

## Navigating the Social Shift: A Preliminary Study of Consumer Behavior on Malaysia's Social Commerce Platforms

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**Abstract:** The proliferation of online businesses coupled with the advancement of information and communication technologies (ICT) has led to the emergence of social commerce. A dynamic platform that not only enables commercial transactions but also plays a vital role in recruiting, establishing, and maintaining customer connections. The integration of social media platforms into e-commerce offers businesses a convenient avenue for engaging with consumers and a novel method for capturing additional sales volume through direct purchases within these networks. This seamless integration of social media platforms into current e-commerce practices has significantly increased its success. Research on the factors that affect purchase intentions in social commerce is still sparse, especially in the context of Malaysian consumers. In general, the causal model of purchase intentions on social commerce in this study aims to investigate the impact of the constructs of visibility and metavoicing on purchase intentions among Malaysian millennial consumers. Henceforth, this initial study specifically aims to evaluate the reliability and validity of the IT affordance constructs of visibility and metavoicing through rigorous assessments. At the items-construct level, the internal consistency assessment was conducted using McDonald's Omega, which is known for its robustness in measuring the reliability of multi-item constructs. At the construct level, discriminant validity and the strength of linear relationships among variables were assessed using Pearson correlation analysis. The pilot dataset gathered was analyzed with SPSS 29, and the results have validated that the predictive model achieved high levels of reliability and validity at both the item and construct levels. Furthermore, the analysis revealed that the independent variables, metavoicing and visibility, have a significant association with purchase intentions, underscoring their importance in understanding consumer behavior.

**Keywords:** *Social Commerce, Intention to Purchase, Metavoicing, Visibility and Reliability*

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### 1. Introduction and Background

With the rapid integration of social interaction in online shopping, social commerce is one innovative combination that allows customers to engage directly during purchase activities within social media environments. The emergence of social media platforms has shifted the landscape of e-commerce. The current adoption rate of Web 2.0 technologies, combined with the increasing reliance on communication and information technologies (ICT), has facilitated the integration of interactive social elements with the transactional capabilities of e-commerce, leading to its rapid rise in popularity (Baghdadi, 2013). Conversely, Ntumba (2023) explains that e-commerce is heavily dependent on leveraging social elements and other information technologies. The expansion of social commerce in Malaysia is particularly significant, as a considerable proportion of social media users are influenced by recommendations and content shared within these networks (Wok & Mohamed, 2017; Nikolinakou, 2020).

The study generally aims to investigate the purchase intention model of social commerce that underlines the influential factors that drive the intention to purchase in social commerce relative to the Malaysian market. Indeed, this preliminary study's outcome may enhance understanding of consumer behavior and insights for firms to optimize their social commerce strategies. Despite numerous studies exploring social media's effects, few have systematically compared its positive and negative impacts or proposed countermeasures. Henceforth, at the very initial stage, this study seeks to assess the reliability and validity at the items and construct level. Regarding the internal consistency of questionnaire items, measurement of constructs, namely visibility, meta voicing, and purchase intention, will be carried out using McDonald's Omega. In addition, Pearson correlation is utilized to assess the discriminant validity at the construct level as well as the relationships between variables. By doing so, it not only highlights the reliability and validity of the causal model of social media marketing in predicting consumer engagement but also explores the psychological and behavioral associations that drive consumer behavior, especially in intention to purchase in social commerce.

## 2. Literature Review

### Purchase Intention

In the evolving landscape of consumer behavior, purchase intention has become a focal point of research, revealing the intricate factors that drive consumers toward acquiring products or services. According to Picaully (2018), the strength of a person's intention is demonstrated through a series of motivated actions aimed at obtaining a desired object. This process is further enriched by the work of Permatasari & Roosinda (2020), who highlight that the motivation sparked during the purchasing process becomes a powerful and persistent force in a consumer's decision-making journey. Customers' purchase intention is the measure of the chance or probability that customers have of engaging in a purchasing behavior (Ping, 2022). Conversely, the latter indicates the degree of dedication or excitement that individuals possess towards making a transaction. Furthermore, it also elucidates the individual's inclination to procure or possess a product or service in the near or forthcoming time. Purchase intention is a crucial stage in the process of making a purchase choice, it serves as an initial indicator of the actions that individuals will carry out, sometimes referred to as consumers in this context (Chiang & Dholakia, 2003). In line with the aforementioned, Jannah & Takarini (2023) describe purchase intention as a phase where consumers plan or desire to buy a particular product, signifying a critical step in the purchasing process.

