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Social Commerce on TikTok: How Social Capital Facets Shape Young Indonesian Tiktok Shopper's Decision-Making Process and Satisfaction

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Abstract— **This study explores the impact of social capital on decision-making and satisfaction among young Indonesian TikTok users, analyzing how its different dimensions—structural, relational, and cognitive—affect decision confidence, comfort, and satisfaction. Utilizing PLS-SEM to analyze data from 326 participants, the findings reveal that structural social capital were not significantly influence decision confidence or comfort, indicating that mere connectivity lacks psychological impact. Similarly, relational components like trust in peers and reciprocity showed no significant effects on decision confidence and comfort, while identity with social groups notably boosts consumer decision confidence. Conversely, cognitive social capital, particularly shared language, substantially enhances both decision confidence and comfort, underscoring the critical role of mutual understanding in social commerce. This research, the first of its kind to assess the influence of various social capital aspects on decision comfort and confidence, offers new insights into how social capital shapes consumer behavior and satisfaction, providing valuable implications for improving user engagement on digital platforms.**

Keywords—Social Commerce, Social Capital, Decision Confidence, Decision Comfort, TikTok.

I. Introduction

In the digital era, social commerce has rapidly evolved, blending traditional e-commerce with social media platforms to create dynamic marketplaces where user interactions significantly influence buying behaviors (Lin et al., 2017; Hajli, 2015; Yadav et al.,

2013). Nowadays, platforms like TikTok not only facilitate social interaction, but also facilitate the buying and selling of products into every stage of the consumer journey (Hajli, 2015). This integration has transformed shopping from a solitary activity into a communal and interactive experience, deeply embedded within social networks and user-generated content (Yadav et al., 2013). As such, understanding the social dynamics that influence consumer behaviors on these platforms is crucial for both academic research and practical application in marketing strategies (Lin et al., 2017).

Social capital, with its roots in the study of societal and community interactions, provides a robust framework for analyzing how relationships within networks influence behavior (Putnam, 2000; Coleman, 1988). In the context of social commerce, social capital can be dissected into structural, relational, and cognitive dimensions each playing distinct roles in shaping consumer decisions (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). While existing studies have extensively explored the impact of social capital on social commerce setting (Yang, 2021;Horng & Wu, 2020; Huang et al., 2020; Chen & Shen, 2015), the rapid rise of social commerce platforms like TikTok presents new challenges and opportunities (Yang, 2021). These platforms are characterized by their highly visual content, ephemeral nature of interactions, and unique user engagement mechanics, which may influence social capital differently compared to more traditional social commerce platforms.

Despite the recognized importance of these factors, there remains a significant gap in the literature concerning how different types of social capital specifically influence psychological outcomes such as decision confidence and comfort in the context of social commerce (Li et al., 2016; Zhang et al., 2014). Most studies have focused on broader outcomes like purchase intention or overall user engagement (Yang, 2021; Huang et al., 2020; Chen & Shen 2015), with less attention given to how these psychological states mediate the relationship between social capital and consumer satisfaction in newer social commerce environments (Wang & Zhang, 2012; Zhao et al., 2016). Furthermore, the unique attributes of platforms like TikTok and their predominant young user base necessitate a fresh investigation into these dynamics.

Addressing this gap, this study explores how structural, relational, and cognitive social capital influence decision confidence and comfort, and subsequently, how these psychological states affect consumer satisfaction on TikTok among Indonesian youth shoppers. By focusing on this demographic and platform, the study contributes to the theoretical and practical understanding of social capital in digital environments, providing insights that help businesses and marketers optimize strategies to enhance user

engagement and satisfaction in social commerce (Lin et al., 2017; Hajli, 2015; Yadav et al., 2013).

II. Literature Review

A. *Social capital in social commerce*

Social capital, a multifaceted concept crucial for the functioning of societies and networks, including those in digital environments like social commerce platforms, encompasses the aggregate of resources linked to a network of institutionalized relationships (Bourdieu, 1986). It is categorized into three types: structural, relational, and cognitive. Structural social capital involves the network ties and configurations that facilitate information and resource flow (Lin et al., 2019), relational social capital is based on personal relationships characterized by trust and mutual obligations (Putnam,2000), and cognitive social capital includes shared representations and interpretations among network members (Coleman, 1988). Together, these types drive individual actions within and benefits from the network.

