

The effect of social commerce construct on purchase intention and customer trust as mediating variable in tiktok shop

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates the impact of social commerce constructs on consumer trust and purchase intention in TikTok Shop. In the rapidly evolving era of globalization, digitalization has transformed the way humans communicate and conduct business. Indonesia, with the third-largest internet user population in Asia, serves as a crucial location to understand how social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok influence consumer behavior. TikTok, with its rapid growth, stands out as a potential platform for social commerce. This research seeks to answer the question of whether social commerce constructs significantly affect consumer trust and purchase intention within TikTok Shop. The results of this study reinforce and accept all four hypotheses, demonstrating that these factors have a significant positive impact in the context of TikTok Shop. This provides empirical evidence of the importance of social commerce constructs in building consumer trust and influencing purchase intentions, as well as the mediating role of consumer trust in the relationship between social commerce constructs and purchase intention on this platform. The practical implications of these findings can assist businesses in designing more effective marketing strategies in the ever-changing digital landscape.

KEYWORDS

Digital Marketing; Social Commerce Construct; Purchase Intention; Customer Trust

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Introduction

In today's globalized world, digitalization has become a crucial aspect of technological advancement, revolutionizing communication, commerce, and information exchange. Digital technologies enable instant global connectivity, breaking down geographical barriers and transforming societal behaviors and perspectives. Indonesia, with 132.7 million internet users, ranks third in Asia, following China and India, reflecting the deep penetration of digitalization into daily life (Katadata, 2022). The impact of digitalization is evident in the increasing use of social media platforms in Indonesia. According to Hootsuite (2023), WhatsApp usage reached 92.1% of the population, up from 88.7% the previous year. Instagram's user base grew to 86.5%, and Facebook saw an increase to 83.8%. This widespread adoption underscores social media's influence over Indonesian society. Platforms like WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok are not just communication tools but vital channels for e-commerce activities, blending social interaction with online shopping (Hajli, 2015).

TikTok, in particular, has seen a significant rise in popularity in Indonesia. In 2023, it became the most downloaded app, largely due to its integration with social commerce (Business of Apps, 2023). TikTok Shop, introduced on April 17, 2021, allows brands to sell directly through the app, leveraging short videos and live shopping features to enhance user engagement and drive sales. The platform offers a seamless shopping experience, eliminating the need to switch to other apps for transactions, thereby enhancing convenience (Sosiakita, 2022). The rapid growth of TikTok Shop is reflected in its impressive metrics. According to Shoplus (2023), TikTok Shop generates an estimated weekly revenue of \$137.2 million with a sales volume of 28.6 million. The platform features over 3 million products and garners more than 10 billion views. A survey by Populix (2022) revealed that 86% of Indonesians have shopped via social media, with TikTok Shop being the most frequently used platform (45%), followed by WhatsApp (21%), Facebook Shop (10%), and Instagram Shop (10%) (Yusra, 2022). Social commerce on TikTok Shop encompasses forums, communities, ratings, reviews, and recommendations, creating a comprehensive platform for interaction and communication. This social interaction fosters trust among users, which is crucial for online transactions. Hajli and Sims (2015) highlighted that social commerce constructs, emerging through Web 2.0, significantly influence consumer trust by empowering users to generate content and share experiences.

However, the user experience on TikTok Shop is not without challenges. Negative comments and complaints in the review sections can affect sellers' ratings and influence other consumers' purchasing decisions. For instance, a viral video reported by Tribun Lampung News showcased a customer expressing disappointment with a TikTok Shop purchase, highlighting issues with product quality and service. Such grievances can diminish consumer trust, impacting purchase intention. Trust is a critical factor in online purchasing. Pavlou and Gefen (2019) emphasized

that trust is essential for initiating online transactions, suggesting that businesses must establish and maintain trust to enhance purchase intentions. Consumers rely on social commerce constructs for recommendations, ratings, and reviews, which can significantly boost their trust and willingness to purchase (Huang and Benyoucef, 2013).

