The Effects of the Social Influence Approach on Swift Guanxi, Trust and Repurchase Intention When Considering Buyer Dependence

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Abstract: This study explores how social influence approaches alter buyer–seller swift guanxi, trust in the seller and repurchase intention when considering the influence of buyer dependence. Based on the results of an online survey in three cities of Taiwan, we empirically test the research model using partial least squares analysis. We found that buyer dependence exerts different but positive effects on each social influence approach usage and only the identification approach contributes to buyer–seller swift guanxi, trust in the seller and repurchase intention. The buyer–seller swift guanxi also mediates the effects of the identification approach and trust in the seller on repurchase intention. This study clarifies the role of buyer dependence on the seller’s social influence approaches and buyer–seller swift guanxi in the online C2C marketplace context. A seller should exploit buyer dependence, learn how to use each social influence approach and develop close buyer-seller swift guanxi, then repurchase intention can be secured.

Keywords: swift guanxi; buyer dependence; social influence approaches; repurchase intention

1. Introduction

Prior studies have confirmed that high-quality buyer–seller communication quality and buyer-seller relationship quality are the key success factors in the context of online marketplaces. The former is constituted by technical features (e.g., interactivity, recommendations and feedback) [1] and online presence and service quality [2,3], the latter includes buyer–seller swift guanxi [1,4], the strength of the buyer–seller tie [5] and trust in the seller [6]. However, non-communication platform-related factors, such as the seller’s social influence approaches and the buyer’s perception of dependence on the seller, have been overlooked.

Individuals involved in a social commerce group are usually socially influenced by community group members [4,7]. Thus, from the perspective of social influence theory [8], the seller’s intentional implementation of social influence approaches tends to influence the buyer–seller swift guanxi development. In addition, the seller’s social influence approaches also improve the buyer’s trust in the seller, which is usually considered an essential antecedent of online purchase intention in the presence of uncertainties [9]. Thus, the first purpose of this study is to investigate the effects of each seller’s social influence approach on buyer–seller relationship quality (i.e., swift guanxi and trust in the seller) and examines their direct and indirect effects on repurchase intention in the context of online marketplaces.

The second purpose of this study is to examine the impact of buyer dependence on the seller’s using social influence approaches, buyer-seller swift guanxi and the buyer’s repurchase intention [10]. The development of buyer–seller swift guanxi tends to shift the power advantage from the seller to the buyer through the strategic practices of guanxi activities [11]. Thus, the levels of buyer dependence might determine the seller’s social influence approach implementation and accelerate the development of buyer–seller swift guanxi, which in turn influences the repurchase intention. Accordingly, the main research...
questions include (1). How do the seller’s social influence approaches alter buyer–seller relationship quality and how do their effects influence repurchase intention? (2). What effect of buyer dependence could exert on the seller’s social influence approaches, buyer-seller swift guanxi and the buyer’s repurchase intention in the context of online marketplaces?

Our study contributes to the field of influence approaches and buyer-seller swift guanxi in three ways. First, our study updates the literature on the antecedents of online buyer-seller swift guanxi by incorporating the seller’s social influence approaches and buyer dependence. Second, we expand on prior research by integrating the power dependence and Chinese guanxi theories to examine how a buyer’s perception of buyer-seller relationship quality mediates the effectiveness of the seller’s influence approaches. Such an examination sheds light on which seller’s influence approaches can work most effectively in a Confucian-rooted social commerce context. Third, our study clarifies the effects of physiological (i.e., buyer-seller swift guanxi and trust in the seller) and behavioral variables (the seller’s influence approaches) on the online repurchase intention. Our results also provide theory- and evidence-based practical suggestions.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Buyer–Seller Relationship Quality: Swift Guanxi and Trust in the Seller

Swift guanxi and trust are the main factors influencing the buyer–seller relationship quality in the context of online marketplaces [1,6]. They are also considered as two key factors related closely in the study of Chinese online market business [12]. Ou, Pavlou and Davison [1] defined buyer–seller swift guanxi as buyers’ perception of an interpersonal relationship with a seller which is formed swiftly and featured by three components, including mutual understanding, reciprocal favors and relationship harmony. Ou, Pavlou and Davison [1] and Fan, Zhou, Yang, Li and Xiang [12] argued that interactivity or social support and presence on websites improved buyer–seller swift guanxi and trust in the seller and that further enhances the buyer repurchase intention.

