

## Social Presence and Repurchase Intention in Social Commerce Platforms: Theoretical Review

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### ABSTRACT

**Objective:** This study aims to investigate how social commerce, as a subset of online buying integrated with social media interaction, influences consumer behaviors such as repurchase intention and active engagement. **Method:** The research framework is grounded in Social Exchange Theory (SET) and the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), examining the relationships among social presence, trust, and customer engagement. **Results:** Findings indicate that social presence – defined as the perception of warm, personal, and authentic connections – plays a pivotal role in fostering trust, reducing online transaction risks, and enhancing customer loyalty. Furthermore, increased engagement within social commerce platforms was found to strengthen community growth and brand attachment, ultimately driving sustainable repurchasing behaviors. **Novelty:** This study contributes by addressing a critical gap in the literature concerning retention and loyalty beyond initial adoption, offering both theoretical insights and practical strategies for cultivating genuine online communities that transform satisfied consumers into long-term brand advocates.

## INTRODUCTION

The growing use of social media for commercial transactions has led to the establishment of a novel paradigm in commerce termed social commerce [1], [2]. Companies may utilise social media platforms, including online forums, communities, and multimedia content, to promote their products, enhance their brands, foster consumer relationships, and stimulate repeat purchases. In contrast to conventional e-commerce, social commerce prioritises interaction and cooperation between enterprises and consumers, fostering a setting where customers have a stronger social connection to brands [2], [3]. The extensive use of social media platforms has significantly expedited the distribution of information on businesses, products, and services. Customers may now engage with one another and with firms, enhancing social awareness within consumer communities [4].

With the rising popularity of social media, businesses are progressively depending on it to cultivate a consumer base. By creating a presence on prominent social networking platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok, companies may expand their reach, enhance their relationships, incite discussions regarding their goods, and eventually affect consumer behaviour [5], [6]. A multitude of ambitious entrepreneurs perceive social media as an accessible means to initiate their ventures. Creating an online presence is straightforward; but, maintaining it requires continuous work to provide followers

with engaging material, promptly address consumer enquiries, and effectively manage online interactions [7].

Social networking sites (SNSs) are increasingly supplanting traditional e-commerce websites as the preferred medium for conducting business. Social networking sites have revolutionised the manner in which businesses engage with their clientele in Malaysia. In reaction to escalating living expenses, several Malaysian entrepreneurs have converted side ventures into full-time enterprises by promoting and selling products straight from personal accounts on prominent platforms like Facebook and Instagram [8], [9]. In reaction to the digital revolution, the Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation (MDEC) initiated the eUsahawan initiative in 2015 to motivate a new cohort of digital entrepreneurs among youth and microbusiness proprietors. By 2023, the program will have assisted more than 400,000 prospective entrepreneurs in acquiring the digital competencies necessary to operate successful online enterprises [10]. The expansion of social commerce is transforming the entrepreneurial environment by enabling businesses of various scales to engage more intimately with customers, which is essential for maintaining customer loyalty and encouraging repeat transactions in the competitive online marketplace [11].

The predominant method of conducting business in Malaysia is swiftly shifting from conventional e-commerce websites to social networking sites (SNSs) like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram [12], [13]. Numerous companies presently utilise this internet technology. Facebook is being recognised as a commercial platform. Owners of Malaysian companies are currently promoting and selling their products using their personal social media accounts. Some individuals have converted their online side hustles into full-time enterprises to address the increasing expense of living (Molinillo et al., 2021). The Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation (MDEC) inaugurated the eUsahawan program on November 23, 2015, aiming to cultivate a new generation of successful digital entrepreneurs among Malaysia's microbusiness and youth demographics. This initiative will provide 356,000 micro-entrepreneurs with essential resources to establish sustainable internet enterprises by May 2020. (Edge Market, 2020). The majority of companies are thought to be offline, small enterprises, commonly referred to as entrepreneurship [14]. In the digital realm, traditional e-commerce models have been predominantly replaced by the customer-to-customer (C2C) business model, which has drawn the interest of online entrepreneurs [15]. Meilatinova (2021) asserts that the consumer-to-consumer (C2C) e-commerce model yields five times the revenue of the business-to-consumer (B2C) e-commerce model.

Social commerce has emerged as a significant revenue stream for several enterprises due to industry growth forecasts [16]. Customer loyalty is essential, as sustained success in social commerce depends on both maintaining current consumers and attracting new ones. Despite the focus on adoption and purchase intent attributes, the significance of client loyalty and retention is still largely unacknowledged in consumer behaviour research. Recent research has highlighted brand page affordances [8], social presence [9], and platform and user trust [17] as pivotal elements affecting

loyalty in social commerce. Repurchase intention has historically served as an indicator of brand loyalty; however, there is an increasing interest in conceptualising loyalty as a complex construct that encompasses behaviours such as positive word-of-mouth and consumer engagement [18].