Despite the promising aspects of TikTok Shop, there is a lack of research specifically targeting its social commerce constructs in Bandar Lampung. Bandar Lampung, a rapidly growing city with increasing internet users, presents a unique context for studying online consumer behavior on platforms like TikTok Shop. Understanding how social commerce constructs influence purchase intention in this region can provide valuable insights for businesses to optimize their strategies. Research by Gibreel et al. (2018) highlighted the mediating role of trust between social commerce constructs and purchase intention. However, inconsistencies exist in the literature. For example, Li (2017) found that social commerce constructs did not significantly impact purchase intention, contrasting with Hajli's (2015) findings. This study aims to bridge this gap by examining the influence of social commerce constructs on purchase intention with customer trust as a mediating variable in TikTok Shop, specifically in Bandar Lampung.

In conclusion, the rise of social commerce platforms like TikTok Shop represents a significant shift in how businesses engage with consumers. The integration of social media and e-commerce offers immense potential for driving sales and fostering trust. However, understanding the dynamics of these constructs, especially in specific contexts like Bandar Lampung, is crucial for businesses aiming to capitalize on this trend. This study aims to investigate the influence of social commerce constructs on purchase intention and customer trust within TikTok Shop. Specifically, the research seeks to determine whether social commerce constructs significantly and positively impact purchase intention and customer trust, if customer trust positively affects purchase intention, and whether customer trust mediates the relationship between social commerce constructs and purchase intention. The objectives of this study are to assess the effect of social commerce constructs on purchase intention, evaluate their impact on customer trust, examine the influence of customer trust on purchase intention, and explore the mediating role of customer trust in the relationship between social commerce constructs and purchase intention.

Literature review

Marketing management

Marketing is a vital component that drives a company's core activities, essential for its survival and growth amidst intense competition. Its primary aim is to facilitate the sale of products and ensure consumer purchases. As Kotler and Keller (2016) state, "Marketing is a societal process by which individuals and groups obtain what they need and want through creating, offering, freely exchanging products and services of value with others," highlighting marketing as a social process of meeting needs and desires through value exchange. Marketing management, crucial for a company's sustainability and progress, involves identifying and satisfying consumer needs, creating, and communicating superior value. Kotler and Keller (2016) define it as "the art and science of choosing target markets and getting, keeping, and growing customers through creating, delivering, and communicating superior customer value." Similarly, Kotler and Armstrong (2017) describe it as "the analysis, planning, implementation, and control of programs designed to create, build, and maintain profitable exchanges with target buyers to achieve company goals." These definitions collectively suggest that marketing management is both an art and a science, involving analysis, planning, implementation, and control to achieve organizational goals effectively and efficiently.

Marketing mix

Creating products that meet consumer needs requires marketing activities that align with company objectives, centered around the marketing mix—a set of controllable variables influencing the market. As Kotler and Armstrong (2017) describe, the marketing mix comprises "the set of tactical marketing tools (product, price, place, and promotion) that the firm blends to produce the response it wants in the target market," combining these elements to elicit desired market reactions. According to Kotler and Keller (2016), the marketing mix for services includes: (a) Product, which involves planning and developing valuable products or services for consumers; (b) Price, the cost consumers pay for a product or service; (c) Place, referring to the company's operational locations and distribution channels; (d) Promotion, activities aimed at communicating product benefits and influencing consumer decisions; (e) People, individuals directly involved in and influencing the product or service exchange, including employees and customers; (f) Process, encompassing all procedures, job schedules, and mechanisms for producing and delivering services; and (g) Physical evidence, the tangible environment where services are created and interactions occur, supporting the service role.

Digital marketing

According to the Indonesian Digital Marketing Association in 2020, digital marketing encompasses ten types: content marketing, which focuses on creating and distributing content to target markets; Search Engine Optimization (SEO), the process of obtaining high-quality traffic either freely or through payment; Search Engine Marketing (SEM), a strategy to enhance website visibility on search engines like Google, Yahoo, and Bing; Social Media Marketing (SMM), utilizing social media platforms to attract and build relationships with customers; Pay Per Click Advertising (PPC), where advertisers pay for each website visitor; affiliate marketing, involving business partnerships to earn commissions from generated traffic; email marketing, using email for product promotion; instant messaging marketing through short messages; and traditional methods like radio and television advertising. The swift technological advancements, as noted by Dewi and Darma (2019), have driven industrial growth, offering significant opportunities for businesses to leverage technology for marketing (Nurmansyah, 2019). These developments have

transformed how marketers engage with consumers (Ritz et al., 2019), making promotional strategies more modern and internet-based, such as digital marketing (Nadya, 2016; Tresnawati & Prasetyo, 2018). Digital marketing, which includes web-based media like blogs, websites, email, and social networks (Fawaid, 2017), simplifies monitoring consumer needs and provides consumers with easy access to information via the internet (Purwana et al., 2017).

