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## FROM LIKES TO PURCHASES: HOW SOCIAL MEDIA IS DRIVING MODERN E COMMERCE

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### ABSTRACT:

*Social media is revolutionizing the e-commerce space, giving rise to the notion of 'social commerce.' The lines between social, interaction, and commercial transaction, have thus been eroded. In this research paper, the diverse functions of social media in present-day e-commerce (impact on consumers buying intention and brand image, and emergence of live-stream selling) have been studied in-depth. A descriptive and conceptual research methodology was used by the study which synthesizes a number of results from across the globe such as India, Pakistan, China, and Oman. It can be concluded from the analysis that social media act as an information transmitter carrying advertising value to Gen Z and Millennial consumer in terms of its credibility and informativeness, thus influencing the brand image, for which this research paper has provided findings of some of these countries and live-streaming selling is providing a platform for SMEs to mitigate capital constraints and interact with consumers. Despite, it is also necessary to state that transition to social-driven e-commerce is accompanied with its share of limitations such as perceptions of risks, digital trust and insufficient legal frameworks for cross border transactions. The conclusions drawn by the research indicate that although social media speeds up the process of globalization and extends the market access but success and sustainability of social-driven e-commerce are dependent on solid consumer protection and development of trust among consumers and the author concludes that social media has transformed into the underpinning framework of the next era of global e-business rather than just being a tool for marketing.*



**Key Words:** Social Commerce, Influencer Marketing, Live-stream Selling, Consumer Behavior, Digital Trust, Brand Image, E-commerce, etc.

### Introduction:

In the time you spent reading this sentence, millions of users across the world would have double tapped an image, swiped up on a story or clicked a 'Shop Now' button in a 30-second clip. Socializing turned into the most sophisticated, personal and ever-present market on earth, and the lines between 'socializing' and 'shopping' have been all but erased. With seamlessly integrated checkout and personalized discovery features built into Instagram, TikTok and Pinterest, a deliberate search for products has been replaced by the impulsive act of discovering them. This paper examines the drastic transition from interaction to purchase as social media has become the driving force of the modern economy, powered by influencer credibility, targeted advertising and social proof.

Through advances in IT and mobile technology, “e-commerce is changing from being a purchasing technology to being a world-wide commercial tendency” (Fan & Pongpatcharattrontep, 2020, pp. 358-363). Social media has developed to be an extremely advanced ecosystem beyond communication between friends or family, so it is the backbone to “social commerce”-the transaction of purchase or sale of products or services within social networking environments. “The growth of e-commerce has tremendously increased due to the speed and easiness it provides in globally exchanging products and services” (Vadwala & Vadwala, 2017). Today, especially among Gen Z and Millennial customers, shoppers no longer only seek from traditional shops but look for trustworthiness and reliability in the social media advertising; “social media is becoming very important to build customers’ awareness of the brand image and relationship to the products” (Hidayat et al., 2025, pp. 1-6). Moreover, “The outbreak of COVID-19 has sped up the change of purchasing behaviors towards digitalization” (Zhao, 2023), so businesses also have to consider social media as a crucial part in their marketing. The study examines the social media influence on the value chain of e-commerce, the consumers’ psychology behind social shopping, as well as related regulatory obstacles.

### Research Methodology:

The study follows a qualitative and descriptive approach. Thus, it is basically a systematic review of current scientific articles and conference papers. It is a conceptual study in nature and seeks to justify how the relation between social media and e-commerce business models is constantly changing. It is a “textual evidence systematic review” (Vadwala & Vadwala, 2017) that tries to overcome the problem of how to collect information from existing traditional scholarly peer-reviewed journals and the new digital channels. Data for this study is drawn from a variety of geographical and functional contexts, including:

**Consumer Behavior Analysis:** Examining “purchasing-intention models in developing markets like Pakistan to understand the roles of trust and perceived risk” (Latif et al., 2022).

**Technological Trends:** Investigating the impact of “live-stream selling and digital automation in markets like China and Ukraine” (Huang et al., 2023; Tkachenko & Hnatiuk, 2023).

**Legal and Regulatory Review:** Analyzing “consumer protection laws and dispute resolution frameworks in Indonesia and Oman” (Budiono et al., 2023; Jebarah, 2025).

**Comparative Studies:** Evaluating the impact of “e-commerce on globalization through cross-country comparisons (e.g., Poland and Turkey)” (Chmielarz et al., 2021).

By integrating these diverse perspectives, the study provides a comprehensive overview of how social media functions as a mediator between vendors and consumers in the digital economy.

### Analysis and Discussion:

#### Brand Image via Social Advertising:

Social media, has become the central channel of modern advertising. Different from the traditional media, social media can achieve ‘informativeness’ and ‘credibility’ which plays important roles on shaping brand image. “It is shown that for the Gen Z and Millennial consumers, an advertising value play mediating role in the consumer’s cognition towards a brand” (Hidayat et al., 2025, pp. 1-6). “If an advertising is seen as credible and informative, the brand image of that company would increase and then a higher customer loyalty can be obtained” (Hidayat et al., 2025, pp. 1-6). Therefore, it is shown that social media is an advertising channel, which create a ‘meaning-making’ mechanism in the consumer’s recognition towards the brand.