Recently, the positive effects of swift guanxi and trust on (re)purchase intention have also been confirmed. Lin, Yan, Chen and Luo [4] and Guo, et al. [13] provided similar conclusions to the work of Ou, Pavlou and Davison [1]. Shi, Mu, Lin, Chen, Kou and Chen [2] and Zhang, et al. [14] found that online service quality positively affects buyer-seller swift guanxi. Lin, Li and Yan [6] expanded the concept of buyer–seller swift guanxi into the social commerce context and confirmed the effects of friends’ social support on buyer–seller swift guanxi and trust. However, Chong, et al. [15] indicated that buyer–seller swift guanxi benefits trust and repurchase intention, and their findings contradict those of Ou, Pavlou and Davison [1]. Chiu, et al. [16] proposed an alternative argument indicating that trust in the seller mediates the positive link between buyer-seller swift guanxi and repurchase intention.

Given those antecedents of buyer-seller relationship quality (i.e., buyer-seller swift guanxi and trust in the seller), including the interactivity and presence of websites [1,4,16], stickiness, word of mouth [17], social support [6], familiarity, interpersonal similarity and personal information [18] has been investigated, a lack of research still exists regarding whether the seller’s behaviors and the buyer dependence alter buyer–seller relationship quality in the seller in online marketplaces.

2.2. Social Influence Theory

Researchers argued that consumer decisions should be understood in the social contexts due to the influence of others who the consumer knows and trusts [19]. Social influence guides consumer decision-making due to consumer motives, including informational and social normative motives. Based on the informational concerns, consumers observe the experience of early adopters in their social network and make their purchase decision [20]. Social normative concerns induce social pressures for consumers to secure positive relations with people in their social network or the self [21]. Thus, consumers’
decision-making is likely to be influenced by friends, acquaintances or family members, and to buy a product or a service to avoid being treated as “old-fashioned”.

Another research stream of social influence focuses on seller’s social influence approaches and their effectiveness. According to the argument of Kelman [22], people are influenced by three social process modes: internalization, identification and compliance. Internalization occurs “when an individual accepts influence because the content of the induced behavior is intrinsically rewarding” [22]. Internalization works because buyers find the value of the influence, such as a professional solution to a specific problem or critical information [23]. Identification indicates the individual’s identification with the social community, such as the feelings of belongingness and membership [24] or echoing what the counterparty expresses, endorsing their views or even behaving similar to them [23]. Compliance occurs when individuals hope to obtain favorable reactions or rewards from another person and avoid costs, such as disapproval, by conforming [22]. Compliance also reflects the normative influence of significant others and the intention of avoiding certain “punishments” that the influencing agent controls [25].

2.3. Buyer Dependence

Research has identified the causes and effects of buyer dependence in buyer–seller relationships. There are two causes for dependence. First, dependence is caused by the rewards obtained from the source of dependence [26,27], which can be considered as benefit-based dependence and associated with the need to remain in the relationship, e.g., the inherent benefits related to the various offerings of the seller. Second, dependence is inversely related to the number of alternative sources of those rewards [28], which can be regarded as cost-based dependence and connected with the need to avoid potential negative consequences, e.g., replacement/switch costs [29]. In the buyer-seller relationship, buyer dependence also is related to the extent to which a buyer needs a relationship with a seller to gain inherent benefits, prevent high switching costs and/or solve the problem of finding suitable alternatives [30]. Waheed and Gaur [28] proved that the customer perception of product familiarity, product importance and supply uncertainty do influence customer dependence, indicating the contingent role of buyer dependence in buyer’s purchase decision making. Some research revealed buyer dependence is strongly and positively related to commitment [31], trust [32] and sales performance [33]. Padgett, et al. [34] contended that seller investment in the relationship and buyer relationship commitment enhance buyer dependence.

