Research paper

Et-moone and marketing relationship governance: The effect of digital transformation and ICT during the COVID-19 pandemic

Ali Abdallah Alalwan [a,b,*], Abdullah M. Baabdullah [c], Yogesh K. Dwivedi [d,e], Nripendra P. Rana [a], Banita Lal [f], Ramakrishnan Raman [e]

[a] *Department of Management and Marketing, College of Business and Economics, Qatar University, P.O. Box - 2713, Doha, Qatar*
[b] *Al-Balqa Applied University, Amman College for Financial & Managerial Science, Jordan*
[c] *Department of Management Information Systems, Faculty of Economics and Administration, King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia*
[d] *Emerging Markets Research Centre (EMaRC), School of Management, Room #323, Swansea University, Bay Campus, Fabian Bay, Swansea SA1 8EN, Wales, UK*
[e] *Symbiosis Institute of Business Management, Pune & Symbiosis International (Deemed University), Pune, India*
[f] *School of Management, University of Bradford, UK*

ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the drivers and impact of et-moone on relational governance within B2B relationships in the Arab Asian region. Building on commitment and trust theory, this study proposes how et-moone could be driven by IT-enabled interactions during the COVID-19 pandemic. Data were collected using an online questionnaire survey from the food, pharmaceutical, detergent and sterilizer industries in Jordan and Saudi Arabia. A two-stage structural equation modelling approach was used to test the model. The results largely support the significant impact of et-moone predictors. A strong and significant relationship was also found between et-moone and relational governance. This study expands the theoretical horizon of et-moone by considering a new driver (i. e., IT-enabled interactions) and its consequences in terms of relational governance. The outcomes of the current study also make contributions for both practitioners and researchers who are interested in socio-cultural values (i.e., et-moone) in Arabic countries. An in-depth discussion on the above is presented in the subsections on theoretical and practical implications.

1. Introduction

Increasingly, the major challenge for modern organizations in the business market is not only meeting their customers' needs but also maintaining and sustaining a long-term profitable relationship with their business customers (Dong, Ma, & Zhou, 2017). Such bonds have an important impact on the sustainable competitive advantage and business performance of all partners including suppliers and business customers (Abosag & Lee, 2013). Therefore, extensive research has been conducted to understand the mechanism by which relationships are built and maintained in the B2B context (Berger, Silbiger, Herstein, & Barnes, 2015). A careful review of such attempts leads to the recognition of the significant role of a common culture and value system in shaping how organizations coordinate and collaborate with each other. In this regard, social bonds and personal networks are more likely to have a significant impact on B2B relationships, especially in cultures that are

characterized by a high degree of collectivism and tribalism. These kinds of interactions between culture and B2B relationships are common in Middle Eastern Arabian countries such as Saudi Arabia and Jordan (Abosag, 2015; Gronroos, 1994; Tlaiss & Kauser, 2011).

In the context of Asian business culture, B2B relationships can take on different forms such as guanxi, wasta, and et-moone (Abosag, 2015; Luo, 2007). Abosag and Naudé (2014), Chen, Huang, and Sternquist (2011), Lohtia, Bello, and Porter (2009), and Pimpa (2008) identified these forms as having a positive role in sustaining B2B relationships, building a solid competitive advantage, and enabling better collaboration, and, therefore, impacting business performance. In Arab countries, people are more collective and depend heavily on their personal and family connections to conduct business (Hofstede, 2001), and et-moone is one of the most common cultural and social values held by business partners in establishing and sustaining profitable business relationships (Abosag, 2015; Pimpa, 2008). According to Abosag and Lee (2013), et-

---

moone can be conceptualized as a deep and solid bond that helps partners to be more flexible in their business interactions, which allows them to make one-sided decisions in business relationships without being concerned that a dispute might occur between the parties. The only studies to address issues related to et-moone have been conducted by Abosag (2015), Abosag and Lee (2013), and Abosag and Naudé (2014) in the context of Saudi Arabia. These researchers have focused on the main antecedents of et-moone relationships such as trust and commitment (Abosag & Lee, 2013), interpersonal liking (Abosag, 2015), and social reputation and doing favours (Abosag & Naudé, 2014).

Most companies are currently suffering due to the COVID-19 pandemic, for example, the resulting shutdowns in most commercial and economic sectors and, accordingly, the deterioration of their financial, employment, and marketing performance (Cankurtaran & Beverland, 2020; Hartmann & Lussier, 2020; Oehmen, Locatelli, Wied, & Willumsen, 2020; Rapaccini, Saccani, Kowalkowski, Paiola, & Adrodegari, 2020). Furthermore, a study carried out by Coface in July 2020 showed that globally, the number of companies that will declare bankruptcy this year is expected to increase by 25% (Global Tarde Review, 2020). Another report published by the International Labour Organization (2020) claimed that approximately 436 million businesses in the most affected sectors around the world would face great challenges due to the serious disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic (International Labour Organization, 2020).

Indeed, several issues pertaining to B2B relationship management (e. g., the lack of inventory, disruption in the supply chain, delay of payment, logistical and product delivery restrictions) have arisen due to the pandemic (Hartmann & Lussier, 2020). To address these problems and challenges, more collaboration and coordination between business partners are needed at this difficult time. Therefore, et-moone relationships seem to be an effective business relationship mechanism by which business partners can reduce the severity of the impact of COVID-19. In the prevailing Arabic and Islamic culture that encourages collaboration and solidarity, especially in times of distress, real friendships and close relationships (e.g., et-moone) occur between business partners (Abosag, 2015; Shaikh, Purchase, & Brush, 2019). Accordingly, it can be argued that, regardless of its dark side, COVID-19 presents an opportunity to rely more on et-moone relationships as an appropriate approach and means of interaction and collaboration among business partners to solve many issues and problems resulting from this crisis. Thus, the need for the study of the dimensions of et-moone culture has become more urgent than ever.

In light of the extensive advances in information and communications technology (ICT) and Web 2.0 applications, business organizations have more opportunities now to increase efficient contact with each other. For example, according to a report published by Statista (2020), the value of B2B activities undertaken over digital platforms jumped from US$5.83 trillion to US$12.2 trillion in 2019. Furthermore, as reported by Gartner (2011), by the end of 2020, the vast majority of business relationships (85%) would be conducted through computer-meditated communication (CMC). Therefore, CMC tools present an integral building block in the marketing relationship area and accordingly contribute significantly to the customer experience (Steinhoff, Arli, Weaven, & Kozlenkova, 2019). CMC has also been included in the shaping and sustaining of relationship marketing, especially that which is based on personal and cultural bonds—that is, guanxi (Ou, Pavlou, & Davison, 2014). For example, an extensive use of CMC channels contributes significantly to swift guanxi between customers and service providers, which, in turn, reflects positively on customer retention and loyalty (Ou et al., 2014). Furthermore, during the COVID-19 pandemic, organizations had to rely on ICT and Web 2.0 to interact and communicate with each other. Therefore, features pertaining to IT-enabled interactions (i.e., interactivity, synchronicity, ubiquitous connectivity, and customization) and the role they could play in facilitating et-moone relationships will be considered in the current study.

It is also important to consider the consequences of using et-moone

as a form of business relationship in the Arabic context. The only study to investigate the consequence of et-moone was undertaken by Abosag (2015), who examined how et-moone can accelerate cooperation between business organizations. Thus, it is important to consider other consequences (e.g., relationship governance). Indeed, business partners always struggle to establish and sustain the solid and deep bonds required to accelerate the level of relational governance (Dong et al., 2017; Frazier, 2009; Geyskens, Steenkamp, & Kumar, 1998). Accordingly, interpersonal relationships could play a positive role in sustaining relational governance, as Dong et al. (2017) reported in relation to guanxi. Conceptually, relational governance was articulated by Zaheer and Venkatraman (1995, p.374) as an 'interfirm exchange which includes significant relationship specific assets, combined with a high level of interorganizational trust.' Increasingly, relational governance presents an essential component in building more solid and sustainable marketing relationships based on shared collaboration and a great sense of responsibility between the parties to the relationship (Dong et al., 2017). Relational governance also reflects the extent to which business partners are actively and jointly engaged with each other in planning their activities and solving their problems (Dong et al., 2017; Gundlach, Achrol, & Mentzer, 1995). Therefore, et-moone, as an interpersonal and social bond, could play an active role in accelerating relational governance aspects such as joint planning and joint problem solving (Bensaou & Venkatraman, 1995; Davies, Leung, Luk, & Wong, 1995; Dong et al., 2017). Furthermore, et-moone is based on a high level of confidence and commitment. This, in turn, allows more freedom and openness in the communication process among business partners, thereby helping in conflicts and problem resolution as well as in jointly planning marketing channel flow (Yang, Su, & Fam, 2012). The selection of relational governance as a consequence of et-moone could be returned to the significant role of relational governance in facilitating the learning process, information, and knowledge exchange between business partners (Shamim, Zeng, Khan, & Zia, 2020). Relational governance could also be viewed as an effective way to prevent and alleviate potential opportunism among business partners (Cao & Lumineau, 2015; Poppo & Zenger, 2002; Williamson, 1979). Thus, relational governance is largely defined as a mechanism to help business partners make more accurate and successful decisions, which, in turn accelerates business performance, competitiveness, and cost reduction for both parties (Janssen, van der Voort, & Wahyudi, 2017; Powell, 1990; Dong et al., 2017).

According to the abovementioned discussion, this study aims to propose and examine a model that could be able to provide an accurate picture regarding the main antecedences and consequences of et-moone over the B2B sector. Therefore, the current study will add value for researchers and practitioners in related areas by examining new aspects associated with the antecedents and consequences of an et-moone relationship. For example, this study will attempt to accelerate the current understanding regarding the impact of cultural bonds (i.e., et-moone) in building and sustaining business-to-business relationships from the perspective of Asian Arabian culture. Examining the emerging issues related to IT-enabled interactions also enriches the current understanding of contemporary challenges pertaining to the form and essence of relationships between business organizations. From a practical perspective, this study can help business organizations related to Asian Arabian culture to deeply understand the main mechanisms pertaining to et-moone culture, and, accordingly, how business partners can effectively engage and collaborate with each other.

In light of the aforementioned discussion, this study addresses the following questions:

1. What drives et-moone relationships in the Arab region?
2. To what extent does et-moon enhance relationship governance?

These questions must be carefully addressed in Jordan and Saudi Arabia as et-moone culture is dominant throughout these two countries.

From a practical perspective, in Arab countries such as Saudi Arabia and Jordan, people are more collective and depend heavily on their personal and family connections to conduct business; et-moone is one of the most common cultural and social values considered by business partners for establishing and sustaining profitable business relationships (Abosag, 2015; Abosag & Lee, 2013; Abosag & Naudé, 2014). Furthermore, the application and reflection of et-moone in the Asian Arab business area could be returned to the cultural characteristics (i.e., tribalism, collectivism, social network influence, and social background) of Asian Arab communities (Abosag, 2015; Abosag & Lee, 2013; Abosag and Naudé (2014). According to Gronroos (1994), trade exchanges within ancient cultures, such as those in Saudi Arabia and Jordan, are largely reflected by personal relationships (et-moone). More importantly, most business organizations in Arab countries are more likely to be family-owned businesses where interpersonal connections are central to the vast majority of business activities (; Krueger, Bogers, Labaki, & Basco, 2021). Moreover, given the impact of COVID-19 and the greater need to work under conditions of social distancing, most organizations have faced significant problems and challenges in these difficult circumstances with the result that they must support and depend on each other. Therefore, a cultural value such as et-moone could play a crucial role in shaping the form and nature of business marketing relationships during the COVID-19 crisis. In this respect, it is also important to note that it has been difficult to conduct et-moone in person using traditional face-to-face communication. Therefore, there is no alternative but to rely on IT-enabled interactions to facilitate B2B communication and et-moone relationships.