The complexity of consumer purchasing interest is underscored by Puspawati & Febrianta (2023), who argue that it should be a primary concern for marketers aiming at the factors that influence consumer decisions. Saffanah et al. (2023) echoed similarly by identifying transactional, referential, preferential, and exploratory indicators as key dimensions of purchase intention, offering a structured approach to understanding consumer behavior. Analyzing consumers' purchase intentions allows an organization to tailor their marketing strategies to better meet the needs and preferences of its target demographic, leading to increased sales and enhanced customer satisfaction (Kim, 2002; Palmatier, 2019; Rane, 2023). Purchase intentions are particularly relevant because they are widely recognized as a primary predictor of actual consumer behavior (Montano & Kasprzyk, 2015). Consequently, understanding these intentions is crucial for the success of online retailers. Identifying and examining the factors that influence purchase intentions is essential, as it enables organizations to make informed decisions about product development, pricing, and promotional strategies, thereby shaping consumer behavior and driving sales (Toha, 2023). Therefore, this study will focus on exploring purchase intention as the primary variable of interest.

### Visibility and Purchase Intention

A crucial aspect influencing purchase intention in the digital age is the concept of visibility affordance. In the context of consumers' purchasing actions on social media platforms, the term "visibility" refers to the availability of accessible entry to products along with the visibility of product information (Dong et al., 2016). Visibility is a very important factor in deciding what people will buy, especially online in places like live shopping and social media marketing. According to Dong and Wang (2018) and Shin et al. (2024), visibility in this case means how much information about the product is visible to customers and how well products are shown during live sessions. Visibility affordance, as Zhang (2022) notes, refers to the visual accessibility and attractiveness of live broadcast content, which helps consumers form a functional perception of goods. This is particularly relevant in livestream e-commerce, where the visualization of shopping scenes and sales processes can lead to impulsive purchasing decisions. Moreover, according to Chen (2024), visibility is closely related to perceived diagnosticity, which is the ability of consumers to correctly judge product quality and fit according to the information given. It has been shown that higher perceived diagnosticity makes people more likely to buy, especially older people who may value careful evaluation before making purchases. Then visibility, whether it's through live demos or interesting material on social media, is a key factor in getting people to want to buy on all digital platforms.

Based on the previous literature, therefore, the following hypothesis was formulated:

**H1:** *Visibility has a positive relationship with purchase intention in social commerce platforms.*

### Metavoicing and Purchase Intention

Metavoicing on social media, which involves adding opinions through likes, comments, and ratings on others' content (Liu-Thompkins et al., 2020) plays a significant role in shaping online discussions and generating extensive qualitative data (Waxa & Gwaka, 2021). The accessibility of metavoicing capabilities can simplify the

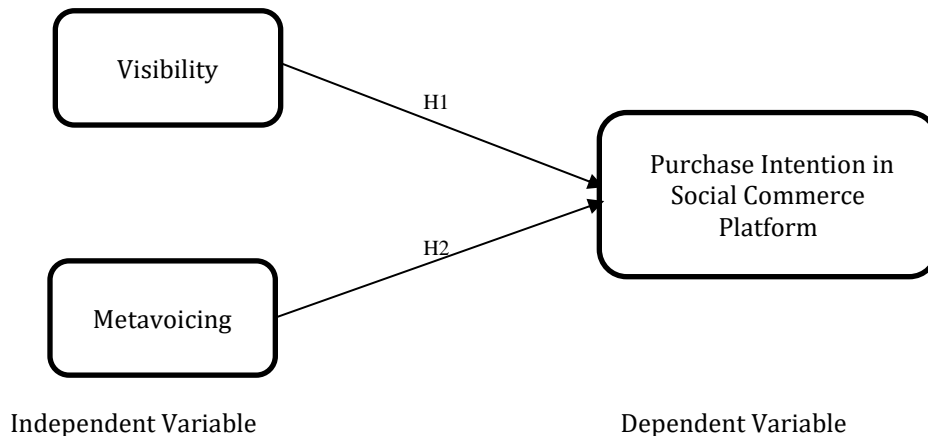
process for customers to locate important product information (Fengliang & Jianhong 2021), enhancing their decision-making. Furthermore, Nurhapizah (2024) highlights that metavoicing allows customers to directly engage with streamers in chat rooms, where immediate responses to questions can be provided, ultimately reducing consumer uncertainty about the products. Dong et al. (2016) describe metavoicing affordance as the extent to which social commerce technology allows consumers to express their opinions about a product. Furthermore, consumers can continue interacting with the seller after the seller has responded to their prior query, demonstrating that metavoicing allows communication to continue (Sun et al., 2019). As a result, metavoicing enables merchants to make a welcoming first impression. This can assist consumers focus their attention on their present live shopping activities and create an immersive experience (Sun et al., 2019). A study by Saffanah (2023) indicates how metavoicing affordance in live purchasing on Instagram can improve engagement. Buyers comment on the online social commerce platform through a two-way interaction with sellers. This informal conversation enables the exchange of product information and solving transactional concerns. Aggregating various thoughts and ideas through an interactive discourse focused on the metavoicing capability raises the level of engagement between buyers and sellers (Sun, 2019). This interaction, often seen in live-stream shopping environments through chat rooms or bullet screens, fosters a closer connection between customers and sellers, enhancing trust and ultimately driving purchase intention Zhou et al. (2022). Collectively, these factors provide a comprehensive understanding of the elements shaping consumer behavior, offering valuable insights for marketers seeking to optimize their strategies in a rapidly evolving digital marketplace. Based on the previous literature, therefore, the following hypothesis was formulated:

**H2:** *Metavoicing has a positive relationship with purchase intention in social commerce platforms.*

### Research Framework

Figure 1 shows the proposed framework for this study. The two independent variables are visibility and metavoicing. Meanwhile, the dependent variable is purchase intention. The research framework also displays the hypothesized relationships proposed in the study.

**Figure 1: Framework**



### 3. Research Methodology

The primary objective of this study is to assess the reliability and validity of the social commerce purchase intention model as well as the association between the independent variables of visibility and metavoicing on the dependent variable, namely purchase intention. This study uses a mono-method quantitative study, which means that it will be utilizing only one data type, which is gathered through a research instrument of questionnaire survey. This study is cross-sectional, where all data are gathered at once, and the research design adopted is based on predetermined measurements using structured and validated data. The survey instrument will be distributed through an electronic platform based on a purposive sampling technique via Google Forms to all millennial users in Johor, Malaysia. Millennials, generally characterized as those born between 1981 and 1996, constitute a substantial demographic on social media sites (Pew Research Center, 2018). They are recognized for their digital proficiency, having matured alongside the emergence of the internet, mobile technology, and social networking (McHaney, 2023). The characteristic respondents for this study are the

millennial social media users located in Johor who don't have experience shopping online through social media platforms. Respondents that were chosen must have at least one social media account. Additionally, an initial question will screen respondents to confirm that they have never made purchases using social media accounts, ensuring their suitability for this study and the quality of the results obtained. A few sample size recommendations for pilot studies were found based on the behavioral study research methodology. In a discussion of exploratory and pilot studies, Isaac and Michael (1995) proposed that "samples with number of sample (N) between 10 and 30 have many practical advantages", including simplicity, simple calculation, and the capacity to test hypotheses. Hill (1998) also stated similarly that pilot surveys in research should involve a range of 10 to 30 participants. Therefore, for this study, a sample of 30 respondents was used for analysis.

### Face Validity

The questionnaires adopted in this study were based on previous research conducted by Dong and Wang (2018), Chandruangphen (2022) and Weismueller (2020). Before conducting the study, it was essential to ensure the validity of the instrument being used. At the initial stage of item confirmation, a subjective evaluation was crucial to determine whether the items appeared to assess what they were intended to measure (Churchill, 1979; Schriesheim, Powers, Scandura, Gardiner, & Lankau, 1993). This evaluation involved assessing face validity, which Fink (1995) defined as "the degree to which an instrument appears to have been developed in a way that makes it likely that it would be understood and completed by its intended respondents." To ensure the instrument accurately detected what it was supposed to test, the researcher sought the expertise of four specialists in the areas of marketing, scale development, and bilingual questionnaire design, with options in both English and Bahasa Melayu. Additionally, the outcome of the validity assessment (Face validity) on the instrument used in this study has demonstrated an appropriate level of face validity and reinforced the assumption of items-construct level validity for the study.

## 4. Results

### Descriptive Analysis Results

The study collected 30 survey questionnaires, which Hill (1998) and Michael (1995) consider satisfactory. According to the information, the majority of millennial respondents (80%) were female, with male respondents representing 20%. In terms of age distribution, the majority of respondents were 33-37 years old and 28-32 years old, with 36.67 percent. Furthermore, 16.67% of respondents are between the ages of 38 and 42, with 10% falling inside that age range. Tables 1, 2, and 3 below represent the summary of descriptive analysis outcomes for each construct namely visibility, metavoicing and intention to purchase.