Businesses must comprehend the elements influencing client behaviour in virtual environments, as in-person interactions are being supplanted by online involvement in the digital era. This study aims to address a significant gap by examining the relationship between social presence and repurchase intention, together with customer participation. Improving the consumer experience in online purchase contexts requires social presence, characterised by a feeling of warmth and personal connection in a virtual interaction. Engaging content, customised messaging, and interactive assistance may enhance social presence in social commerce by fostering a sense of value and belonging among consumers, hence promoting satisfaction and trust [19]. Customers are more inclined to trust their transactions and intend to repurchase from a brand when they perceive a significant amount of social presence, as it mitigates the risk and uncertainty often associated with online shopping [20].

Repurchase intention, defined as the probability that a client would make an additional purchase from the same company, serves as a crucial metric of consumer loyalty and sustained profitability. Research indicates that social presence greatly affects repurchase intention by improving satisfaction and trust [21]. Recent study by Luo et al. (2022) indicates that social cues, including tailored recommendations and interactive assistance, enhance customer trust and the probability of repeat brand usage. These findings, along with previous research, indicate that social signals in digital contexts enhance trust and repurchase intention by fostering a more empathetic and humanised online experience [22].

Customer engagement behaviours beyond just repurchasing to include other acts such as offering feedback, engaging in brand communities, and advocating for the company. These actions are essential for cultivating a community of ardent customers who actively endorse and advocate for the brand, hence enhancing loyalty. Expectation-Confirmation Theory (ECT) posits that when customer expectations are fulfilled, satisfaction and loyalty are enhanced, thereby elevating the likelihood of repurchase and brand interaction. This framework elucidates the connection between repurchase intention and engagement behaviours [23]. The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) posits that consumer engagement activities, including sharing positive experiences and participating in brand communities, are driven by positive attitudes towards repurchase, social norms, and perceived behavioural control [24].

Additionally, Social Exchange Theory (SET) elucidates the relationship between involvement and consumer loyalty. SET posits that social interactions are predicated on an exchange process wherein individuals seek to minimise costs while maximising benefits. Zhou et al. (2022) and Zhang et al. (2023) assert that brand-supporting behaviours, like offering good feedback and engaging in community interactions, are likely reciprocated by devoted consumers who appreciate their relationship with a firm.

This reciprocity strengthens the link between the company and its clients, fostering a dedicated base of individuals involved in the brand's success.

Ultimately, comprehending and enhancing consumer loyalty in the digital realm necessitates an investigation into the influence of social presence on repurchase intention and its subsequent effect on customer engagement behaviour. This study offers useful insights into how organisations may develop engaging online experiences that enhance customer loyalty and stimulate active consumer engagement by examining these linkages. This information is essential for formulating marketing strategies that promote repeat business and cultivate a loyal consumer base that engages with and endorses the brand, eventually resulting in sustained corporate success.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

### **Literature Review**

Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned activity asserts that three key factors – attitude towards the activity, subjective standards, and perceived behavioural control – influence an individual's behavioural intentions, which then dictate their actions. Within the realm of social commerce, the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) may elucidate the impact of customer loyalty on word-of-mouth intention, customer engagement behavioural intention, and repurchase intention.

Consumer loyalty, encompassing both behavioural loyalty (repeated purchases) and attitudinal loyalty (emotional attachment), directly influences individuals' perceptions of the brand. A positive disposition increases the likelihood of individuals continuing to purchase from the company (repurchase intention), participating in brand-related activities (customer engagement behaviour intention), and recommending the brand to others (word-of-mouth intention). Subjective norms, defined as the perceived social pressure to engage in or abstain from certain behaviours, are critically important in social commerce, where peer influence and social validation play essential roles. Loyal consumers are more inclined to engage in beneficial actions for a business when they perceive that their peers have similar sentiments towards it. Ultimately, perceived behavioural control, or the perceived ease or difficulty of the action, is also crucial. The simplicity of sharing content, interacting with it, and doing transactions may bolster these behavioural objectives in social commerce. Consequently, TPB serves as an effective framework for comprehending how certain behavioural goals in social commerce foster consumer loyalty.

Social commerce has become a significant focus of study in recent years (Liu et al., 2021). There are several interpretations of the word "social commerce." Nadeem et al. (2020) initially conceptualised it as s-commerce activities and transactions occurring on social media platforms utilising Web 2.0 technologies. Liu et al. (2021) delineate a phenomenon arising from social media practices and Web 2.0 technologies, which have transformed into prevalent consumer instruments for socialisation and information dissemination pertaining to commercial activities. Baghdadi (2016) contends that interactions within the value chain are defined by cooperation and participation. These

writers' definitions reveal some commonalities among them. These qualities include: using social media; facilitating participant engagement (buyers, sellers, and seekers); engaging in diverse activities (selling, purchasing, comparing, and exchanging information about objects; co-creation); and including social interactions and community elements. Han et al. (2018) assert that e-commerce and social commerce differ significantly in terms of platform scale, corporate objectives, and user engagement levels.