Social commerce construct

According to Hajli (2015), the social commerce construct is a social platform that has emerged through the development of web 2.0, enabling consumers to generate content and share their experiences. Social commerce utilizes the internet to support social activities and influence individuals in their purchasing decisions (Hajli & Sims, 2015). Information search in social commerce can occur through forums and communities, ratings and reviews, and recommendations and referrals (Purwana et al., 2017). Forums and communities serve as spaces for sharing information and acquiring knowledge, while ratings and reviews provide product evaluations by users on social commerce platforms. Recommendations and referrals happen when users share their opinions about products and recommend them to others. Additionally, Hajli (2015) identifies three dimensions of the social commerce construct: forums and communities, which facilitate information and knowledge sharing through social interactions; ratings and reviews, which involve user evaluations of products on company websites or e-commerce platforms; and recommendations and referrals, which occur when consumers recommend products to others based on their interest.

Customer trust

Trust is a crucial issue in economic and social transactions, especially in the online context where uncertainty is prevalent (Ba & Pavlou, 2002, in Hajli, 2014). Trust is generally defined as "the willingness to depend on an exchange partner in whom one has confidence" (Moorman et al., 1993, in Shi & Chow, 2015). In e-commerce literature, trust can be based on credibility, which refers to the belief that the other party in a transaction is trustworthy (Ba & Pavlou, 2002, in Hajli). Consumer trust is formed among parties who may not know each other well in transactional activities and is defined as one party's willingness to accept the risk associated with another party's actions, expecting that the other party will act in ways important to the trusting party, regardless of the ability to monitor or control these actions (Priansa, 2017). Trust can be described as a company's willingness to rely on its business partners, depending on factors such as perceived competence, integrity, honesty, and benevolence (Kotler & Keller, 2016). McKnight et al., as cited in Priansa (2017), identify two key dimensions of consumer trust: trusting belief and trusting intention. Trusting belief refers to the consumer's perception that the company has beneficial characteristics, built on three points: benevolence, the seller's good treatment of the consumer; integrity, the seller's adherence to agreements; and competency, the seller's success in fulfilling the consumer's desires. Trusting intention is the willingness to be influenced by others, comprising the willingness to depend on the seller and the subjective probability of depending on the seller in the buying and selling process.

Purchase intention

Purchase intention refers to an individual's inclination towards acquiring an item based on their satisfaction and preference, perceiving it as beneficial to themselves (Kurniani & Priansa, 2016). It signifies the willingness of a consumer to purchase a product. According to Priansa (2017), purchase interest can be evaluated across various dimensions. Generally, these dimensions encompass four main aspects: transactional interest, which reflects a person's reliance on purchasing goods or services from a company; referential interest, indicating a person's inclination to recommend the product to others; preferential interest, which aligns with consumer behavior in favoring a particular product; and exploration interest, describing a consumer's ongoing quest for information about the product of interest.

Methods

Object research

This study adopts a quantitative descriptive approach, aiming to ascertain the values of independent variables, specifically the social commerce construct, without drawing comparisons or correlations with other variables (Sugiyono, 2017). The research objective is to investigate the significant influence of the social commerce construct on purchase intention, with customer trust acting as the mediating variable, within the framework of TikTok Shop. Through this investigation, the study seeks to comprehend the ramifications of the social commerce construct on purchase intention and its subsequent impact on customer trust within the TikTok Shop platform. The focal point of examination in this research is the social commerce construct as the independent variable, driving changes or instigating the emergence of the dependent variable, purchase intention, while customer trust mediates this relationship within the context of TikTok Shop.