Jordan is considered in the current research to expand the theoretical and practical scope in studying and examining et-moone culture and its impact on business relationships. Indeed, the choice of including Jordan alongside Saudi Arabia in this research was based on a set of factors. The existence of personal relationships such as et-moone and wasta within the Jordanian business sector has been reported by different studies (Al-Ramahi, 2008; Alsarhan & Valax, 2020; El-Said & Harrigan, 2009; Loewe, Blume, & Speer, 2008; Ta'Amnha, Sayce, & Tregaskis, 2016). Jordan is located at the centre of the Arab world and has geopolitical importance due to its geographical situation and political role in the Middle East region. Furthermore, Jordan geographically represents the link between Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Palestine. Jordan is also one of the Arab moderation countries. Therefore, Jordan has always been recognized as a stable and secure business environment. According to a recent report published by US News (2020), Jordan is considered to be one of the top six Arab countries in terms of human resources, education, climatic diversity and business, quality of life, and cultural openness. Furthermore, Jordan's ranking on the global entrepreneurship index improved by 23 positions between 2014 and 2018 (up from 72nd to 49th). The Global Entrepreneurship Index 2018 showed that Jordan's rating is equivalent to the average rating of the Arab region, which is 37%. Jordan outperforms the region in indicators of product and service innovation, technology uptake, competition, start-up skills, and cultural support (World Bank, 2020). This is in addition to the inclusion of 72 Jordanian companies among the top 100 Arab start-ups in 2019 according to the same report issued by World Bank (2020). Jordan also has many cultural and economic characteristics that are close to those of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. This is evident by the large number of Jordanian people who work in Saudi Arabia, which reached nearly half a million workers in 2020 (Arab center Washington DC, 2020). Similar to Saudi Arabia, family businesses are historically the common business model in Jordan, and personal relationships are at the heart of all commercial exchanges.

The rest of the current study was structured as follows. The next section critically reviews the main body of the et-moone and B2B relationship literature. The conceptual model and research hypotheses are fully argued in Section 3, followed by Section 4, which is devoted to presenting the methodology applied in the current study. Section 5 presents the empirical results, which are then discussed in Section 6,

along with the key theoretical and practical implications. The research conclusion is demonstrated in Section 7.

2. Literature review

The B2B relationship has been commonly addressed by marketing researchers but more specifically by researchers who are interested in the related area of industrial marketing (Abdul-Muhmin, 2005; Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Padgett, Hopkins, & Williams, 2020; Rauyruen & Miller, 2007). However, part of the current literature review was derived from the business area including aspects pertaining to relational governance (Dong et al., 2017; Gundlach et al., 1995; Zaheer & Venkatraman, 1995). Additionally, there was also a need to review information technology and the information system area for issues pertaining to IT-enabled interactions (Chen, Preston, & Xia, 2013; Li, Zheng, & Zhuang, 2017; Sinkovics, Jean, Roath, & Cavusgil, 2011; Wang & Wei, 2007).

In their endeavours, marketing researchers have tested and validated a number of factors proven to play a significant role in building, sustaining, and maintaining business relationships (Gil-Saura, Frasquet-Deltoro, & Cervera-Taulet, 2009; He, Huang, & Wu, 2018). Many of these studies have concentrated on two main drivers of B2B relationships: trust and commitment (Abdul-Muhmin, 2005; Abosag & Lee, 2013; Rauyruen & Miller, 2007; Yen & Abosag, 2016). These two factors are derived from the commitment-trust theory of relationship marketing proposed by Morgan and Hunt (1994). Theoretically, commitment and trust have been traditionally proposed and validated as key success factors of any marketing relationship (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Trust and commitment were also validated by Rauyruen and Miller (2007) as dimensions of B2B as a relationship quality along with satisfaction and service quality. Rauyruen and Miller's (2007) findings confirmed the significant impact of both trust and commitment on business customers' buying intention and their attitudinal loyalty.

A review of the literature on B2B relationships indicates that different forms of relationships and their outcomes have been examined. For example, buyer-supplier dependency in the United States was considered by Padgett et al. (2020), who found a significant impact of commitment aspects (affective, calculative, and normative) on the extent to which buyers rely on their suppliers. B2B relationship loyalty was also empirically measured by a study conducted in Spain by Gil-Saura et al. (2009), who provided further evidence supporting the role of trust and commitment in enhancing B2B relationship loyalty. Relationship quality was addressed by He et al. (2018) as a multidimensional construct comprising three main aspects: brand trust, word-of-mouth, and value cocreation. He et al. (2018) demonstrated that aspects pertaining to brand value congruence – namely, self-enhancement congruence and self-transcendence – could predict the relationship quality between business partners. Even though mechanisms such as trust and commitment can be addressed as a fundamental basis for building and strengthening the relationship between business partners, other mechanisms pertaining to cultural bonds and marketing practices must be considered to determine how they reflect the momentum and strength of the relationship (Canavari, Fritz, Hofstede, Matopoulos, & Vlachopoulou, 2010).

Relationship development was another form of the B2B relationship tested by Singh and Koshy (2011) as a mediating factor between value cocreation and customer satisfaction. Singh and Koshy (2011) revealed the significant impact of value cocreation on relationship development and, accordingly, on the acceleration of the level of customer satisfaction. Satisfaction was also examined as a major desired consequence of B2B relationships by Murphy and Sashi (2018), who proposed several predictors, such as mode of communication and interactivity. Murphy and Sashi (2018) confirmed that personal and digital communication can accelerate the level of dyadic contact, which, in turn, enhances relationship satisfaction.

The transformation process from traditional to digital B2B

relationships was addressed by Canavari et al. (2010), who argued that trust is crucial in facilitating this process. Similarly, Berthon, Pitt, Berthon, Campbell, and Thwaites (2008) discussed the related issue of e-B2B relationships by concentrating on technology readiness and cultural values as key determinants of e-B2B engagement. Pavlou (2002) articulated how trust is initiated by business organizations in the virtual market space of B2B, which can sustain B2B relationship trust. Lin, Yip, Ho, and Sambasivan (2020) investigated how implementing ICT applications in the B2B setting can impact an organization's performance, and they considered the moderating role of ethical leadership on the relationship between the adoption of information technology applications for B2B relationships and business performance.

The cultural impact of B2B relationships has also been the focus of many marketing researchers who have examined the importance of having a clear and solid understanding of the targeted community where B2B relationships are initiated as well as aspects pertaining to relationship value and common country culture (Berthon et al., 2008; Zhuang, Xi, & Tsang, 2010). Indeed, culture is more likely to play a crucial role in countries where collectivism is high and people depend heavily on personal and family connections to conduct their business (Hofstede, 2001). For example, interpersonal guanxi has been commonly reported as a key component determining the nature and efficiency of B2B relationships in China (Abosag, Yen, Barnes, & Gadalla, 2021; Dong et al., 2017; Zhuang et al., 2010). Dong et al. (2017) provided statistical evidence demonstrating that interpersonal guanxi is a key factor that fully mediates the impact of relationship marketing orientation on relational governance. According to Zhuang et al. (2010), guanxi not only accelerates the level of collaboration but also mitigates conflict between business partners in marketing channels. Zhou, Zhang, Shen, and Zhou (2020) examined the role of interpersonal guanxi in accelerating the amount of confidence and the extra role of behaviour among business partners. As a tool of localization, guanxi was proposed and validated as a moderating factor by Yen and Abosag (2016), who demonstrated that the impact of desirable relationship quality dimensions – trust, commitment, communication, and collaboration – on both financial performance and long-term orientation is significantly moderated by guanxi.

Within the Arab part of the Middle East, a qualitative study by Abosag and Lee (2013) explored how business relationships can evolve in the Saudi Arabian context based on two theoretical models: life-cycle theory and trust and commitment theory. Their results showed trust and commitment as key drivers reinforcing the et-moone bond between business partners in Saudi Arabia. Abosag and Naudé (2014) operationalized et-moone as a cultural bond corresponding to guanxi in the Saudi Arabian context that could be undertaken and evolved via a large degree of openness, externalisation of collaboration and coordination, high self-disclosure, knowledge and information sharing, and attitudinal and behavioural loyalty. Abosag and Naudé (2014) also found that guanxi/et-moone is considerably predicted by the role of both interpersonal liking and trust. However, Abosag and Naudé (2014) did not provide a further explanation regarding the main consequences of et-moone in terms of business performance, competitiveness, or even relational governance. Another empirical study conducted by Abdul-Muhmin, 2005; Abosag, 2015 demonstrated that trust, commitment, and interpersonal liking are the main antecedents of et-moone. The same study also found that et-moone significantly impacts the level of B2B cooperation in the Saudi context.

Shaikh et al. (2019) more recently argued in-depth how et-moone and other similar constructs (i.e., Ehsan and wasta) could reflect on social capital. Shaikh et al. (2019) asserted that et-moone is a kind of special personal relationship that could be extended to the organizational level in terms of the B2B relationship. On the other hand, wasta was conceptualized by Mohamed and Mohamed (2011, p.412) as 'a form of favouritism that provides individuals with advantages not because of merit or right but because of who they know' (Mohamed & Mohamed, 2011, p.412). Compared to et-moone, which could be applied at the

institutional level along with considering the mutual benefit of all parties in the exchange process, wasta is more likely to be applied at the individual level; however, its benefits are limited only to the person who uses it (Shaikh et al., 2019).

Wasta has been studied in a range of Arab countries including Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt (i.e., Aldossari & Robertson, 2016; Alsarhan & Valax, 2020; Alwerthan, Swanson, & Rogge, 2018; Barnett, Yandle, & Naufal, 2013; Mohamed & Mohamed, 2011; Tlaiss & Kauser, 2011). For example, Alsarhan and Valax (2020) have recently provided qualitative evidence supporting the existence and role of wasta in the Jordanian public sector. Alsarhan and Valax (2020) argued in detail that problems could arise from the use of wasta, especially with regard to human resource management practices. Some of these negative consequences could be summarized in terms of a decline in the level of satisfaction and loyalty of workers as well as an increase in the level of job insecurity and turnover, which, in turn, could negatively reflect on organizational performance and give rise to stereotyping. A mixed method research strategy was also conducted by Tlaiss and Kauser (2011) to determine how wasta could shape employees' career development in Middle Eastern countries. Their results showed that despite the great conviction that wasta is an unfair practice, it is not likely to disappear easily and quickly from Arab societies and their reflections focused on different aspects of employees' business and social life, especially those related to career development. In Egypt, wasta was studied by Mohamed and Mohamed (2011). According to the quantitative data collected using a quasi-experiment, Mohamed and Mohamed (2011) reported that the competence and morality of wasta users are more likely to be underestimated in comparison with individuals who do not use wasta. However, most of these studies have been mainly conducted in the public sector and only addressed the related issues of wasta inside organizations and from the perspective of human resource management. Furthermore, most of them are qualitative studies and have considered wasta's negative consequences on the organization's performance. Therefore, it could be difficult to expand the applicability of these studies' results to et-moone culture and the B2B context.