3. Research Model and Hypotheses Development

3.1. Buyer Dependence

Dependence on a seller enhances a buyer’s willingness to cooperate with the seller but decreases a buyer’s intention to adopt a strong stance [35]. Monczka, et al. [36] argued that the high level of buyer dependence makes the supplier exploits its market power and causes the customer to lose the stance of negotiating competitive prices. A high level of buyer dependence may lead to the rationalization of the seller’s compliance approach [25]. We expect a high level of buyer dependence to increase the buyer’s intention to develop swift guanxi with a seller who holds monopolized benefits [11]. Due to high buyer dependence and the buyer’s willingness to adopt a cooperative or weak stance, buyers are likely to expect and even rationalize the seller’s compliance approach, and that may further strengthen the effect of the compliance approach on a buyer’s repurchase intention but weaken the effects of the internalization and identification approaches on the buyer’s repurchase intention. Based on the aforementioned discussion, we propose the following hypotheses:

**Hypothesis (H1).** The higher the buyer dependence, the more likely is a seller to adopt a compliance approach than the identification and internalization approach.
Hypothesis (H2). Buyer dependence is positively related to buyer–seller swift guanxi.

Hypothesis (H3). Buyer dependence is positively related to repurchase intention.

3.2. Seller’s Influence Approaches

Once a buyer recognizes the worth of a seller’s offerings, the buyer appreciates the seller’s understanding of their interests or needs, which facilitates mutual understanding between the two parties because the buyer perceives being understood and tends to be willing to share additional information with the seller or learn more about the seller. Moreover, according to trust transfer theory, if a buyer has a strong belief in the trustworthiness of the information or suggestions provided by a seller, the buyer may transfer their trust to the seller [37]. Useful and professional information or suggestions resulting from the internalization approach are likely to gain a buyer’s trust.

The identification approach facilitates the formation of a harmonious relationship between a buyer and a seller because this approach seeks to evoke the buyer’s enthusiasm, goodwill and other positive feelings toward the seller [23]. Moreover, a seller’s caring and warmth can satisfy the psychological needs of a buyer [38], which causes the buyer to perceive the online shopping environment as valuable and trustworthy [39]. Thus, the identification approach provides strong emotional support that causes the buyer to trust the seller and attempt to maintain a close relationship with the seller [6].

Once the buyer hopes to gain a reward or approval, access some valuable resources or avoid risks or costs from the seller, the seller’s compliance approach works. However, if the buyer does not show concern about these gains or losses or feels required or forced to comply with the seller’s directions, the seller’s compliance approach is likely to harm the buyer’s perception of buyer–seller swift guanxi. In addition, warning messages from the compliance approach might cause negative feelings that also can be considered as negative emotional support, which damages the buyer’s trust in the seller. Thus, the following hypotheses are proposed:

Hypothesis (H4). The seller’s internalization (H4-1) and identification approaches (H4-2) facilitate a higher level of buyer–seller swift guanxi than the compliance approach does.

Hypothesis (H5). The seller’s internalization (H5-1) and identification approaches (H5-2) facilitate a higher level of trust in the seller than the compliance approach does.

Hypothesis (H6). The internalization (H6-1) and identification approaches (H6-2) facilitate a higher repurchase intention than the compliance approach does.

3.3. Buyer–Seller Swift Guanxi and Trust in the Seller

The development of buyer–seller swift guanxi and trust in the seller can reduce uncertainty and improve the experience with exchange parties [40]. Thus, we expect that buyer–seller swift guanxi and trust in the seller lead to repurchase intention [1].

