

# The Impact of Online Social Capital in The Context of Social Commerce on Consumer Purchase Intention

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**Abstract.** This study aims to examine the influence of online social capital on consumer purchasing interest in the context of social commerce. The urgency of this study lies in the increasing number of active users on social media every year, making this social commerce trend increasingly growing, because more and more business actors are offering their products and services through social media. This study employs a quantitative approach, focusing on primary data from a survey of Padang State Polytechnic students as the population. The data is processed using the Structural Equation Model (SEM) to test the hypothesis with the SmartPLS 4.0 program. The results of the study indicate that online social capital has a positive effect on consumer purchasing interest. Through these findings, it is hoped that it will contribute to business actors who have used social commerce in their marketing strategies, so that they can take the right policies through the online social capital they have from the experience gained from consumers, and it is recommended for business actors who have not used social commerce to be able to use it along with the massive use of social media today

**Keywords:** Online Social Capital, Purchase Intention, Social Commerce

## INTRODUCTION

The emergence of social media has significantly changed the landscape of information sharing, consumption, and marketing. According to data from the Indonesia Digital Report 2023, internet usage in Indonesia has increased every year, although there are times when the increase is not too significant and fluctuates. As of January 2023, 77% of Indonesia's population used the internet, with 60.4% actively engaging in social media [1]. The growing number of active users each year has made the internet a medium for e-commerce to interact with consumers by utilizing features such as Facebook, Twitter, and others to sell products and services. This phenomenon has led to the emergence of the term "social commerce."

The social commerce trend has sparked significant growth in the display of advertisements and product sales on social media. This consistent and sometimes unlimited usage has created a phenomenon that cannot be ignored in the digital world. According to the Gross Merchandise Value (GMV) report for the e-commerce industry, Indonesia is predicted to reach \$104 billion by 2025 [1]. Despite the widespread use of e-commerce platforms, a significant market potential remains from the fragmented communities on social media.

Social commerce is a combination of electronic commerce forms that integrate components of social media, and its core concept involves all kinds of commercial activities using online social connections [2]. Social interaction is a crucial issue on social media [3]. Interacting with friends can accumulate social capital, defined as the resources available to individuals through their social interactions [4]. The ability to form and maintain relationships is a prerequisite for the accumulation of social capital [5]. Research expands on this idea by emphasizing the importance of developing social networks, as social capital arises from investment in social relationships with expected returns. Therefore, social capital is an essential element of social media user behavior [6].

Social capital is associated with various types of relationships, including interpersonal and organizational networks. Initially, social capital was used in research related to community relations. It has been shown to be a pool of the best resources accumulated and created through everyday interactions between individuals and groups. The nature of social capital in the structure of relationships between individuals is the most critical factor in implementing this concept in social phenomena. The theory of social capital explains social resources that can bring together certain elements in a social network. Additionally, social capital is an aggregate resource that can create value. It not only fosters mutual understanding between individuals but also compels communities to achieve common goals [9].

The widespread adoption of information technology and the development of social media have eliminated the boundaries of time and space in the purchasing world. Social media also allows consumers to view other consumers' purchasing experiences anytime and anywhere, while facilitating communication and interaction with others. Research by Trudeau and Shobeiri [11] demonstrates that strengthening consumer social interaction is an effective way for companies to create a superior brand experience. Nowadays, more brands recognize the importance of social interaction and are building their own social platforms to meet the interactive needs between brands and consumers, as well as among consumers, thereby increasing user engagement and consumer purchase intention [11].

Consumer purchase intention is a personal behavior that can be influenced by information and emotional processes impacted by various pieces of knowledge. One of the core factors influencing knowledge exchange is social interaction [12]. Most consumers are influenced by social interaction when making purchases [13], and the closer the social interaction between consumers, the stronger the consumers' awareness of relevant information and their willingness to buy [14, 15, 16].

The development of social capital on social media platforms has attracted the attention of researchers in the past decade. From a theoretical perspective, the research highlights the importance of online social capital and the fact that online communities create a new context due to their accessibility and fluidity, necessitating further research and presenting gaps in the literature. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the impact of online social capital on consumer purchase intention within the context of social commerce.

This research is conducted with the aim of testing the influence of online social capital on consumer purchase intention in a new context, namely social commerce, and formulating practical implications for business practitioners using marketing through digital platforms, as well as for academics based on the model and research variables (online social capital and consumer purchase intention) that have been tested.