As mentioned above, et-moone has been investigated by three studies (Abosag, 2015; Abosag & Lee, 2013; Abosag & Naudé, 2014) in Asian Arabian settings. These studies have enriched the understanding of how business relationships are built and sustained in the Asian Arabian context. However, they have all been conducted in Saudi Arabia and considered only a few antecedents - trust and commitment (Abosag & Lee, 2013), interpersonal liking (Abosag, 2015), and social reputation and doing favours (Abosag & Naudé, 2014) - and the consequences (cooperation) of et-moone. Moreover, these attempts did not provide a further explanation regarding the main consequences of et-moone in terms of business performance, competitiveness, and even relational governance (Abosag, 2015). Therefore, there is still a need to widen the theoretical horizon regarding the antecedents and consequences of et-moone as well as to consider a new context (i.e., Jordan) to expand the applicability of et-moone in the Asian Arabian context.

This study was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic and was subject to its impact, so there is a need to consider how a cultural bond such as et-moone can influence B2B interactions during such difficult times. This study also recognises the importance of technological mechanisms (i.e., IT-enabled interactions) to facilitate the communication process among business partners, especially in the absence of human communication due to the impact of COVID-19 and restrictions. In addition, cooperation was the only consequence of et-moone tested by Abosag (2015); therefore, other consequences (e.g., relational governance) should be taken into account.

3. Conceptual model

The proposed conceptual model is based on the commitment-trust theory of relationship marketing and other factors including IT-enabled formal interaction and IT-enabled informal interaction (see
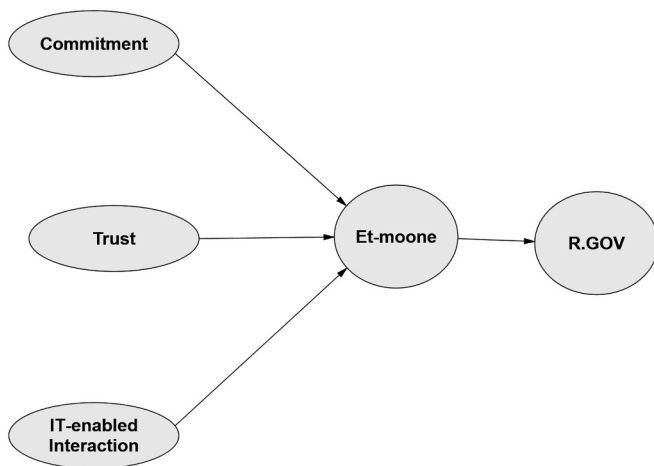
Fig. 1. Proposed conceptual model (adapted from Abosag, 2015; Li et al., 2017; Morgan & Hunt, 1994).

Fig. 1). Furthermore, it explores how et-moone, as a cultural value, can shape the relational governance between business partners. Indeed, the selection of the commitment-trust theory of relationship marketing as a theoretical base for the current model was due to both dimensions of this theory—namely, trust and commitment—being largely supported as strong drivers that sustain business partners' networks, especially strong and deep ones such as et-moone (Abdul-Muhmin, 2005; Abosag, 2015; Abosag & Lee, 2013; Rauyruen & Miller, 2007; Yen & Abosag, 2016; Zhuang & Zhang, 2011). This could be returned to the impact of both commitment and trust in terms of the extent to which business partners wish to invest and sacrifice something of value to sustain their correlation, as stated by Morgan and Hunt (1994). Furthermore, although Morgan and Hunt (1994) examined commitment-trust theory in the retailing context (B2C), they asserted that the theoretical and empirical horizon of their proposition could be expanded to other contexts such as customers, business partners, and even employees (Mukherjee & Nath, 2007). This assertion has lately been supported by different studies undertaken within the area of B2B (i.e., Abdul-Muhmin, 2005; Abosag & Lee, 2013; Rauyruen & Miller, 2007; Yen & Abosag, 2016).

As shown in Fig. 1, three factors (commitment, trust, and IT-enabled interaction) were proposed as key drivers of et-moone. Relational governance (R.GOV) was also proposed to be predicted by the role of et-moone. The following subsections provide more details and justifications of each factor in the current model.

3.1. Commitment

Morgan and Hunt (1994, p.23) conceptualized commitment 'as an exchange partner believing that an ongoing relationship with another is so important as to warrant maximum efforts at maintaining it; that is, the committed party believes the relationship is worth working on to ensure that it endures indefinitely.' From a practical perspective, a close and deep relationship (e.g., et-moone) could not work or survive if business partners do not have strong feelings of obligation towards each other. Such obligation is a kind of normative commitment and presents the extent to which business partners are morally obligated to sustain and remain in the relationship (Allen & Meyer, 1990). This is reflected by a willingness of business partners to invest and make sacrifices for their own mutual relationships to achieve their interests in the long run and keep their relationship sustainable (Rylander, Strutton, & Pelton, 1997; Yen & Abosag, 2016). Therefore, an adequate level of commitment between business partners is essential to ensure a close relationship such as an et-moone relationship.

According to Abosag and Lee (2013), et-moone relationships require business partners to be mutually committed to each other. Moreover,

commitment is more likely to be attained using personal and social networks rather than official and organizational networks (Chung, Yen, & Wang, 2020; Rylander et al., 1997). In this regard, Abosag (2015) argued that deep personal networks (e.g., et-moone) will be significantly enhanced if business partners have a solid personal commitment. Abosag (2015) empirically confirmed the crucial role of commitment in et-moone relationships in the Saudi Arabian context. In another study on the Saudi context, Abdul-Muhmin, 2005 found that commitment is a key factor not only in sustaining B2B relationships but also in mitigating partners' intentions to terminate the relationship. Thus, Abosag (2015, p.151) reported that 'Mutual commitment is a cornerstone in the development of an Et-Moone relationship.' Therefore, this study suggests that an et-moone relationship between business partners would require business partners to have a mutual sense of obligation (commitment); accordingly, a high level of commitment between business partners leads to the attainment of a stronger et-moone relationship. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1. Commitment will positively influence an et-moone relationship.

3.2. Trust

According to Morgan and Hunt (1994, p.23), trust occurs when the parties in a relationship have confidence in each other's reliability and integrity. Indeed, such confidence will lead to a higher willingness for dependence and reliance among relationship partners (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). With regard to B2B relationships, it has been widely argued that confidence cannot be taken for granted; rather, it is acquired from the ability, benevolence, and integrity perceived in trusted exchange partners over time (Abosag & Lee, 2013; Abosag & Naudé, 2014; Alalwan, Dwivedi, & Rana, 2017, Alalwan, Rana, Dwivedi, & Algharabat, 2017; Boersma, Buckley, & Ghauri, 2003; Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Zhou, Zhang, Zhuang, & Zhou, 2015).

Trust has been the focus of many marketing relationship researchers (Abosag & Naudé, 2014). This could be because the crucial role of trust not only enhances relationship satisfaction (Smith & Barclay, 1997), but it also assists in accelerating partners' intention and willingness to sustain their relationship (Abosag & Lee, 2013). Therefore, a sensitive and close relationship (e.g., et-moone), which requires all relationship partners to obtain a higher degree of sacrifice and dependence, is more likely to be influenced by the level of trust and confidence shared with the exchange partner. Although trust pertains to intrinsic emotion and feelings, it is commonly displayed in observed actions and behaviours (e. g., collaboration, coordination, and et-moone) (Abosag & Naudé, 2014; Boersma et al., 2003). Chowdhury (2005) and Li (2005) found that trust also makes available open channels of communication with a lower level of concerns about opportunism and susceptibility; accordingly, trust creates more opportunities for a shared understanding among business partners. Abosag (2015) added that an adequate level of trust among et-moone partners helps them to be more flexible in improving this relationship and to have positive expectations of each other's future actions and behaviours. The causal relationship between trust and et-moone has been empirically validated by Abosag (2015) and Abosag and Naudé (2014) in the context of Saudi Arabia. Thus, the following hypothesis proposes the following:

H2. Trust will positively influence an et-moone relationship.

3.3. IT-enabled interactions

Given the ICT and Web 2.0 revolution, companies have progressively moved to digital platforms to communicate and interact with each other (Li et al., 2017; Smock, Rudzki, & Rogers, 2007). A wide range of communication channels - both formal (e.g., email, video conferencing, enterprise resource planning) and informal (e.g., social media such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Zoom, mobile calling, messaging apps) - are available to business organizations to freely interact and communicate

with each other 24/7 (Alalwan, Dwivedi, & Rana, 2017; Alalwan, Rana, et al., 2017; Baabdullah, Alalwan, Rana, Kizgin, & Patil, 2019; Dwivedi et al., 2021; Fischer & Reuber, 2014; Hosseini, Fallon, Weerakkody, & Sivarajah, 2019; Kim, Umanath, & Kim, 2005). By using such emerging tools and digital platforms to communicate, companies can have more efficient contact with each other (Kim et al., 2005). This, in turn, positively impacts coordination and cooperation among business partners (Li et al., 2017).

Theoretically, many studies have reported the contribution and value that could be added to B2B cooperation and coordination by a greater reliance on IT-enabled interactions. This could be attributed to the crucial role of both types of IT-enabled interactions - formal and informal - in enhancing the capabilities and competences of partners in processing and exchanging information and knowledge, leading to a greater understanding of each other's requirements (Alalwan, 2018; Chen et al., 2013; Li et al., 2017). Furthermore, the role of IT-enabled interactions is not limited to facilitating information processing and exchange; rather, it also sustains the extent of confidence between business partners, which helps to reduce transaction expenses and lessen opportunistic behaviour (Li et al., 2017; Sinkovics et al., 2011; Wang & Wei, 2007). Therefore, features pertaining to IT-enabled interactions, both formal and informal, could provide more opportunities for et-moone partners to have closer relationships stemming from a greater mutual understanding. Consequently, this helps strengthen the et-moone relationship. Furthermore, as discussed in the introduction above, during the COVID-19 pandemic, organizations have had to rely on ICT and Web 2.0 to interact and communicate with each other. In light of these issues, the current study considers the impact of technological aspects in terms of IT-enabled interactions on the et-moone relationship. Thus, the following hypothesis proposes the following:

H3. IT-enabled interactions will positively influence an et-moone relationship.

3.4. Et-moone

According to Abosag and Naudé (2014, p.887), 'Et-moone is based on strong close intimate friendships that provide greater flexibility in business relationships and allow for unilateral decisions in business relationships without causing any uneasiness or division between partners.' In fact, et-moone is fundamentally based on solid interpersonal and social bonds; accordingly, et-moone is not like any type of usual and transactional relationship but is rather a special one with a special partner (Abosag, 2015; Abosag & Naudé, 2014). From a practical perspective, et-moone is a common relationship value in Middle Eastern and Arabic countries (e.g., Saudi Arabia, Jordan) (Abosag, 2015; Gronroos, 1994; Tlaiss & Kauser, 2011). The significance of et-moone in business partner relationships is because business partners engaged with each other in an et-moone relationship are more likely to sacrifice their valuable resources (time, money, effort, information) to help each other (Abosag, 2015; Kohli, Yen, Alwi, & Gupta, 2021). Such a relationship will also be at stake in light of the unusual and difficult circumstances arising from the COVID-19 pandemic (Abosag & Lee, 2013).

