BEHAVIORAL INTENTION MODEL TO PURCHASE ORGANIC VEGETABLES THROUGH ELECTRONIC COMMERCE SYSTEMS AND MULTI-CHANNEL MARKETING

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Abstract

The research aims to study the behavioral intention model to purchase organic vegetables through electronic commerce systems and multi-channel marketing. A validated online questionnaire and convenient random sampling method were used to collect data from organic vegetable consumers purchasing through electronic commerce systems and multi-channel marketing in Bangkok and its vicinity with a sample population of 750 people. The statistics used to analyze the data include percentage, mean, standard deviation, confirmatory factor analysis, and path analysis through structural equation analysis.

The results of this research indicated that the behavior of intention to purchase organic vegetables through multi-channel marketing had been influenced by perceived ease of use (TE = 0.99), attitude (TE = 0.65), and perceived usefulness (TE = 0.24), respectively, with 95 percent of predictive value.

The attitude towards accepting technology in purchasing organic vegetables through multi-channel marketing was influenced by the perceived ease of use (TE = 0.94) and perceived benefits (TE = 0.11), respectively, with the predictive value at 89 percent.

Keywords: Organic Vegetables, Electronic Commerce Systems, Purchase Intent, Multi-Channel Marketing

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Introduction

"Money is not real, but food is" is an immortal speech of Mom Chao Sitthiphon Kritdakorn, the father of new agriculture and Former Minister of Agriculture, President of Kasetsart University Council, and award-winning Ramon Magsaysay Foundation for Public Service of new agricultural development in 2510 (Bunnag, 2009). Time has proven that strength and sustainability must grow on the basis of agriculture in Thailand since food is the basic factor for living. The advantage of topography makes Thailand one of the leading countries in the world with producing quality agricultural products, which can be upgraded to be the kitchen of the world. Therefore, the policy related to agriculture must be in focus of all Thai governments.

The agricultural sector is very important to the economy and society of Thailand. According to the Agricultural Census of the National Statistical Office, the number of populations in the agricultural sector is 25 million, or 40 percent of the total population. Agriculture is Thai largest source of labor and this sector generates approximately 9 percent of the GDP, which is an important source of income for several households. Even though the agricultural sector employs over 40 percent of the country's total workforce, which is the majority of the labors, farmers' average income is lower than other occupations. Besides income inequality, low stability due to seasonal fluctuations affects farmers' quality of life. Reducing the problem of inequality and raising the income per capita of farmers have always been an economic problem of the country's development (Duangnirat, 2020). The results of the survey on debt and income of Thai farmers in the latest year revealed that the average debt of farmers in 2021 was at 262,317 baht/household, 16.54% higher than the number found in 2020 with an average debt at 225,090 baht/household. The average income of farmers in 2021 was 408,099 baht/household, 4.54% higher than 2020 with an average total income of 390,376 baht/household (Wannakhajorn, 2021). Thus, it is necessary that this issue must be solve for sustainable income.

Sustainable income is based on the use of knowledge. Modern farmers have to adapt to farming by considering the society as a whole. Besides agriculture, it is necessary that farmers understand business management and marketing. In other words, the future of agriculture requires the application of management disciplines in order to understand the current needs of consumers. According to the "exploding from within" concept of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej, it is vital that one should not only wait for fate. Thus, farmers should not only wait for assistance from the government. Instead, they should understand consumer behavior and the popularity of the products that they produce.

At present, the popular trend focuses on "health". People tend to exercise, and use natural and chemical-free products. Organic products attract attention of customers since they are most directly related to health. Another trend that has dramatically changed is the development of communication technology from the Analog Era to the Digital Era. Due to the spread of COVID-19, consumers are forced to work from home and spend more time with technology by using their mobile phone to shop. In addition, the government also supports the use of financial transactions via mobile phones. These change the behavior of consumers to purchase goods and services since they have to make a purchase

decision through electronic commerce. Thus, multi-channel marketing plays a very important role and is the key element of success in the new era by creating marketing proposals through individual customers together with the consistent integration of various marketing channels.

The business should be giving the electronic commerce with multiple marketplaces such as storefronts, subscription services, and also through social media in-app purchases. The variety of digital sales channel or multi-channel will make consumers familiar with products and resulting in more sales volume. The perspective customers are not always lookup for our product, then it is important to diversity business electronic commerce sales via multichannel selling.