The concept of social capital has been extensively used as a theoretical framework in social commerce studies providing insights into how online social structures influence consumer behavior, such as, purchasing intention (Yang, 2021; Horng & Wu, 2020; Huang et al.,

2020). Additionally, notable studies, such as those by Chiu et al. (2006) and Wang and Zhang (2012), have demonstrated that these dimensions significantly affect aspects like community engagement, loyalty, and the intention to engage in online communities by facilitating resource and information exchange (Ganguly et al. 2019; Ravindran et al., 2015). These studies underscore the profound impact of social capital on the dynamics of social commerce, suggesting that businesses can harness this capital to build stronger, more engaged online communities and drive economic success.

B. *Decision confidence and decision comfort*

Decision confidence and decision comfort are crucial psychological states that influence consumer satisfaction. Decision confidence is defined as the assurance consumers have in the correctness of their choices (Sweeney & Soutar, 2001), while decision comfort refers to the ease and lack of stress experienced during the decision-making process (Parker et al., 2016). Research highlights that higher decision confidence and comfort significantly enhance consumer satisfaction and reduce the likelihood of post-purchase regret, thus improving loyalty and the likelihood of repeat purchases (Komiak & Benbasat, 2006). Social capital influences these constructs by providing trust and normative guidance through networks, which can assure consumers about their purchasing decisions (Coleman, 1988). Despite the acknowledged impact of social capital on decision-making, there is a gap in the literature regarding how different elements of social capital, such as structural, cognitive, and relational components, specifically interact with decision confidence and decision comfort in the current social commerce environments.

C. *Hypotheses development*

Social interaction, a key component of structural social capital, plays a pivotal role in facilitating information transfer and resources exchange (Ganguly et al. 2019; Ravindran et al., 2015). The frequency and richness of social interactions, such as comments, likes, and shares, significantly increase exposure to diverse opinions and information can shaping purchasing intention within social commerce contexts (Yang, 2021, Xiang et al., 2016). Prior studies have shown that social interactions on digital platforms enhance the user's ability to gather diverse opinions and insights, which in turn aids in more informed and confident decision-making (Valenzuela et al., 2009; Ellison et al., 2007;). Moreover, the reassurance and validation received through active social interactions reduce the anxiety and stress associated with purchasing decisions, thereby enhancing decision comfort.

H1: Social interaction positively affects (a) decision confidence and (b) decision comfort.

Relational social capital, crucial in online shopping contexts where physical evaluation of products is not possible (Yang 2021). It plays a vital role in influencing consumer behavior through trust in peers, reciprocity, and identity. Trust in peers provides psychological assurance about the reliability of information and product quality, enhancing decision confidence and comfort by reducing uncertainty and fear of potential losses, thereby creating a relaxed shopping environment (Lu et al., 2009; Pavlou & Gefen, 2004; Gefen et al., 2003). Reciprocity strengthens this trust by fostering a supportive network where mutual exchanges of information and emotional support clarify doubts and reinforce decision-making confidence (Wasko & Faraj, 2005; Chiu et al., 2006;). Additionally, identity within relational social capital, characterized by a strong sense of community belonging, aligns individual choices with group norms and provides social validation. This alignment boosts decision confidence and emphasizes the influence of identity in decision-making, where choices are seen as extensions of one’s social self, consistently reinforcing confidence in those choices (Hsu et al., 2008; Bagozzi & Dholakia, 2006).

H2: Trust in peers positively affects (a) decision confidence and (b) decision comfort.

H3: Reciprocity positively affects (a) decision confidence and (b) decision comfort.

H4: Identity positively affects (a) decision confidence and (b) decision comfort.

Cognitive social capital, which includes shared languages, is crucial for providing clear and effective communication within networks, particularly in social commerce where interaction is mediated through textual and visual media (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998; Chiu et al., 2006). This common understanding not only reduces misunderstandings and aligns user expectations but also boosts decision confidence by making consumers feel more knowledgeable and well-informed. Furthermore, it alleviates the cognitive load and stress associated with interpreting product-related information and navigating the purchasing process, thereby enhancing decision comfort (Huysman & Wulf, 2006; Tsai & Ghoshal, 1998).

H5: Shared language positively affects (a) decision confidence and (b) decision comfort.

Decision confidence directly influences decision comfort, reducing anxiety and easing the decision-making process, which in turn plays a pivotal role in shaping overall consumer satisfaction (Parker et al., 2016; Phillips & Baumgartner, 2002). Confident decisions fulfill consumer expectations and reduce post-purchase regret, enhancing satisfaction, while comfortable decisions made without undue stress lead to a more fulfilling shopping experience, further boosting satisfaction (Sweeney et al., 2001; Oliver, 1997;). Thus, decision confidence and comfort are interconnected and each significantly contributes to enhancing overall consumer satisfaction.

H6: Decision Confidence. significantly affects (a) decision comfort and (b) satisfaction.

H7: Decision Comfort significantly affects satisfaction.

