

From socialising to shopping: Are South Africans willing to shop on Facebook?



South African small, medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs) are feeling the pressure of tough economic conditions, increasing competition and record-high unemployment rates. Meanwhile, social media use in the country is growing at an exponential rate and Facebook, South Africa's favourite social media platform, boasts more than 21 million local users. This growth in social media use offers SMMEs with a potentially golden opportunity by way of Facebook commerce (f-commerce).

F-commerce combines online shopping and social media; offering Facebook users the opportunity to shop on Facebook. However, very little research is available on f-commerce, and it is thus important to determine whether f-commerce would be a viable avenue for SMMEs to market their goods and services on, whether South Africans would be willing to shop on Facebook, what factors affect their intention to shop on Facebook, and how these intentions translate into use.

A study was conducted by Euodia Botha, a Master's student in the Department of Marketing Management at the University of Pretoria, to investigate South African Facebook users' perceptions with regards to the ease of use and usefulness of f-commerce platforms, specifically Facebook Marketplace and Facebook Buy-and-Sell Groups. Furthermore, the study sought to understand whether these perceptions of ease of use and usefulness could predict Facebook users' attitudes toward f-

commerce, their intention to use f-commerce, as well as whether these intentions could predict users' actual Facebook shopping behaviours.

Responses from 549 South African Facebook users were analysed, and the findings indicate that when Facebook users perceive f-commerce as being easy to use and useful, they have a more positive attitude toward it, and are consequently more intent on using f-commerce. Furthermore, these positive attitudes toward, and intentions to utilise f-commerce predicts respondents' actual Facebook shopping behaviours.

Marketing managers and SMMEs owners should emphasise the ease of use and usefulness of f-commerce in their marketing communications in order to stimulate positive consumer attitudes towards shopping on Facebook. Furthermore, they should educate consumers on how to use f-commerce platforms effectively as this will improve consumer perceptions of the ease of use and usefulness of f-commerce. Ultimately, by improving consumer perceptions of the ease with which they can shop on Facebook, and the usefulness of shopping on the platform, consumers will have a more favourable attitude towards f-commerce, will be more intent on utilising the platform for shopping purposes, and will ultimately be more likely to shop on Facebook.

This research was conducted as part of the fulfilment of the [Master's degree](#) in Marketing Management in 2019 with the [Department of Marketing Management](#) by Euodia Botha under the supervision of [Prof. Melanie Wiese](#).