Ou, Pavlou and Davison [1] confirmed that when a buyer thinks that a seller is trustworthy, buyer–seller swift guanxi can be developed. They argued that trust in the seller helps the development of buyer–seller swift guanxi because buyers and sellers can quickly rely on building mutual understanding and achieving a harmonious relationship. Thus, when the buyer perceives the seller’s trustworthiness, buyer–seller swift guanxi is more likely to be developed. Considering that trust develops over time after the first transaction and forms the transactional basis of relationship development [41], buyer–seller swift guanxi tends to be accelerated by trust in the seller. Therefore, we propose the following hypotheses. Figure 1 presents the research model.
Hypothesis (H7). Buyer–seller swift guanxi is positively related to repurchase intention.

Hypothesis (H8). Trust in the seller is positively related to buyer–seller swift guanxi.

Hypothesis (H9). Trust in the seller is positively related to repurchase intention.

4. Research Method

4.1. Sampling and Data Collection

We collected survey data from a voluntary online survey platform during January 2021 and selected people who lived in three major cities in Taiwan (namely Taipei, Taichung and Kaohsiung) and were aged 25–39 years as our target participants. We selected these participants because (a) the aforementioned age group represents the largest online service user group [42] and (b) the mobile- and web-based communication infrastructure in the aforementioned cities is superior to that in other Taiwanese regions. We encouraged participation and asked respondents to refer their friends, families and acquaintances to the survey at least reached 60 within each city. We ensured that all participants had the experience of buying on online C2C shopping platforms in Taiwan by using an initial screening question at the beginning of the adopted questionnaire. During the survey
period, we collected 229 samples and 203 responses are usable. It is not possible to compute a response rate due to adopting convenience sampling. Table 1 describes the demographics of the participants. Early and late responses were also compared on all latent constructs by using traditional t-tests according to the recommendations of Armstrong and Overton [43]. The results indicated that there was no statistically significant difference in the level of all latent constructs between early and late respondents.

| Measure       | Item                  | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------|-----------------------|-----------|------------|
| Gender        | Male                  | 99        | 48.76      |
|               | Female                | 104       | 51.23      |
| Residence     | Taipei                | 81        | 39.9       |
|               | Taichung              | 71        | 34.98      |
|               | Kaohsiung             | 51        | 25.12      |
| Education     | High School           | 63        | 30.05      |
|               | University/College    | 79        | 38.92      |
|               | Graduate School       | 61        | 30.05      |
| Age           | 25–30                 | 75        | 36.95      |
|               | 31–35                 | 73        | 35.96      |
|               | 35–39                 | 55        | 27.09      |
| Monthly income| Under USD 650         | 31        | 15.27      |
|               | USD 650–1000          | 54        | 26.6       |
|               | USD 1000–1500         | 42        | 20.69      |
|               | USD 1500 and above    | 76        | 37.44      |
| Total         |                      | 203       | 100        |

### 4.2. Instrument Development

All the constructs and items used in this study and the related literature are listed in Appendix A. We used the component-based and formative measurements rather than the reflective constructs to measure the buyer–seller swift guanxi (i.e., mutual understanding, reciprocal favors and relationship harmony) and trust in the seller (i.e., ability, integrity and benevolence) following the approach of Ou, Pavlou and Davison [1]. All items were evaluated using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 for strongly disagree to 5 for strongly agree. Based on the last version of the online questionnaire modified by three experts (a professor of marketing management, a practical marketer on shopping websites and a salesperson experienced in using social media), we implemented a pretest by using a group of 60 participants who were studying a Master of Business Administration course in Taiwan. Questions were reworded so words and questions that might be difficult for people to understand were replaced with different wording.

### 5. Results

We used partial least squares (PLS) to test the research framework and hypotheses. PLS was used due to its capability of handling reflective and formative constructs simultaneously. PLS involves using nonparametric inference methods (i.e., bootstrapping) and resampling procedures; thus, the disadvantage of nonparametric methods, for which no formal significance test exists for the estimated parameters, can be overcome [44,45].

