

The Influence of Social Commerce Construct on Social Shopping Intention: The Mediating Effects of Customers' Trust

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Abstract - Online purchasing transactions are rather complicated due to minimal physical interaction. Uncertainty in the condition of goods received and fraud transactions, product delivered not as agreed, unconfirmed cancellation, and goods not sent. All of these things caused to consumer distrust. Nowadays online transactions are increasingly enlivened by the presence of social media which provides e-commerce functions. It is called a social commerce construct as a medium for interaction in purchasing products by consumers which are argued for being able to increase consumer trust and purchase intentions. Based on this, the study aims to investigate the influence of social commerce constructs on social shopping intention through consumer trust in social platform TikTok. The data was collected from TikTok users who had made purchases via TikTok within the past year, and tested using path analysis. The results reveals that the social commerce construct has a direct effect on consumer trust and social shopping intention, consumer trust has a direct effect on social shopping intention, and the social commerce construct has an indirect effect on social shopping intention through consumer trust. It is believed that the output of this study will enrich information for digital marketers and online sellers for their strategies.

Keywords: Social Commerce, Social Commerce Construct, Consumer Trust, Social Shopping Intention, Consumer Behaviour.

I. INTRODUCTION

In the last decade, the use of digital technology, especially the use of the internet, has increased drastically. Indonesia's internet penetration rate is one of the highest in the Asian region. Referring to the 2021-2022 Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII) report, penetration of Indonesian internet users reached 77.02% with a total of 210.02 million. This is due to shifted in people's lifestyles, especially those related to fulfilling personal needs, which involving buying and selling activities. Previously, buying and selling transactions were carried out conventionally in the market, but now they have changed to online channels using the marketplace through e-commerce which is carried out in

an integrated manner, starting from ordering, payment, to delivery. Advances in information technology increase the frequency of online shopping in the digital era [1], [2]. Easy use and speed of transactions are the choice for consumers to use e-commerce to meet their needs.

The development of internet technology is marked by the rapid development of web 2.0, which has an impact on the emergence of social media which provides opportunities to produce new business models. The use of social media emerged social interaction which causes a bigger market, so it could attract more customers, especially in the E-Commerce sector. The development of E-Commerce to this stage has revolutionized the expansion of E-Commerce which is called Social Commerce [3]. Social commerce with the adoption of new business models has a higher potential risk than e-commerce. This report was submitted by the Indonesian Consumers Foundation through CNBC Indonesia's Legal Money program [4], that complaints related to e-commerce were in the top three over the last five years. The complaints in 2022 include inappropriate goods (20%), refunds (32%), unilateral cancellations (8%), and goods not arriving (7%). In a period of two months in 2023, National Consumer Protection Agency (BPKN) received 20 fraud cases of shopping in e-commerce.

On the other side of the growth of E-Commerce, there are several disturbing factors, namely from the consumer's perspective, consumers not only need a sense of comfort, but more importantly, they need to feel secure when making transactions via E-Commerce. In social commerce, transactions occur with minimal physical interaction between sellers and buyers, so consumers cannot find out the condition of the product directly. Not to mention several obstacles and problems in the delivery process, related to delivery time, damage during delivery due to poor packaging, delivery mistake or misplaced, etc. This causes complexity in social commerce transactions due to widespread fraud in online purchase transactions and uncertainty in social conditions between sellers and buyers. Therefore, seller must be able to build buyer trust, which is an important factor, so that consumers can be interested and trusted to make purchases through online.

At this point, it is clear that consumers need to have confidence in making decisions when making purchases in the E-Commerce business. Building consumer trust is the main factor in creating a sense of confidence in consumers. Currently, social media has become a communication medium that can facilitate consumers to interact with each other. Social media users can influence each other through relationships that exist online, so that it can positively increase the trust of social media users or in these case consumers. This condition creates a social commerce construct which then shifts consumer behavior which can then have a positive impact on E-Commerce. Consumer trust can be built through the Social Commerce Construct, which ultimately increases consumer interest in doing business transactions online. All of these arguments need to be investigated in more detail; therefore research is needed regarding the above matters.

Regarding the condition of Social Commerce in Indonesia, a report from the Populix Survey on The Social Commerce Landscape in Indonesia [5] shows that 86% of the consumer respondent population purchases some goods through social media. In another figures, it could be said that 4 out of 5 respondents have used social media (social commerce) as a product purchasing platform. Several social media are equipped with trade transaction functions, including TikTok, Instagram, WhatsApp, Facebook, Telegram, Line, Pinterest, and several others.

