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The moderating role of user engagement on the influence of artificial intelligence on trust and satisfaction in social commerce

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the role of artificial intelligence in increasing trust and satisfaction in social commerce. The moderating role of user engagement was also explored to determine the influence of these two variables. A quantitative method employing a structural equation modeling approach was used to analyze a sample of 384 social commerce user respondents in Indonesia. The study involved two stages: a measurement model and a structural model. The results confirmed that artificial intelligence has a significant influence on trust and satisfaction, which in turn have implications for repurchase intention. User engagement also strengthened the relationship between artificial intelligence and trust, but not satisfaction. These findings suggest that optimizing artificial intelligence and enhancing user engagement are crucial strategies for digital businesses to foster trust, which in turn influences consumer repurchase intention. Increasing user engagement through engaging interactions and AI-based personalization can strengthen the influence of artificial intelligence on trust. These results provide new insights, particularly in social commerce, in positioning artificial intelligence not merely as a tool to facilitate consumers, but rather, the technology must be able to engage consumers to maximize its benefits.

Keywords

artificial intelligence; engagement; social commerce; satisfaction; repurchase intention

INTRODUCTION

Social commerce allows users to share information, create promotional content, and conduct transactions for products and services through social media platforms. (Al-Omoush and Shuhaiber, 2024). By combining the interactive and transactional functions of digital platforms, social commerce offers a more immersive shopping experience influenced by real-time recommendations and interactions (Phan, Ngo, and Phuoc, 2022). This is due to the platform's ability to deliver a more immersive and contextual user experience, where recommendations, reviews, and social interactions can influence purchase intentions in real time. Entrepreneurs leveraging social commerce must understand digital consumer behavior, content preferences, and platform-specific communication strategies while responding quickly to trends and building loyal communities through authentic content (Su and Li, 2021). The use of artificial intelligence (AI) in social commerce benefits both sellers and buyers by improving efficiency, relevance, and user enjoyment, which leads to increased satisfaction and long-term consumer relationships (Sadiq *et al.*, 2025; Srihita *et al.*, 2025).

Although prior studies have confirmed that AI can increase trust, satisfaction, and engagement in social commerce (Păuceanu, Văduva, and Nedelcuț, 2023; Al-kfairy *et al.*, 2024; Grover and Arora, 2025), limited research has examined engagement as a factor that reinforces AI effectiveness, despite its critical role in social commerce success (Mubdir *et al.*, 2025). This gap is particularly relevant in Southeast Asia, especially Indonesia, where social media use strongly influences purchasing behavior (We Are

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Social, 2025). Therefore, we need to understand the characteristics of social commerce business models that also emphasize social aspects (Cheng, 2025).

To address these issues, this study adopts the technology acceptance model and the service robot acceptance model as the theoretical foundation to examine the functional and emotional mechanisms of AI in social commerce (Al-Makhmari *et al.*, 2022; Khan, Hasan and Ali, 2023). This study answers three research questions: (1) How does AI influence trust and satisfaction? (2) How do trust and satisfaction affect repurchase intention? (3) How does user engagement moderate the effect of AI on trust and satisfaction? Accordingly, the proposed framework combines functional aspects (perceived usefulness and ease of use) and social–emotional aspects (social presence and emotional connection) to better understand consumer behavior in social commerce.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Artificial intelligence

AI in social media refers to technologies that analyze and manage interactions and content to enhance user experience (Saheb, Sidaoui and Schmarzo, 2024). (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2019) Classify AI: Analytical AI, Human-Inspired AI, and Humanized AI. Social media companies that utilize AI for image recognition are included in analytical AI, which learns from experience to inform decision-making. For example, the Best Buy company only uses its Twitter account to gain insight into customer feedback to improve its performance (Giordano *et al.*, 2024). AI in social commerce is evaluated through functional attributes, perceived usefulness, and ease of use from TAM (Aiolfi, 2023; Na *et al.*, 2023). Meanwhile, social emotional attributes such as social presence and emotional connection from sRAM (Cheng, 2025).