III. Methods

A. *Construct definition and measurement*

Overall, the questionnaire was segmented into three distinct components. Initially, we conducted an investigation regarding their shopping experience through TikTok. Individuals lacking prior purchasing experience on TikTok will be exempted. The second section of the questionnaire inquired about the demographic details of the respondents, such as their age, income, education, occupation, and shopping frequency. The main section assessed many aspects of social capital, decision comfort, decision confidence, and satisfaction.

All the items in the second section of the questionnaire have been derived from previous studies to verify that the indicators in each construct have content validity. The constructs of Decision Confidence, Decision Comfort, and Satisfaction were derived from the studies conducted by Tan et al. (2012), Parker et al. (2016), and Liang (2011) accordingly. Trust in peers, reciprocity, and identity, which are components of relational social capital, were derived from the works of Chang and Chuang (2011), Pai and Tsai (2016), and Chiu et al. (2006) respectively.

Social interaction and Shared language, representing structural and cognitive social capital respectively, were adapted from Chiu et al. (2006). Each question was assessed using a 4-point Likert scale. Since all of the measurements were derived from previous research conducted in English, a proficient English translator was employed to translate into Bahasa. Additionally, we carried out a preliminary investigation to assess the precision of the measurement.

B. *Data analysis*

We opted for the utilization of Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with the assistance of SmartPLS 4.0. Initially, we performed an evaluation on the measurement model. It is imperative to conduct an evaluation of the measuring model, which encompasses the examination of indicator reliability, internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2022). After the model successfully met all the necessary validity and reliability tests, we proceeded with the evaluation of the structural model in order to evaluate the hypotheses. We also reported R2, Q2 Predict, CVPAT, and statistical significance of the structural path coefficients. We adhered to the most recent guideline put forward by Hair et al. (2022) to evaluate both the measurement and structural model.

C. *Sample and data collection*

The results were gathered through an internet-based questionnaire in April 2024. We exclusively focused on respondents who had previous purchase experience on the TikTok social commerce platform. A grand total of 350 questionnaires were gathered. Following a thorough data screening process, which involved identifying suspicious answer patterns, outliers, and examining data distributions, a total of 34 responses were excluded from the analysis (Hair et al., 2022). Consequently, a total of 326 questionnaires that met the necessary criteria were utilized for the purpose of data analysis. Most of the participants were female, accounting for 66% of the respondents with 80% of the participants fell within the age range of 17 to 24, and 70% identified themselves as

college students. The summary of respondents' demographic information of the respondents is presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Summary of Respondents' Demographic Information

Demographic		N	%
Gender	Female	111	34%
	Male	215	66%
Age	14-16	9	3%
	17-24	261	80%
	25-34	44	13%
	34-39	12	4%
Education	Senior High School	213	65%
	Undergraduate	101	31%
	Master and above	12	4%
Occupation	College Student	227	70%
	Employee	48	15%
	Entrepreneur	37	11%
	Others	14	4%
Shopping Frequency	Very rarely	64	20%
	Seldom	100	31%
	Sometimes	34	10%
	Often	34	10%
	Very often	64	29%

IV. Results and Discussion

A. *Assessment of measurement model*

Evaluating the measurement model is an essential step that must be carried out to verify the validity and reliability of the model. As part of the measurement model assessment, we performed various tests to determine the validity and reliability of the indicators including indicator reliability, internal consistency, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. Table 2 presents a summary of the results pertaining to the indicator reliability, internal consistency, and convergent validity, while table 3 shows the results of the discriminant validity test utilizing the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio of Correlations (HTMT).

Our study has successfully met all necessary criteria for validity and reliability. We first ensured the reliability of the indicators by confirming that all outer loadings exceeded the minimum threshold of 0.7. We then verified internal consistency using Cronbach's alpha and Composite Reliability (rho_c), both of which surpassed the required value of 0.7. For convergent validity, we used the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and found that each construct's AVE exceeded the acceptable threshold of 0.5, indicating robust performance. After the removal of several indicators (SOC4, TIP4, TIPS, IDE3, CON3, COM2, SAT1), discriminant validity was confirmed using the HTMT criterion, with all values remaining below the 0.85 cut-off. Despite the removal of these indicators impacting some metrics, our model still passed all essential tests for validity and reliability.

