

The Influence of Social Presence on Purchase Intention in Social Commerce: The Mediating Roles of Trust and Attitude

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<https://doi.org/10.51137/wrp.ijarbm.2024.lpts.45613>

Abstract – Social commerce is a new form of e-commerce that applies Web 2.0 technology features to design customer-oriented businesses. This allows consumers to generate content with the aim of sharing information about their shopping experience and engaging socially in the purchasing process. This study aims to analyze the impact of social presence on purchase intention, using trust and attitude as mediators in social commerce. The Batam city community, well-versed in social commerce, serves as the sample for this research. A total of 300 respondents were used in this study. The sample technique uses purposive sampling. Smart PLS is an analysis tool. The variables used are social presence, attitude, trust, and purchase intention. The results of this study are that social presence has no effect on purchase intention, but social presence influences purchase intention with the mediation of trust and attitude. Another result is that social presence influences attitude and trust. These findings contribute to businesspeople making good use of social commerce. By understanding the factors that influence purchase intention in social commerce, company can increase their social presence and increase customer trust in their service attitude, thereby increasing sales of products and goods in social commerce.

Keywords – Social Presence, Trust, Attitude, Purchase Intention, Social Commerce

Submitted: 2024-10-08. Revised: 2024-10-22. Accepted: 2024-12-31.

1 Introduction

Social media has emerged as the primary tool for sharing information regarding companies, products, and services (Nadeem et al., 2020a). Social media facilitates relationships among and between customers and the company (Shaari & Ahmad, 2017). It enables users to create content to disseminate information regarding their shopping experiences and engage in social interactions during the purchasing process (Liu et al., 2019a). We project the gross merchandise value (GMV) of social commerce in Indonesia to approximate US\$8.2 billion by 2023. Nurhayati (2023) anticipates the value to nearly quadruple, attaining US\$22.1 billion by 2028, signifying substantial market potential. Conversely, the proliferation of social commerce platforms in recent years has inevitably led to heightened competition among suppliers in this sector. From a corporate standpoint, comprehending how to stimulate consumers' purpose to engage in online transactions on social commerce platforms is a crucial strategy for attaining competitive advantage and leveraging economic value (Farivar et al., 2017). This essay will underscore the importance of examining the factors that affect consumer purchase intention in social commerce and then identify the decision-making process for this particular business model from novel perspectives. Prior research indicates that trust is a pivotal concern in online purchase, and the significance of peer-generated material amplifies its relevance for social commerce platforms (Hajli et al., 2017).

This study uses the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) (Ajzen, 1973), which states that attitude towards an object and subjective norms are direct determinants of intention to perform a behaviour. A person's attitude towards an object, whether positive or negative, is a reflection of their prominent beliefs. The first advantage of the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) is its proven accuracy in predicting human behaviour. Its use is relatively simple because it considers assessments of attitudes, controls, and subjective norms (Handriana et al., 2020). In addition, a very important variable is social presence; the extent to which the media creates social presence depends on the extent to which the media provides social presence. In a social commerce environment, the social presence brought by online reviews is a stimulating factor for consumers (Zhu et al., 2020).

According to research (Gao & Li, 2019), the quality of the seller's website has an impact on the buyer's perceived presence, influencing website identification and purchase intention. The conceptual model, using the collected social commerce data, reveals a positive relationship between information and service quality and social presence. The benefits of social presence can reduce risk, generate pleasure, and build trust. Nadeem et al. (2020) research reveals that social commerce trust completely mediates the connection between social presence, commitment, and loyalty within the social commerce online brand community. Online interactions primarily revolve around trust. Ye et al. (2019) research indicates that social presence boosts customer trust and purchase intentions. Attitudes towards purchases from online stores are very strong determinants of consumer purchase intentions on the internet. Social media serves as a platform for social interaction and association, but it can

also serve as a source of information and fulfil lifestyle needs. Additionally, some individuals or certain groups use social media networks like Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and others to promote products and services to the public.