Social commerce emphasises the cultivation of a collaborative online environment and social relationships, in contrast to traditional e-commerce, which prioritises efficiency via personalised experiences and the incorporation of novel features. Consequently, individuals engaged in social commerce may collaborate on projects, exchange information, establish relationships, and even assume the role of the merchant themselves [25]. The two types of organisations employ different techniques to create value. For instance, in the realm of e-commerce, the corporation is responsible for developing the processes, products, and services. Conversely, social commerce is a platform accessible to all for collaborative engagement [26].

Instagram, a leading social networking site, has emerged as a significant force in social commerce. Instagram serves as an excellent platform for businesses to engage with prospective clients due to its abundance of captivating images and videos, as well as its extensive user base. Instagram has become a formidable platform for businesses to showcase their products, engage with customers, and enhance sales with features such as shoppable posts, stories, and IGTV. The platform's use of e-commerce features facilitates effortless purchasing by enabling users to discover items through organic content and get them from within the app.

Research has identified many key elements that render Instagram a potent social commerce platform. Primarily, images and videos significantly influence human behaviour. Utilising striking photos and films that effectively elucidate product information may enhance a product's attractiveness. Research indicates that consumers are more inclined to engage with and trust visual content, hence increasing the likelihood of their purchasing decisions. The images and narratives in Instagram posts evoke emotions, which is crucial for customer retention. User-generated content (UGC) on Instagram significantly influences consumer purchasing decisions. User-generated content (UGC), such as product evaluations, testimonials, and images of individuals utilising the product, serves as social proof and enhances the product's authenticity. User-generated content (UGC) significantly influences consumer purchasing decisions, as individuals tend to trust the perspectives and experiences of their peers above conventional ads. Instagram's tagging and hashtag functionalities enhance the dissemination and visibility of user-generated content (UGC), hence augmenting its potency.

The influencer market significantly contributes to Instagram's success in social commerce. Influencer marketing is individuals with substantial followings on Instagram use their profiles to endorse items to their audience. Influencers facilitate the connection between brands and consumers by acting as mediators. Individuals contemplate and

aspire to purchase items influenced by their spoken expressions. Research indicates that collaboration with influencers may enhance brand recall, foster trust, and strengthen connections, potentially resulting in increased sales. Instagram has interactive elements such as live sessions, quizzes, and polls that promote user engagement and foster a sense of community. These discussions not only engage individuals but also furnish marketers with valuable insights. Instagram promotes user interaction among individuals and with the company, fostering a devoted consumer base that feels a sense of connection. There are advantages and disadvantages associated with utilising Instagram for social commerce. Due to the platform's competitiveness and the multitude of firms present, advertisers must consistently provide innovative concepts to maintain user engagement. Organisations must be adaptive to maintain relevance and visibility amid evolving algorithms and shifting client preferences.

Instagram exemplifies the potential of social commerce. This platform effectively enhances sales and fosters consumer engagement with your company by emphasising influencer marketing, visual material, user-generated contributions, and interactive features. Businesses seeking to leverage social media for success might gain valuable insights from Instagram's functionality as a social commerce platform. Further study should continue to examine the emerging patterns and strategies inside Instagram and comparable social commerce platforms to gain a greater understanding of their influence on consumer behaviour and corporate outcomes.

The concept of social presence emerged when individuals recognised the significant impact of social cues on mediated communication. Social presence refers to the perceived significance of another individual in a mediated dialogue and the relevance of their subsequent interactions. It specifies the extent to which nonverbal signals in media communications may be perceived and reacted to, as opposed to in-person interactions [27]. Social presence is crucial in social commerce since it fosters a sense of community, enhances interaction quality, and promotes psychological intimacy [28]. Social presence in social commerce refers to the extent to which the platform facilitates users in forming amicable, intimate, and pleasurable connections with others [28]. Recent research indicates that social presence enhances online engagement and interaction, hence facilitating the growth of social commerce [29]. Social presence is a multifaceted notion that includes social context, communication, social identity, and involvement. It extends beyond individual interactions. This multimodal approach supports prior research by highlighting the necessity of a thorough assessment of social presence that incorporates both emotional and cognitive aspects [8], [29].