The explanation above illustrates several important issues in E-Commerce, which underlies the need for this research. This research measures and analyzes the relationship and interrelationship between three variables, namely social commerce construct, social shopping intention, and consumer trust.

In more detail, the Populix Survey shows that social media users such as TikTok, WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, Telegram, Line, and Pinterest, are some social media platform that commonly used by onlin buyers enthusiasts. TikTok as a social media for shopping is the highest rank with 54% of respondents having made or interested to purchase online (social shopping intention). The use of social media TikTok in Indonesia is in second place globally with 109.9 million users (databooks, 2023). TikTok is becoming increasingly popular, indicated by the growing number of TikTok users, so it has the potential to increase TikTok as a medium for online purchasing transactions. Therefore, this research uses a case study regarding the social commerce construct of TikTok as a main preference for someone to make online purchases.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Social Commerce became widely known in the mid-2000s when social media began to develop. The term Social

Commerce is caused by digital disruption in business where there is the use of social media in e-commerce. Initially, e-commerce was only limited to optimizing the use of marketplace platforms. The availability of e-commerce features on social media creates dual functions in one platform, social elements, and commercial trading activities. This creates social interaction between consumers and sellers as well as between consumers. The use of social media in e-commerce allows users to create a more interesting content which combining text, images, sound, and video. So it can create a more dynamic online shopping environment during online shopping process or business interactions between sellers and their customers [6], also because it is considered more consumer-oriented [7].

2.1 Social Commerce Construct

With the development of the use of social media, there has been a shift in online business models, from traditional online platforms to more dynamic online business model platforms. Companies must change their online business models [8], which must be able to adapt to a dynamic business environment and faster and more volatile market and consumer behavior [6]. Furthermore, with social interaction in e-commerce, emotional relations could be aroused among consumers, through their comments and reviews, and between consumers and sellers. For this reason, an appropriate customer engagement strategy is needed, which is also needed for creating loyal consumers [9].

Based on the conditions written above, nowadays research on the topic related to social commerce has become an interesting topic and is of interest to many researchers. Accordingly, marketing strategies are required to focus more not only on digital marketing strategies but more specifically shifting to social media marketing strategies [8], [9]. As we know, digital marketing has an influence in many aspects, all of which will lead to improving market performance [10]. Similarly, social commerce marketing is believed to have a positive impact on market and business performance in general. Many studies have been presented that show the correlations between social commerce marketing and several aspects of improvement in business [11]. Social commerce has an impact on consumer behavior [12], [13], particularly in the way they decide on shopping and purchasing goods [1], [2].

2.2 Customer Trust

Several other related issues that are influenced by the era of social commerce are how companies design their product promotion strategies. This needs to be paid attention to because there is a shift in how consumers decide to buy online, whether based on price[14], brand image [15] or customer trust [16], [17]. This online buying trend

consequently shifts the way sellers market, promote [18], and put their pricing strategies for their products [19].

The presence of social media platforms facilitates individuals to socialize in cyberspace and change their shopping behavior. Therefore in E-Commerce, social commerce construct becomes an aspect of effective social commerce transactions since consumers are more enthusiastic to do an online purchase [20]. Even though the social commerce construct does not significantly influence the quality of social relationships built between sellers and buyers, the social commerce construct does have an influence on consumers' online purchasing intentions [21]. This shopping environment increased significantly during the pandemic Covid-19 [22]. Slightly similar result on influence of social commerce construct on customer attitude, while customer's attitude as mediating variable has influenced on consumer shopping attention [23].

Slightly different, another research revealed that although the social commerce construct is able to have a positive influence on trust and is able to create emotional closeness, but it does not have a significant influence on social shopping intention [24].

Another important variable in social commerce is trust that needs to be generated by sellers. Customer trust plays an important role in E-Commerce [17], especially in buying and selling transactions carried out online [25]. Customer trust is the confidence that consumers have in a product to be purchased. This belief generally arises after a certain time as proven by the manufacturer in fulfilling the company's commitment to fulfilling its promises and providing satisfaction to customers [26]. Trust mainly can be generated more effectively through reviews from previous buyers, and it is even more effective than building a trust through advertisements [27].