Therefore, we aim to bridge the gap in previous research by thoroughly studying the attitudes and desires of Indonesian consumers towards purchasing on social commerce. The aim of this study is to examine how social presence, through the mediation of attitude and trust, influences consumers' inclination to make purchases on social commerce. This study will delve deeper into the mediating role of attitude and trust in social commerce

2 Literature Review

2.1 *The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA)*

The TRA theory attempts to understand, clarify, and predict human behaviour. The idea posits that individuals recognize the repercussions of their actions and hence make decisions informed by the facts at hand. This hypothesis posits that exposure to specific information aids in forecasting an individual's intentions, which precede their actual decisions (behaviour) (Rao et al., 2021). Purwianti (2021) presents a framework of intention-attitude beliefs wherein beliefs, attitudes, and subjective norms influence behavioural intents. The TRA defines attitude as a taught predisposition to respond favourably or unfavourably to information or things. Individual beliefs, developed through exposure to information about an item and subsequent assessment of its characteristics, determine attitude (Handriana et al., 2020).

2.2 Purchase Intention

Purchase intention is an attitude that emerges from an evaluation process, where individuals make a series of decisions about the product they wish to purchase based on their relationship to the product. According to Agmeka et al. (2019) purchase intention is an important variable in measuring the potential actions chosen by consumers. Understanding consumer buying intentions enables companies to better understand the market and adjust their products or services, thereby increasing their profits. Interest in purchasing a product arises when the company's products meet consumer needs, and this fascination can influence buying attitudes. The higher the consumer's buying interest, the higher their desire to purchase the product. (Purwianti, 2019; Purwianti et al., 2022).

2.3 Social Presence and Trust

Research indicates a correlation between social presence and trust in social commerce, suggesting that social cues conveyed via digital media allow customers to evaluate trustworthiness. This indicates that consumers are more inclined to engage rather than exhibit loyalty when social commerce trust

is present (Nadeem et al., 2020). When traditional and Instagram celebrities are seen as equally physically attractive, social presence determines the effect of celebrity type on trust, but when both appear with the same brand (Jin et al., 2019), there are different levels of trust. Increased social presence has a stronger positive effect on trust about product recommendations (Munnukka et al., 2022). Ye et al. (2019) assert that social presence is a characteristic of online P2P platforms, whereas trust develops as a post-hoc general attitude through customer engagement with the platform. Enhanced social presence fosters a sense of communication and boosts online trust by offering useful information and resolving product-related issues in a hedonic context, thereby enhancing social experience and enjoyment. With social presence, merchants can increase the level of interaction, consumer trust, and brand reputation (Jiang et al., 2019). This research supports the finding that social presence affects trust (Leong et al., 2020) and (Zhu et al., 2020). Based on existing research, the hypothesis is:

H1. Social Presence has a significant effect on trust

2.4 Social Presence and Attitude

Social presence is a communication channel that identifies the way people communicate and socialize and defines the level of awareness of interactional communication. Social presence is defined as 'the level of importance of others in interactions and the level of importance of international relations (Leong et al., 2020). According to Jin et al. (2019), social presence is important for attitude; consumers who are exposed to Instagram celebrity brand posts perceive more trustworthiness, show more positive attitudes towards supported brands, and feel a stronger social presence. Increased social presence has a significantly stronger positive effect on the perceived quality of product recommendations among consumers who have a positive prior attitude compared to consumers who have a negative attitude (Munnukka et al., 2022). The level of perceived risk when buying online and the perception of consumer trust have a considerable influence on individual attitudes (Jadil et al., 2022). Social presence is a major factor in consumer experiences, attitudes, and responses with online services (De Cicco et al., 2020). Based on existing research, the hypothesis is

H2. Social presence has a significant effect on attitude.

2.5 Trust and Purchase Intention

In the context of social commerce, trust plays a crucial role in enhancing purchase intentions. The higher the trust that customers have in the platform, the higher the consumer involvement in the buying process (Hajli et al., 2017). According to Mior Shariffuddin et al. (2023), online purchase intention significantly modifies this relationship. Various studies have identified a favourable correlation between trust and online purchasing intention. Lăzăroiu et al. (2020) conducted a survey which demonstrated that consumer trust significantly influences decision-making in social commerce. Online purchasing intentions commonly acknowledge trust as a significant determinant (Jadil et al.,

2022). Increased consumer trust in a brand correlates with a higher likelihood of purchase. A congenial social trading atmosphere that fosters interpersonal ties among consumers can enhance social value and assist firms in cultivating consumer trust, which is essential for success (Wang et al., 2021). Consumer trust in products is defined by confidence stemming from the reliability of previously acquired goods. Consumer trust can profoundly impact their purchasing intentions (Handriana et al., 2020). Based on existing research, the hypothesis is