As long as et-moone is a consequence of other antecedents (i.e., trust, commitment, RMO, and IT-enabled interaction), it is an antecedent in its nature, and it will lead to several consequences in terms of a mutual understanding and a greater desire to share resources and benefits (Abosag, 2015). However, the only study to examine the consequences of et-moone was conducted by Abosag (2015), who focused exclusively on cooperation. Therefore, the current study considers it important to expand the scope of et-moone consequences by considering the role of relational governance. According to Zaheer and Venkatraman (1995, p.374), relational governance is an 'interfirm exchange which includes significant relationship specific assets, combined with a high level of interorganizational trust.'

Relational governance can also be addressed as a dual governance

mechanism that forms consistent, stable, and enduring marketing relationships and one that is established through communal coordination and a sense of obligation among partners in business relationships (Dong et al., 2017). The adoption of relational governance means that business partners jointly and actively plan and coordinate their actions in a constant manner by using relational mechanisms (Dong et al., 2017; Gundlach et al., 1995). Given the perspective of relational governance, interpersonal and social bonds along with joint work are the main foundations for initiating and maintaining sustainable two-way relationships (Dong et al., 2017). Accordingly, aspects of relational governance, such as joint planning and joint problem solving, are essentially derived from solid and deep interpersonal bonds (e.g., et-moone; interpersonal guanxi) that are built on trust and commitment (Bensaou & Venkatraman, 1995; Davies et al., 1995; Dong et al., 2017). Furthermore, it has been widely discussed how social and personal bonds in business relationships can contribute by adding value for all partners in terms of coordination, problem solving, and equitable allocation of resources and benefits. In this respect, Wang (2007) demonstrated the role of interpersonal guanxi as an essential requirement of B2B marketing relationships.

In line with the aforementioned discussion, an et-moone relationship establishes a foundation on which business partners can expand their collaboration and coordination when jointly planning and problem solving. Furthermore, et-moone is based on a high level of confidence and commitment. This, in turn, allows more freedom and openness in the communication process among business partners, thereby helping in conflicts and problem resolutions as well as in jointly planning flows in the marketing channel (Yang et al., 2012). In line with this assumption, Dong et al. (2017) empirically proved the impact of interpersonal guanxi on relational governance. Thus, the following hypothesis proposes the following:

H6. An et-moone relationship will positively influence relational governance.

4. Methodology

This study was conducted in two Arabic countries within the Middle East region: Jordan and Saudi Arabia. Its aim was to investigate how et-moone, as a common cultural value, can shape B2B relationships, especially in light of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Using an online questionnaire survey, data were collected from different industries, including food, pharmaceutical, detergent and sterilizer, service, agriculture, and wholesaling merchandising. The digital version of the questionnaire was sent to a sample size of 500 (250 for each country). Following Abosag's (2015) approach, the current survey targeted those participants (procurement managers, marketing managers, directors of supply, senior managers, general managers, chief executive officers, and owners) involved in marketing relationship interactions with main suppliers. In this respect, it is important to note that this study followed the same approach adopted by Abosag (2015) and Abosag and Naudé (2014) by asking the targeted participants to relate their responses to the major suppliers with which they have an et-moone relationship.

The scale items for the current study factors were adapted from different sources. For example, five scale items to measure trust were adopted from Doney and Cannon (1997) and Abosag (2015), and four scale items to test commitment were adopted from Tellefsen and Thomas (2005) and Abdul-Muhmin (2002). It is worth noting that the trust scale of Doney and Cannon (1997) and the commitment scale of Tellefsen and Thomas (2005) were adopted and validated by Abosag (2015) and that the validity and reliability of both scales has been demonstrated in relation to Saudi Arabia. As shown in the Appendix, both aspects of relational governance – joint planning and joint problem solving – were measured by a scale developed by Claro, Hagelaar, and Omta (2003). Two dimensions were considered to test IT-enabled interactions: IT-

enabled formal interactions and IT-enabled informal interactions. Five items of IT-enabled formal interactions were extracted from Li et al.'s (2017) scale, while IT-enabled informal interactions were tested using three items from Li et al. (2017) and one newly designed item. Finally, et-moone was measured based on scale items developed and validated by Abosag and Naudé (2014).

A seven-point Likert scale was used to measure the extent of the participants' agreement or disagreement with the scale items that were adopted. Furthermore, as the focus of this study is on Arabic culture in the Middle East, the questionnaire was converted to the Arabic language using the back-translation method suggested by Brislin (1976). The Arabic version was then reviewed by a number of experts (two from Jordan and two from Saudi Arabia) who specialize in the area of marketing and B2B relationships. All the experts supported the adequacy of the scale items used.

A pilot study was undertaken with twenty procurement managers, directors of supply, chief executive officers, and owners. These participants were asked to evaluate the clarity and accuracy of the language used and the absence of any ambiguity in the questions. All pilot study participants reported that the questions were clear and confirmed the absence of errors or ambiguity. Furthermore, Cronbach's alpha was tested for all scale items based on the data collected from pilot study participants, and all Cronbach's alpha values were above the threshold value of 0.70 (Nunnally, 1978).

5. Results

The total number of valid responses was approximately 313, with a response rate of 62%. As shown in Table 1, the vast majority of participants were male (75.1%), and 24.9% were female. The age category of 31–40 (47.06%) represents the largest part of the current study sample, followed by those whose age was between 25 and 30, which comprised 20.1% of the total sample. With regard to educational level, approximately 60.7% of the study participants held an undergraduate degree. The distribution of the study sample according to the participants' job title was as follows: CEO (11.5%), Director of supply (17.2%), General Manager (15.6%), Senior Manager (10.8%), Marketing manager (16.9%), Procurement manager (16.6%), and Owner (11.8%). Approximately 17.2% of the sample participants came from a retailing context, followed by those who worked in the food industry (16.6%). In terms of company size, approximately 46.3% of the current sample participants worked in medium-sized organizations, while a lower percentage of participants (23%) was observed for those working in small-sized organizations.

5.1. Descriptive statistics of the measurement items

As shown in Table 2, the vast majority of scale items had an average mean value higher than 5 except commitment. The highest average mean value (5.41) was captured by trust items with an average SD value of 1.18054. This reflects the level of trustworthiness between business partners. The second highest average mean value (5.24) was for the relational governance joint problem solving scale items with an average SD of 1.08. Scale items of both aspects of IT-enabled interactions, formal (5.21) and informal (5.20), were positively valued by the current study sample participants. This, in turn, supports the importance of IT-enabled interactions in sustaining et-moone during the COVID-19 pandemic. Et-moone items were also highly valued by the current study sample participants as the average mean value accounted for in this regard was 5.16, with an average SD value of 1.09. On the other hand, commitment items were recognized to have the lowest average mean value of 4.84 (Std. Deviation: 1.04). However, they were still above the median of the seven-point Likert scale (3.5). More details regarding other construct scale items are provided in Table 2.

Table 1
Respondents' demographic characteristics.

Demographic profile	Number of respondents (N = 313)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	235	75.1
Female	78	24.9
Total	313	100
Age		
18–24	21	3.7
25–30	63	20.1
31–40	149	47.06
41–50	56	17.8
51–60	19	6.07
60+	5	
Total	313	100
Title of the participants		
CEO	36	11.5
Director of supply	54	17.2
General manager	49	15.6
Senior manager	34	10.8
Marketing manager	53	16.9
Procurement manager	52	16.6
Owners	35	11.8
Total	313	100
Education Level		
High school	18	5.7
Diploma	33	10.5
Bachelor	209	60.7
Master	37	11.8
PhD	10	3.1
Other	6	1.9
Total	313	100
Nature of the Context		
Food Industry	52	16.6
Pharmaceutical Industry	48	15.3
Detergent and sterilizer industry	46	14.6
Service	38	12.1
Agriculture	26	8.03
Wholesaling merchandising	49	15.6
Retailing	54	17.2
Total	313	100
Size of the company		
Small	72	23
Medium	145	46.3
Large	96	30.7
Total	313	100

5.2. Common method bias

The current study is designed as a self-report survey, and the data regarding the antecedents and consequences of et-moone were answered by the same respondents. Thus, there was a possibility for the emergence of a problem with common method bias (Bhattacherjee, 2012; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). As suggested by Podsakoff et al. (2003), thirty-one scale items of the seven latent constructs were subjected to Harman's single factor test and loaded into exploratory factor analysis (Harman, 1976; Podsakoff et al., 2003). The yielded results of Harman's single factor test proved that there are no concerns regarding any problem of common method bias in the current study data as the variance accounted for by the first factor was 41.24%, which is less than the cut-off value of 50% (see Podsakoff et al., 2003).

5.3. Structural equation modelling

Thirty-one scale items and seven latent constructs were subjected to a two-stage structural equation modelling (SEM) analysis. As the constructs (IT-enabled interactions and relational governance) were multi-dimensional, they were tested as second-order factors where their

Table 2
Descriptive statistics of the measurement items.

Construct	Item	Mean	Std. Deviation
Commitment	CM1	4.96	1.08
	CM2	4.85	1.08
	CM3	4.77	1.00
	CM4	4.78	1.02
	Average	4.84	1.04
Trust	TR1	5.45	1.19
	TR2	5.38	1.18
	TR3	5.42	1.17
	TR4	5.46	1.23
	TR5	5.35	1.10
	Average	5.41	1.18
Relational governance joint planning	GP1	5.16	1.07
	GP2	5.03	1.10
	GP3	5.04	1.09
	GP4	5.24	1.16
	GP5	5.15	1.10
	Average	5.13	1.10
Relational governance joint problem solving	GPS1	5.21	1.07
	GPS2	5.24	1.10
	GPS3	5.24	1.02
	GPS4	5.27	1.13
	Average	5.24	1.08
IT-enabled formal interactions	IT.F1	5.18	1.13
	IT.F2	5.23	1.11
	IT.F3	5.25	1.08
	IT.F4	5.21	1.18
	IT.F5	5.18	1.10
	Average	5.21	1.12
IT-enabled informal interactions	IT.INF1	5.21	1.11
	IT.INF2	5.23	1.18
	IT.INF3	5.17	1.13
	IT.INF4	5.21	1.11
	Average	5.20	1.13
Because this supplier is et-moone…	ETM1	5.09	1.05
	ETM2	5.17	1.163
	ETM3	5.21	1.03
	ETM4	5.15	1.14
	Average	5.16	1.09

subdimensions were considered first-order constructs. The following subsections discuss this aspect in more detail.