2.3 Social Shopping Intention

Purchase intention in marketing is in the realm of consumer behavior, which is influenced by many factors. Consumer behavior determines how consumers search for information on goods to be purchased, what factors influence when choosing goods and making purchasing decisions. There are three components related to consumer behavior, related to knowledge, emotion and motivation [28]. These three components are the basis for purchase intention which can be measured in four indicators, i.e. Transactional interest, Referential interest, Preference interest, and Exploratory interest [29]. Purchase intention has become an interesting topic in many marketing and consumer behavior researches. With the development of the use of social media in E-Commerce, social shopping intention has become an

important part of marketing. Social shopping intention is the purchase intention of consumers which starts from searching for shopping and product information in their social communities [30], [31], [32]. Consumer satisfaction with the information and digital data received will strengthen their perceptions, which is finally will increase consumers' purchasing intentions or social shopping intentions[33], [34].

III. METHODS

This research uses quantitative methods because it is considered suitable for use in research that observes phenomena that can be quantified. With this approach, it is hoped that the research results will be able to identify and describe the patterns of measurable phenomena. The case in this research focus is TikTok users who have made purchases through the TikTok shop at least once in the last year between July 2022 to June 2023. The research object is an active user of social commerce TikTok in Indonesia. Data analysis used the path analysis method with the absolute requirement of an adequate sample size of 106 respondents. Data collected from the questionnaire was analyzed using validity and reliability tests, descriptive analysis, significance t-test, path analysis, coefficient of determination analysis, and Sobel test analysis which is to test the significance of the mediation effect.

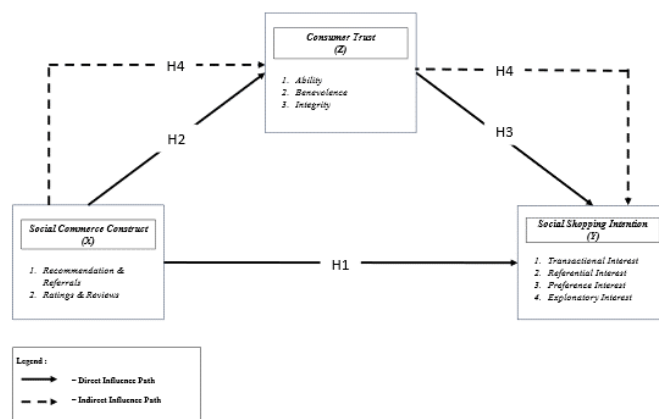


Figure 1: Research Model

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Three variables in this research, namely consumer trust as an intervening variable between the exogenous variable is the social commerce construct and the endogenous variable is social shopping intention. The social commerce construct is believed to be a variable that facilitates consumers to share information and build social support platforms for online purchases. The social commerce construct consists of recommendations & referrals, ratings & reviews, and forums & communities [7]. This research use the first two indicators from social commerce construct variables in TikTok social commerce, because the TikTok platform does not specifically

have features for indicator forums & communities. The two indicators chosen have advantages in user personalization. It can be said that TikTok has a system model that connects supply (creating content) & demand (needing content) so that this platform focuses on the communication needs of TikTok users personally.

The frequency distribution of the 106 respondents who were used as research objects is presented in the table below and classified with likert scale, i.e.: Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Neutral (N), Agree (A), and Strongly Agree (SA)

Table 1: Variable Frequency Distribution for Social Commerce Construct

Item	Response Scale					Skor	Mean
	SD	D	N	A	SA		
	1	2	3	4	5		
	%	%	%	%	%		
X1.1	0.9%	3.8%	8.5%	50.0%	36.8%	443	4.18
X1.2	0.9%	1.9%	15.1%	42.5%	39.6%	443	4.18
X1.3	0.0%	1.9%	17.9%	47.2%	33.0%	436	4.11
X1.4	0.0%	6.6%	32.1%	33.0%	28.3%	406	3.83
X2.1	0.9%	0.9%	13.2%	38.7%	46.2%	454	4.28
X2.2	1.9%	0.9%	7.5%	36.8%	52.8%	464	4.38
X2.3	0.0%	1.9%	20.8%	43.4%	34.0%	434	4.09
X2.4	0.9%	6.6%	23.6%	35.8%	33.0%	417	3.93
Social Commerce Construct						3497	32.58

The results of path analysis of the data are:

Table 2: Path Analysis

Latent Variables	R ²	Std. Error	Std. Coeff.	t	Sig.
(X) → (Y)		0.096	0.227	2.426	0.017
(X) → (Z)	0,697	0.045	0.835	15.454	0.000
(Z) → (Y)		0.115	0.654	6.988	0.000
(X) → (Z) → (Y)	0,727	0.089	0,546	6,782	0.000

X: Social Commerce Construct

Y: Social Shopping Intention

Z: Consumer Trust.