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### ***Result***

In social commerce, social presence encompasses interactions among users, companies, and the technology behind the social platform. This engagement amplifies users' feelings of connection and belonging inside the social commerce platform, aiding the processing and internalisation of social material on both conscious and subconscious

levels [30], [31]. In social commerce, where individuals purchase items in a discreet virtual environment, perceived trust is a critical factor influencing consumer behaviour. Mayer et al. (1995) assert that trust in a relationship is the conviction that one individual will behave in a manner beneficial to the relationship and aligned with its objectives. In social commerce, trust encompasses confidence in the platform, the merchants, and the relationships with other users. All users and stakeholders cultivate an atmosphere of reliability for making purchasing decisions. Pavlou and Fygenson (2006) assert that perceived trust is crucial in influencing consumer attitudes and behaviours in an online context, due to the heightened risks of fraud, privacy violations, and inadequate service quality.

Integrating perceived trust into the TPB model allows the indirect examination of the impact of confidence in the platform and products on altering attitudes towards repurchase intention. For example, robust platform trust in a social commerce setting may facilitate the development of favourable user attitudes. This would increase the likelihood of customers returning to the platform and engaging in its communities. The Theory of Planned Behaviour posits that individuals select behavioural alternatives depending on their anticipated outcomes. The central inquiry is whether understanding the impact of trust on customer engagement decisions, such as composing reviews, disseminating information, and conversing with other customers, can enhance the company's performance.

Trust is a crucial element in all business interactions, whether conducted in person with clients or online. Liu et al. (2011) assert that trust pertains to attributes such as reliability, honesty, and self-assurance. Trust is a concept pertaining to interpersonal relationships. Trust and risk are directly proportional to one another. The authors define vulnerability as one party's reliance on another to perform a crucial activity for the trustor, irrespective of the trustor's capacity to monitor or control that party. Establishing trust with clients has consistently been a primary objective. Nadeem et al. (2020) assert that to cultivate customer loyalty, it is essential to first gain their trust through the provision of quality products and services. When customers believe that an online store operates effectively, they are more likely to remain loyal. Although numerous studies have examined the relationship between trust and client loyalty, none have specifically addressed trust in online purchasing.

The level of confidence an individual possesses in a company or brand is contingent upon their assurance that the entity will fulfil its obligations in a business transaction. This implies that the company or brand will honour its commitments and adhere to the stipulated terms of the contract. Chen et al. (2019) identified trustworthiness as a crucial element in cultivating consumer trust, asserting that consumers are more inclined to engage with firms renowned for their honesty and integrity. Nadeem et al. (2020) demonstrated that trust is vital for conducting business online, particularly due to the considerable uncertainty associated with e-commerce, especially in social commerce. Buyers are particularly susceptible to risk and uncertainty, as they remain uncertain

about the seller's conduct [30]. In social commerce, trust is paramount due to the elevated likelihood of adverse occurrences.

Crucially, companies cannot establish authentic connections with their customers without earning their trust. Trust enables consumers to navigate socially intricate and unpredictable scenarios [30], alongside its pragmatic advantages, which include enhanced communication with customers, reduced costs, and prolonged customer lifespans. Furthermore, trust increases the propensity of customers to purchase from and endorse a company [32]. Rauyruen and Miller (2007) assert that customer loyalty and commitment stem from the trust inherent in the company relationship. Numerous studies, including those by Reichheld et al. (2000), Wang et al. (2006), Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2002), and Gilliland and Bello (2002), have corroborated this assertion.

Previous research has examined the issue of trust from many perspectives. Trust may signify several traits, such as competence, friendliness, credibility, reliability, honesty, and predictability, contingent upon the context. Grabner-Kruter and Kaluscha (2008) assert that trust encompasses a range of "hard" and "soft" characteristics. These parts are part of what trust means. The hard dimension, which is centred on functioning, comprises traits like competence, predictability, and ability. The soft dimension, on the other hand, is about how people get along with each other and encompasses traits like honesty, friendliness, trustworthiness, and integrity. Simultaneously, the present study focusses on the fundamental trust institutions linked to the social commerce platform (Lin et al., 2019). We also keep an eye on how much people trust certain parts of social media and online shopping platforms. Consequently, we have focused our research on the many entities that promote customer confidence in online financial transactions.

Unwavering dedication serves as the cornerstone for establishing enduring connections. Relationship marketing research defines commitment as a persistent desire to maintain a valued relationship and an emotional investment in a company [33], [34]. Numerous studies have characterised customer commitment as the extent to which a consumer is inclined to preserve a relationship with a brand [35]. Various scholars have provided this definition. Morgan and Hunt (1994) contend that when partners commit to one another, it increases the likelihood of prioritising the long-term benefits of the relationship over immediate gratification. Multiple studies have shown that a company's commitment to its consumers significantly affects the level of customer loyalty it enjoys [36], [37].