5.3.1. Confirmatory factor analysis of IT-enabled interactions

IT-enabled interaction was also treated as a second-order factor comprising two aspects: IT-enabled formal interactions (IT.F) and IT-enabled informal interactions (IT.INF). As shown in Fig. 2, IT.F and IT.INF adequately loaded on their second-order factor of IT-enabled
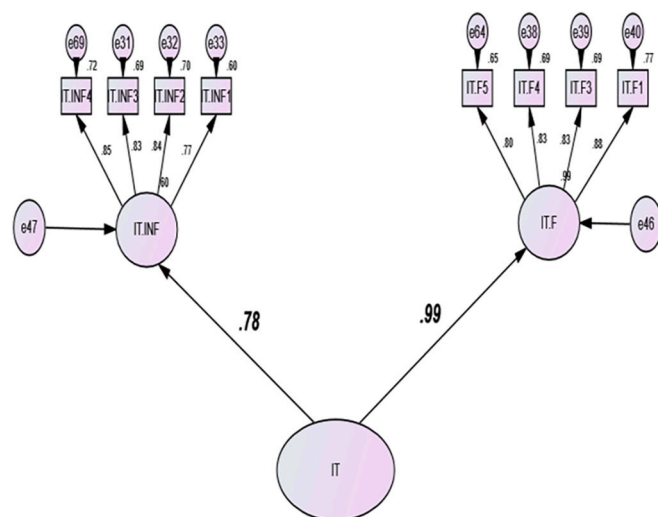

Fig. 2. Confirmatory factor analysis of IT-enabled interaction.

interaction with a standardized regression weight value of 0.78 for IT.INF and 0.99 for IT.F. The first-order factors of IT.F and IT.INF had CR values of 0.902 and 0.894, respectively (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Moreover, the AVE values were within the recommended level of 0.50: 0.698 for IT.F and 0.678 for IT.INF. Apart from one item from IT.F (IT.F2), all scale items used to measure the first-order factors of IT-enabled interaction had factor loading values of not less than 0.50 (Hair Jr, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010). Furthermore, as shown in Table 3, the intercorrelation value (0.771) was less than the square root values for both IT.F and IT.INF. This, in turn, supports the discriminant validity of IT.F and IT.INF. Finally, all fit indices for evaluating the goodness of fit of the measurement model of IT-enabled interaction were observed to be within their threshold levels: GFI = 0.98; AGFI = 0.921; CFI = 0.993; CMIN/DF = 1.741; NFI = 0.954; and RMSEA = 0.042 (Hair Jr et al., 2010).

5.3.2. Confirmatory factor analysis of relational governance

The final construct treated as a second-order factor in the model was relational governance (R.GOV). Two dimensions – governance joint planning (JP) and governance joint problem solving (JPS) – were tested as first-order factors. Fig. 3 shows that JPS and JP were largely loaded onto the second-order factor R.GOV with standardized regression weight values of 0.80 and 0.87, respectively. Only one item (GP2) from the JP construct had a factor loading value less than 0.50, so it was removed from the revised version; all the other items used to measure these two first-order constructs had factor loading values higher than 0.50 (Hair Jr et al., 2010). As Table 4 shows, the CR values calculated for both JPS and JP were found to be within the suggested level of not less than 0.70 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The largest CR value was for JP (0.821), and the lowest was for GPS (0.814). Both constructs had AVE values of not less than 0.50; JPS had a value of 0.524, and JP had a value of 0.519 (Hair Jr et al., 2010). Both JP and JPS matched the requirement of discriminant validity as the intercorrelation value (0.701) was less than the square root values for each. Fit indices for R.GOV were within their threshold levels: GFI = 0.975; AGFI = 0.90; CFI = 0.983; CMIN/DF = 1.952; NFI = 0.943; RMSEA = 0.049 (Hair Jr et al., 2010).

5.3.3. Confirmatory factor analysis of the full model

In this stage, all model constructs were subjected to measurement model analyses to ensure that the model adequately fitted the observed data and that the remaining constructs (i.e., et-moone, trust, and commitment) matched the requirements pertaining to construct reliability and validity. As shown in Table 5, a number of fit indices of the first version of the full model were not within the recommended values (i.e., GFI = 0.891; AGFI = 0.795; NFI = 0.895). Therefore, the model was revised by considering the problematic items. Two items from the et-moone construct (ETM5 and ETM6) were found to have a factor loading of less than 0.50, so they were removed. Subsequently, all fit indices of the revised version of the model were within their threshold levels: GFI = 0.916; AGFI = 0.852; CFI = 0.977; CMIN/DF = 2.053; NFI = 0.941; RMSEA = 0.051 (Hair Jr et al., 2010).

The CR and AVE results, as presented in Table 6, also supported the reliability and validity of the scale measurement items adopted in the current study. For example, the CR values for all constructs were found to be above 0.70, as suggested by Fornell and Larcker (1981). The highest CR value was for trust (0.933) while the lowest was for CM (0.886). Similar values were also yielded regarding Cronbach's alpha (α)

Table 3
IT-enabled interaction reliability and validity.

	CR	AVE	IT.INF	IT.F
IT.INF	0.894	0.678	**0.823**	
IT.F	0.902	0.698	0.771	**0.830**

Diagonal values are squared roots of AVE/ off-diagonal values are the estimates of inter-correlation between the latent constructs
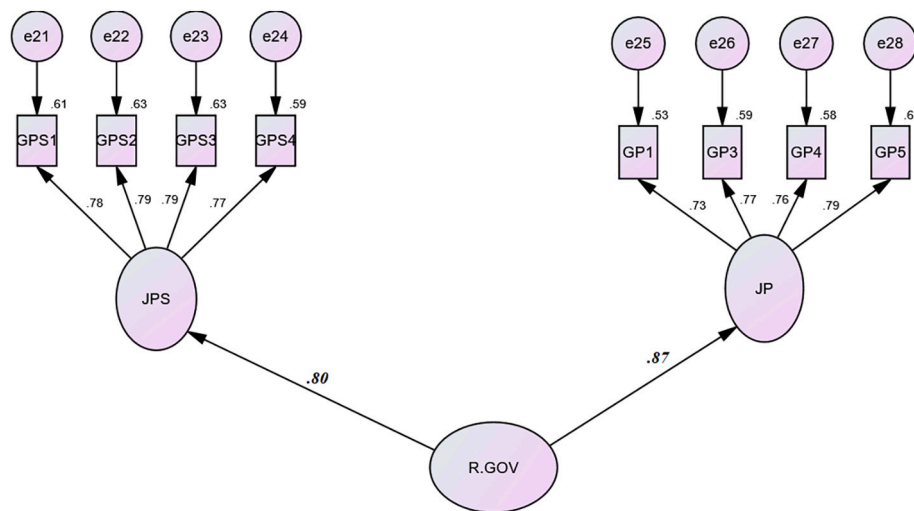
Fig. 3. Confirmatory factor analysis of relational governance (R.GOV).

Table 4
Relational governance (R.GOV) reliability and validity.

	CR	AVE	JPS	JP
JPS	0.814	0.524	0.723	
JP	0.821	0.519	0.701	0.720

Table 5
Results of measurement model.

Fit indices	Cut-off point	Initial measurement model	Revised measurement model
CMIN/DF	≤3.000	2.745	2.053
GFI	≥ 0.90	0.891	0.916
AGFI	≥ 0.80	0. 795	0.852
NFI	≥ 0.90	0.895	0.941
CFI	≥ 0.90	0.952	0.977
RMSEA	≤ 0.08	0.051	0.051

Table 6
Composite reliability and average variance extracted.

	CR	AVE	Cronbach's alpha (α)
Et-moone	0.924	0.726	0.912
R.GOV	0.905	0.810	0.894
IT	0.894	0.784	0.876
TR	0.933	0.708	0.931
CM	0.886	0.642	0.885

for all constructs, which were all above 0.70, as suggested by Nunnally (1978). The largest Cronbach's alpha (α) was found for trust (0.931), and the lowest Cronbach's alpha (0.885) was found for CM.

For discriminant validity, all values of intercorrelation between

Table 7
Discriminant validity.

	Et-moone	R.GOV	IT	TR	CM
Et-moone	**0.852**				
R.GOV	0.805	**0.900**			
IT	0.734	0.806	**0.885**		
TR	0.720	0.805	0.596	**0.842**	
CM	0.785	0.762	0.668	0.626	**0.801**

Diagonal values are squared roots of AVE/ off-diagonal values are the estimates of inter-correlation between the latent constructs

constructs were less than the values of squared roots of AVE (see Table 7). The highest intercorrelation value (0.806) was noticed between R.GOV and IT-enabled interaction, but it is still less that squared roots of AVE (0.900) accounted for R.GOV and the squared roots of AVE (0.885) accounted for IT-enabled interaction.

The AVE values were also found to be not less than 0.50, as recommended by Hair Jr et al. (2010). R.GOV recorded the largest AVE value of 0.810, followed by IT-enabled interaction with a value of 0.784, while CM had the smallest AVE value (0.642). Furthermore, all unremoved items had standardized regression weight values (factor loading) of not less than 0.50, as shown in Table 8.

Table 8
Standardized regression weights.

Scale item	Latent construct	Factor loading
IT.F	IT	0.995
IT.INF	IT	0.776
GP	R.GOV	0.801
GPS	R.GOV	0.870
ETM1	Et-moone	0.701
ETM2	Et-moone	0.754
ETM3	Et-moone	0.701
ETM4	Et-moone	0.658
IT.F1	IT.F	0.876
IT.F3	IT.F	0.829
IT.F4	IT.F	0.830
IT.F5	IT.F	0.804
IT.INF1	IT.INF	0.774
IT.INF2	IT.INF	0.840
IT.INF3	IT.INF	0.831
IT.INF4	IT.INF	0.848
TR1	TR	0.759
TR2	TR	0.967
TR3	TR	0.747
TR4	TR	0.709
TR5	TR	0.962
CM1	CM	0.741
CM2	CM	0.801
CM3	CM	0.856
CM4	CM	0.803
GP1	GP	0.707
GP3	GP	0.744
GP4	GP	0.760
GP5	GP	0.775
GPS1	GPS	0.763
GPS2	GPS	0.762
GPS3	GPS	0.778
GPS4	GPS	0.694

5.4. Structural model analyses

Six research hypotheses were subjected to structural model analyses. The results for fit indices are GFI = 0.912; AGFI = 0.84; CFI = 0.966; CMIN/DF = 2.061; NFI = 0.921; RMSEA = 0.054 (Hair Jr et al., 2010), which are largely supported by the structural model's goodness-of-fit. The predictive validity was also supported as the current conceptual model was able to explain approximately 0.70 and 0.65 of the variance in et-moone and relational governance, respectively (see Fig. 4). Furthermore, based on the path coefficient analyses, all research hypotheses were found to be significant in the current model. As Table 9 and Fig. 4 show, commitment was the most influential factor predicting et-moone ($\gamma = 0.631$, $p < 0.000$), followed by trust ($\gamma = 0.381$, $p < 0.000$). IT-enabled interaction was also able to significantly predict et-moone with a coefficient value of 0.391 and a *p*-value of 0.000. Finally, a strong significant relationship was found between et-moone and relational governance ($\gamma = 0.801$, $p < 0.000$).

Variance inflation factors (VIFs) were tested in the current study to guarantee that there was no concern about multicollinearity between et-moone and their antecedents or between et-moone and R.GOV. The largest VIF value was found between et-moone and R.GOV (3.3854), while the lowest VIF value (2.687) was found between TR and et-moone. However, all VIF values, as presented in Table 9, were found to be less than 10, as suggested by Brace, Kemp, and Snelgar (2003) and Diamantopoulos and Siguaw (2000). Thus, there is no concern regarding the multicollinearity issue.