The term “social commerce” was first introduced in 2005 by Yahoo when Yahoo! launched Shoposphere, the earliest service for social commerce. The “Select List” feature allowed users to comment on and review product listings [17]. Since social commerce leverages social media as a platform to combine shopping activities and social networking, electronic word of mouth (eWOM) can be a crucial element in social commerce. Social commerce utilizes Web 2.0 technologies such as social media to facilitate social interactions in receiving or providing shopping information, including experiences, eWOM, and user-generated content [18, 19]. Social commerce, which is part of e-commerce, adopts Web 2.0 technologies and infrastructure to support online interpersonal interactions and contribute to acquiring and exchanging shopping experiences. The trend of social commerce has rapidly developed, as evidenced by data showing that the revenue generated by social commerce grew by approximately \$30 billion worldwide in 2015 [20].

Social commerce involves the transfer of product information (i.e., receiving and giving), which is assumed to increase when users are highly engaged with social media. This aligns with the research by Alhidari [21], which examined the purchasing decision-making process, finding that social media engagement positively influences purchase intention, mediated by eWOM. The results indicate that users are more likely to share or seek shopping information when they spend more time on social networking sites (SNS), either for browsing or participating.

This research is a development of previous studies. The developments include: a) the use of the online social capital variable, which is directly connected to purchase intention; b) the dimensions of the online social capital variable tested in relation to current marketing and market conditions, specifically social commerce.

Online Social Capital. Social capital refers to the potential tangible and intangible resources a person can obtain through their social relationships. Bourdieu [22] and Coleman [23] specifically argued that social capital is not an active resource, but rather a passive one that can be activated when a need arises. Since its introduction, social capital has been further clarified. According to Lin [24], social capital consists of three components. The first is the resources available in a person's social network. The second is the accessibility of those resources. The third is the ability to actually utilize those resources. All three criteria must be met for social capital to exist.

This concept later evolved, distinguishing social capital into two dimensions: bridging and bonding. Bridging social capital refers to new information or worldviews gained from weak ties, which may be broad but lack depth. In

contrast, bonding social capital is binding, providing emotional support and mobilizing resources that can only be obtained from strong personal relationships [25].

The difference between online and offline social capital focuses on how resources are obtained through connected individuals. Online social capital means that people are connected via ICT, while offline social capital means they are connected directly [25]. The use of online network platforms to build and maintain relationships is very different from face-to-face interactions [26].

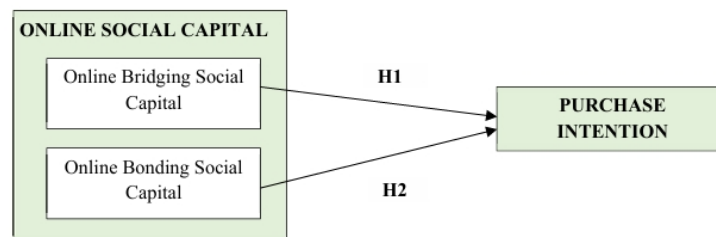
The concept of having social capital through relationships with others using information communication technology (ICT) is called online social capital (OSC). Early social capital research aimed to determine whether ICT helped or hindered the development of social capital. While earlier research found that online connections were insufficient, as more people started using ICT—especially through social media—evidence increasingly supported how ICT could be used to gather and obtain information that bridges and bonds social capital resources [27], which in turn impacts the emergence of consumer purchase intentions.

Purchase Intention describes the extent to which consumers form behavioral intentions to purchase a product or brand, considered one of the main objectives of brand interaction through social media [10]. Social capital theory has been studied as a unique concept influencing purchase intention [14, 28], and is regarded as one of the important resources for increasing consumer purchase intention [29, 30]. Online purchase intention is defined as the customer’s desire to purchase products or services through a website. In this sense, online shopping is the final result of several e-commerce signals for customers, due to ease of use, shorter journeys, and convenient payment. The tendency for online shopping is growing among customers [31].

When consumers acquire social capital in the relational dimension of an online brand community, they will better recognize the brand community and expect to maintain long-term relationships with the brand, significantly increasing the likelihood of repeat purchases. Previous studies also show that strong social interaction ties can influence consumers' purchase intentions. Brands are more likely to exert a strong influence on Generation Z’s purchase intentions through narratives [32].