According to the fact that consumers tend to buy products via electronic commerce, it is essential to conduct research on the behavior model of intention to purchase organic vegetables through electronic commerce systems and multi-channel marketing in order to find information needed to predict the purchase intention of customers, which would benefit farmers and stakeholders.

Research Objectives

To study the behavior model of intention to purchase organic vegetables through electronic commerce systems and multi-channel marketing.

Literature Review

Organic Vegetables

Organic vegetables are the products of non-chemical production system to prevent and suppress pests. Instead of chemical fertilizers, farmers use organic fertilizers that leave no toxic residues (Department of Agricultural Extension, 2009, pp. 4-5). Since consumers become more aware of the dangers of pesticide residues in vegetables sold in the market leading to more demand for environmentally-friendly products, farmers are more interested in growing chemical-free vegetables while many businesses have turned their attention to organic vegetable products (Dorais, 2007; Porciuncula, Luzviminda & Rex, 2015).

Electronic Commerce System

Online shopping is important nowadays since it provides convenience and fast services (Rittiboonchai, 2021, pp.32). It is subject to electronic commerce system from the process of advertising, purchasing goods, selling goods, delivering goods, paying the price and exchanging goods/services or information over the Internet (Chaffey, 2009). The highlight of the electronic commerce system is cost savings, increasing the efficiency in business operations by reducing the importance of visual elements of the business, such as office buildings exhibition rooms, warehouses, salespersons, and customer service officers. Therefore, geographical restrictions in the form of distance and business hours are no longer an obstacle to run a business. Electronic commerce refers to the sale or purchase of goods or services between businesses, households, individuals or private organizations through electronic transactions carried out on the internet or online communication networks by

exchanging electronic messages or EDI (Electronic Data Interchange) messages. The delivery of goods or services may be carried out either online or offline (Eurostat Statistics-Explained, 2016), as well as financial transactions (Tassabehji, 2003).

Purchase Intention

Purchase intention is one of the factors in the process of purchase decision. It is between others' attitudes and unexpected situational factors. Consumers may have a purchase intention based on other factors, such as expected revenue, price, and expected product benefits (Javornik et al., 2019). However, unforeseen circumstances may alter purchase preferences, and social influence plays a very important role in the purchase intention through the use of the application service (Chanton, Chimmasangkana & Rittiboonchai, 2021). According to Apirungruengsakul and Pasunon (2020), the intention to purchase products online is most influenced from the factors of marketing innovation, consumer loyalty, and consumer satisfaction respectively. The results of the study on the causal relationship analysis show that marketing innovations affect purchase intention through electronic commerce channels which corresponds to the study on cyberspace marketing: factors driving e-commerce adoption (Ching & Ellis, 2010).

Multichannel Marketing

The combination of communication with the delivery of goods or services to customers and channels is a synergy to attract customers and maintain a good relationship with customers. Multi-channel marketing strategy has been developed rapidly to provide more than one marketing channels to reach customers (Rosenbloom, 2004).

This development also focuses on e-commerce marketing channels through electronic commerce systems. This is an alternative to the new generation of consumers with the use of all digital media that have played an increasingly important role in daily life. The role of media is a convenient and easy channel for consumers to purchase goods. With more channels, consumers tend to buy products (Baran, Galka & Struk, 2008).

Key strategies in multi-channel marketing can lead to effective marketing according to Berman and Thelen (2004). The strategies consist of

1. Integration of existing marketing channels by emphasizing product consistency across marketing channels in order to promote marketing channels,
2. Designing an efficient information system,
3. Order and delivery process through all marketing channels, and
4. Finding partners in marketing channels

In the past 5 years, the development of information systems has evolved greatly and continuously until there is research in the marketing field mentioned. Multi-channel marketing was developed from single channel. The current trend of electronic commerce shows that several entrepreneurs have applied more cross-channel and omni-channel. The development of more complete information technology can integrate and process all channels and information (Cui et al., 2019).