#### 5.1. Measurement Model

We first conducted an exploratory factor analysis to evaluate the convergent validity. In this process, one item for the internalization approach and two items for the identification approach were eliminated because their factor loading values were lower than 0.7. As presented in Table 2 and Appendix A, the Cronbach’s α and composite reliability scores of all factors exceeded 0.7, which indicates that the scales had reasonable reliability. The
The square root of the average variance extracted (AVE) of constructs excluding swift guanxi and trust in the seller was significantly higher than its correlation with other constructs and the AVE of these constructs was greater than 0.5, which confirmed the discriminant and convergent validity of measurement items [46]. As discussed previously, swift guanxi and trust in the seller were treated as the formative construct and their multicollinearity test revealed that all the VIFs of related items were less than the threshold of 10 [47] and all items weights were significant at \( p < 0.05 \). Bootstrapping with 5000 resamples was performed, and the bootstrap-based inference statistics indicated that the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) was 0.071, which is less than the threshold of 0.08; thus, the measurement model exhibited an acceptable fit with the collected data.

### Table 2. Descriptive Statistics and Discriminant Validity Assessment of the Measurement Model.

| Measure            | Cronbach's \( \alpha \) Value | CR Value | 1   | 2   | 3   | 4   | 5   | 6   | 7   |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|----------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 1. Buyer dependence| 0.928                           | 0.954    | 0.935|     |     |     |     |     |     |
| 2. Internalization | 0.800                           | 0.862    | 0.388| 0.745|     |     |     |     |     |
| 3. Identification | 0.789                           | 0.863    | 0.323| 0.551| 0.782|     |     |     |     |
| 4. Compliance      | 0.915                           | 0.940    | 0.553| 0.459| 0.250| 0.893|     |     |     |
| 5. Swift guanxi    | n.a.                            | n.a.     | 0.443| 0.503| 0.546| 0.331| 1.000|     |     |
| 6. Trust in seller | n.a.                            | n.a.     | 0.401| 0.513| 0.499| 0.352| 0.671| 1.000|     |
| 7. Repurchase Intention | 0.741                                           | 0.838    | 0.378| 0.488| 0.478| 0.397| 0.540| 0.412| 0.752|
| Mean               | 3.719                           | 4.521    | 4.828| 3.175| 4.588| 4.598| 4.564|     |     |
| Standard deviation | 0.967                           | 0.583    | 0.605| 1.014| 0.620| 0.621| 0.538|     |     |

Note: 1. Diagonal elements are the square roots of the average variances extracted. 2. Sub-diagonal elements are the correlations among latent variables calculated using partial least squares. 3. CR: composite reliability.

### 5.2. Common Method Bias

Due to the self-reported and single-source data, we adopted several methods to eliminate the potential common method bias (CMB) [48]. First, each item in the questionnaire was revised according to three experts’ opinions and then the content validity can be ensured. Second, we also claimed that respondents’ anonymity would be protected to prevent evaluation apprehension. Third, social desirability could be decreased when using online surveys instead of traditional paper-and-pencil surveys [49], and the equivalent data quality at a lower cost than mail surveys could also be ensured [50]. Fourth, we ran Harman’s single-factor test [51]. The results indicated that the first factor explained 35.63% of the variance, which suggests that a single factor did not account for the majority of the covariance of the variables; thus, CMB did not appear to be a problem [48]. The variance inflation factors were lower than 0.4 in the full collinearity test, which indicates that CMB can be ruled out in this study [52].

