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Social Commerce Optimization for Banyumas MSMEs on Shopee and Tokopedia: A Mixed-Methods Approach

Rizqi Faturohman[1], Dhanar Intan Surya Saputra[2*], Retno Waluyo[3]

[1,2,3] *Information System Study Program, Faculty of Computer Science, Universitas Amikom Purwokerto, Central Java, Indonesia*

[*] dhanarsaputra@amikompurwokerto.ac.id

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ABSTRACT

The development of social commerce has accelerated the transformation of the digital business ecosystem for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Indonesia, particularly through marketplace platforms such as Shopee and Tokopedia. This study aims to analyze the effect of social commerce optimization on the competitiveness of MSMEs in Banyumas Regency and identify strategic factors supporting digital business transformation. The research employed a mixed-methods approach with a sequential explanatory design integrating quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitative data were collected through questionnaires distributed to 120 MSMEs actively using Shopee and Tokopedia, while qualitative data were obtained through semi-structured interviews with 12 informants consisting of MSME actors, digital marketing practitioners, MSME communities, and academics. The results of simple regression analysis indicate that social commerce significantly affects MSME competitiveness ($\beta = 0.684$; $p < 0.001$), with a coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.468, indicating that social commerce contributes 46.8% to improving MSME competitiveness. The findings reveal that live shopping features, affiliate marketing, customer reviews, and social media integration significantly enhance customer engagement, digital branding, and market expansion. This study contributes to the development of a social commerce optimization framework based on customer engagement and digital branding to strengthen MSME competitiveness within the digital economic ecosystem.

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1. Introduction

Digital transformation has become a major factor influencing the development of modern businesses, including the Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) sector. Developments in information technology, the internet, social media, and marketplace platforms have driven a shift in business patterns from conventional models to a more dynamic and interactive digital business ecosystem [1], [2]. These changes not only impact transaction processes but also alter communication patterns, marketing strategies, and consumer behaviour when purchasing products online [3], [4]. In this context, business digitalization is a crucial requirement for MSMEs to survive and compete in the increasingly competitive digital economy.

One rapidly growing form of digital business development is social commerce. This concept is a development of electronic commerce that integrates social media, social interaction, and e-commerce activities into a single digital ecosystem [5], [6]. Social commerce functions not only as a transaction medium but also as a means of communication, promotion, customer interaction, the formation of digital communities, and strengthening consumer trust in a product or brand [7], [8]. The development of digital consumer behaviour and the widespread use of social media have encouraged many marketplace platforms to transform from mere conventional e-commerce services into more interactive, user-experience-based social commerce ecosystems. This transformation is evident through features such as live shopping, short videos, affiliate marketing, customer review systems, and social media integration that enable more intensive two-way communication between sellers and consumers [9], [10].

In Indonesia, the development of social commerce is supported by the high number of internet users, the dominance of smartphone use [11], and the characteristics of a digital society that actively uses social media in their daily activities [12]. Indonesia's demographic, dominated by a productive young generation, also encourages the growth of marketplaces based on digital social interaction [13], [14]. In this context, Shopee and Tokopedia are two of the largest marketplaces in Indonesia that actively leverage social commerce in their platform development [15]. Shopee is known for its aggressive digital promotion

strategy, leveraging features such as Shopee Live, Shopee Video, and its affiliate program to increase real-time user interaction [16], [17]. Meanwhile, Tokopedia places greater emphasis on strengthening its digital ecosystem, transaction stability, and integrating digital services that support a comprehensive user experience [18], [19]. The presence of these two marketplaces provides significant opportunities for MSMEs to expand their markets, increase product visibility, and build closer relationships with customers through interactive digital-based features.

Banyumas Regency is one of the regions in Central Java Province, Indonesia, that has seen significant MSME development across sectors such as culinary, fashion, crafts, and local creative products [20], [21]. The development of digital technology has encouraged many MSMEs in Banyumas to start utilizing marketplaces and social media as marketing and product distribution tools. The use of digital platforms is considered capable of helping MSMEs improve marketing efficiency, expand consumer reach, and increase business competitiveness [22]. However, the digital transformation process of MSMEs in Banyumas still faces various challenges, including low digital literacy, limited ability to create digital marketing content, limited use of social commerce features, and high price competition in digital marketplaces.