H3. Trust has a significant effect on purchase intention

2.6 Attitude and Purchase Intention

The Sobel test research and research results demonstrate that a person's involvement with a brand on social media influences their purchase intention, a relationship that is significantly mediated by their attitude on social media brand pages. (McClure & Seock, 2020). Social media engagement is increasingly relevant in consumer shopping and purchasing behaviour and can significantly influence new consumer attitudes towards brands. However, such engagement does not directly affect the future purchase intention of the brand. Individual attitudes have a significant positive effect on purchase intentions (Jadil et al., 2022). Attitude has a significant and positive impact on green purchase intentions (Maziriri et al., 2023). The intention to purchase environmentally friendly equipment indicates potential purchase behaviour, particularly during the stage where consumers evaluate and rank significant brands as part of their purchase intention process. Brand attitude has a significant impact on brand credibility and intention (Hsiu-Ying Kao et al., 2020). This demonstrates consumers' intention to use the brand by enhancing their perceptions of its attitude and credibility through explicit explanations. Consumer attitudes have an impact on product purchase intentions; consumers who have a positive attitude towards products tend to intend to buy them (Handriana et al., 2020). Some of the arguments above conclude that attitude has a significant positive effect on purchase intention. Based on existing research, the hypothesis is

H4. Attitude has a significant effect on purchase intention.

2.7 Social Presence and Purchase Intention

Social presence is a fundamental notion in social media and social commerce platforms. A website's social presence encompasses an aura of warmth and amicability. The existence of social elements enhances purchasing intents on online platforms by augmenting honesty, predictability, capability, and discretion. Emoticons and novel features from platforms such as Facebook and Instagram might enhance the perception of warmth in conversations and influence purchase intentions (Hajli et al., 2017). Enhanced social presence can diminish the perceived social distance between vendors and purchasers, thereby augmenting online trust and intentions to acquire products (Ye et al., 2019). Elevating social presence will enhance trust in site members and purchase intents, as emotional elements significantly influence the

inclination to purchase online (Liu et al., 2019). According to research by Zhu et al. (2020), social presence does not directly influence purchase intention, as media efficacy can modulate consumers' perception of social presence, which progressively intensifies from text to visuals and videos. The existence of social factors significantly influences buying intention (Gao & Li, 2019). Social media presence and website recognition can influence consumer purchasing intentions. It is essential for online shop proprietors to enhance consumers' feelings of warmth and human interaction on e-commerce platforms to establish a robust website identity that attracts online shoppers. Prior studies demonstrate that social presence markedly affects purchasing intention, as observed by Jiang et al. (2019). Based on existing research, the hypothesis is

H5. Social presence has a significant effect on purchase intention.

2.8 Trust and Attitude as mediation

Ye et al. (2019), who have extensively examined the mediating effect of trust, assert that enhancing social presence can reduce the perceived social distance between sellers and buyers, thereby augmenting online trust and intents to acquire products. Elevating social presence amplifies the potency of trust in enhancing purchasing intention. A robust social presence enhances consumer trust by offering personal, sociable, and warm human interaction (Liu et al., 2019). Customer engagement enhances social presence, mitigating uncertainty toward merchants, while trust significantly influences social commerce, consequently augmenting customer purchase intentions in this domain (Jiang et al., 2019). Social presence does not directly affect purchase intentions, as media power can somewhat influence customers' social presence (Zhu et al., 2020). Social presence serves as a critical determinant of consumer trust, thereby influencing their inclination to purchase from a social commerce platform or application (Al-Adwan, 2018). In the social commerce environment, consumers' enjoyment of shopping on websites and applications has resulted in trust and positive attitudes towards these platforms (Ang et al., 2018). Consumers who see Instagram celebrity brand posts consider them more trustworthy, express more positive attitudes toward the endorsed brand, and feel a stronger social presence, which can increase consumers' purchase intentions for the product (Jin et al., 2019). Social presence and website identification can drive consumer purchase intentions (Gao & Li, 2019). Social presence can shorten the social distance between sellers and buyers and can increase online trust and product purchase intentions (Ye et al., 2019). Social presence is a major factor in consumers' experiences, attitudes, and responses with online services (De Cicco et al., 2020). Based on existing research, the hypothesis are :

H6. Social presence influences purchase intention with the mediation of trust.

H7 Social presence influences purchase intention by mediating attitude.