**Table 1: Descriptive statistic for visibility**

Visibility	Mean	Std Dev
The online social media platform provides me with a detailed picture of the product.	3.967	0.850
The online social media platform makes the product attributes visible to me.	3.600	1.00
Online social media platforms make information about how to use products visible to me.	3.967	0.765
Online social media platforms help me to visualize products like in the real world.	3.833	0.747
I have seen others using online social media platforms.	4.433	0.626

The descriptive analysis of items measuring the visibility construct indicates that respondents generally view online social media platforms positively regarding their ability to provide product information. Overall, for visibility, the mean scores for the items range from 3.600 to 4.433, indicating a high level of agreement and considerably low standard deviation, ranging from 0.626 to 1.00, reflecting low to moderate response variability.

**Table 2: Descriptive statistic for meta-voicing**

<b>Metavoicing</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std Dev</b>
Online social media platform helps me to visualize products like in the real world.	4.067	0.868
Social media platform allows me to react to sellers' feedback on products.	4.167	0.747
Social media platform allows me to share sellers' opinions about products.	4.267	0.691
Social media platform allows me to join in sellers' communal discussions on products.	3.767	0.858

For metavoicing, the mean scores range from 3.767 to 4.267, demonstrating strong agreement among participants. The standard deviations, from 0.691 to 0.868, indicate low to moderate variability in responses. This suggests that while there is a consensus on the effectiveness of meta-voicing features, there is some variation in individual experiences.

**Table 3: Descriptive statistics for Purchase Intentions**

<b>Purchase Intentions</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std Dev</b>
I can imagine buying (products/services) through social media platforms.	3.900	0.8544
The next time I buy (products/services), I will consider this social media platform.	4.000	1.017
I am very interested in buying (products/services) from social media platform	4.000	1.017
I will consider the social media platform as my first shopping choice.	3.733	1.112
I intend to purchase products or services through social media platforms.	4.067	0.868
I expect that I will purchase the product or services through the social media platform	3.700	1.022

According to Table 3, the mean scores for Purchase Intention items range from 3.700 to 4.067, showing generally high purchase intentions among participants. The standard deviations, ranging from 0.854 to 1.112, indicate some variability in these intentions. Overall, while there is a strong inclination towards purchasing, individual responses vary to a moderate extent.

**Internal consistency**

To ensure the robustness of the study model, both reliability and validity must be established before conducting the main analysis. Validity analysis assesses how well a test meets its intended purpose and application, extending beyond basic quantitative data analysis (Riege, 2003). Verifying item-construct reliability is essential before proceeding with field or empirical studies, and internal consistency should be evaluated using actual field data (Weigle, 2007). O'Neill (2003) emphasizes that ensuring reliability at the item-construct level is an ongoing process involving method analysis, outcome evaluation, and continuous refinement.

Reliability is crucial for test quality, reflecting the consistency and replicability of results across different situations (Hajjar, 2018; Aven, 2012; Leech, Barrett, & Morgan, 2014). High reliability is achieved when a measure consistently yields the same results under stable conditions (Neil, 2009). Although Cronbach's alpha is commonly used for internal consistency measurement, this study employs McDonald's Omega, which is considered a more accurate metric. Research indicates that Omega provides a better measure of internal consistency compared to alpha and other alternatives (Zinbarg et al., 2005; Raykov, 1997; Zinbarg, Yovel, Revelle, & McDonald, 2006; Graham, 2006; Zinbarg, Revelle, & Yovel, 2007; Revelle & Zinbarg, 2009). Omega minimizes the risk of overestimating or underestimating reliability. Cronbach's alpha is reliable only if the assumptions of the tau-equivalent model are met (McDonald, 1981; Green et al., 1977; Shevlin, Miles, Davies, & Walker, 2000; Revelle & Zinbarg, 2009), making it less suitable for scales measuring distinct areas or processes (Cronbach & Shavelson, 2004).

**Table 4: Internal Consistency Assessment**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Mc Donald Omega</b>
Visibility	0.738
Metavoicing	0.832
Purchase Intention	0.948

Referring to Table 4 above, the reliability values for the variables range from 0.738 for visibility to 0.832 for metavoicing, with purchase intention reaching 0.948. These values demonstrate that the item-construct levels



have achieved an acceptable reliability coefficient, all exceeding the 0.7 threshold. According to the literature, McDonald's Omega values should surpass 0.70 to ensure acceptable internal consistency (Alpar, 2014; Soysal, 2023).