### 5.3. Structural Model

As displayed in Figure 2, the \( \beta \) coefficients of the structural model indicate that buyer dependence facilitated all of the social influence approaches (\( \beta = 0.323 \) to 0.553, \( p < 0.000 \)) and buyer–seller swift guanxi (\( \beta = 0.161, p < 0.01 \)); thus, H1 is fully supported. Buyer dependence facilitated more usage of the compliance approach than the identification and internalization approach. Moreover, buyer dependence helped increase buyer–seller swift guanxi but not repurchase intention; thus, H2 is supported but H3 is not supported. We speculate that buyer dependence may not be sufficiently high to induce repurchase intention. Even though a buyer perceives high dependence on a seller, in the context of online shopping, many alternatives may exist and perceived high dependence cannot induce a significant improvement in repurchase intention.
Figure 2. Results of Structural Modeling Analysis. *** \( p < 0.001 \); ** \( p < 0.01 \).
Regarding the effects of the social influence approach, the identification approach significantly increased buyer–seller swift guanxi ($\beta = 0.220, p < 0.000$) and repurchase intention ($\beta = 0.188, p < 0.01$). Moreover, the identification ($\beta = 0.311, p < 0.000$) and internalization ($\beta = 0.273, p < 0.01$) approaches significantly increased trust in the seller. Thus, H4-2, H5 and H6-2 are supported. The compliance approach exerted no effect on buyer–seller swift guanxi, trust in the seller and repurchase intention. The results confirm that the compliance approach did not promote the buyer–seller relationship quality (i.e., buyer–seller swift guanxi and trust in the seller) and repurchase intention. We speculate the normative influence and feeling of being potentially punished or being threatened could be the main reasons [25]. Moreover, the seller’s internalization approach did not enhance buyer–seller swift guanxi and repurchase intention. Thus, the respondents did not recognize the seller’s efforts in implementing internalization approaches, which led to them not experiencing buyer–seller swift guanxi. Furthermore, the seller’s internalization messages did not induce the buyer’s repurchase intention, showing inconsistent results with previous studies [23,24]. The buyer can access information and knowledge of products from the Internet, and customer opinions and reviews in social media, and that might cause no significant effect of the seller’s internationalization approach due to the information competition effect [53].

The results also confirm that buyer–seller swift guanxi was significantly and positively related to repurchase intention; thus, H7 is supported. The results are consistent with the works of Shi, Mu, Lin, Chen, Kou and Chen [2], Shang and Bao [54], Fan, Zhou, Yang, Li and Xiang [12], and Chiu, Chih, Ortiz and Wang [16]. Notably, trust in the seller enhances the level of buyer–seller swift guanxi but does not enhance repurchase intention; thus, H8 is supported but H9 is not. We speculate that buyer-seller swift guanxi might replace the effect of trust in the seller on repurchase intention since buyer–seller swift guanxi positively mediates the relationship between trust in the seller and repurchase intention. The results in Table 3 confirm our speculation. Buyer–seller swift guanxi fully mediated the relationship between trust in the seller and repurchase intention but partially mediated the relationship between the identification approach and repurchase intention (variance accounted for [VAF] = 0.244). Being different from the results of Chiu, Chih, Ortiz and Wang [16], our results prove the mediating role of swift guanxi between trust in the seller and repurchase intention. Furthermore, trust in the seller had a mediating effect on the relationship between identification or internalization and buyer–seller swift guanxi, which indicates that trust in the seller enhances the effects of the identification and internalization approaches. The identification approach exerted a partial mediating effect on the relationship between buyer dependence and buyer–seller swift guanxi (VAF = 0.182), showing the limited effectiveness of the identification approach on helping deliver the influence of buyer dependence on buyer-seller swift guanxi.