Customers who are committed to an exchange link are more inclined to remain loyal and exert efforts to preserve it. Such relationships serve as a robust foundation for the cultivation of loyalty. Jumaev and Hanaysha (2012) assert that devoted customers are less prone to brand switching, are willing to pay a premium for products, and are easier to retain. This holds true regardless of concerns regarding competition, company errors, or subpar service. For social commerce enterprises to thrive, they require the backing of online and brand communities. Kim et al. (2008) define "brand community commitment" as the extent of an individual's affection for and belief in an online group. Morgan and Hunt (1994) contend that members of these groups exhibit complete devotion when they



harbour positive perceptions of one another and recognise the significance of their relationship.

Kang et al. (2007) say that how dedicated members are to these groups is greatly affected by how they engage with each other on the platform. Users develop a more positive perception of the platform, the community, and, within the realm of social commerce, the marketed product or service. Research of this nature considers both behavioural and emotional commitment. "Behavioural commitment" pertains to actions undertaken for the benefit of the community, in contrast to "attitude of commitment," which includes the emotional bond linked to active community engagement. Similar to Lah et al. (2019), this study used community views as a proxy for the actual engagement of members and brands with the community. When trying to guess how active members will be in an online community, professionals look at both what the people actually do and how committed they are to the organisation. Two examples of social responsibility include helping people in your community and finding solutions to challenges for the good of others.

Maintaining customer loyalty offers numerous advantages. Companies can retain consumers and enhance relationships with existing customers through loyalty programs. These proactive measures provide businesses with various competitive benefits, including increased word-of-mouth promotion, heightened willingness to pay, and augmented sales and profits. Consequently, customer loyalty is a crucial element of success, indicating that customers will continue to purchase from and engage with a business. In the domain of online shopping, customer loyalty is particularly significant due to the plethora of choices available at the click of a button. This holds true from a brand's perspective within the framework of social commerce, which differs from other forms of e-commerce by retaining a substantial number of customers on the social commerce platform.

Electronic loyalty can be defined as the likelihood that a customer will make additional purchases from a specific online retailer. Customer loyalty is a significant indicator of success, as it demonstrates that consumers are inclined to continue their patronage. Consequently, businesses must focus on retaining existing customers while acquiring new ones. In the realm of online shopping, consumer loyalty is particularly critical due to the plethora of available options. Both brand function and social commerce are predicated on this fundamental concept. However, social commerce tends to foster greater allegiance to the social service platform compared to traditional online shopping. Digital loyalty signifies that a client is likely to revisit a website and execute substantial transactions, exemplifying loyalty in the digital landscape. The researcher subsequently applies this concept to social commerce, defining social commerce customer loyalty as an individual's propensity to engage and make future purchases via a specific social commerce platform due to positive sentiments towards that platform. This is conducted for the purposes of this study, which will investigate the implications of customer loyalty to improve practitioners' understanding of its effects.

## ***Discussion***

Social commerce is a new business model based on the growing use of social media for business transactions [38], [39]. Businesses may promote, establish customer loyalty, engage with consumers, and drive repeat purchases using social media tools including online communities, forums, and multimedia. Social commerce relies on two-way contact and cooperation between firms and customers, unlike traditional internet buying. This strengthens consumer-company bonds, according to Alves et al. (2022) and Lin et al. (2021). Social media has accelerated the distribution of company, product, and service information. Community members may be more informed thanks to new customer-business communication channels [40]. Businesses are increasingly using social media to promote client loyalty. By using Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok, companies may contact more people, develop deeper connections, initiate product conversations, and impact customer behaviour [41], [42]. Many would-be entrepreneurs think social media makes starting a business easy. Creating an online presence is easy, but maintaining it takes work to engage people, answer enquiries swiftly, and manage relationships [43], [44].

Business is being conducted on social networking sites (SNSs) rather than traditional internet commerce. Social media has transformed Malaysian businesses' client relations. In response to growing living costs, some Malaysian entrepreneurs have transformed their side enterprises into full-time occupations by selling and marketing items directly on Facebook and Instagram [45]. As digital technologies proliferated, the Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation (MDEC) developed the eUsahawan initiative in 2015 to promote digital entrepreneurship among young people and microbusiness owners. By 2023, the initiative's digital competency training will have helped over 400 thousand entrepreneurs [46].