3 Research Methods

This study utilizes a quantitative approach, employing purposive sampling as the sampling strategy. The research population consists of people in the city of Batam who use social commerce. The participants in this study are This study employs samples of individuals who have engaged in shopping on social commerce platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and TikTok. These individuals meet the criteria of being active social media users in the past six months and having purchased a smartphone within the last year. The research employs both primary and secondary data. We collected primary data by disseminating a questionnaire via Google Form to 300 respondents. We obtained the questionnaire items from prior research. Hair et al. (2010) employed a sample size that was 10 times larger than the number of formative indicators used to measure a single construct. The minimum sample size required is 160 respondents. We distributed the questionnaire to 300 respondents. We used non-probability sampling, specifically targeting people who have shopped on social commerce. Social presence uses 3 indicators (Zhu et al., 2020), trust uses 4 indicators, attitude uses 3 indicators, and purchase intention uses 3 indicators (Farivar et al., 2017). The measurement scale uses a 5-point Likert scale.

4 Result

Based on the analysis, most of the respondents are male, namely 158 (52.7%) and female, 142 (47.3%) purchase products or goods online on social commerce. From the age of the respondents processed and shows that from 300 respondent data 18- 22 years with 42.3% 127 respondents, the younger generation prefers online shopping through social commerce. From the questionnaire data processed, 138 respondents are employees with a percentage of 46%, students 19.7%, self-employed 17.3%, students 16%, and not working 3%.

Figure 1. PLS Calculate Result

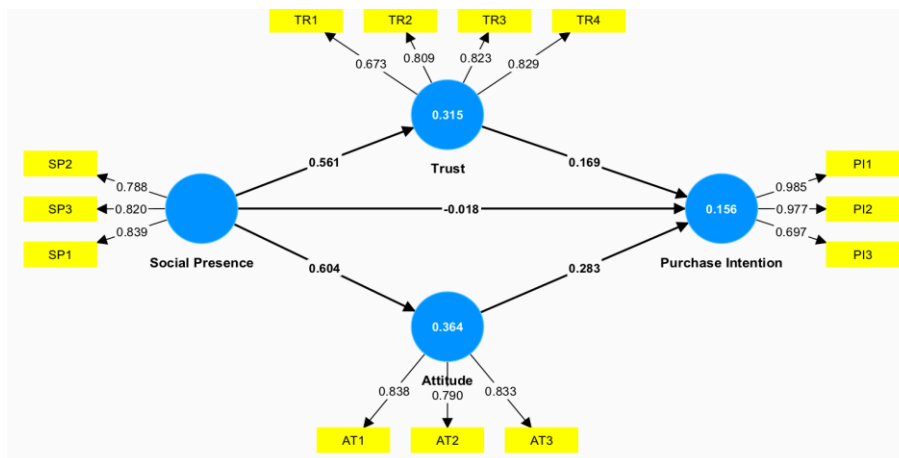


Table 1. The Convergent Validity and Reliability of the Measurement Model

Variable	Indicators	Outer Loading	AVE	Cronbach's alpha	Composite Reliability
Attitude	AT1	0,838	0,674	0,758	0,861
	AT2	0,790			
	AT3	0,833			
Purchase Intention	PI1	0,985	0,803	0,879	0,923
	PI2	0,977			
	PI3	0,697			
Social presence	SP2	0,788	0,666	0,749	0,857
	SP3	0,820			
	SP1	0,839			
Trust	TR1	0,673	0,618	0,790	0,865
	TR2	0,809			
	TR3	0,823			
	TR4	0,829			

Table 1 indicates that the outer loading value is above 0.7 (Hair et al., 2014), the AVE value surpasses 0.5, and both Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values are greater than 0.5 (Hair et al., 2014).

Table 2. Results of Hypothesis-testing

Hypothesis	T statistics	P values	Result
Attitude -> Purchase Intention	4,075	0,000	accepted
Social Presence -> Attitude	9,933	0,000	accepted
Social Presence -> Purchase Intention	0,264	0,792	rejected
Social Presence -> Trust	10,048	0,000	accepted
Trust -> Purchase Intention	2,203	0,028	accepted

Social Presence -> Attitude -> Purchase Intention	3,615	0,000	accepted
Social Presence -> Trust -> Purchase Intention	2,156	0,031	accepted

From table 2, it can be concluded that all hypotheses are accepted except the hypothesis about social presence having no effect on purchase intention. This is because the P-value is 0.792 and the T-statistic value is 0.264.