### Table 3. Results Obtained in the Test on Mediating Effects.

| Mediation Paths                     | Direct Effects | Indirect Effects | Total Effects | VAF  |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|------------------|---------------|------|
| Buyer dependence → Identification   | 0.161 (2.031 *)| 0.071 (2.229 **) | 0.391 (4.937 ***)| 0.182|
| → Swift Guanxi                      |                |                  |               |      |
| Identification → Trust in Seller    | 0.220 (2.868 **)| 0.142 (3.054 **) | 0.362 (5.137 ***)| 0.392|
| → Swift Guanxi                      |                |                  |               |      |
| Internalization → Trust in Seller   | 0.093 (1.095)  | 0.124 (2.581 ***)| 0.217 (2.067 ***)| 0.571|
| → Swift Guanxi                      |                |                  |               |      |
| Identification → Swift Guanxi       | 0.188 (2.265 **)| 0.070 (1.966 *)  | 0.258 (2.958 *)| 0.244|
| → Repurchase Intention              |                |                  |               |      |
| Trust in Seller → Swift Guanxi      | −0.053 (0.372) | 0.145 (2.697 ***)| 0.092 (0.680) | 1.00 |
| → Repurchase Intention              |                |                  |               |      |

Note: 1. T statistics are in parentheses. 2. *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$. 3. VAF: variance accounted for.
6. Conclusions and Implications

6.1. Theoretical Implications

First, our study contributes to the understanding of the role of buyer dependence on the seller’s social influence approaches and buyer–seller swift guanxi development in the context of online marketplaces. Buyer dependence not only exerts positive and different effects on the usage of each social influence approach but also promotes the development of buyer–seller swift guanxi. Moreover, buyer dependence facilitates the usage of the compliance approach more than the identification and internalization approach. The buyer–seller swift guanxi can be used to improve the power imbalance in the buyer–seller dyad.

Second, our findings demonstrate the different effects of a seller’s influence approach on buyer–seller swift guanxi, trust in the seller and repurchase intention. However, only the identification approach works well in increasing buyer–seller swift guanxi, trust in the seller and repurchase intention simultaneously. The internalization approaches often adopted by a seller only increase the buyer’s trust in the seller. The compliance approach does not enhance buyer–seller swift guanxi, trust in the seller and repurchase intention.

Third, our results confirm the positive and major role of buyer–seller swift guanxi in improving buyers’ repurchase intention. Buyer–seller swift guanxi influences repurchase intention to a considerably greater extent than it influences buyer’s trust in the seller. Even though the seller’s identification approach increases repurchase intention, its effect on repurchase intention is lower than that of buyer–seller swift guanxi. Buyer–seller swift guanxi tends to be the major cause of repurchase intention.

Fourth, this study clarifies the mediating roles of buyer–seller swift guanxi and trust in the seller in determining repurchase intention. Trust in the seller mediates the effects of the internalization and identification approaches on buyer–seller swift guanxi. The aforementioned findings explain why only the identification approach enhances buyer–seller swift guanxi. Similarly, buyer–seller swift guanxi mediates the effects of the identification approach and trust in the seller on repurchase intention. Our findings indicate the critical and fundamental role of buyer-seller swift guanxi in bridging the gap between trust in the seller and buyer’s repurchase intention.

Finally, given that a seller’s social influence approaches have a greater effect on trust in the seller than on buyer–seller swift guanxi but buyer–seller swift guanxi plays the major role in facilitating a buyer’s repurchase intention, how the buyer treats the seller (the status of buyer–seller swift guanxi) tends to be more important than what the seller appeals to the buyer (social influence approaches). To the best of our knowledge, this study is the first to provide a detailed explanation of how a seller’s influence approaches enhance buyer–seller swift guanxi and a buyer’s trust in the seller, which in turn increases repurchase intention.

6.2. Practical Implications

First, those who run C2C e-commerce businesses should exploit buyer dependence because it helps develop buyer–seller swift guanxi; however, buyer dependence does not contribute to repurchase intention. A seller should cultivate a buyer’s dependence by developing a credible professional image and demonstrating irreplaceability and valuable resources or assistance to the buyer. These efforts would pay off with a high buyer dependence, which combined with the identification approach, can enhance buyer–seller swift guanxi and repurchase intention.