In a competitive and ever-changing business environment, where retail power and customer demand levels continue to increase, developing long-term relationships with customers is a crucial requirement for product success and sustainability in the market. Customers are targeted by mass media during this period, and the impact of this media has changed the way consumers think, feel, and what they need. Market researchers and organizations spend a lot of time annually studying customers to determine their decisions and behaviors. Analyzing customer purchase intention behavior is essential for determining customers’ behavioral intentions [33].

Based on the literature review as explained in the previous subsections, the research model is illustrated in the **FIGURE 1**.



**FIGURE 1.** Research Model

Research Hypotheses are

H1: *Online Bridging Social Capital has a positive and significant effect on consumer Purchase Intention*

H2: *Online Bonding Social Capital has a positive and significant effect on consumer Purchase Intention*

## METHODS

The objects of this research are online social capital (OSC) and purchase intention (PI), with the unit of analysis being consumers who have transacted via social commerce. The research was conducted from May to December 2024.

The research data was collected from the population of Politeknik Negeri Padang (PNP) students. Since the exact number of students using social commerce was unknown, the Lemeshow formula (1997) was used to calculate the required data. Based on the calculations, a minimum of 96 respondents were required. The sample was taken using purposive sampling, meaning that samples were selected based on specific criteria. The respondents' criteria for this research were those who had made transactions on social commerce platforms.

The data collection technique used in this research was a survey method through a questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of four parts: (1) respondent demographics, (2) questions related to social commerce usage, (3) questions concerning online social capital and consumer purchase intention. The questions were designed using both closed and open-ended questions. Closed questions employed a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5, with 1 representing strong disagreement and 5 representing strong agreement. Open-ended questions were aimed at gathering respondents' opinions freely and as explanatory responses to the indicators being measured.

The designed questionnaire was first tested with a small sample to validate and ensure reliability. Validity was tested using factor analysis, and reliability was tested using Cronbach's alpha method. The selection of this method was based on the fact that the data being tested was on an interval scale, and according to Sekaran [34], the Cronbach's Alpha Test is the most popular and reliable for testing internal consistency. The closer the Cronbach's alpha value is to 1, the higher the internal consistency reliability. The minimum alpha coefficient standard used according to Guilford is  $\geq 0.5$  [35], meaning a Cronbach's alpha reliability score of  $> 0.60$  indicates that the instrument is reliable, and if the reliability score is  $< 0.60$ , the instrument is not reliable.

The collected data was analyzed using various tests, including model measurement tests with validity and reliability assessments. The model and hypotheses were tested using the Structural Equation Model (SEM). Convergent validity was evaluated based on the principle that the measurement of a construct should have a high correlation. [36,37]. Reliability testing was conducted to demonstrate accuracy. In SmartPLS, reliability is assessed through the values of Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha, both of which should be greater than 0.7 [36,37].

The evaluation of the structural model or inner model aims to predict the relationships between latent variables. The inner model is evaluated by examining the percentage of variance explained, as indicated by the R-squared values for the endogenous latent variables [36,37].

To test the hypotheses and evaluate the research model, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis was conducted with the help of SmartPLS version 4.0 software. The results of this analysis will provide answers to the research questions formulated in this study. Furthermore, path coefficients will be obtained, allowing the relationships and influences between specific independent variables and their dependent variables to be understood. A hypothesis is accepted if the T-value  $>$  T-table value, with the condition that the degree of freedom (df) = n-2 [38].

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### RESULTS

#### Instrument Testing

Convergent validity is evaluated through the Average Variance Extracted (AVE). The AVE values confirm that all indicators are valid as they exceed the minimum threshold value of 0.5 (Hair et al., 2018). The variables indicate that each indicator for the variables is valid. The indicator validity is also shown by outer loadings greater than 0.5, as seen in **TABLE 1**.