Various previous studies have shown that social commerce positively influences brand equity, customer engagement, customer loyalty, and digital business performance [23], [24], and that it serves as a strategic medium for building brand value through digital social interactions [25], [26]. Other studies on the use of social media as a promotional tool for MSMEs also show that social media can increase the effectiveness of marketing communications and expand consumer reach [27], [28]. Furthermore, research on integrated marketing communication in e-business emphasizes the importance of digital communication strategies in building customer relationships in the digital economy era [29], [30]. Features such as live shopping, affiliate marketing, customer reviews, promotional videos, and interactive content are essential components of modern social commerce practices, capable of increasing interactions between sellers and consumers.

Despite the growing body of literature on social commerce and digital marketing, previous studies have predominantly focused on customer behaviour, platform adoption, or general digital marketing practices [31], [32]. Limited attention has been given to how social commerce capability can strategically strengthen MSME competitiveness through the integration of customer engagement, digital branding [33], [34], and marketplace feature optimization [35], [5]. In addition, prior studies rarely compare the different strategic characteristics of Shopee and Tokopedia within the context of regional MSMEs in emerging digital economies. Therefore, the existing literature still lacks an integrated analytical perspective explaining how marketplace-based social commerce capabilities contribute to MSME competitiveness.

To address this gap, the present study adopts the Resource-Based View (RBV) perspective, which emphasizes that organizational competitiveness can be strengthened through the development of valuable, rare, and difficult-to-imitate capabilities [36], [37]. In the context of this research, social commerce capability is reflected through MSMEs' ability to utilize marketplace features, develop digital branding, create interactive customer engagement, and integrate social media communication strategies. The RBV perspective is considered relevant because digital capability and social interaction have become strategic intangible resources for MSMEs in the digital economy era.

Based on this theoretical perspective, this study examines how the optimization of social commerce features in Shopee and Tokopedia contributes to strengthening the competitiveness of Banyumas MSMEs. The research focuses on identifying the influence of marketplace-based social commerce on customer engagement, market expansion, digital branding, and business competitiveness, as well as analysing supporting and inhibiting factors affecting social commerce implementation among MSMEs.

The research problem formulation focuses on how Banyumas MSMEs utilize social commerce through the Shopee and Tokopedia marketplace platforms, the factors influencing the optimization of social commerce within Banyumas MSMEs, and the strategies that can be implemented to increase MSME competitiveness through digital technology. Based on this problem formulation, this study aims to analyse the use of social commerce in Banyumas MSMEs, identify supporting and inhibiting factors for social commerce implementation, and formulate strategies to optimize social commerce to strengthen MSME competitiveness. This research contributes theoretically by extending the application of the Resource-Based View in the context of social commerce and regional MSME digital competitiveness. Practically, this study provides strategic insights for MSME actors, local governments, and digital marketplace providers in developing customer engagement strategies, digital branding capabilities, and marketplace optimization programs to strengthen regional MSME competitiveness in the digital economy era.

2. Research Methodology

a. Research Approach and Location

This research used a mixed-methods approach with a sequential explanatory design, a research approach that combines quantitative and qualitative methods [38], [39]. This approach was selected to obtain a comprehensive understanding of how social commerce optimization influences the competitiveness of MSMEs in Banyumas Regency through the utilization of Shopee and Tokopedia marketplaces. In the first stage, quantitative data were collected and analysed to measure the relationship between social commerce utilization and MSME competitiveness. In the second stage, qualitative data were collected through in-depth interviews to strengthen the interpretation of quantitative findings and explore contextual factors influencing social commerce implementation among MSMEs.