Social commerce is revolutionising company processes and enabling greater customer interactions for all sizes of businesses. In the competitive world of online buying, Nguyen et al. (2022) and Zhou et al. (2022) say this is essential to keep customers coming back and raise sales. Molinillo et al. (2021) found that Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter are outperforming traditional e-commerce websites as Malaysia's most popular business venues. Many firms employ this internet technology. Facebook is increasingly seen as a platform for advertisements. Some Malaysian entrepreneurs offer their products on their own social media profiles. To fight rising living costs, more people are turning their part-time online occupations into full-time companies [7]. MDEC released eUsahawan on November 23, 2015. We want to help Malaysian youth and microbusinesses become successful internet entrepreneurs. Thanks to this initiative, 356,000 small business owners will have the skills to start and operate successful online businesses by May 2020. (2020 Market Research). Small enterprises, or entrepreneurship, make up most offline firms [10]. Internet entrepreneurs are focused on the customer-to-customer (C2C) business model, which has supplanted conventional online business models, according to Molinillo et al. (2019). Meilatinova (2021) reports that C2C e-commerce generates five times more revenue than B2C.

With the industry's predicted growth, Wang et al. (2021) say social commerce is a substantial income source for many firms. Social commerce relies on consumer loyalty to retain and attract clients. We don't completely grasp client loyalty and retention, even though most consumer behaviour research focus on adoption and purchase intent. Recent research suggest that brand page affordances, social presence, platform and user trust, and other variables determine social commerce loyalty [5], [8], [14]. Recent research by Kang et al. (2020) and Zhang et al. (2023) demonstrate that brand loyalty is more complex than repurchase intention and incorporates positive word-of-mouth and consumer interaction.

Businesses must understand how consumers behave online as online interactions replace face-to-face encounters. This study addresses a major need by examining social presence, repurchase intention, and customer participation. Customer satisfaction with online buying depends on a friendly, real social presence. Interactive support, personalised messaging, and engaging content can boost social commerce presence, according to Chen et al. (2022) and Wang et al. (2023). Customers who feel appreciated and part of the community are more satisfied and trustworthy. A strong social presence makes customers trust a company's transactions and consider buying from them again. Internet shopping is safer and less uncertain [3], [22], [28].

Repurchase intention, which shows the possibility that a consumer would buy again from the same company, is a key indicator of customer loyalty and long-term success. Studies (Zhou et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2021) show that social presence affects consumers' satisfaction, trust, and repurchase intent. Luo et al. (2022) found that social cues like tailored advice and interactive help boost consumer trust and repurchase. As in earlier research, digital social signals provide a more compassionate and personalised online experience, which promotes trust and repurchase [30], [32].

Customer involvement goes beyond repurchasing and includes feedback, brand forums, and lobbying. These acts are essential to attracting loyal customers who promote the company's products and services. According to the Expectation-Confirmation Theory (ECT), meeting consumer expectations enhances happiness and loyalty, making them more inclined to repurchase and connect with a brand. This model explained engagement behaviours and repurchase desire for Chen and Lin (2021) and Kang et al. (2020). According to the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), positive attitudes towards repurchase, social norms, and perceived behavioural control influence consumer engagement activities like sharing positive experiences and joining brand communities [40], [47].

Additionally, SET illuminates the relationship between involvement and consumer loyalty. SET states that people interact via social ties to optimise benefits and minimise costs. Zhou et al. (2022) and Zhang et al. (2023) found that loyal consumers who value their relationship with a firm are more likely to give positive comments and participate in community activities. This two-way street of giving and receiving deepens the business-customer relationship by nurturing an engaged community involved in the brand's success. To understand and develop digital consumer loyalty, social presence

must be studied on repurchase intentions and customer contact with the firm. This study illuminates how firms may design dynamic online experiences that increase consumer engagement and loyalty by examining these linkages. This data allows marketers to build campaigns that retain consumers and attract new ones who will be brand ambassadors and help the firm flourish.

According to Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Activity, an individual's attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control affect their behavioural intentions and actions. The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) might illuminate how consumer loyalty influences repurchase, behavioural engagement, and company promotion in social commerce. Consumer loyalty to a brand is a direct result of their emotional involvement and recurrent purchases. Consumers with a positive attitude are more inclined to buy the brand again, attend brand events, and promote it. Subjective norms – social influences that influence behavior – underpin social trade. Here, peer pressure and societal approbation are key. Customers are more inclined to support a firm if they think their friends and family do. A person's behavioural control, or how difficult the action is, is vital. Social commerce's ease of content sharing, engagement, and transaction execution may assist attain these behavioural aims. TPB helps explain how social commerce behavioural goals boost consumer loyalty.

Recently, social commerce has become a major academic field (Liu et al., 2021). One can interpret "social commerce" numerous ways. Nadeem et al. (2020) initially described it as Web 2.0 social media activity and transactions. Liu et al. (2021) mention Web 2.0 and social media as popular ways for customers to submit information about firms' behaviour. All value chain exchanges include collaboration and involvement, according to Baghdadi (2016). These writers' definitions share some similarities. These aspects include social media, engaged players (searchers, purchasers, and sellers), co-creation, product information distribution, and sales, and social connections and community functions. Han et al. (2018) found substantial differences between e-commerce and social commerce in platform scale, company goals, and user participation. Social commerce emphasises developing online communities and social interactions, whereas traditional e-commerce streamlines the purchase process with tailored experiences and better functionality. Thus, social commerce participants can collaborate, exchange expertise, make connections, and even sell [48]. Two firms utilise various methods to create money. Company products, services, and processes enable online purchases. However, social commerce promotes inclusive collaboration [29].