**TABLE 1.** Outer Loading and AVE

Construct	Item	Outer loadings	AVE
<i>OBDS</i>	OBDS1	0.755	0.613
	OBDS2	0.817	
	OBDS3	0.759	
	OBDS4	0.787	
	OBDS5	0.794	
<i>OBNS</i>	OBNS1	0.787	0.663
	OBNS2	0.822	
	OBNS3	0.847	

	OBNS4	0.849	
	OBNS5	0.821	
	OBNS6	0.802	
	OBNS7	0.788	
	OBNS8	0.794	
<b>PI</b>	PI1	0.822	0.74
	PI2	0.901	
	PI3	0.856	

Respondents' perceptions of the Online Bridging Social Capital variable were measured with five items, while the Online Bonding Social Capital variable was measured with eight items. After testing the validity, both variables were found to be valid, with values above 0.7 (Hair et al., 2019), and AVE values greater than 0.5. The same results were also found for the Purchase Intention variable, which was measured with three items. All questions were found to be valid with AVE values greater than 0.5.

### Discriminant Validity

This study used the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) criterion to test discriminant validity. TABLE 2 shows that the HTMT ratio for all constructs is less than 0.9. Therefore, each construct is unique and captures a phenomenon that is not represented by other constructs in the model

**TABLE 2.** Discriminant Validity: Heterotrait-Monotrait Ration (HTMT)

	<b>OBDS</b>	<b>OBNS</b>	<b>PI</b>
<b>OBDS</b>			
<b>OBNS</b>	0.795		
<b>PI</b>	0.587	0.592	

### Reliability Test

Reliability was tested using SmartPLS version 4.0 software. The results show that Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability for each construct are between 0.80 and 0.90. According to Hair et al. (2018), Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values between 0.80 and 0.90 are considered highly reliable and acceptable. Therefore, all constructs in the research model were found to have a high level of reliability (TABLE 3).

**TABLE 3.** Internal Consistency Reliability

	<i>Cronbach's alpha</i>	<i>Composite reliability (rho_a)</i>	<i>Composite reliability (rho_c)</i>
<b>PI</b>	0.825	0.839	0.895
<b>OBDS</b>	0.843	0.848	0.888
<b>OBNS</b>	0.928	0.938	0.94

### Variance Analysis (R<sup>2</sup>) or Determination Test

Variance Analysis (R<sup>2</sup>) or Determination Test is used to determine the extent of the influence of independent variables on the dependent variable. The value of the coefficient of determination can be shown in TABLE 4

**TABLE 4.** R-Square

	<i>R-Square</i>	<i>R-Square Adjusted</i>
<b>PI</b>	0.356	0.344

Based on the R-square value in TABLE 4, it shows that Online Social Capital can explain the variability of the competitive advantage construct by 34.4%, while the remaining 65.6% is explained by other constructs outside the scope of this study.

### Hypothesis Testing

In testing the hypotheses, this study uses several criteria that must be met, namely Original Sample, T-statistics, and P-values. Based on the literature review as explained in the previous subsections, the research hypotheses for the research model illustrated in Figure 5 are as follows:

H1: Online Bridging Social Capital has a positive and significant effect on consumer Purchase Intention

H2: Online Bonding Social Capital has a positive and significant effect on consumer Purchase Intention

**TABLE 5.** Hypothese Testing

Hypotheses	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
OBDS->PI	0.332	0.334	0.117	2.850	0.002
OBNS->PI	0.317	0.326	0.109	2.914	0.002

TABLE 5 shows the hypothesis testing using Bootstrapping. The research results indicate a significant relationship between Online Bridging Social Capital and Purchase Intention. The testing results show a t-statistic value of 2.850 for the relationship between Online Bonding Social Capital and Purchase Intention. The Original Sample estimate is positive at 0.332, indicating that the direction of the relationship between Online Bonding Social Capital and Purchase Intention is positive; that is, when Online Bonding Social Capital increases, Purchase Intention will also increase. Based on these results, the t-statistic is significant, as it is greater than 1.96, with a p-value of 0.002, thus the first hypothesis is accepted.

For the second hypothesis, the testing results show a t-statistic value of 2.914 for the relationship between Online Bonding Social Capital and Purchase Intention, with a p-value of 0.002. Based on these results, the second hypothesis is also accepted.

### Research Model

The collected data were processed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis with the assistance of SmartPLS version 4.0 software. The data processing resulted in a model as shown in FIGURE 2.

## DISCUSSION

The results of this study indicate that both dimensions of online social capital—Online Bridging Social Capital (OBDS) and Online Bonding Social Capital (OBNS)—positively and significantly affect consumer purchase intention (PI) in the context of social commerce. This supports the hypotheses proposed in the study.