4.1 The direct impact of Social Commerce Constructs on Social Shopping Intention

Based on the results of the path analysis, shows that the Social Commerce Construct variable has a direct and positive correlation with the social shopping intention variable. This indicates that the Social Commerce Construct which is of consisting of Recommendations and Referrals and Ratings and Reviews increases social shopping intention when making online purchases through the TikTok Shop. Moreover, Recommendations and Referrals, which describe interactions between consumers in recommending and referring a product and service have a positive response from respondents.

Table 1, for X1.1 – X1.4 shows that the majority of consumers agree that recommendations and referrals can increase consumer interest in a product. This is in line with the theory of consumer behavior, where in receiving information in the form of recommendations and referrals, consumers will be considered [21], [35]. Furthermore, the majority of respondents agreed that users who provide recommendations are believed to have insight into the product. So that potential consumers who obtain product-related information can consider purchasing the product, before finally making an actual purchase.

Another dimension of the social commerce construct, Ratings & Reviews, which is an interaction between consumers, has a positive response from respondents. In this dimension, consumers assess and rank a product based on their experience in using the product. Data in X2.1 – X2.4 illustrates that the majority of consumers agree that ratings & reviews can increase consumer interest in a product and come to a final decision in purchasing a product. Likewise, the study on the impact of social commerce on online purchase intention that occurs on several social network sites (SNS), such as Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube [36], [37] and within all three dimensions of social commerce constructs [7]. Another similar research found the influence of social commerce constructs (SCCs) on social commerce intentions, however, the data collected from general social networking users does not focus only on online shoppers [21]

Other research concludes that the social commerce construct has a negative correlation with social shopping intentions [24]. This research was conducted on an e-retail website where only one product brand. The scope of interaction is too narrow and specific so it is less effective in influencing consumer buying interest. This is different from social commerce TikTok with massive users and the TikTok supply-demand system model. With this mechanism, TikTok social commerce provides content that is fitted to the user's personalization, so that the recommendation content, reviews & ratings of a product are adjusted to the user's needs. Therefore, the social commerce construct on TikTok is effectively used as an interaction medium to increase consumer purchasing interest in a product.

4.2 The Direct Effect of Social Commerce Construct on Consumer Trust

The next hypothesis is whether there is a direct correlation of the social commerce construct variable on the consumer trust variable. The path analysis depicts the social commerce construct variable has a positive and significant effect on the consumer trust variable (Table 2). This indicates

that the social commerce construct increases consumer trust when making online purchases through the TikTok Shop.

The Recommendation and referrals dimension for a product or service has a positive response from respondents. This can be seen in the values X1.1 – X1.4 (Table 1) where the majority of consumers believe that recommendations and referrals are factors in generating trust in a product. Recommendations on TikTok tell about previous consumer experiences, this makes the content of the recommendations on TikTok trustworthy. So in the end the majority of consumers agree that trust in recommendations and referrals increases consumer purchase intentions. Another perspective on consumer trust, it was also suggested that recommendations and referrals have a role in creating consumer trust through brand recognition and word-of-mouth promotion [16].

As with other dimensions of the Social Commerce Construct, giving Ratings and Reviews by consumers to a product has a positive response from respondents. X2.1 – X2.4 in Table 1 shows that the majority of consumers agree that ratings & reviews are a factor in generating trust in a product. Ratings and reviews act as information for potential consumers when deciding to purchase a product. Consumers who provide ratings and reviews have insight based on previous purchasing experiences, so their reviews and ratings can be trusted. Apart from that, through social commerce constructs, consumers can search for information regarding product recommendations that suit their needs. Along with the research on the impact of customer Ratings and Reviews, another research shows that customer reviews on purchased products leverage sales [38], and marketers need to focus on these reviews in building up a digital marketing strategy [23].

To conclude the effect of the Social Commerce Construct on Consumer Trust, overall the social commerce construct can increase interaction between consumers regarding a product or service and can be used as a construct to increase online purchasing trust. These results are in line with the results of previous research [7], [24], [37].

4.3 Direct Influence of Consumer Trust on Social Shopping Intention

Next, the research investigates the direct influence of the consumer trust variable on the social shopping intention variable. The results of path analysis show that the consumer trust variable has a positive and significant effect on the social shopping intention variable (Table 2). This indicates that consumer trust, which consists of the indicator dimensions of ability, benevolence, and integrity, increases social shopping intention through TikTok Shop.