Data

Data for this study is sourced from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data, as defined by Sugiyono (2019), is collected directly from the objects under investigation, involving the distribution of questionnaires to a synchronized group of sample respondents representing the entire population. In this research, primary data is gathered through questionnaires distributed to consumers using TikTok Shop in Indonesia, particularly in Bandar Lampung. Secondary data, on the other hand, is obtained from external sources such as national and international

journals, articles, and previous research relevant to the Social Commerce Construct, Consumer Trust, and Purchase Intention. Regarding data collection methods, an online questionnaire is employed, following the guidance of Cholid Nabuko & H. Abu Achmadi (2007), wherein respondents answer a series of questions using the Likert scale format. This format enables respondents to express their attitudes or opinions across various levels, with each statement scored to gauge the responses, facilitating the measurement of constructs such as Social Commerce Construct, Consumer Trust, and Purchase Intention.

Population and sample

In this study, the population comprises all TikTok Shop users engaging in social commerce activities in Bandar Lampung, although the exact number is unknown. These users actively browse, interact with, and potentially make purchases from sellers on the platform. Employing a non-probability sampling method, specifically purposive sampling, the sample is drawn with specific considerations, including gender, employment status, age (Generation Z), monthly income, and expenses. The sample size is determined using the Bernoulli formula, considering a 5% level of significance, a 95% confidence level, and a 10% error rate. With these parameters, the minimum sample size is calculated to be 100 respondents, ensuring reliable data processing and meeting the criteria for robust research, as suggested by Sugiyono (2017).

Data analysis technique

In this research, quantitative analysis will be conducted utilizing path analysis techniques to investigate the relationships between the social commerce construct, purchase intention, and customer trust within the context of TikTok Shop. The Partial Least Squares (PLS) analysis model will be employed to test the hypotheses and validate the conceptual framework, considering the hierarchical causal relationships proposed. Through the PLS method, both measurement models (outer model) and structural models (inner model) will be evaluated, focusing on convergent validity, discriminant validity, and reliability. Additionally, mediation testing will be performed to detect the presence and nature of mediating effects, categorized as full mediation, partial mediation, or no mediation. Hypothesis testing will involve comparing t-statistic values with the t-table to determine the significance of the hypotheses. Ultimately, conclusions will be drawn based on the comparison between calculated statistics and predetermined thresholds, providing insights into the relationships among the variables under investigation.

Results

Respondent characters

The respondents in this study are users of the TikTok Shop social commerce platform in Bandar Lampung who have shown interest in making purchases. Data collection involved distributing questionnaires through Google Forms to 100 respondents, including a pilot test, with subsequent analysis conducted using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) via the Partial Least Square (PLS) method. Respondent characteristics, encompassing gender, age, employment status, monthly income, and monthly expenses, were collected to provide insight into the demographics of TikTok Shop users in Bandar Lampung. Results indicate that the majority of users are female (65%), predominantly aged between 18-22 years (76%), with a significant proportion being college students (80%). Furthermore, most users have monthly incomes and expenses below IDR 1 million. These findings offer a comprehensive understanding of the demographic profile of TikTok Shop users in Bandar Lampung, providing valuable insights for the study's analysis and interpretation.

Results of hypothesis testing

Based on the data analysis conducted using SmartPLS 4.0 software and bootstrapping technique, the hypotheses in this research were tested by examining the values of t-statistic and p-values. The results revealed significant relationships between the variables under investigation. Firstly, the Social Commerce Construct was found to have a significant positive impact on Customer Trust and Purchase Intention, with p-values of 0.000 for both relationships. This suggests that the Social Commerce Construct significantly influences both Customer Trust and Purchase Intention in a positive manner. Secondly, Customer Trust was found to significantly impact Purchase Intention, with a p-value of 0.036, indicating a positive relationship between these variables. Lastly, Customer Trust was identified as a significant mediator in the relationship between the Social Commerce Construct and Purchase Intention, with a p-value of 0.036. These findings support the acceptance of all hypotheses, affirming the crucial role of Customer Trust as a mediator between the Social Commerce Construct and Purchase Intention in the context of the study.