Based on the literature review and related research, independent variables, mediator variables and dependent variables were set within the research framework as follows:

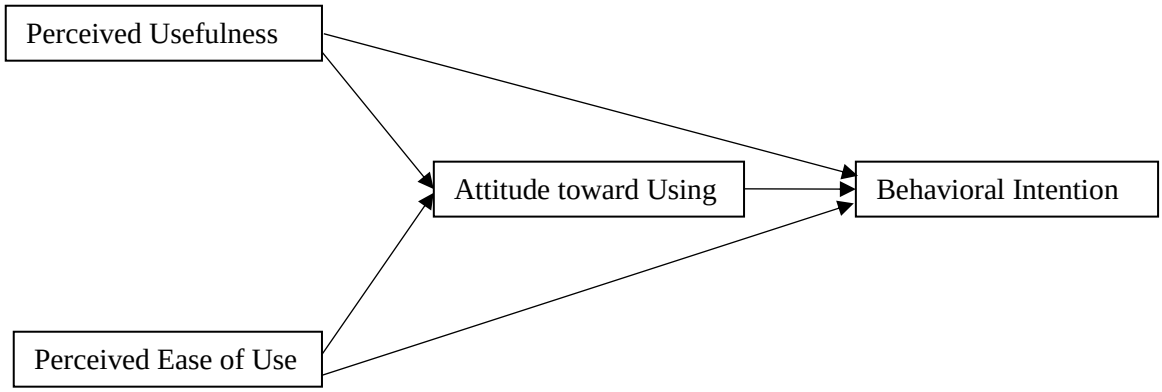

Figure 1 Research Framework

Research methodology

The population is 750 consumers purchasing organic vegetable through electronic commerce and multi-channel marketing in Bangkok and its vicinity. The sample size was based on the formula Hair et.al. (2010, pp. 100-102), who suggested the ratio between The sample per number of parameters or variables for measurement should be at least 20 to 50 samples per 1 observed variable. There were 15 observable variables in this study with the criteria of 50 samples per 1 observable variable. A total of 750 samples were collected. The statistics used in the data analysis consisted of percentage, mean, standard deviation and the confirmatory factor analysis and path analysis through Structural Equation Model (SEM) analysis.

Research Results

The personal data of the respondents showed that most of them were female (68.00%), aged 21-30 years (70.67%), student (53.07%), single (59.47%), with a bachelor's degree (60.13%), with less than 20,000 baht per month income (81.60 %).

Consumer behavior of the respondents regarding the decision to buy organic vegetables through electronic commerce and multi-channel marketing shows that their purchase decision was based on advertising media (41.20%), the time of use to buy organic vegetables was less than 1 hour/day (56.73%), the frequency of purchasing organic vegetables was 1-2 times/month (45.87%), the time to buy organic vegetables through the electronic commerce system was 12.01-16.00 (33.07%), the average price of organic vegetables via electronic commerce system was 100-300 baht (55.87%), the application used to buy organic vegetables was Facebook (66.33%), the payment channel was cash payment upon receipt of goods (pay on delivery) (61.47%). Besides purchasing organic vegetables, the respondents also purchase clothes/accessories (38.00%). Their opinions towards the e-commerce system in Thailand for organic vegetable customers was marketing through multiple channels (37.87%).

Table 1 Perceived Usefulness, perceived ease of use, attitude toward using, and behavioral intention to purchase organic vegetables through electronic commerce and multi-channel marketing.

Results	Mean	SD	Assessment Level
Perceived Usefulness : PU	4.01	0.68	High
Perceived Ease of Use : PEU	4.03	0.68	High
Attitude toward Using : ATU	4.06	0.65	High
Behavioral Intention : BI	4.01	0.71	High

The results in all aspects were at a high level. The aspect that received the highest score was attitude toward using, while the lowest score was perceived usefulness, and behavioral intention.