The research reveals that consumer trust influences social shopping intention. This can be seen from the results of the ability indicator (Z1.1 – Z1.2) which shows that the majority of consumers trust TikTok. This is because it gives the impression of being trustworthy and committed to providing services so that TikTok can be used as a transaction medium. Consumers need a trust on security for doing transactions on digital media [39]. The benevolence indicator (Z2.1 – Z2.2) shows that the majority of respondents trust TikTok because of its good service and displaying content that matches consumer interests. Product recommendations in TikTok content increase consumer interest in purchasing products. While the third indicator, integrity (Z3.1 – Z3.2) shows that the majority of respondents trust TikTok. Additionally, it was suggested that an online customer review from someone that the customer knew is more trusted than a review from someone that the customer does not recognize [27].

Overall, the research concludes that consumer trust must be built through three indicators. The three indicators of consumers trust for TikTok users are built through the seller's integrity, ability, and benevolence. Respondents did not hesitate to purchase products on TikTok because they were promising and reliable. Meanwhile, other research states that recommendation, transaction safety, and rating are the top three indicators that can build consumers' trust in doing transactions online [40], electronic word-of-mouth has an impact on individual social commerce intentions [41], and also mitigation of user privacy issues is needed to increase consumer trust and their shopping interest [34].

4.4 Indirect Influence of Social Commerce Construct on Social Shopping Intention Through Consumer Trust

This research aims to test the indirect influence of the social commerce construct variable on the social shopping intention variable. Based on the results of the path analysis, it shows that the social commerce construct variable has a positive and significant effect on the consumer trust variable and consumer trust has a positive and significant effect on the social shopping intention variable (Table 2). From this, the indirect influence is calculated by multiplying the influence of $X \rightarrow Z$ and $Z \rightarrow Y$. The consumer trust variable as an intervening variable has quite a high influence with an influence value of 0.54609, with the result $t_{count} > t_{table}$ $6.782 > 1.98282$ and $t(p\text{values}) 0.000 < 0.05$, it can be stated. In other words, it can be said that the social commerce construct has an indirect influence on social shopping intention through consumer trust.

Similar to the results of the current research, trust is more personal, where the online shopping experience for consumers creates a sense of consumer engagement. This involvement

then has a positive impact on online purchasing intentions [42]. The research data was collected from Weibo users as respondents. Weibo is a popular social media in China and takes the form of micro-blogging, which is often compared to Facebook and Twitter which are banned in China. Additionally, other researches places consumer trust as a intervening variable in the correlation between electronic word of mouth communication and customers' online purchase intentions, CSR and purchase intentions [43]. Trust as a variable intervenes in product selection based on consumer preferences and consumer intentions [44].

V. CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that the social commerce construct has a direct effect on social shopping intention with a coefficient of 0.227, $t_{count} > t_{table}$ ($2.2426 > 1.98282$), probability $0.017 < 0.05$, so it can be said that social commerce construct affects social shopping intention was significant at 22.7% with 77.3% influenced by other variables. Also, the social commerce construct has a direct effect on consumer trust with a coefficient of 0.835, $t_{count} > t_{table}$ ($15.454 > 1.98282$), probability $0.000 < 0.05$, so it can be said that the social commerce construct has a significant effect on consumer trust of 83.5% with 16.5% is influenced by other variables. While for consumer trust has a direct effect on social shopping intention with a coefficient of 0.654, $t_{count} > t_{table}$ ($6.988 > 1.98282$), probability $0.000 < 0.05$, so it can be said that consumer trust has a significant effect on social shopping intention of 65.4% with 34.6% is influenced by other variables. Finally for the last hypothesis social commerce construct has an indirect effect on social shopping intention with a coefficient of 0.546, $t_{count} > t_{table}$ ($6.782 > 1.98282$), probability $0.000 < 0.05$, so it can be said that the social commerce construct has a significant effect on social shopping intention of 54, 6% with 45.4% influenced by other variables.

From the above results, it can be seen that the biggest positive correlation is on the effect of social commerce construct on consumer trust with coefficient of 0.835.

The research result has a contribution for developing a marketing knowledge, especially digital marketing. Furthermore, the result implies data that can be used for building up digital marketing strategies. The implication for marketing practitioners is during the process of developing a Digital Marketing Strategy, where marketers will know comprehensively the role of the Social Commerce Construct variable which has a correlation with other main variables in digital marketing. Research reveals that trust has a big role in convincing consumers to choose and buy a product. Meanwhile, trust itself is largely determined by reviews,

recommendations and referrals given by someone based on their experience in buying and using the products.

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