Table 1. Hypothesis Testing Result

Hypothesis	Effect	Result	Description
H1	Social Commerce Construct (X) -> Customer Trust (Z)	Coefficient Value = 0,931 T-Statistics = 53,140 P Value = 0,000	Hypothesis Accepted
H2	Social Commerce Construct (X) -> Purchase Intention (Y)	Coefficient Value = 0,738 T-Statistics = 7,223 P Value = 0,000	Hypothesis Accepted

H3	Customer Trust (Z) -> Purchase Intention (Y)	Coefficient Value = 0,222 T-Statistics = 2,107 P Value = 0,036	Hypothesis Accepted
H4	Social Commerce Construct (X) -> Customer Trust (Z) -> Purchase Intention (Y)	Coefficient Value = 0,207 T-Statistics = 2,104 P Value = 0,036	Hypothesis Accepted

Discussion

The effect of social commerce construct on customer trust

The discussion on the impact of the Social Commerce Construct on Customer Trust addresses the research problem and hypothesis, affirming that the Social Commerce Construct indeed has a positive and noteworthy influence on Customer Trust within the TikTok Shop platform. With the first hypothesis being accepted, it confirms the significant relationship between these variables. The effective implementation of various features within the Social Commerce Construct on TikTok Shop, such as recommendations, guidance, ratings, reviews, and community forums, facilitates customer communication, interaction, and information-sharing, ultimately fostering trust among customers before making purchases. This corresponds with the observed scenario on TikTok Shop, where negative comments and low ratings within the Social Commerce Construct can detrimentally affect customer trust and their shopping intentions. This finding aligns with Cahayani's (2020) study, which similarly concluded that the Social Commerce Construct significantly impacts Customer Trust.

The effect of social commerce construct on purchase intention

The discussion concerning the influence of the Social Commerce Construct on Purchase Intention addresses the research problem and hypothesis, affirming the proposition that the social commerce construct indeed has a positive and substantial impact on Purchase Intention within the TikTok Shop platform. With the second hypothesis being accepted, it confirms the significant relationship between these variables. This finding is in line with prior research indicating that enhancing the quality of the Social Commerce Construct can effectively enhance Purchase Intention. Moreover, these results are consistent with previous studies, such as that conducted by Hajli (2015), which also demonstrated a positive correlation between the Social Commerce Construct and Purchase Intention.

The effect of customer trust on purchase intention

The discourse regarding the influence of Customer Trust on Purchase Intention tackles the research problem and hypothesis, asserting that Customer Trust indeed has a positive and significant impact on Purchase Intention within the TikTok Shop platform. With the acceptance of the third hypothesis, it confirms the existence of a noteworthy relationship between Customer Trust and Purchase Intention. This suggests that Customer Trust holds substantial importance in influencing Purchase Intention among TikTok shoppers. These findings resonate with a study conducted by Cahayani (2020), which also revealed a significant impact of Customer Trust on Purchase Intention.

Indirect effect of social commerce construct on purchase intention through customer trust

The discourse on the indirect influence of Customer Trust on Social Commerce Construct and repeat Purchase aims to address the research problem and hypothesis asserting that Social Commerce Construct significantly impacts Purchase Intention in TikTok Shop, with Customer Trust acting as a mediator. With the acceptance of the fourth hypothesis, it is established that Social Commerce Construct indeed has a positive and significant influence on Purchase Intention, mediated by Customer Trust. Furthermore, the specific indirect effects analysis reveals that Customer Trust partially mediates the relationship between Social Commerce Construct and Purchase Intention. This suggests that Purchase Intention can materialize as customers engage directly with the features of Social Commerce Construct, fostering trust towards the TikTok Shop platform.

Conclusion

The findings of this research provide valuable insights into the dynamics between the Social Commerce Construct, Customer Trust, and Purchase Intention within the TikTok Shop context. Firstly, the significant positive impact of the Social Commerce Construct on Customer Trust underscores the importance of features like product recommendations and user reviews in fostering trust among consumers. Secondly, the confirmed influence of the Social Commerce Construct on Purchase Intention highlights its role in shaping consumer purchasing behavior. Additionally, the substantial effect of Customer Trust on Purchase Intention emphasizes the pivotal role of trust in driving purchasing decisions on social commerce platforms like TikTok Shop. Moreover, the mediation analysis revealing Customer Trust as a mediator between the Social Commerce Construct and Purchase Intention underscores the interconnectedness of these variables and the importance of building trust to enhance purchase intention. Suggestions derived from these findings include recommendations for TikTok Shop to prioritize maintaining positive reviews and ratings, provide honest product information, and offer value-added services to stimulate interest and trust among consumers and sellers alike. Additionally, future research avenues could explore broader sample

characteristics, incorporate additional variables, and investigate different objects to provide comprehensive insights for companies operating in the social commerce landscape.

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