Table 2 Constructs Validity and Reliability

Construct	Item	Load	Int. and Conv.	Validity
Social Modality	SOC1	.847	α	: 0.853
	SOC2	.865	rho_c	: 0.895
	SOC3	.715	AVE	: 0.682
	SOC4*	.867		
Trust in Peers	TIP1	.824	α	: 0.880
	TIP2	.849	rho_c	: 0.913
	TIP3	.804	AVE	: 0.676
	TIP4*	.803		
	TIP5*	.830		
Reciprocity	REC1	.857	α	: .744
	REC2	.758	rho_c	: .854
	REC3	.823	AVE	: .662
Identity	IDE1	.824	α	: .845
	IDE2	.817	rho_c	: .896
	IDE3*	.813	AVE	: .683
	IDE4	.850		
Shared Language	LAN1	.795	α	: .722
	LAN2	.792	rho_c	: .844
	LAN3	.817	AVE	: .642
Decision Confidence	CON1	.830	α	: .783
	CON2	.842	rho_c	: .874
	CON3*	.832	AVE	: .697
Decision Comfort	COM1	.793	α	: .755
	COM2*	.843	rho_c	: .859
	COM3	.820	AVE	: .671
Satisfaction	SAT1*	.769	α	: .812
	SAT2	.749	rho_c	: .869
	SAT3	.746	AVE	: .571
	SAT4	.798		
	SAT5	.713		

Table 3 Discriminant Validity using HTMT

	COM	CON	IDE	SOC	REC	SAT	LAN
CON	.847						
IDE	.619	.698					
SOC	.555	.611	.821				
REC	.590	.669	.827	.801			
SAT	.848	.826	.602	.555	.555		
LAN	.701	.770	.782	.728	.802	.693	
TIP	.509	.577	.742	.722	.837	.481	.705

B. *Assessment of structural model*

After establishing validity and reliability, we ran bootstrapping procedures with 10,000 subsamples. We chose the percentile bootstrap method for calculating confidence intervals, taking into account the kurtosis and skewness of each indicator (Hair et al. 2022). Based on the result, we rejected hypotheses H1a, H1b, H2a, H2b, H3a, H3b, and H4b, and accepted hypotheses H4a, H5a, H5b, H6a, H6b, and H7.

Given the predictive nature of PLS-SEM as tools, it is crucial to report the prediction capability (Hair et al., 2022). We employed PLSpredict/CVPAT methods to validate the predictive capability of our model, as

indicated by the Q2 Predict values for choice confidence (0.346), decision comfort (0.252), and satisfaction (0.288) being more than zero. The CVPAT results provided additional evidence to support the predictive significance of this. In addition, the adequacy of the model was confirmed by the SRMR value of 0.066, which falls comfortably within the acceptable range (< 0.08), indicating a strong fit (Henseler et al., 2016). The R- squared values for decision confidence, decision comfort, and satisfaction were 0.346, 0.252, and 0.379 respectively.

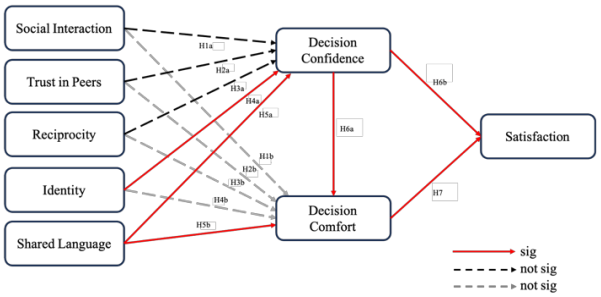

Fig. 1 Result from bootstraping procedures in SmartPLS 4

Table 4 Summary of Key Findings

Path				β-val	T-val	P-val	
H1a	SOC	®	CON	.049	0.63	.525	Reject
H1b	SOC	®	COM	.045	0.55	.584	Reject
H2a	TIP	®	CON	.042	0.63	.539	Reject
H2b	TIP	®	COM	.007	0.10	.918	Reject
H3a	REC	®	CON	.104	1.24	.217	Reject
H3b	REC	®	COM	.033	0.44	.657	Reject
H4a	IDE	®	CON	.277	2.96	.003	Accept
H4b	IDE	®	COM	.095	1.35	.176	Reject
H5a	LAN	®	CON	.302	3.87	.000	Accept
H5b	LAN	®	COM	.159	2.04	.041	Accept
H6a	CON	®	COM	.405	5.86	.000	Accept
H6b	CON	®	SAT	.387	6.13	.000	Accept
H7	COM	®	SAT	.388	6.77	.000	Accept

C. *Discussion*

This research examines the impact of social capital on the decision-making and satisfaction of young Indonesian TikTok users, offering insights into how various aspects of social capital influence consumer behavior in social commerce.