Marketers who can utilize artificial intelligence have been shown to increase customer trust (Cicek, Gursoy and Lu, 2025). This use of AI must be carried out ethically to encourage positive social change, thus increasing consumer trust (Celedonia *et al.*, 2021). In another context, businesses can also use AI for deepfake protection by ensuring content authenticity and protecting customer reputations (Bode, 2021). Furthermore, AI can also increase customer satisfaction (Park *et al.*, 2024; Xie, Wang and Cheng, 2024). Through real-time data collection (Nazir *et al.*, 2023)It can quickly identify customer purchasing patterns (Samara, Magnisalis and Peristeras, 2020).

H1: Artificial intelligence has a significant effect on trust

H2: Artificial intelligence has a significant effect on satisfaction

User engagement

Customer engagement is defined as a psychological experience that reflects their behavior toward a company (Brodie *et al.*, 2011). This behavior occurs due to emotional and psychological factors, regardless of the price of the product offered (Harrigan *et al.*, 2017). Their reason for engaging on social media is to stay connected with business connections and follow new brands worldwide (Aamir *et al.*, 2024). Therefore, companies need to understand the role of engagement in optimizing their marketing strategies, particularly when utilizing AI in social commerce.

While prior studies examined how AI increases engagement (Bag *et al.*, 2021a) this study argues that engagement instead shapes the effectiveness of AI. This is based on the user's level of experience interacting with AI, which can influence perceptions of usefulness and trust (Choung, David and Ross, 2023). For example, when someone accesses a website that uses AI services, it will influence the user's response during the interaction (Munaro *et al.*, 2021). For example, interacting with a chatbot that meets customer expectations is likely to result in customer satisfaction (Sanny *et al.*, 2020). However, such interactions must elicit a positive user response (Chen, Le and Florence, 2021), and customer engagement is a positive form of feedback (Li, Larimo and Leonidou, 2020; Boujena *et al.*, 2021). Customer engagement through social media also allows marketers to obtain consumer feedback and helps companies determine customer satisfaction levels (Bag *et al.*, 2021a). Therefore, we hypothesize that:

H3: User engagement moderates by strengthening the relationship between AI and trust

Table 1.
Respondent characteristics

Respondent Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	180	46.9 %
Female	204	53.1 %
Age (in years)		
29 – 26	285	74.2 %
27 – 42	99	25.8 %
Education		
Senior High School	190	49.5 %
Bachelor's Degree	140	36.5 %
Post-graduate Qualification	54	14 %
Job		
Student	235	61.2 %
Enterpreneurs	45	11.7 %
Civil Servants	36	9.3 %
Private Employee	68	17.7 %
Social Media		
Instagram	80	20.8 %
Facebook	62	16.2 %
Tiktok	242	63 %
Product categories		
Electronics	51	13.3 %
Fashion	186	48.4 %
Food & Beverages	100	26 %
Self-care	47	12.2 %

H4: User engagement moderates by strengthening the relationship between AI and satisfaction

Trust, satisfaction, repurchase intention

In social commerce, trust is considered a fundamental psychological element motivating users to engage in online behavior (Leong *et al.*, 2020). Trust is also considered a prerequisite and predictive factor for business success (Zhao, Huang and Su, 2019). Trust refers to the belief that a party will act reliably and in accordance with expected principles (Schurr and Ozanne, 1985). Increased consumer trust has implications for consumer repurchase intention (Yang *et al.*, 2019; Trivedi and Yadav, 2020). In this context, AI enables a consistent and satisfying shopping experience through a personalized system that remembers customer preferences, thus encouraging repeat purchase intention.

Furthermore, customer satisfaction on online platforms can also increase repeat purchase intention (Chiu and Cho, 2019; Nazir *et al.*, 2023). Customers are more likely to continue using AI if they are satisfied with the service provided (Kim, Myeong and Ahn, 2023). In consumption contexts, satisfaction is a psychological response formed when user expectations and prior experiences interact (Oliver, 1981). Expectation–Confirmation Theory (ECT) explains satisfaction as the result of comparing initial expectations with actual performance (Oliver, 1997). ECT argues that user satisfaction and perceived benefits are predictors of behavioral intentions, while user confirmation of expectations and perceived benefits lead to user satisfaction (Hsu, Chang and Chuang, 2015). Therefore, we hypothesize that:

H5: Trust has a significant effect on repurchase intention

H6: Satisfaction has a significant effect on repurchase intention

The conceptual model of this study is shown in Figure 1. It illustrates the proposed