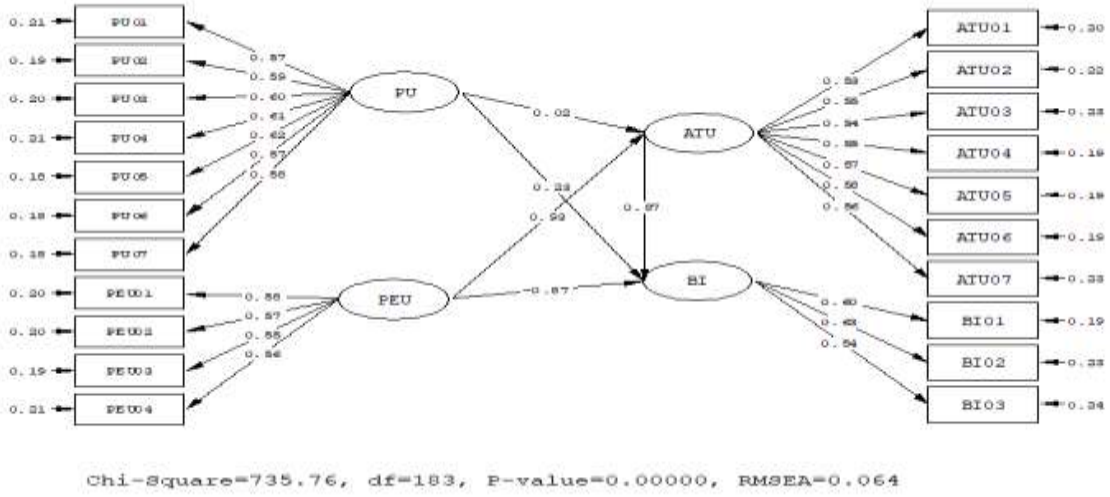

Figure 2 A behavior model of the intention to purchase organic vegetable through electronic commerce systems and multi-channel marketing before adjustment

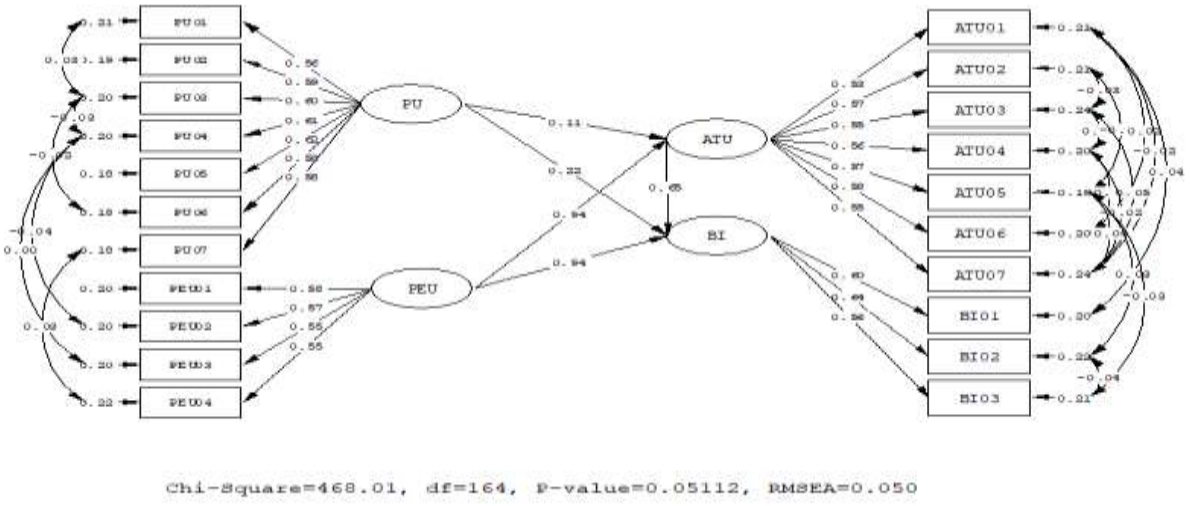

Figure 3 A behavior model of intention to purchase organic vegetable through electronic commerce systems and multi-channel marketing after adjustment

From the results of the index analysis used to verify the coherence and harmony of the model with the empirical data, the results of assessment show that χ^2 = 486.01, df = 164, χ^2/df = 2.85, RMSEA = 0.050, NFI = 0.99, CFI = 0.99, GFI = 0.94, SRMR = 0.02. The index shows that the new model has better empirical consistency since it is consistent with sufficient empirical data. The results of the analysis can be explained from the internal latent variables to the internal observable variables, and from external latent variables to observable variables as follows:

Table 2 The results of the analysis of the behavioral path analysis of organic vegetable purchases through electronic commerce and multi-channel marketing