The quantitative stage focused on examining the effect of social commerce capability as the independent variable on MSME competitiveness as the dependent variable. Social commerce capability was operationalized through indicators including the intensity of marketplace usage, utilization of live shopping features, affiliate marketing, customer review management, digital interaction, and social media integration. Meanwhile, MSME competitiveness was measured through indicators such as sales growth, customer engagement, market expansion, digital branding strength, and customer loyalty. The research was conducted in Banyumas Regency, Central Java, Indonesia, focusing on MSMEs that actively use Shopee and Tokopedia as digital business

platforms. Banyumas was selected because of the significant growth of digital MSMEs and the increasing adoption of marketplace-based social commerce within the regional economy.

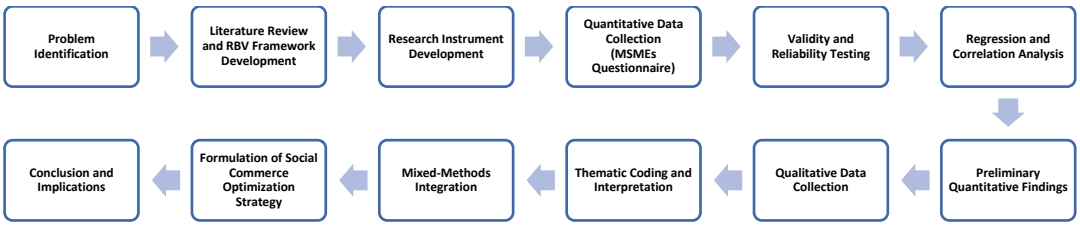


Figure 1. Sequential Explanatory Mixed-Methods Research Flow

b. Population, Sample, and Data Collection Techniques

The population in this study consisted of MSMEs in Banyumas Regency that had actively used Shopee or Tokopedia for at least one year. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling based on several criteria: (1) having an active store on Shopee or Tokopedia, (2) using the marketplace as the primary sales channel, (3) conducting regular transaction activities, and (4) being willing to participate as research respondents.

The quantitative sample consisted of 120 MSMEs. The sample size was determined based on the minimum requirement for regression analysis, which recommends a sample size of at least 15–20 respondents per variable to achieve adequate statistical power in social science research. Since this study employed six measurement indicators for social commerce capability and competitiveness, the sample size of 120 respondents was considered statistically adequate and representative for regression-based analysis. The qualitative stage involved 12 informants consisting of six MSME owners, two digital marketing practitioners, two representatives of the Banyumas MSME community, and two academics specializing in digital business and e-commerce studies. The informants were selected purposively to obtain diverse perspectives regarding the implementation of social commerce strategies among regional MSMEs.

Data collection was conducted through questionnaires, interviews, and documentation. The questionnaire used a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 and included indicators related to marketplace usage intensity, social commerce feature utilization, customer engagement, digital branding, sales improvement, and business competitiveness. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore experiences in using Shopee and Tokopedia, digital marketing strategies, implementation barriers, and optimization strategies for marketplace-based social commerce. Documentation techniques were also used to collect supporting data such as MSME profiles, marketplace activities, sales records, and digital promotional content.

c. Data Analysis Techniques and Validity

Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics, validity testing, reliability testing, correlation analysis, and simple linear regression analysis to examine the relationship between social commerce capability and MSME competitiveness. Validity testing was conducted using Pearson Product Moment correlation analysis with a significance threshold of 0.05. Reliability testing employed Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, where variables with alpha values greater than 0.70 were considered reliable. The regression analysis aimed to identify the influence of social commerce capability on MSME competitiveness, while the coefficient of determination (R^2) was used to measure the contribution of the independent variable to the dependent variable.

Qualitative data were analysed using thematic analysis techniques involving data reduction, data categorization, coding, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The thematic coding process produced several major themes, including digital customer engagement, marketplace feature optimization, digital branding capability, marketplace dependency, and barriers to digital transformation. These themes were used to strengthen the interpretation of quantitative findings and explain the strategic role of social commerce in improving MSME competitiveness.

To ensure research validity and credibility, several validation techniques were employed, including source triangulation, method triangulation, member checking, and peer debriefing. These approaches were intended to improve data consistency, credibility, and the objectivity of research findings.