Table 2.
Convergent validity

Item construct	Loadings	CR	AVE
Artificial Intelligence in Social Commerce		**0.932**	**0.507**
AI technology in social commerce will make sellers more productive	0.668		
AI technology in social commerce will improve my shopping skills	0.685		
My interaction with the AI was obvious and easy to understand	0.735		
I believe the AI easily answered my questions	0.722		
Overall, I believe the system is easy to use	0.748		
I easily understood the AI system in social commerce	0.760		
I felt a sense of human contact when interacting with the AI service (chatbot)	0.625		
I felt like I could always use AI when I needed it	0.695		
I expect to receive more personalized recommendations through products/services that use AI.	0.751		
AI-driven products/services can provide me with answers to complex questions.	0.734		
AI-enabled products/services give me easier access to information	0.770		
I feel comfortable receiving recommendations from AI	0.794		
I don't need much time to understand the recommendations provided by AI	0.741		
User Engagement on Social Media		**0.866**	**0.582**
I often consider continuing to utilize social commerce.	0.758		
Social media has sparked my interest in learning more about product brands that frequently appear on my homepage.	0.775		
I feel very positive when using social commerce.	0.800		
I feel happy when using social commerce.	0.847		
I am proud to use social commerce.	0.821		
Satisfaction		**0.839**	**0.759**
I am satisfied using my favorite social commerce app	0.891		
I enjoy using my favorite social commerce app	0.907		
Social commerce has met my expectations	0.813		
Trust		0.840	0.676
Social commerce apps have the skills and expertise to meet most customer needs.	0.828		
Social commerce apps possess the necessary skills and expertise to deliver high-quality service to both buyers and sellers.	0.864		
Social commerce apps make a reasonable effort to address most of their users' concerns.	0.862		
I am confident that purchasing on social commerce apps is a safe and secure experience.	0.729		
Repurchase intention		**0.830**	**0.745**
I will consider social commerce as my first choice for purchasing similar products in the future.	0.869		
I intend to continue purchasing products and services from social commerce platforms.	0.876		
I will return to the store I visited on social commerce to purchase similar products in the future.	0.845		

relationships among artificial intelligence, trust, satisfaction, user engagement, and repurchase intention.

METHODS

This study employed a quantitative method approach by collecting a representative sample from the research population (Mohajan, 2020). We collected data from 384 respondents from Indonesian social commerce customers who had purchased products on the platform. This sample size meets the recommended sample size (Krejcie and Morgan, 1970). Table 1 illustrates the profile of the study respondents. Purposive sampling was used, involving the selection of informants based on specific qualities related to the research phenomenon (Etikan, Musa

Table 3.
Discriminant validity Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) – Matrix

AI Social Commerce	Engagement	Intention	Satisfaction	Trust
-	-	-	-	-
0.809	-	-	-	-
0.713	0.834	-	-	-
0.697	0.900	0.802	-	-
0.768	0.858	0.872	0.809	-
0.297	0.318	0.405	0.279	0.387

Table 4.
Discriminant validity Fornell-Larcker criterion

Ai Social Commerce	Engagement	Intention	Satisfaction	Trust
0.727				
0.722	0.801			
0.628	0.702	0.863		
0.618	0.767	0.672	0.871	
0.679	0.729	0.727	0.682	0.822

and Alkassim, 2016). Therefore, this technique was suitable for ensuring a diverse range of perceptions representative of the social commerce population. The questionnaire was distributed using Google Forms to respondents by asking several questions adopted from previous research, such as Artificial Intelligence, which is formed with four dimensions, namely perceived usefulness, ease of use, social presence, and emotional connection (Venkatesh *et al.*, 2003; Castro, 2020; Toader *et al.*, 2020; Akdim and Casaló, 2023; Shoukat *et al.*, 2024), trust (Cheng, Gu and Shen, 2019), satisfaction (Hossain and Kim, 2018; Sheikh *et al.*, 2019), user engagement (Bag *et al.*, 2021b), repurchase intention (Shang and Bao, 2020). The Likert scale, strongly disagree (1) - strongly agree (5), is used to measure the extent to which respondents agree with the statements asked in the questionnaire, especially those related to their attitudes and perceptions of the experience of using AI technology in social commerce.