	Attitude		**ATUa**	**Behavior Intention To purchase organic vegetables through multi-channel marketing Bia**		
	R^2 = 0.89			**R^2 = 0.95**		
	DE	**IE**	**TE**	**DE**	**IE**	**TE**
Perceived Usefulness PUa	0.11**	-	0.11**	0.22**	*0.02*	0.24**
	(0.10)	-	(0.10)	(0.14)	*(0.18)*	(0.13)
	6.62	-	6.62	14.11	*0.77*	16.64
Perceived Ease of Use PEU	0.94**	-	0.94**	0.94**	*0.05*	0.99**
	(0.02)	-	(0.02)	(0.03)	*(0.11)*	(0.03)
	20.06	-	20.06	23.10	*1.61*	24.68
Attitude toward Using ATUa				0.65**	-	0.65**
				(0.05)	-	(0.05)
				17.39	-	17.39

Values: EP = Estimation Parameter, (SE = Standard Error), t-value (*<.05, **<.01)
DE = Direct Effect / IE = Indirect Effect/ TE = Total Effect

The behavior of intention to purchase organic vegetables through multi-channel marketing was based on the overall influence of perceived ease of use (TE = 0.99), attitude (TE = 0.65) and perceived usefulness (TE = 0.24) respectively with a predictive power of 95 percent.

The attitude towards accepting technology in purchasing organic vegetables through multi-channel marketing was influenced by perceived ease of use (TE = 0.94), and perceived usefulness (TE = 0.11) respectively with had 89% predictive power.

The results showed that the behavior of intention to buy organic vegetables through electronic commerce and multi-channel marketing was directly influenced by perceived usefulness (TE = 0.11), perceived ease of use (TE = 0.94), and attitude toward using (TE = 0.65). However, the effects of indirect influence are insignificant to behavioral intention to purchase.

Table 3 Confirmative component analysis of behavioral intention to purchase organic vegetables through electronic commerce and multi-channel marketing

Matrix LAMDA - Y	**AVE =**	**0.63**	**CR =**	**0.84**
Behavioral Intention to purchase organic vegetable: Bia		**λy**	**t-value**	**R^2**
Prefer purchasing through e-commerce system: BI01		0.60	-	0.64
Regularly purchase through e-commerce system: BI02		0.64	23.44	0.65
Recommend others to purchase through e-commerce system: BI03		0.56	22.18	0.60
Matrix LAMDA - Y	**AVE =**	**0.59**	**CR =**	**0.91**
Attitude toward Using ATUa		**λy**	**t-value**	**R^2**
High flexibility and security ATU01		0.53	-	0.57
No difficult process ATU02		0.57	22.22	0.60
Save time ATU03		0.55	21.09	0.55
Reduce risks due to climates during the travel ATU04		0.56	22.31	0.61
The quality is similar or higher than products in general stores ATU05		0.57	22.47	0.62
Satisfaction with the product quality and price ATU06		0.58	24.25	0.62
Able to purchase from anywhere ATU07		0.55	20.40	0.56
Matrix LAMDA - X	**AVE =**	**0.61**	**CR =**	**0.86**
Perceived Ease of Use: PEUa		**λx**	**t-value**	**R^2**
Classification makes it easy to find the products: PEU01		0.58	25.49	0.63
Several channels allow users to access easily: PEU02		0.57	25.33	0.62
Easy procedure which is easy to understand and use: PEU03		0.55	24.78	0.60
Customers can search for information on organic vegetables that meet their needs in the sales channel: PEU04		0.55	24.27	0.58
Matrix LAMDA – X	**AVE =**	**0.64**	**CR =**	**0.93**
Perceived Usefulness PUa		**λx**	**t-value**	**R^2**
Customers can choose a channel to purchase organic vegetable as demanded: PU01		0.56	24.66	0.60
Customers can order organic vegetables at any place and time, which is convenient: PU02		0.59	26.06	0.64
Customers can find organic vegetables precisely: PU03		0.60	25.99	0.65
Ordering organic vegetables allows customers to know a wide variety of agricultural products: PU04		0.61	26.28	0.65
Customers can find the organic vegetables quickly: PU05		0.62	27.20	0.68
Customers recognize the benefits of organic vegetables: PU06		0.56	26.52	0.66
Customers can compare prices and the quality of the organic vegetables: PU07		0.56	26.27	0.65

The results showed that the intention to buy organic vegetables is a result of regular purchases through electronic commerce system ($\lambda y12 = 0.64$), while attitude toward using arises from product satisfaction, quality, and price ($\lambda y26 = 0.58$)

Causal variables show that perceived ease of use is based on the classification which makes it easier to find the product ($\lambda X11 = 0.58$), while the perceived usefulness is based on the ability to find

the organic vegetables quickly (λX24 = 0.62). The element weight values were also tested by convergent validity (AVE), which must not be less than 0.50, and construct reliability (CR), which must be greater than 0.60.