Firstly, the lack of significant effects from structural social capital (social Interaction) on decision confidence and comfort challenges some traditional assertions in social capital literature, such as those posited by Bourdieu (1986) and Putnam (2000), who argue that the structure of social relations significantly contributes to the resources available to individuals within networks. However, our findings align with Burt (1992), who suggested that mere interaction without qualitative relational elements might not be sufficient to yield the benefits of social capital. Thus, it is plausible that in social commerce contexts, mere structural interactions without deeper relational or cognitive engagements do not contribute significantly to decision-making processes. It also plausible that social interaction might influence decision confidence and comfort indirectly. For example, Prior research has proposed causal relationships between different dimensions of social capital (i.e., Yang et al., 2014).

Similarly, the absence of significant effects from some of relational social capital dimensions, including trust in peers and reciprocity, on decision confidence and comfort might initially seem counterintuitive. However, it resonates with the perspective of Molm (2001), who argued that not all forms of reciprocity or peer trust directly influence individual outcomes in digital environments where personal stakes and risk perceptions differ from more traditional settings. Further, the fast-paced and often anonymous nature of interactions on platforms like TikTok disrupting traditional trust dynamics (Zhao et al., 2016).

Furthermore, the significant influence of Identity, as part of relational social capital, on decision confidence but not on decision comfort suggests a complex interplay where identity-related factors might bolster certainty in decision-making but do not necessarily ease the psychological comfort during the process. This finding might reflect the dual-edged nature of identity within social networks, enhancing clarity but possibly not alleviating the stress or discomfort associated with purchasing decisions, as suggested by Portes (1998).

Conversely, cognitive social capital, evidenced by shared language, shows a significant positive impact on both decision confidence and comfort. This supports the assertions of Coleman (1988), who noted that shared understandings and common languages facilitate more effective communication and agreement on mutual goals, which are critical in enhancing decision-making efficacy in e-commerce environments.

The strong relationship between decision confidence, comfort, and satisfaction highlights the critical role of psychological states in the consumer buying. Confidence and comfort are key predictors of satisfaction, and enhancing these factors could substantially improve consumer contentment in social commerce environments (Chen & Shen, 2015). This underscores the need for strategies that specifically target these psychological aspects to boost overall user satisfaction.

D. *Theoretical implications*

This study challenges traditional views on structural and relational social capital, highlighting the need for theoretical updates in the digital commerce realm, particularly on platforms like TikTok frequented by young users. Traditional frameworks emphasize stable social structures, yet recent findings suggest that dynamic online interactions demand new trust and engagement mechanisms. Additionally, the study underlines the unique importance of cognitive social

capital, such as shared language, in enhancing decision confidence and comfort, expanding on Coleman's (1988) theory for online settings. It also calls for a deeper investigation into how different facets of relational social capital, especially digital identity, affect consumer trust and loyalty. Moreover, integrating psychological theories with social capital frameworks highlights their strong linkage to consumer satisfaction.

E. *Practical implications*

This study outlines practical strategies for increasing consumer decision confidence, comfort, and satisfaction on social commerce platforms like TikTok. Marketers should create immersive content that surpasses basic interactions and customize communications to match the cultural and linguistic contexts of their audience, enhancing clarity and alignment of user expectations to boost engagement. Strengthening group identity can also increase decision confidence. Policymakers need to ensure that platforms provide safeguard against misleading content, thus maintaining the integrity of online interactions. These approaches collectively create a strong framework for using social capital to improve user experience in dynamic digital marketplaces.

V. Conclusions

This study examines the intricate relationship between several characteristics of social capital and their impact on consumer decision-making and satisfaction among young Indonesian shoppers on TikTok. The findings indicate that social interaction among peers, trust in peers, reciprocity do not have a significant impact on both decision confidence and comfort. In contrast, shared language and group identity have a considerable influence on these outcomes. These findings emphasize the importance of having a detailed understanding of how social capital affects social commerce, especially on dynamic platforms that are popular among young customers.

This study's limitation lies in its narrow focus on young Indonesian shoppers and exclusively on TikTok, potentially limiting its broader applicability. Future research could broaden the demographic scope and include various social commerce platforms to better assess the impacts of social capital across different contexts. Additionally, employing qualitative methods would deepen the understanding of consumers' subjective experiences with social capital in social commerce. Longitudinal studies would also be beneficial in exploring how changes in social commerce features affect social capital and consumer behavior over time.

Lastly, this study treated dimension of social capital as parallel elements. The observed lack of direct impact from social interaction, trust in peers, as well as reciprocity on decision confidence and comfort may suggest potential indirect effects, which were not tested in this study. Prior research has proposed causal relationships between different dimensions of social capital (i.e., Yang et al.,

2014). Therefore, future studies could explore these indirect pathways to better understand the complex roles that various aspects of social capital play in influencing decision confidence and comfort.

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