Data analysis

This study used SmartPLS software due to its exploratory nature and its suitability for testing the research model's hypotheses (Hair Jr *et al.*, 2021). The data analysis process employed a structural equation modeling (SEM) approach, conducted in two stages: the measurement model and the structural model (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988). The first step, the measurement model, was used to test validity through discriminant and convergent validity. Convergent validity is defined as an average variance extracted (AVE) value greater than 0.5 based on the calculation of loading factors greater than 0.5 obtained from each measurement item (Hair, Howard and Nitzl, 2020). Discriminant validity, on the other hand, requires the correlation between the root values of the AVE and the other two.

Composite reliability is also assessed for reliability testing, with a standard value of >0.7 (Hair *et al.*, 2017). The next step is the structural model, which is used to test the hypotheses by examining the p-value.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Measurement model

The first step was to test the measurement model by examining the required threshold values for discriminant and convergent validity. As illustrated in Table 2, the factor loadings, AVE, and CR values were above the required threshold values. Discriminant validity was also confirmed by observing heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) values below 0.90 (Gold, Malhotra and Segars, 2001), and

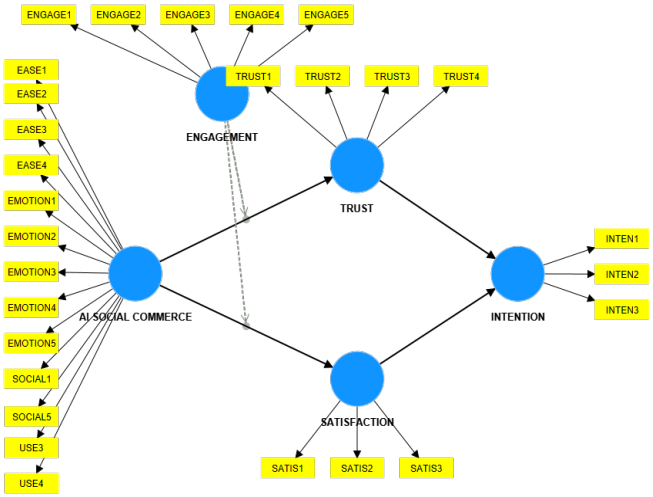

Figure 2.
Research model and measurement constructs

the square root of the AVE for each construct was greater than the square of the interconstruct correlation (Fornell and Larcker, 1981), as shown in Tables 3 and 4. These results indicate that the validity and reliability were appropriate for this study, allowing for the next stage, namely the structural model.

Structural model

Bootstrapping was performed with 384 samples using Smart PLS 4 to obtain standardized path coefficients and assess the significance of each proposed hypothesis. (Hair, Babin and Krey, 2017) Consider a significance value of P-value < 0.05. The results of the study indicate that the direct effect of the five hypotheses is supported. Details are shown in Table 5. The first hypothesis shows a positive and significant effect of artificial intelligence on satisfaction (b = 0.131, p-value = 0.009). The second hypothesis also indicates that artificial intelligence has a positive and significant effect on trust (b = 0.300, p < 0.001). The third hypothesis shows that engagement significantly moderates by strengthening of the influence of AI on trust (b = 0.105, p-value = 0.000). The fourth hypothesis shows that engagement is unable to moderate the effect of AI on satisfaction (b = 0.020, p-value = 0.474). The fifth hypothesis indicates that trust has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention (b = 0.501, p-value = 0.000). The sixth hypothesis indicates that satisfaction has a significant positive effect on purchase intention (b = 0.330, p-value = 0.000).

DISCUSSION

Theoretical implications

The findings of this study show that the use of artificial intelligence in social commerce enhances consumer trust and satisfaction, consistent with previous research emphasizing the role of chatbot services and recommendation systems in improving personalized experiences and reducing transaction uncertainty (Prentice, Dominique Lopes and Wang, 2020; Rane, Choudhary and Rane, 2024; Singh *et al.*, 2024). When users feel understood and supported, they are more likely to view the platform positively, resulting in higher satisfaction.

Other research also confirms that high consumer satisfaction and trust in using AI in social commerce can lead to increased repurchase intention. These findings align with previous research explaining that consumer trust is a key factor in building long-term relationships with customers (Miao *et al.*, 2022). Customer satisfaction plays a crucial role in creating loyalty and encouraging repeat purchasing behavior (Sun, Zhao and Wang, 2022). When customers feel satisfied and trust the service they use, they naturally feel more comfortable repurchasing, as their expectations have been met.