Summary and Discussion

1. Perceived usefulness and ease of use directly affects the behavioral intention to buy organic vegetables through electronic commerce and multi-channel marketing with statistical significance. The findings are consistent with Ozdemir et al. (2008), who suggested that the benefits of using technology and perceived ease of use compared with the complexity of innovative technology can lead to technology adoption. Hart, Heskett and Sasser (1990) proposed that entrepreneurs who perceive the benefits of an application or innovation tend to believe that such applications or innovation can increase productivity, efficiency, and profits for companies, agencies or their organizations. This leads to a strategy to do business in accordance with the amorementioned direction. In addition, Mangkonsila and Bureerat (2018), who studied customer relationship management for good feedback from e-commerce and social media in restaurant business, found that there was a large amount of information, knowledge through transactions in electronic commerce systems to build relationships and deliver products and services to meet the needs of users. Users who provide feedback can help business to have a competitive advantage and create a positive experience with their customers. This is also consistent with Vapeevuttikorn and Changchenkit (2021), who examined how digital marketing communications of online stores on Shopee affect consumers' purchasing decision-making processes. They found that ease of use can lead to efficiency, speed and cost reduction in various aspects of consumer purchasing decisions. The results of the qualitative research found that building awareness of digital marketing communications through search engine, digital media, advertising banner, social media, and word of mouth affect the purchasing decision process. Malaikaew (2018, p. 247) found that doing business in the fruit and vegetable market requires information as a guideline for entrepreneurs to improve products and develop marketing strategies to meet the needs of consumers and remain in the market in a sustainable manner.

2. Attitudes towards usage also affect behavioral intention to buy organic vegetables through electronic commerce and multi-channel marketing with statistical significance. Newstrom and Davis (2002) suggested that purchase intention is an expression of one's attitude or belief towards something, as well as an expression that is related to the action component. Also, it is a person's decision to choose or perform a behavior with a fixed mind direction and goals with a decisive effort to carry out the intended behavior. A person with a high commitment to perform a behavior is also more likely to exhibit the highly targeted behavior. However, the intent to perform this behavior will persist until the right opportunity and time. To achieve a positive attitude, Yadav and Singh (2014) suggested that good communication with customers by providing customers the opportunity to make a suggestion and give some feedback can lead to products or services development. Thus, online stores can effectively respond

to the needs of their customers. According to Sanlai, Thaweesuk and Sakrungpongsakul (2017), it was found that the acceptance of technology, perceived ease of use and attitude toward usage affected the tendency of intention to use online shopping service. Thanasarnsophon and Thaweesuk (2019) also found that technology acceptance in attitude toward usage ($\beta = 0.479$) significantly influenced Generation X's smartphone payment in Bangkok.

Recommendations

1. The results of the research revealed that the behavioral intention to buy organic vegetables through electronic commerce system is based on the ease of use due to the development of technology, followed by a positive attitude towards use. In contrast, perceived benefit is the least influential. Therefore, entrepreneurs who would like to sell organic vegetables through the electronic commerce system should focus on the key factors, especially the use of technology which allow easy access, as well as mobile friendly technology with fast loading. Moreover, creating an active engagement can encourage consumers to purchase the product from such channel, leading to product loyalty. Once customers have decided to buy products, they tend to use the channel they have used rather than finding new channels.

2. Entrepreneurs should focus on developing perceived usefulness which has been the least direct factor of intention to buy organic vegetables. It is necessary to improve the channel by choosing a channel to sell organic vegetables to meet the needs of customers. With this, customers would recognize the benefits of organic vegetables and be able to compare prices and the quality of the organic vegetables.

3. It is essential to integrate the technology from upstream to downstream since good attitudes can lead to engagement in behavioral intention. The study shows that such process still lacks perceived usefulness and ease of use. Thus, entrepreneurs should improve such process in order to create purchase loyalty.

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