6. Discussion

This study was conducted when all organizations worldwide were suffering from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, there was a need to determine how a cultural value (i.e., et-moone) could shape and sustain B2B relationships from the Asian Arabian perspective (i.e., Saudi Arabia and Jordan). The empirical part of the current study supported the proposed hypotheses of the conceptual model. For example, the results of the confirmatory factor analyses supported the goodness-of-fit, reliability, and validity of second-order factors: IT-enabled interactions and relational governance. The whole measurement model was also able to adequately fit the observed data, and all factors matched the criteria pertaining to reliability and validity.

Structural model analyses confirmed the predictive validity of the current model as R^2 values accounted for both et-moone (0.70) and relational governance (0.65). This, in turn, supports the role of et-moone as a crucial cultural bond in shaping B2B relationships in Asian Arabian countries such as Jordan and Saudi Arabia. Such results could indicate the importance of the culture across Jordan and Saudi Arabia, which is

Fig. 4. Structural model results.

Table 9
Hypothesis testing results.

Hypothesized path			Estimate	SE	CR	P	VIF
Et-moone	←	IT	0.391	0.056	5.004	***	3.154
Et-moone	←	CM	631	0.052	9.599	***	3.654
Et-moone	←	TR	0.381	0.039	6.216	***	2.687
R.GOV	←	Et-moone	0.801	0.060	11.943	***	3.854

characterized to a great extent by collectivism and tribalism (Shaikh et al., 2019). In this regard, it is necessary to consider the roots of this Arab and Islamic culture that encourages cooperation and solidarity among members of society (Abosag & Lee, 2013; Gronroos, 1994; Shaikh et al., 2019). Therefore, it has also been widely argued that people in these countries depend heavily on their personal and friendship connections to conduct and facilitate business transactions (Abosag, 2015; Abosag & Lee, 2013; Abosag & Naudé, 2014). Saudi Arabian culture is described as one of the ancient cultures (Gronroos, 1994) in that relationships are essential to commercial exchanges.

According to path coefficient analysis, all the research hypotheses were found to be significant. For example, both constructs of the commitment-trust theory of relationship marketing were supported as the strongest determinants of et-moone relationships, which, in turn, supports the applicability of this theory to the B2B context in Asian Arabian countries. Commitment was the strongest factor contributing to et-moone relationships, with the highest path coefficient value of 0.589. This means that business partners will never be able to engage in an et-moone relationship without an extensive level of commitment towards each other. In other words, the sense of obligation shared between business partners and their desire to sacrifice their valuable resources to serve their common interests present the source of energy feeding the et-moone relationship. Such results parallel Abosag's (2015) findings that empirically demonstrate commitment to the strongest factor predicting et-moone relationships. Abosag (2015) attributed this to et-moone being a cultural relationship formed and built on the values of legacy and tribalism and as pertaining to a future direction rather than to current or previous ones.

The second strongest fact in the current study model was trust, which had a regression weight value of 0.304. This result indicates that business partners who share a high degree of confidence in each other's reliability and integrity are more likely to be involved in et-moone relationships. Unlike commitment, trust is more likely to be shaped based on the accumulated experience between business partners and by the extent to which they are reliable and keep their promises (Abosag, 2015; Abosag & Naudé, 2014). Therefore, trust is commonly considered by et-moone partners to be evidence and confirmation of the strength, validity, and viability of the relationship. The current results regarding the role of trust are not dissimilar to other studies that have considered the role of trust in et-moone relationships (Abosag, 2015; Abosag & Naudé, 2014) or other relationship consequences such as relationship satisfaction (Smith & Barclay, 1997), relationship collaboration, and coordination (Abosag & Naudé, 2014; Boersma et al., 2003).

The results of the structural model (see Fig. 4) demonstrate the significant role of IT-enabled interactions in predicting et-moone relationships, with a regression weight value of 0.391. This result reflects the importance of both formal and informal communication channels in facilitating the interactions between business partners and, accordingly, in sustaining the level of collaboration and coordination. In this regard, the repeated interactions facilitated by ICT tools will enhance mutual understanding and harmony between business partners, and they will provide greater opportunities for promoting an et-moone relationship. Both types of IT-enabled interactions have provided effective solutions for most companies facing lockdown due to the COVID-19 epidemic when they were the only means of communication between business partners. These results are in line with other studies that have shown the significant impact of COVID-19 (Chen et al., 2013; Dwivedi, Kapoor, &
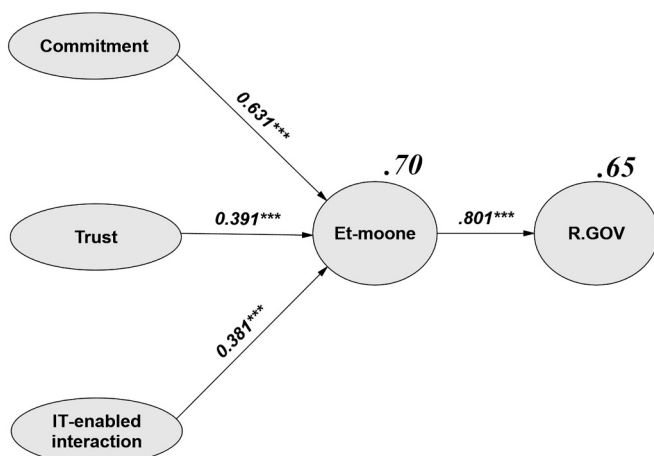
Chen, 2015; Kim et al., 2005; Li et al., 2017; Sinkovics et al., 2011; Wang & Wei, 2007).

The highest regression weight value (0.801) in the current study model was for the relationship between et-moone and relational governance. This indicates that et-moone relationships enhance the opportunities for business partners to jointly solve their problems and plan their business activities. In other words, having a strong and deep relationship based on a great degree of trust and mutual commitment is the foundation for achieving relational governance. Business partners engaged in an et-moone relationship enjoy more freedom and flexibility in settling outstanding issues and planning forthcoming transactions pertaining to volume demands, sales forecasts, new product issues, and inventory management. The current study's results regarding the positive impact of et-moone on relational governance are similar to those reached by Dong et al. (2017), who statistically demonstrated the causal relationship between interpersonal guanxi and relational governance.

6.1. Theoretical contribution

Several studies (Abosag, 2015; Abosag & Lee, 2013; Abosag & Naudé, 2014) have addressed the role of et-moone as a cultural value in shaping B2B relationships in Asian Arabian countries. Therefore, this study makes a solid contribution by shedding more light on this important phenomenon and by considering new aspects in relation to et-moone's antecedents and consequences. Thus, this study has expanded the current understanding of the role of culture in how business relationships are built and sustained in the Asian Arabian context. Furthermore, it has expanded the theoretical horizon of et-moone by considering a new mechanism (i.e., IT-enabled interactions). Indeed, there has always been a question regarding the influence of information systems and ICT in facilitating business partners' interactions. The current study has introduced a clear explanation of the role of both formal and informal IT-enabled interactions in easing and sustaining et-moone relationships. Only a few antecedents of et-moone have previously been tested, namely, trust and commitment (Abosag & Lee, 2013), interpersonal liking (Abosag, 2015), and social reputation and doing favours (Abosag & Naudé, 2014). Thus, the current study contributes by proposing and validating the impact of IT-enabled interactions, which was proposed as a multidimensional construct covering two dimensions: formal and informal interactions. Therefore, new levers of et-moone relationships were considered in the current study model along with trust and commitment as common antecedents of et-moone relationships. Furthermore, it should be noted that only one study (Abosag, 2015) has shed light on the consequences of et-moone in terms of cooperation. Accordingly, an important contribution of the current study is the testing of relational governance as a new consequence of et-moone relationships.

6.2. Practical implications

The results of the current study provide clues regarding the main levers that can help business partners actively engage in et-moone relationships and, accordingly, to have more relational governance. For example, et-moone is not like any other type of business relationship and is more likely to take its place during difficult times such as those resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic (Abosag & Lee, 2013). Therefore, business partners should consider such difficult situations to be an opportunity to show the strength of their relationship. This could be attained by sharing a mutual understanding between the company and its main suppliers. Furthermore, business partners should have greater flexibility and understanding of the difficult circumstances affecting each other, especially in relation to financial and supply matters.

This study's results demonstrate the crucial role of trust in sustaining et-moone relationships. In this regard, it is important to note that trust is not something to be taken for granted; rather, it relies on a cumulative positive experience among business partners. Therefore, both parties in

an et-moone relationship should consistently work hard to prove that they are benevolent, competent, and honest. For example, promises should always be kept, and accordingly, business partners should not give any promise that they are unable to fulfil. Being open with business partners also helps to mitigate concerns about opportunism and susceptibility and thus enhances trust. In terms of commitment, business partners should demonstrate their willingness to invest and sacrifice to sustain their deep relationship and to achieve their mutual interests in the long run (Hartmann & Lussier, 2020; Rylander et al., 1997; Yen & Abosag, 2016). This, in turn, requires both parties to always express their sense of obligation towards each other and to act in a manner that shows goodwill.

The results have shown how both formal and informal IT-enabled interactions can enrich et-moone relationships. Thus, business partners should pay attention to using and developing these types of high-tech interactions (Cankurtaran & Beverland, 2020). For example, organizations should always guarantee the reliability and quality of their systems used in their formal communications, and they should ensure that all messages and information exchanged arrive on time, in the proper form, and with the correct content. This also requires organizations to make available different options of formal communication channels (e.g., email, video conferencing, enterprise resource planning). Web 2.0 applications and social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, LinkedIn, Zoom, and mobile calling and messaging apps) should be considered by business partners due to their high interactivity, personalization, and synchronicity in informal IT-enabled interactions. Indeed, using these applications and platforms will enable business partners to actively interact with each other in a more personalized way around the clock. This, in turn, enables business partners to maintain a high level of mutual attachment, thereby enriching et-moone.

Finally, et-moone has been empirically confirmed as a key lever of relationship governance. As discussed by Abosag (2015), business partners should be fully aware that et-moone is not an end in itself but rather a way to sustain longitudinal governance relationships that require joint cooperation in setting future plans to solve problems. Therefore, business partners should cooperatively design their future plans for issues relating to the size of orders and inventory management. It is also important to have extensive information sharing in relation to sales forecasts and new product demands. Business partners should also keep a constant level of open communication to solve all outstanding problems within a participatory framework.

6.3. Limitations and future research directions

Although this study has proposed and tested new mechanisms that leverage et-moone (IT-enabled interactions), it has not covered other aspects pertaining to Arab culture (tribalism and religion). Thus, future studies could shed more light on the role of these aspects in accelerating or hindering et-moone relationships. In addition, the data in this study were collected from two countries – Saudi Arabia and Jordan – which limits the generalizability of the results. Therefore, it would be useful for future studies to consider et-moone issues in other Arab countries that have the same culture (e.g., Bahrain, Kuwait, Iraq, Oman, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates). This study has not considered the impact of business customers' features (size, type, experience), so future studies should examine such features in relation to the antecedents and consequences of et-moone. Furthermore, this study was more cross-sectional in nature and was conducted under special circumstances arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, it would be important to carry out a longitudinal study to determine how the predictors of et-moone would behave otherwise under different circumstances. Finally, relationship governance was proposed as the sole consequence of et-moone relationships, so a consideration of other types of consequence (marketing performance, brand equity, and loyalty) would add further understanding of the significant role of et-moone in the B2B context.