Another key finding reveals that engagement moderates the effect of AI on trust, but not on satisfaction. Higher interaction with AI-based features reinforces consumers'

Table 5.
Structural model

Hypothesis	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	S.D	t-statistics	p-values
AI Social Commerce -> Satisfaction	0.131	0.132	0.050	2.626	0.009
Ai Social Commerce -> Trust	0.300	0.301	0.046	6.580	0.000
Engagement X Ai Social Commerce -> Trust	0.105	0.106	0.028	3.684	0.000
Engagement X Ai Social Commerce -> Satisfaction	0.020	0.020	0.028	0.716	0.474
Trust -> Intention	0.501	0.503	0.051	9.926	0.000
Satisfaction -> Intention	0.330	0.329	0.054	6.139	0.000

trust in the platform, which supports the findings of Lee, Chan and Tang, (2024), However, engagement does not significantly strengthen satisfaction, indicating that satisfaction is influenced more by cognitive and emotional evaluations than by interaction frequency, as explained by expectation confirmation theory (Oliver, 1980). Thus, this study highlights a selective moderating role of engagement in influencing user responses to AI in social commerce.

These results support the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), where perceived usefulness and ease of use contribute to user trust and satisfaction, reinforcing technology adoption. The findings also align with the Expectation Confirmation Theory (ECT), which states that satisfaction arises when user expectations are fulfilled or exceeded. The responsiveness and personalization of AI enhance perceived value, ultimately driving repurchase intention.

Managerial implications

This study offers practical insights for social commerce managers and businesses utilizing social media to market their products, particularly in the context of leveraging. Artificial Intelligence technology to foster customer trust and satisfaction. The integration of AI through chatbot services, recommendation systems, and accurate product information promotes positive platform perceptions. Companies need to prioritize personalization and responsiveness to reduce transaction uncertainty and enhance user confidence during digital interactions. Therefore, social commerce managers must focus AI development on creating long-term value by providing intuitive and value-added customer experiences.

This study also highlights the moderating role of customer engagement, which strengthens the effect of AI on trust. Thus, social commerce companies should design interactive AI features that encourage active participation. However, engagement does not moderate the relationship between AI and satisfaction, indicating that satisfaction depends more on whether AI meets or exceeds user expectations. Therefore, managers must ensure that AI delivers both functional and emotional value to sustain positive customer experiences.

CONCLUSION

The critical question of whether user engagement in social commerce utilizing AI can impact consumer trust and satisfaction is largely answered in this study. The study argues that engagement acts as a moderator, strengthening the influence of AI on trust, but not on satisfaction. Engagement encourages consumers to directly experience the benefits of AI more intensely, thereby strengthening their positive perceptions of the reliability, credibility, and integrity of AI-based systems. However, the converse finding suggests that despite high engagement, satisfaction is more dependent on meeting expectations, consistent with Expectation Confirmation Theory, which asserts that perceived usefulness and expectation congruence with AI are key to driving technology adoption, shaping satisfaction, and strengthening customer loyalty. This study also confirms that the use of AI in social commerce can increase customer trust and satisfaction. Features such as chatbots and preference-based recommendation systems create a personalized, responsive, and informative shopping experience, reducing uncertainty

and fostering positive perceptions of the platform. Satisfied and trusting customers are more likely to make repeat purchases. These findings reinforce the importance of AI as a long-term strategy for building customer loyalty.

Limitations

While this study is insightful, it does have several limitations that can be used as input for further research. The data used in this study are primarily limited to respondents who actively use specific social commerce platforms, such as Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook. The results may not fully represent user behavior on other platforms or in different geographic regions. Second, the quantitative approach employed places greater emphasis on measuring perceptions and relationships between variables, without in-depth exploration of users' subjective experiences of interacting with AI systems, such as chatbots or automated product recommendations. Third, the variables in the research model only cover specific aspects, such as trust, satisfaction, and repurchase intention, thus failing to consider other external factors, including data privacy, user digital literacy, and regulations, that could impact the effectiveness of AI implementation.

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