok & Yu, 2013, Bulencea & Egger, 2014). Although most of the previous studies confirmed that social research positively affects the purchasing intentions of customers (Huang, 2016; Narangajavna *et al.*, 2017; Onder *et al.*, 2020; Dwiviedi *et al.*, 2021; Onofreia, 2022), the study did not support this hypothesis.

Concerning with purchase intentions the study reported a great results related to the effect of quality of products and services presented on restaurants pages; promoting products and services by restaurants on Facebook pages; positive reviews by friends and unknown persons on Facebook; and encouraging relatives to follow restaurant' Facebook pages on purchase intention, there are many previous studies conducted on the same effect, these studies were (Park *et al.*, 2010; Sigala, Christou, & Gretzel, 2012; Huang, 2016; Narangajavna *et al.*, 2017; Onder *et al.*, 2020).

## **6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The results of this study confirmed positive influence of both perceived usefulness and perceived trust on customers purchase intentions toward restaurant services. In other words, when potential customers review a useful and trusted information (posted by either social media users or restaurants) on Facebook about restaurants, they tend dine at these restaurants or order food from them. Moreover, perceived usefulness of Facebook information about restaurants encourages customers to use Facebook as a social search engine as well as social platform. Interestingly, the study showed that perceived trust in Facebook information about diners has nonsignificant positive impact on customers purchase intentions toward restaurant services.

Based in the result of this study, a number of recommendations can be suggested. Restaurant managers must consider Facebook a major and essential part of their marketing plan for their restaurants, as it has been proven that Facebook has become an integral part of people's daily activities and people have become dependent on Facebook for many issues. restaurants managers should publish all information related to the services and products offered by the restaurant on Facebook pages, as well as must update news and information about the restaurant constantly and publish it on Facebook page of the restaurant. Restaurant managers must take all the reviews made by customers related to their restaurant on the various Facebook pages into their consideration, whether they are reviews positive or negative. Restaurant managers must explore the reasons for positive and negative reviews to maximize the positives and work on correcting the negatives. It is also necessary for restaurant managers to follow the public pages on Facebook to monitor the published news and reviews related to their restaurant. Restaurant managers must be interested in building trust with customers through their Facebook pages.



## **7. RESEARCH LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

This study contains some limitations in addition to a set of proposals that can be appointed for future research. In regard to the limitations of the current study, the survey included local customers of restaurants inside Egypt only, which can be affected by the identity of these customers as well as their social and economic level and their local culture, as well as the dependence of the local population in Egypt on Facebook more than other social media platforms. It is possible to suggest a set of future research related to this study, which is to examine the views of foreign customers with regard to searching through Facebook for restaurants, as well as conducting a study on the use of social media platforms other than Facebook such as Twitter, as well as the interest can expand to conduct qualitative study Include restaurant managers to know their views on this concern.

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