Instagram, a famous social media platform, has entered social commerce. Instagram is an excellent marketing tool due to its vast user base, variety of engaging photographs and videos, and ability for businesses to communicate with potential consumers. Shoppable posts, stories, and IGTV have helped firms promote, interact, and sell on Instagram. The platform's e-commerce capabilities make buying items easy by enabling users locate them through organic content and buy them in the app. Studies show that Instagram is fantastic for social commerce due of its characteristics. Visual media, especially cinema and TV, influence behaviour. Using compelling photos and

videos to explain product facts can improve a product's appeal. Research shows that visually attractive content increases sales. Instagram must make users feel something to keep them coming back.

Instagram UGC strongly influences customer purchases. UGC like reviews, testimonials, and product photographs boosts product legitimacy and social proof. User-generated content (UGC) influences consumer purchases because people trust their peers more than traditional marketing. Tagging and hashtags make Instagram's user-generated content (UGC) simpler to share and locate, improving its effectiveness. Instagram's social commerce success relies on influencers. Large-following Instagrammers can market items to their followers. Influencers may alter things by facilitating brand-customer relationships. Their statements influence shoppers' decisions. Influencers increase brand awareness, trust, and connections, which can enhance sales, according to research. Instagram's live sessions, quizzes, and polls engage and unite users. These arguments engage individuals and enlighten marketers. Instagram gets people to communicate with each other and the company, which builds brand loyalty. Instagram offers pros and cons for social commerce. Many companies compete on the network, so advertising must constantly come up with fresh concepts to keep people engaged. Enterprises must adapt to be relevant in a market where algorithms and client preferences change.

Instagram demonstrates the power of social commerce. This platform increases sales and interest in your brand through influencer marketing, visual material, user-generated content, and interactive features. Instagram's social commerce capabilities may help firms maximise social media. More study on Instagram and other social commerce platforms' developing patterns and approaches is needed to understand how they affect consumer behaviour and company outcomes.

Social presence emerged from the relevance of social cues in technology-mediated communication. The phrase "social presence" indicates a person's importance in mediated conversations and future contacts. It describes how much harder it is to read and respond to nonverbal clues in mediated interactions than in person [32], [34]. Being physically present improves interactions, psychological intimacy, and community relationships, making it vital for social commerce [37], [39]. Zhou et al. (2022) describe social presence in social commerce as the platform's ability to help users create friendly, intimate, and pleasurable relationships. Recent research show that a social presence makes online participation and communication simpler, which boosts social commerce [27], [34]. The complicated concept of social presence includes context, communication, identity, and engagement. No more alone discussions. This multimodal strategy supports past research by emphasising the necessity to evaluate social presence holistically, including emotional and cognitive factors [28], [32].

In social commerce, "social presence" refers to how users, companies, and the platform's technology interact. These interactions boost users' sense of belonging and connection on the social commerce platform, which aids conscious and subconscious processing and internalisation of social material [32], [35]. In private online shopping, or social commerce, client conduct depends on perceived trust. Mayer et al. (1995) define

trust as the expectation that one partner would behave in the relationship's best interests. Have trust in the platform, merchants, and user connections while using social commerce. Every site member contributes to a trustworthy atmosphere, which makes shoppers feel good about their purchases. Pavlou and Fygenson (2006) suggest that perceived trust influences online customer attitudes and actions due to greater fraud, privacy breaches, and decreased service quality. By adding perceived trust to the TPB model, we may indirectly explore how platform and offering faith affects repurchase intent attitudes. Site impressions may improve in social commerce settings with strong platform trust. This would encourage customers to return and participate in communities. Per the Theory of Planned Behaviour, people select between numerous actions based on their goals. The fundamental topic is whether studying how trust influences customer engagement decisions like review writing, information sharing, and customer communication may enhance company performance.

Trust is essential in every business connection, online or offline. Liu et al. (2011) link trust to honesty, self-confidence, and reliability. Trust characterises relationships. Trust and danger are linked. The authors define vulnerability as the lack of control or surveillance over a trusted third party who performs a vital duty. Earning clients' trust has always been our key focus. To establish client loyalty, Nadeem et al. (2020) recommends giving good products and services to build trust. Customers like a smooth-running e-commerce site. Many research have examined how trust impacts consumer loyalty, but none have examined how trust influences online shopping. Trusting a firm or product is believing it will keep its commercial commitments. This indicates that the firm or brand will honour its commitment. Chen et al. (2019) say being trustworthy builds customer trust. Honest and ethical firms attract more customers. Nadeem et al. (2020) show that trust is crucial for online firms due to the high level of uncertainty in e-commerce, especially social commerce. Buyers are more sensitive to risk and mistrust since they don't know the vendor's behaviour [35]. Social commerce requires trust due to the increased risk of bad results.