7. Conclusion

The current study has investigated how Arabic sociocultural values (namely, et-moone) could sustain marketing relationship governance from the perspective of Arab Asian countries: Jordan and Saudi Arabia. The current study was also able to clarify how trust, commitment, and IT-enabled interactions could support the existence of such cultural bonds: Et-moone, which in turn leads to more relational governance. The current study has mainly concentrated on the context of the B2B relationship in the Middle Eastern region in Jordan and Saudi Arabia. As few studies have tested the related issues of et-moone's antecedences and consequences in these sectors, the current study has made a considerable contribution for both marketing practitioners and researchers.

Appendix 1. Scale of measurement items

Construct	Item	Items	References
Commitment	CM1	We have a strong sense of loyalty to our major suppliers.	Abosag (2015); Doney and Cannon (1997)
	CM2	Our relationship with our major supplier is a long-term one.	
	CM3	We are very committed to our major supplier.	
	CM4	The relationship with our major supplier means very much to us.	Abdul-Muhmin (2002)
Trust	TR1	Our major supplier has been frank in dealing with us.	Abosag (2015); Doney and Cannon (1997)
	TR2	Our major supplier keeps promises.	
	TR3	I believe the information that our major supplier provides us.	
	TR4	Our major supplier does not make false claims.	
	TR5	Overall, I trust our major supplier.	
Relational governance joint planning	GP1	We plan volume demands for the next season together with our major supplier.	Claro et al. (2003)
	GP2	Our company plans the various demands for the next season together with our major supplier.	
	GP3	Our major supplier provides us with sales forecasts for the products our company sells.	
	GP4	We share our long-term plans for our products with our major supplier.	
	GP5	We jointly plan the new product demands for the next season with our major supplier.	
Relational governance joint problem solving	GPS1	Our major supplier and our company jointly address problems that arise in the relationship.	
	GPS2	Our major supplier and our company jointly take responsibility for getting things done.	
	GPS3	Our major supplier and our company often help each other.	
	GPS4	Our major supplier and our company are both committed to improving our relationship.	
IT-enabled formal interactions	IT.F1	We often transfer business materials with our major supplier through information technologies (e.g., email).	Li et al. (2017)
	IT.F2	We often access each other's inventory (or production) levels through information technologies.	
	IT.F3	We often transmit purchase orders with our major supplier through information technologies (e. g., ERP, Sametime).	
	IT.F4	We often coordinate inventory (or production) schedules with our major supplier through information technologies.	
	IT.F5	We hold video conferences with our major supplier on a regular basis.	
IT-enabled informal interactions	IT. INF1	We follow one another on social media (e.g., QQ, WeChat, Twitter).	
	IT. INF2	We often chat about family or interests over the internet with one another in our spare time.	
	IT. INF3	We often interact on social media, such as posting or forwarding interesting links to one another, making comments, and "opting in."	
	IT. INF4	We often use social media platforms (e.g., WhatsApp, Facebook messenger, Zoom) to communicate and interact with our major supplier.	Self-designed
Because this supplier is et-moone…	ETM1	We strongly appreciate our relationship.	Abosag and Naudé (2014)
	ETM2	We do things that benefit his or her company.	
	ETM3	We have solidarity in our relationship.	
	ETM4	We are willing to help him or her to gain competitive advantage over competitors.	

References

Abdul-Muhmin, A. G. (2005). Instrumental and interpersonal determinants of relationship satisfaction and commitment in industrial markets. *Journal of Business Research, 58*(5), 619–628.

Abosag, I. (2015). The antecedents and consequence of Et-Moone B2B relationships. *Industrial Marketing Management, 51,* 150–157.

Abosag, I., & Lee, J. W. (2013). The formation of trust and commitment in business relationships in the Middle East: Understanding Et-Moone relationships. *International Business Review, 22*(3), 602–614.

Abosag, I., & Naudé, P. (2014). Development of special forms of B2B relationships: Examining the role of interpersonal liking in developing Guanxi and Et-Moone relationships. *Industrial Marketing Management, 43*(6), 887–896.

Abosag, I., Yen, D. A. W., Barnes, B. R., & Gadalla, E. (2021). Rethinking guanxi and performance: Understanding the dark side of Sino–US business relationships. *International Business Review, 30*(4), 101775.

Alalwan, A. A. (2018). Investigating the impact of social media advertising features on customer purchase intention. *International Journal of Information Management, 42,* 65–77.

Alalwan, A. A., Dwivedi, Y. K., & Rana, N. P. (2017). Factors influencing adoption of mobile banking by Jordanian bank customers: Extending UTAUT2 with trust. *International Journal of Information Management, 37*(3), 99–110.

Alalwan, A. A., Rana, N. P., Dwivedi, Y. K., & Algharabat, R. (2017). Social media in marketing: A review and analysis of the existing literature. *Telematics and Informatics, 34*(7), 1177–1190.

Aldossari, M., & Robertson, M. (2016). The role of Wasta in repatriates' perceptions of a breach to the psychological contract: A Saudi Arabian case study. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management, 27*(16), 1854–1873.

Allen, N. J., & Meyer, J. P. (1990). The Measurement and Antecedents of Affective, Continuance and Normative Commitment to the Organization. *Journal of Occupational Psychology, 63,* 1–18.

Al-Ramahi, A. (2008). Wasta in Jordan: A distinct feature of (and benefit for) Middle Eastern society. *Arab Law Quarterly, 22*(1), 35–62.

Alsarhan, F., & Valax, M. (2020). Conceptualization of Wasta and its main consequences on human resource management. *International Journal of Islamic and Middle Eastern Finance and Management, 14*(1), 114–127.

Alwerthan, T. A., Swanson, D. P., & Rogge, R. D. (2018). It's better to give than to receive: Psychological need satisfaction mediating links between Wasta (favouritism) and individuals' psychological distress. *International Journal of Psychology, 53*(S1), 11–20.

Arab center Washington DC. (2020). Jordan manoeuvres in GCC politics to protect its interests. Available at: http://arabcenterdc.org/policy_analyses/jordan-maneuvers-in-gcc-politics-to-protect-its-interests/ Accessed on 07.08.2021.

Baabdullah, A. M., Alalwan, A. A., Rana, N. P., Kizgin, H., & Patil, P. (2019). Consumer use of mobile banking (M-Banking) in Saudi Arabia: Towards an integrated model. *International Journal of Information Management, 44*, 38–52.

Barnett, A., Yandle, B., & Naufal, G. (2013). Regulation, trust, and cronyism in Middle Eastern societies: The simple economics of "wasta". *The Journal of Socio-Economics, 44*, 41–46.

Bensaou, M., & Venkatraman, N. (1995). Configurations of interorganizational relationships: A comparison between U.S. and Japanese automakers. *Management Science, 41* (9), 1471–1492.

Berger, R., Silbiger, A., Herstein, R., & Barnes, B. R. (2015). Analyzing business-to-business relationships in an Arab context. *Journal of World Business, 50*(3), 454–464.

Berthon, P., Pitt, L., Berthon, J. P., Campbell, C., & Thwaites, D. (2008). E-relationships for e-readiness: Culture and corruption in international e-B2B. *Industrial Marketing Management, 37*(1), 83–91.

Bhattacherjee, A. (2012). *Social Science Research: Principles, Methods, and Practices* (2nd ed.). textbook), FL: AnolBhattacherjee (open access.

Boersma, M. F., Buckley, P. J., & Ghauri, P. N. (2003). Trust in international joint venture relationships. *Journal of Business Research, 56*(12), 1031–1042.

Brace, N., Kemp, R., & Snelgar, R. (2003). *SPSS for psychologists: A guide to data analysis using SPSS for windows*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Brislin, R. (1976). Comparative research methodology: Cross-cultural studies. *International Journal of Psychology, 11*(3), 215–229.

Canavari, M., Fritz, M., Hofstede, G. J., Matopoulos, A., & Vlachopoulou, M. (2010). The role of trust in the transition from traditional to electronic B2B relationships in agri-food chains. *Computers and Electronics in Agriculture, 70*(2), 321–327.

Cankurtaran, P., & Beverland, M. B. (2020). Using design thinking to respond to crises: B2B lessons from the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic. *Industrial Marketing Management, 88*, 255–260.

Cao, Z., & Lumineau, F. (2015). Revisiting the interplay between contractual and relational governance: A qualitative and meta-analytic investigation. *Journal of Operations Management, 33*, 15–42.

Chen, D. Q., Preston, D. S., & Xia, W. (2013). Enhancing hospital supply chain performance: A relational view and empirical test. *Journal of Operations Management, 31*(6), 391–408.

Chen, Z., Huang, Y., & Sternquist, B. (2011). Guanxi practice and Chinese buyer–supplier relationships: The buyer's perspective. *Industrial Marketing Management, 40*(4), 569–580.

Chowdhury, S. (2005). The role of affect- and cognition-based trust in complex knowledge sharing. *Journal of Managerial Issues, 17*(3), 310–326.

Chung, H. F., Yen, D. A., & Wang, C. L. (2020). The contingent effect of social networking ties on Asian immigrant enterprises' innovation. *Industrial Marketing Management, 88*, 414–425.

Claro, D. P., Hagelaar, G., & Omta, O. (2003). The determinants of relational governance and performance: How to manage business relationships. *Industrial Marketing Management, 32*(8), 703–716.

Davies, H., Leung, T. K. P., Luk, S. T. K., & Wong, Y. H. (1995). The benefits of "guanxi": The value of relationships in developing the Chinese market. *Industrial Marketing Management, 24*(3), 207–214.

Diamantopoulos, A., & Siguaw, J. A. (2000). *Introducing LISREL*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Doney, P. M., & Cannon, J. P. (1997). An examination of the nature of trust in buyer-seller relationships. *Journal of Marketing, 61*(2), 35–51.

Dong, W., Ma, Z., & Zhou, X. (2017). Relational governance in supplier-buyer relationships: The mediating effects of boundary spanners' interpersonal guanxi in China's B2B market. *Journal of Business Research, 78*, 332–340.

Dwivedi, Y. K., Ismagilova, E., Hughes, D. L., Carlson, J., Filieri, R., Jacobson, J., … Kumar, V. (2021). Setting the future of digital and social media marketing research: Perspectives and research propositions. *International Journal of Information Management, 59*, 102168.

Dwivedi, Y. K., Kapoor, K. K., & Chen, H. (2015). Social media marketing and advertising. *The Marketing Review, 15*(3), 289–309.

El-Said, H., & Harrigan, J. (2009). You reap what you plant: Social networks in the Arab world – The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. *World Development, 37*(7), 1235–1249.

Fischer, E., & Reuber, A. R. (2014). Online entrepreneurial communication: Mitigating uncertainty and increasing differentiation via Twitter. *Journal of Business Venturing, 29*(4), 565–583.

Fornell, C., & Larcker, D. F. (1981). Evaluating structural equation models with unobservable variables and measurement error. *Journal of Marketing Research, 18*(1), 39–50.

Frazier, G. L. (2009). Physical distribution and channel management: A knowledge and capabilities perspective. *Journal of Supply Chain Management, 45*(2), 23–36.