5 Discussion

The results of the attitude research test with purchase intention T statistics of 4.075 and a P value of 0.000 show that attitude has a significant influence on purchase intention. Social media engagement and services can influence consumer attitudes to be interested and find out more about the brand, thereby increasing the intention to buy products or goods in social commerce. Consumer attitudes towards brands or products have a direct impact on their desire to buy because they are influenced by emotional connections, perceived value, recommendations and reviews, social interactions, consistency, and brand reliability. McClure & Seock, 2020 and Handriana et al., 2020 produced similar research results. Based on the path coefficient test, the effect of social presence on attitude has a T statistics value of 9,933 and a P values value of 0.000, so social presence has a significant effect on attitude. This shows that consumer attitudes place more value on social presence when posting quality recommendations for products or goods on brands (Munnukka et al., 2022). Consumers can talk directly with merchants on social commerce to find out more about the product or item. Increased social presence has a very strong positive effect on brands and positive consumer attitudes, so it can increase consumers' desire to interact in an online environment. The study's results are consistent with the findings (Jin et al., 2019).

The findings of the social presence study test concerning purchase intention demonstrate an inconsequential influence since T statistics are less than 0.264 and P values exceed 0.792. Test results show that social presence does not inherently guarantee consumer interest in purchasing products or goods through social commerce. In social commerce, consumers cannot ensure the quality of products. The effect of media can affect consumers' social presence to a degree, progressively augmenting their experience of social presence through text, photos, and videos. A robust social media presence does not necessarily correlate with content that is pertinent or engaging to the target audience. If the content disseminated by businesses or individuals fails to resonate with consumers' interests or requirements, it may diminish its influence on purchase intent. The research findings align with those of Zhu et al. (2020).

Social presence, through trust and attitude, influences purchasing intention. The T statistic of 2.156 and P value of 0.031 demonstrate that social presence significantly influences purchase intention, mediated via trust. Customer contact enhances social presence, mitigating confusion regarding merchants,

while trust significantly influences social commerce, consequently elevating customer buy intention in this domain. Comprehensive product information fosters consumer trust and stimulates further interest. An engaged social presence via brand communication can foster trust by promptly and competently addressing inquiries, disseminating information, and responding to feedback. This can enhance consumer confidence and consequently elevate their intention to purchase. The study's results align with prior studies conducted by Ye et al. (2019) and Jiang et al. (2019). The influence of social presence on purchase intention, mediated by attitude, is significant (T statistic 3.615 and P value 0.000). In a social commerce context, the pleasure derived from purchasing on websites and applications, informed by experiential outcomes, has fostered trust and favorable perceptions of these platforms. Social presence indicates that social commerce platforms are reliable and secure. The aim is to influence the way consumers perceive the platform and boost their intentions to make purchases. The study's results align with the findings of Ang et al. (2018).

Another result is that trust has an effect on purchase intention, with a T statistic of 2.203 and a P value of 0.028. Based on these results, trust has a significant influence on purchase intention. In order to establish consumer trust, merchants on social commerce platforms must maintain a high level of credibility and enhance their product quality and customer service, thereby fostering consumer interest in social commerce. Assisting consumers in mitigating risks related to the quality of their products or services also enhances their confidence that social commerce online sellers are providing excellent customer service. This makes consumers want to shop on social commerce. The research results are similar to those of Mior Shariffuddin et al. (2023) and Yu et al. (2021). Another result is that social presence affects trust with a T statistic value of 10.048 and a P value of 0.000. The relationship between social presence and trust in social commerce demonstrates that elements communicated through digital media enable consumers to evaluate trust. This suggests that consumers are more willing to commit and become loyal when social commerce trust is present (Nadeem et al., 2020). Increased social presence has a stronger positive effect on trust for product recommendations (Munnukka et al., 2022).

6 Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to determine the effect of social presence on purchase intention through the mediation of trust and attitude. The results of this study are that social presence affects attitude and trust, while trust and attitude affect purchase intention. However, social presence has no effect on purchase intention. Social presence has an effect on purchase intention through the mediation of trust and attitude. This study solely concentrates on applying the TRA theory, incorporating social presence and trust, with the expectation that future research will incorporate price value (Purwianti et al., 2024). In addition, it is crucial to consider the impact of social presence on the hospitality industry (Purwianti, 2023). By understanding the factors that

influence purchase intention in social commerce, producers can enhance their social presence and boost customer trust in their service attitudes, thereby increasing sales of products and goods in social commerce

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