**Pearson Correlation Results**

Correlational analysis was used to determine the relationships between the variables, which further advances to determine the discriminant validity. As for discriminant validity assessment, the analysis outcome of Pearson correlation analysis advanced the validity assessment of discriminant validity at the construct level. This validity assessment focuses on the correlations between independent variables. Referring to Table 5, the result from the Pearson correlation confirmed that the constructs employed in this research model were distinct as the correlation between independent variables does not exceed  $r=0.7$ , thus achieving discriminant validity.

In addition, the Pearson correlation results can determine the relationship between visibility and metavoicing (independent variable) and purchase intention (dependent variable). As indicated in Table 5 below, the Pearson correlation coefficients showed the association between independent variables and dependent variables was a significant positive relationship. The correlation between visibility and intention to purchase is  $r=0.692$  and  $sig.<0.001$ ; this shows a moderately significant relationship (Cohen, 1978). On the other hand, the correlation between meta voicing and intention to purchase was explicated likewise with coefficient  $r=0.563$  and  $sig. <0.001$ . The analysis reveals a strong positive correlation between visibility and purchase intention (Cohen, 1978).

**Table 5: Summary of Pearson Correlation Analysis**

	Purchase Intention	Visibility	Metavoicing
Purchase Intention	1	.692**	.563**
Visibility	.692**	1	.675**
Metavoicing	.563**	.675**	1

*Sig 1-tailed\*\* <0.01*

**5. Conclusion**

The analyses confirmed that the scale items and constructs used in the model demonstrated acceptable reliability and validity. McDonald's Omega values exceeding 0.7 across all constructs validated the internal consistency and robustness of the measurement tools. Additionally, face validity was reinforced through expert evaluation, further supporting the validity of the measurement items. The discriminant validity assessment ensured that the constructs were distinct from one another, confirming the model's validity and suitability for further empirical study.

The preliminary study also explored the direct relationships between the independent variables—visibility and metavoicing—towards purchase intention. Pearson correlation analysis revealed that visibility has the strongest correlation with purchase intention, indicating that higher visibility is strongly associated with increased purchase behavior. Metavoicing showed a moderate positive correlation with purchase intention, suggesting that engagement in metavoicing activities positively impacts purchase intent. Furthermore, the strong positive correlation between visibility and metavoicing highlights their interconnectedness within consumer behavior.

These findings support the hypothesis that both visibility and metavoicing are significant predictors of purchase intention, with visibility having a more dominant effect. The results underscore the importance of enhancing visibility and fostering metavoicing to drive consumer engagement and purchase behavior. The reliable measurement of these constructs, validated through McDonald's Omega, affirms the questionnaire's effectiveness in capturing the nuances of consumer behavior. The positive correlations identified suggest that businesses and marketers can strategically leverage visibility and metavoicing to influence purchase intentions, potentially leading to increased sales and customer loyalty. This study offers valuable insights for both academic research and practical marketing applications.

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**Appendix 1**

**Visibility**

- | No | Items   |
|----|---|
| 1  | The online social media platform provides me with a detailed picture of the product.    |
| 2  | The online social media platform makes the product attributes visible to me.            |
| 3  | Online social media platform makes information about how to use products visible to me. |
| 4  | Online social media platform helps me to visualize products like in the real world.     |
| 5  | I have seen others using online social media platforms.                                 |

**Metavoicing**

- | No | Items   |
|----|---|
| 1  | Online social media platform helps me to visualize products like in the real world.       |
| 2  | The social media platform allows me to react to sellers' feedback on products.            |
| 3  | The social media platform allows me to share sellers' opinions about products.            |
| 4  | The social media platform allows me to join in sellers' communal discussions on products. |

**Purchase Intention**

- | No | Items   |
|----|---|
| 1  | I can imagine buying (products/services) through social media platforms.              |
| 2  | The next time I buy (products/services), I will consider this social media platform.  |
| 3  | I am very interested in buying (products/services) from social media platforms.       |
| 4  | I will consider the social media platform as my first shopping choice.                |
| 5  | I intend to purchase products or services through social media platforms.             |
| 6  | I expect that I will purchase the product or services through social media platforms. |

*Source : Dong & Wang (2018) ; Chandruangphen (2022) & Weismueller (2020)*