Companies must acquire customer confidence to form meaningful relationships. Trust helps clients negotiate difficult and unexpected social circumstances and improves consumer communication, reduces expenditures, and retains clients [36], [37]. Trust makes customers buy and promote a brand [40]. Trust between businesses and consumers drives customer loyalty and commitment, according to Rauyruen and Miller (2007). Several studies support this claim. Reichheld et al. (2000), Wang (2006), Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2002), Gilliland and Bello (2002). Previous studies have examined trust from different perspectives. Based on the scenario, trust may include competence, friendliness, credibility, reliability, honesty, and predictability. Grabner-Kruter and Kaluscha (2008) say trust has several "hard" and "soft" traits. All these are needed to trust someone. Durability depends on operational efficacy, competence, reliability, and capacity. Openness, honesty, friendliness, and integrity are "soft" attributes that affect relationships. This study examines the social commerce platform's trust institutions [41],

[42]. We also consider client confidence in social media and e-commerce platforms. Our research has focused on many categories that make internet shopping secure.

Unwavering devotion builds lasting connections. According to connection marketing study, commitment is an emotional investment in a corporation and a constant attempt to maintain a valued relationship [36], [37]. Many studies have examined customer commitment as the degree to which a consumer desires to stay with a brand, including De Wulf et al. (2001) and Palmatier et al. (2006). Many researchers support this idea. Committed couples are more inclined to choose the partnership's long-term benefits over their own short-term goals, according to Morgan and Hunt (1994). Studies suggest that customer loyalty is closely connected with a company's devotion to its customers [38]. Loyal clients strive more to maintain an exchange connection. These connections foster loyalty. According to Jumaev and Hanaysha (2012), loyal consumers are less likely to transfer brands, spend more, and are easier to maintain. This applies whether you're concerned about bad service, firm faults, or competition. Online and brand communities must help social commerce enterprises to prosper. Kim et al. (2008) describe "brand community commitment" as an individual's trust and connection to an online group. Morgan and Hunt (1994) suggest that these groupings are fully committed when members like each other and value their relationship.

Kang et al. (2007) found that platform interactions affect group commitment. Social commerce consumers see the product, platform, and community more favourably. This research examines emotional and behavioural commitment. Unlike the "attitude of commitment" that involves emotive engagement in improving society, "behavioural commitment" involves precise actions for the group's benefit. This study employed community perceptions to represent member and brand participation in the community, following Lah et al. (2019). Experts assess online community involvement based on members' behaviours and dedication to the organisation. Helping others and solving communal issues shows social responsibility. Customer retention has several benefits. Loyalty programs help businesses retain and connect with customers. These preemptive steps may raise sales, profitability, customer willingness to pay, and favourable word of mouth, giving companies an edge. To keep customers coming back for more, businesses need customer loyalty. Online shopping requires consumer loyalty due to the multitude of possibilities available with a click. The brand sees this as especially true in social commerce, where a disproportionate amount of customers stay longer than in conventional online buying.

The likelihood that an online customer would return to a store is called electronic loyalty. Customer loyalty is a key success indicator since it predicts repeat business. A corporation should prioritise client satisfaction and acquisition. Customer loyalty is important since internet buying is so varied. Social commerce and brand utility depend on this premise. Unlike traditional online buying, social commerce increases platform loyalty. A customer's inclination to return to a website and make large purchases defines digital loyalty. The researcher then discusses social commerce using this notion. Loyalty is a social commerce customer's likelihood to buy more from a platform after a positive

encounter. This study will examine client loyalty's effects to assist practitioners understand its value.

## CONCLUSION

**Fundamental Finding :** This study highlights that social commerce transcends traditional e-commerce by leveraging participatory features of social media to foster trust, commitment, and community-driven engagement, as exemplified by Malaysia's eUsahawan program. **Implication :** The findings underscore the necessity for businesses to cultivate strong social presence and perceived trust as strategic imperatives for reducing transactional risks, enhancing consumer loyalty, and driving sustainable revenue growth in increasingly competitive digital marketplaces. **Limitation :** However, the study is constrained by its contextual focus, as cultural, technological, and infrastructural differences across regions may limit the generalizability of the results. **Future Research :** Subsequent investigations should adopt cross-country comparative analyses and longitudinal approaches to explore how varying socio-cultural and technological ecosystems influence the dynamics of social presence, trust, and consumer advocacy in social commerce environments.

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