Second, a seller should learn how to use each influence approach appropriately. For example, the identification approach can be used to enhance the buyer–seller relationship quality, which encompasses buyer–seller swift guanxi, trust in the seller and repurchase intention. Then, inspiration or ingratiating tactics should be the basic routes for daily interaction with buyers because these tactics can satisfy buyers’ physiological, psychological and self-esteem needs. By using an internalization approach, such as providing trustworthy information and professional recommendations, sellers can develop buyers’ trust in them, which can promote the development of buyer–seller swift guanxi. The
compliance approach should be avoided due to its inability to enhance the buyer–seller relationship quality and repurchase intention.

Third, converting the seller’s efforts into close buyer–seller swift guanxi should be the priority for businesses or individuals selling products in online marketplaces. When dedicating considerable efforts to facilitate buyer–seller swift guanxi, a seller should recognize the mediating role of trust in the seller in supporting internalization and identification approaches for enhancing buyer–seller swift guanxi. Thus, a buyer’s trust in the seller constitutes the foundation of buyer–seller swift guanxi [1]. Repurchase intention can be secured and enhanced only through the long-term nurturing of and dedication to buyer–seller swift guanxi.

6.3. Limitations and Future Research Directions

First, all the measures used in this study were self-reported by buyers engaged in online shopping. Future research can be conducted to compare the dyadic perspective and explore additional theoretical and practical implications. Second, additional research variables, such as widely divergent product categories, features related to social commerce platforms and buyer and seller characteristics, should be considered to obtain additional credible evidence and to understand buyer–seller swift guanxi and repurchase intention. Considering the continual emergence and development of Internet communication technologies and the ideologies of Generation Z, buyer–seller traditional or swift guanxi might be evolving currently. The differences in guanxi-related ideologies between generations also merit additional investigations.

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**Appendix A**

| Constructs/Items | 
|------------------|
| **Buyer dependence [55]** |
| 1. It is difficult to replace the seller because the seller could help me a lot. |
| 2. It is difficult to find another seller offering similar products or services. |
| 3. I cannot afford to switch to another seller. |

| **Social influence approaches [22,23]** |
|----------------------------------------|
| **Internalization approach** |
| 1. The seller emphasized that following their professional recommendations will benefit you. |
| 2. The seller provided recommendations according to their professional experience and judgments. |
| 3. The seller made it explicit that their professional advice is beneficial for you. |
| 4. The seller presented related information and options as much as possible. |
| 5. The seller provided comprehensive information for purchase decision-making. |
| 6. The seller ensured that the buyer received all information relevant to purchasing decisions (deleted). |

| **Identification approach** |
|----------------------------|
| 1. The seller made you feel comfortable about yourself before making a sales pitch. |
| 2. The seller tried to make the buyer excited about the offerings (deleted). |
| 3. The seller complimented and praised your achievements. |
| 4. The seller discussed shared interests and/or your concerns prior to discussing sales issues. |
| 5. The seller complimented and praised the buyer’s achievements (deleted). |
| 6. The seller made the buyer feel good about the seller before discussing issues. |
Constructs/Items

Compliance approach
1. The seller stated that your interests would suffer or receive no preferential treatment if their offerings were ignored.
2. The seller implied that they would stop doing something good for you if their requests were not followed.
3. The seller implied that something might become difficult to manage if their requests were not met.
4. The seller emphasized that some preferential treatments will be stopped or deleted if their offerings were not accepted.

Swift guanxi [6] (Formative construct)
1. The seller and I can understand each other.
2. The seller and I treat each other as one treats their friends.
3. The seller and I have a harmonious relationship.

Trust in the seller [1] (Formative construct)
1. The seller is very knowledgeable and competent about their products and services.
2. I think the seller is honest and full of integrity.
3. I believe that the seller would act in my best interests.

Repurchase intention [1,56]
1. Given the opportunity, I predict that I would consider buying products from this seller shortly.
2. Given the opportunity, I intend to place an order from this seller again.
3. I will buy similar products from this seller again.

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