### Online Bridging Social Capital (OBDS)

The positive and significant relationship between OBDS and PI demonstrates that weak ties in online social networks, such as interactions with acquaintances or distant connections, can provide access to new information and opportunities, thereby influencing purchase decisions. This finding aligns with the research of Putnam [4] and Kim et al. [14], who emphasized the role of bridging social capital in exposing individuals to diverse perspectives and resources, thus affecting their behavior, including purchase intentions.

### Online Bonding Social Capital (OBNS)

The significant effect of OBNS on PI shows that strong ties in online networks, characterized by close relationships such as family and friends, play an essential role in reinforcing trust and emotional support. This, in turn, increases the likelihood of consumers making purchases through social commerce. This finding corroborates the results of previous studies, including those by Ellison et al. [6] and Bourdieu [22], which highlight the importance of bonding social capital in fostering a sense of community and shared values, which can lead to higher purchase intention.



The findings suggest that consumers' decisions to purchase products through social commerce are not only influenced by the availability of information but also by the quality and nature of their online social connections. Social interactions on platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter provide opportunities for consumers to learn from the experiences of others, seek recommendations, and make informed purchasing decisions. This is particularly important in the digital era, where consumers are inundated with vast amounts of information, and social capital serves as a filter to help them navigate the purchasing process.

These results provide practical implications for businesses engaged in social commerce. To optimize marketing strategies, companies should focus on building and maintaining both weak and strong social ties with their customers. By fostering a sense of community and trust within their online platforms, businesses can increase consumer engagement and ultimately drive purchase intention.

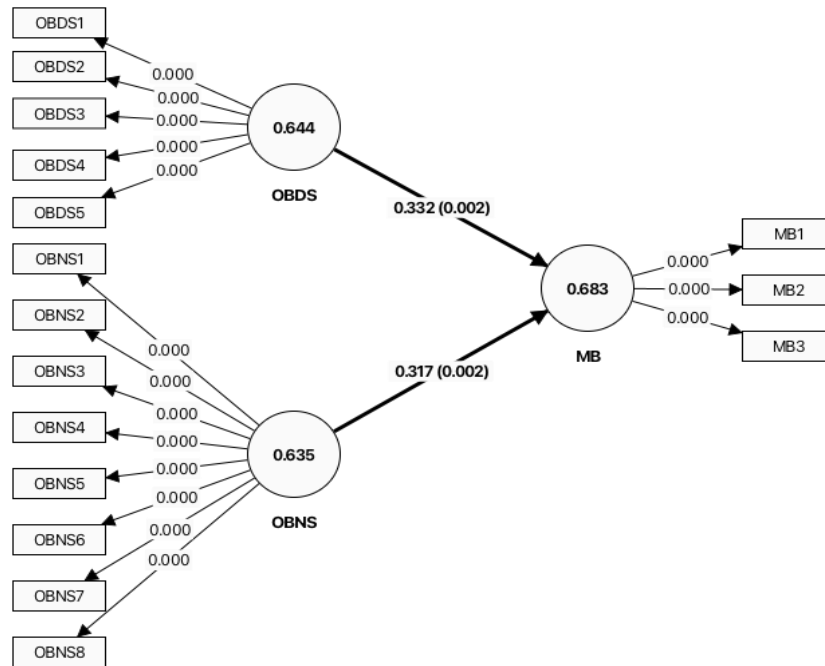


FIGURE 2. Research Model Testing

## CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, this study successfully demonstrates that online social capital—both bridging and bonding—significantly impacts consumer purchase intention in the context of social commerce. The findings highlight the importance of social connections in shaping consumer behavior, particularly in the online environment where interactions are increasingly mediated through social platforms. This research provides insights for both business practitioners and academics. For business actors utilizing social commerce, the study emphasizes the need to build and nurture online communities that facilitate both weak and strong ties. By leveraging the power of social capital, businesses can enhance consumer trust, increase engagement, and ultimately influence purchase decisions. For academics, this research contributes to the growing body of literature on online social capital, particularly in the relatively new field of social commerce. Future research could explore the moderating effects of other factors, such as consumer demographics or technological advancements, on the relationship between social capital and purchase intention. Additionally, longitudinal studies could provide deeper insights into how these relationships evolve over time as social media usage continues to grow and transform.

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