#### The Evolution of Live-Stream Selling:

The most significant development in the sphere of social commerce is the advent of live-stream selling. “This model has found immense favor amongst SMEs who are severely capital restricted” (Huang et al., 2023). The business model of a platform such as those prevalent in the Chinese market that provide live-stream facilities has enabled the retailers to showcase their goods in real-time and address any concerns of the buyers, “thereby establishing immediacy and an emotional connect, thereby minimizing the psychological distance of the buyers from the sellers (often inducing a purchase

faster than static images of goods)” (Huang et al., 2023). The retailers themselves-be they financed through platform finance or trade credit-are a matter of importance “when determining efficiency in supply chains” (Huang et al., 2023).

**Trust, perceived risk and purchasing intention:**

Although there are many advantages to social commerce; because there is a “non-face-to-face” (Latif et al., 2022) nature in these purchases, it brings many potential perceived risks. Trust, perceived benefit and perceived risk influence consumers’ purchasing intention particularly in developing countries such as Pakistan as consumers are concerned about products, secure payments and personal information.

**Trust as a mediator:** “Trust is a prerequisite which could overcome the negative impact of perceived risk” (Latif et al., 2022).

**Globalization & culture context:** The effect of e-commerce on globalization has been different among countries. For instance, “internet-based solutions have been developed similar in Poland and Turkey; but cultural differentiation creates different interactions between customers and internet” (Chmielarz et al., 2021).

**Automation & Decision Making Through Data:**

“The inclusion of social media data to the business processes of an organization’s CRM and ERP systems helps to automate operations” (Tkachenko & Hnatiuk, 2023). By tracking consumer response and trends on social media, businesses can, better manage stock. Predict market trends, supply and demand. “Make management decisions quickly that minimizes cost and risks” (Tkachenko & Hnatiuk, 2023). The automation through data analysis is vital for business organizations in today’s ever-changing world of consumer preferences.

**Legal issues and consumer protection:**

In line with the growth of e-commerce on social media, there still exists some legal and technical hurdles to its overall advancement. “In India although e-commerce has a lot to offer, the legal framework still appears to be a constraint in achieving its full potential” (Vadwala & Vadwala, 2017). Likewise, in “Oman the rapid pace of development of digital economy has outrun its existing consumer protection regulations in particularly in relation to the cross-border transactions” (Jebarah, 2025).

**Dispute Resolution:** “Indonesian law seems to provide legal recourse in relation to disputes via its ITE Law” (Act No. 19 of 2016), as suggested “dispute settlements must first be approached amicably, if unsuccessful then through the courts” (Budiono et al., 2023).

**Regulatory gaps:** “The absence of globally unified regulations for social commerce leaves the consumers at the mercy of international sellers in social selling transactions” (Jebarah, 2025).

**Key Findings of the Study:**

**Advertising value:** “credibility and informativeness in social media advertisements are the key factors in determining brand image among young people” (Hidayat et al., 2025, p. 1-6).

**SME Empowerment:** “Live-stream selling is a way for undercapitalized SMEs to get access to international markets but it demands for careful management of both supply chain and finances” (Fan & Pongpacharatrontep, 2020, p. 358-363, Huang et al., 2023).

**The Trust deficit:** The risk perception is a barrier to the willingness to buy in on-line purchasing environment and it suggests for the development of “digital trust” (Latif et al., 2022) by transparent behavior and the security of payment.

**Pandemic trigger:** COVID-19 resulted in lasting consumption preference shift to the e-commerce and the social media engagement became a “new normal rather than a trend” (Chmielarz et al., 2021, Zhao, 2023).

**The Legal lag:** “Current legal regulations of most of the developing countries do not fit the characteristics of social-driven, cross-border e-commerce transaction” (Budiono et al., 2023, Jebarah, 2025).

## CONCLUSION:

Thus, to sum up, social media has undeniably revolutionized the e-commerce space, growing from an auxiliary marketing tool to the engine driving the modern digital economy. By taking advantage of live-streaming functionality, celebrity authority, and automated, data-driven sales funnels, businesses are able to deliver the compelling, individualistic shopping experiences to which consumers now have a strong addiction. However, such transformation to the dominant social commerce environment has yet to materialize fully due to inherent problems such as the absence of consumer trust, lack of data privacy and poor legislation to protect consumers. To leverage fully the potential of social commerce, stakeholders should consider to strengthen their digital infrastructure and establish uniform cross-border consumer laws. Since e-commerce has been a force of globalization, the creation of trust in a non-face-to-face environment will be the key to determining success. Future advancements by AI and blockchain technology might be the solutions to the problems mentioned above, but now the human factors of social media is the strongest driving force for the 'Click, Shop, Repeat' revolution.

The transition from 'likes to purchases' is more than just an alteration of user habits, it represents an alteration in the very DNA of retail. We no longer go shopping, we always are shopping and now it is algorithms that can cater to our wants and needs even more than ourselves. Through the power of community, the likability of influencers and ease of in-app checkouts, every like has become a sales lead, and every follower a potential customer. With integration of AR and AI in these platforms, the online store front becomes an even more immersive experience and ultimately, it's no longer a product's quality that determines success but rather its surrounding social narrative. The brand that has won over the feed has also inevitably won over the consumer's pocketbook.

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