Gartner. (2011). CRM strategies and technologies to understand, GROW and manage customer experiences. Available at: https://www.gartner.com/imagesrv/summits/docs/na/customer-360/C360_2011_brochure_FINAL.pdf Accessed on 26. .01.2021.

Geyskens, I., Steenkamp, J. E. M., & Kumar, N. (1998). Generalizations about trust in marketing channel relationships using meta-analysis. *International Journal of Research in Marketing, 15*(3), 223–248.

Gil-Saura, I., Frasquet-Deltoro, M., & Cervera-Taulet, A. (2009). The value of B2B relationships. *Industrial Management & Data Systems, 109*(5), 593–609.

Global Tarde Review. (2020). Coface WARNS of 'sudden global surge' in insolvencies amid coronavirus outbreak. Available at: https://www.gtreview.com/news/global/coface-warns-of-sudden-global-surge-in-insolvencies-amid-coronavirus-outbreak/ Accessed on 20.08.2020.

Gronroos, C. (1994). From marketing mix to relationship marketing: Towards a paradigm shift in marketing. *Asia-Australia Marketing Journal, 2*(1), 9–29.

Gundlach, G. T., Achrol, R. S., & Mentzer, J. T. (1995). The structure of commitment in exchange. *Journal of Marketing, 59*(1), 78–92.

Hair, J. F., Jr., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., & Anderson, R. E. (2010). *Multivariate data analysis: A global perspective* (7th ed.). Pearson Education International.

Harman, H. H. (1976). *Modern factor analysis* (3rd ed.). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Hartmann, N., & Lussier, B. (2020). Managing the sales force through the unexpected exogenous COVID-19 crisis. *Industrial Marketing Management, 88*, 101–111.

He, J., Huang, H., & Wu, W. (2018). Influence of interfirm brand values congruence on relationship qualities in B2B contexts. *Industrial Marketing Management, 72*, 161–173.

Hofstede, G. (2001). *Culture's consequences, Comparing values, behaviours, institutions, and organizations across nations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Hosseini, S., Fallon, G., Weerakkody, V., & Sivarajah, U. (2019). Cloud computing utilization and mitigation of informational and marketing barriers of the SMEs from the emerging markets: Evidence from Iran and Turkey. *International Journal of Information Management, 46*, 54–69.

International Labour Organization. (2020). *ILO Monitor: COVID-19 and the world of work* (3rd ed.) updated estimates and analysis). Available at: https://bit.ly/3aH7cvl.

Janssen, M., van der Voort, H., & Wahyudi, A. (2017). Factors influencing big data decision-making quality. *Journal of business research, 70*, 338–345.

Kim, K. K., Umanath, N. S., & Kim, B. H. (2005). An assessment of electronic information transfer in B2B supply-channel relationships. *Journal of Management Information Systems, 22*(3), 294–320.

Kohli, G. S., Yen, D., Alwi, S., & Gupta, S. (2021). Film or film brand? UK Consumers' engagement with films as brands. *British Journal of Management, 32*(2), 369–398.

Krueger, N., Bogers, M. L., Labaki, R., & Basco, R. (2021). Advancing family business science through context theorizing: The case of the Arab world. *Journal of Family Business Strategy, 12*(1), 100377.

Li, L. (2005). The effects of trust and shared vision on inward knowledge transfer in subsidiaries' intra-and inter-organizational relationships. *International Business Review, 14*(1), 77–95.

Li, M., Zheng, X., & Zhuang, G. (2017). Information technology-enabled interactions, mutual monitoring, and supplier-buyer cooperation: A network perspective. *Journal of Business Research, 78*, 268–276.

Lin, W. L., Yip, N., Ho, J. A., & Sambasivan, M. (2020). The adoption of technological innovations in a B2B context and its impact on firm performance: An ethical leadership perspective. *Industrial Marketing Management, 89*, 61–71.

Loewe, M., Blume, J., & Speer, J. (2008). How favoritism affects the business climate: Empirical evidence from Jordan. *The Middle East Journal, 62*(2), 259–276.

Lohtia, R., Bello, D. C., & Porter, C. E. (2009). Building trust in US-Japanese business relationships: Mediating role of cultural sensitivity. *Industrial Marketing Management, 38*(3), 239–252.

Luo, Y. (2007). *Guanxi and business* (2nd ed.). Singapore: World Scientific.

Mohamed, A., & Mohamed, S. (2011). The effect of Wasta on perceived competence and morality in Egypt. *Cross Cultural Management: An International Journal, 18*(4), 412–425.

Morgan, R. M., & Hunt, S. D. (1994). The commitment-trust theory of relationship marketing. *Journal of Marketing, 58*(3), 20–38.

Mukherjee, A., & Nath, P. (2007). Role of electronic trust in online retailing: A re-examination of the commitment-trust theory. *European Journal of Marketing, 41*(9/10), 1173–1202.

Murphy, M., & Sashi, C. M. (2018). Communication, interactivity, and satisfaction in B2B relationships. *Industrial Marketing Management, 68*, 1–12.

Nunnally, J. C. (1978). *Psychometric theory*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

Oehmen, J., Locatelli, G., Wied, M., & Willumsen, P. (2020). Risk, uncertainty, ignorance and myopia: Their managerial implications for B2B firms. *Industrial Marketing Management, 88*, 330–338.

Ou, C. X., Pavlou, P. A., & Davison, R. M. (2014). Swift guanxi in online marketplaces: The role of computer-mediated communication technologies. *MIS Quarterly, 38*(1), 209–230.

Padgett, D., Hopkins, C. D., & Williams, Z. (2020). Buyer dependence in B2B relationships: The role of supplier investments, commitment form, and trust. *Journal of Business Research, 119*, 13–24.

Pavlou, P. A. (2002). Institution-based trust in interorganizational exchange relationships: The role of online B2B marketplaces on trust formation. *The Journal of Strategic Information Systems, 11*(3–4), 215–243.

Pimpa, N. (2008). Relationship value in Thai business-to-business marketing. *Journal of Asia-Pacific Business, 9*(3), 235–247.

Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B., Lee, J. Y., & Podsakoff, N. P. (2003). Common method biases in behavioral research: A critical review of the literature and recommended remedies. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 88*(5), 879.

Poppo, L., & Zenger, T. (2002). Do formal contracts and relational governance function as substitutes or complements. *Strategic Management Journal, 23*(8), 707–725.

Powell, W. W. (1990). Neither market nor hierarchy: Network forms oforganization. In L. L. Cummings, & B. M. Staw (Eds.), *Research in organizational behavior* (pp. 295–336). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.

Rapaccini, M., Saccani, N., Kowalkowski, C., Paiola, M., & Adrodegari, F. (2020). Navigating disruptive crises through service-led growth: The impact of COVID-19 on Italian manufacturing firms. *Industrial Marketing Management, 88*, 225–237.

Rauyruen, P., & Miller, K. E. (2007). Relationship quality as a predictor of B2B customer loyalty. *Journal of Business Research, 60*(1), 21–31.

Rylander, D., Strutton, D., & Pelton, L. E. (1997). Toward a synthesized framework of relational commitment: Implications for marketing channel theory and practice. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice, 5*(2), 58–71.

Shaikh, H. A., Purchase, S., & Brush, G. (2019). Arabic business relationship characteristics: A social capital perspective. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing, 34*(2), 412–425.

Shamim, S., Zeng, J., Khan, Z., & Zia, N. U. (2020). Big data analytics capability and decision making performance in emerging market firms: The role of contractual and relational governance mechanisms. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change, 161*, 120315.

Singh, R., & Koshy, A. (2011). Does salesperson's customer orientation create value in B2B relationships? Empirical evidence from India. *Industrial Marketing Management, 40*(1), 78–85.

Sinkovics, R. R., Jean, R. J. B., Roath, A. S., & Cavusgil, S. T. (2011). Does IT integration really enhance supplier responsiveness in global supply chains? *Management International Review, 51*(2), 193.

Smith, J. B., & Barclay, D. W. (1997). The effects of organizational differences and trust on the effectiveness of selling partner relationships. *Journal of Marketing, 61*(1), 3–21.

Smock, D. A., Rudzki, R. A., & Rogers, S. C. (2007). *On-demand supply management: World class strategies, practices, and technology.* Fort Lauderdale, FL: J. Ross Publishing.

Statista. (2020). Global B2B e-commerce gross merchandise volume (GMV) from 2013 to 2019. Available at: https://bit.ly/3cS3WQq Accessed on 01.08.2020.

Steinhoff, L., Arli, D., Weaven, S., & Kozlenkova, I. V. (2019). Online relationship marketing. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, 47*(3), 369–393.

Ta'Amnha, M., Sayce, S., & Tregaskis, O. (2016). *Wasta in the Jordanian context. Handbook of human resource management in the middle east.* Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Tellefsen, T., & Thomas, G. P. (2005). The antecedents and consequences of organizational and personal commitment in business service relationships. *Industrial Marketing Management, 34*(1), 23–37.

Tlaiss, H., & Kauser, S. (2011). The importance of Wasta in the career success of Middle Eastern managers. *Journal of European Industrial Training, 35*(5), 467–486.

US News. (2020). Jordan#56 in overall rankings: #64 out of 78 in 2020. Available at: https://www.usnews.com/news/best-countries/jordan.

Wang, C. L. (2007). Guanxi vs. relationship marketing: Exploring underlying differences. *Industrial Marketing Management, 36*, 81–86.

Wang, E. T., & Wei, H. L. (2007). Interorganizational governance value creation: Coordinating for information visibility and flexibility in supply chains. *Decision Sciences, 38*(4), 647–674.

Williamson, O. E. (1979). Transaction-cost economics: The governance of contractual relations. *The Journal of Law and Economics, 22*(2), 233–261.

World Bank. (2020). Digitization is the Pathway to Growth in Jordan. Available at: https://blogs.worldbank.org/ar/arabvoices/digitalizing-pathway-growth-jordan Accessed on 07.08.2021.

Yang, Z., Su, C., & Fam, K. S. (2012). Dealing with institutional distances in international marketing channels: Governance strategies that engender legitimacy and efficiency. *Journal of Marketing, 76*(3), 41–55.

Yen, D. A. W., & Abosag, I. (2016). Localization in China: How guanxi moderates Sino-US business relationships. *Journal of Business Research, 69*(12), 5724–5734.

Zaheer, A., & Venkatraman, N. (1995). Relational governance as an interorganizational strategy: An empirical test of the role of trust in economic exchange. *Strategic Management Journal, 16*(5), 373–392.

Zhou, J., Zhang, C., Shen, L., & Zhou, K. Z. (2020). Interpersonal guanxi and partner extra-role behavior: Mediating role of relational and transactional governance strategy. *Industrial Marketing Management, 91*, 551–562.

Zhou, Y., Zhang, X., Zhuang, G., & Zhou, N. (2015). Relational norms and collaborative activities: Roles in reducing opportunism in marketing channels. *Industrial Marketing Management, 46*, 147–159.

Zhuang, G., Xi, Y., & Tsang, A. S. (2010). Power, conflict, and cooperation: The impact of guanxi in Chinese marketing channels. *Industrial Marketing Management, 39*(1), 137–149.

Zhuang, G., & Zhang, X. (2011). Impact of relationship marketing orientation on the exercise of interfirm power and relational governance in marketing channels: Empirical evidence from China. *Journal of Marketing Channels, 18*(4), 279–302.