3. Results and Discussion

a. Respondent Profile and Descriptive Statistics

Based on the research results, the majority of respondents were engaged in the culinary sector, followed by fashion, crafts, and other business sectors, as presented in Table 1. Most MSMEs had utilized digital marketplaces for more than two years, with Shopee becoming the dominant platform used by respondents. These findings indicate that marketplace platforms have become an important component of MSME business activities in Banyumas Regency.

Table 1. Respondent Profile

Respondent Characteristics	Category	Percentage
Business Sector	Culinary	42%
	Fashion	28%
	Crafts	18%
	Others	12%
Marketplace Usage Duration	1–2 Years	31%
	> 2 Years	69%
Dominant Marketplace	Shopee	73%

	Tokopedia	27%

Descriptive statistical analysis showed that the average score of social commerce capability among Banyumas MSMEs reached 4.12 on a five-point Likert scale, indicating a relatively high level of marketplace utilization. The highest mean score was found in customer review management, while digital content creation capability showed the lowest average score. Meanwhile, MSME competitiveness obtained an average score of 4.05, particularly reflected through customer engagement improvement and market expansion, as presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

Variables / Indicators	Mean	Standard Deviation
Live Shopping Utilization	4.24	0.63
Customer Review Management	4.31	0.58
Affiliate Marketing Usage	4.08	0.71
Social Media Integration	4.15	0.66
Digital Content Creation Capability	3.76	0.82
Customer Engagement	4.19	0.61
Digital Branding Strength	3.98	0.69
Market Expansion	4.01	0.73
MSME Competitiveness	4.05	0.65

The validity test results demonstrated that all questionnaire items had correlation coefficients above 0.30 and significance values below 0.05, indicating that all indicators were valid. Reliability testing also showed satisfactory results, with Cronbach's Alpha values above 0.70, confirming that the research instrument was reliable for further analysis, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Validity and Reliability Test Results

Variables	Number of Items	Validity Result	Cronbach's Alpha	Interpretation
Social Commerce Capability	6	Valid	0.872	Reliable
MSME Competitiveness	5	Valid	0.854	Reliable

The research findings also reveal that Banyumas MSMEs actively utilize various social commerce features, including live shopping, promotional videos, affiliate marketing, flash sales, customer reviews, interactive chat systems, and social media integration. Shopee was more intensively used because of its aggressive promotional ecosystem and interactive features, while Tokopedia tended to be preferred by MSMEs focusing on transaction stability and long-term digital store management.

b. The Influence of Social Commerce on MSME Competitiveness

The quantitative analysis results showed that social commerce capability had a positive and significant influence on MSME competitiveness. Simple linear regression analysis produced a regression coefficient value of $\beta = 0.684$ with a significance value of $p < 0.001$, as presented in Table 4. Furthermore, the coefficient of determination (R^2) value of 0.468 demonstrated that 46.8% of MSME competitiveness was explained by social commerce capability variables, as shown in Table 5.

Table 4. Simple Regression Analysis Results

Variables	β Coefficient	t-value	Sig. (p-value)	Result
Social Commerce Capability → MSME Competitiveness	0.684	8.912	< 0.001	Significant

Table 5. Correlation and Determination Coefficient

Analysis	Value	Interpretation
Correlation Coefficient (r)	0.684	Strong Positive Relationship
Coefficient of Determination (R^2)	0.468	46.8% Contribution

Interview results further strengthened the quantitative findings. MSME owners stated that live shopping features were highly effective in increasing customer interaction because they enabled direct communication between sellers and buyers in real time. In addition, customer review systems significantly influenced customer trust and purchasing decisions.

The thematic coding analysis identified five major themes influencing social commerce implementation among Banyumas MSMEs, namely digital customer engagement, marketplace feature optimization, digital branding capability, marketplace dependency, and barriers to digital transformation, as presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Main Themes from Thematic Coding Analysis

Themes	Findings
Digital Customer Engagement	Increased interaction and customer loyalty through live commerce
Marketplace Feature Optimization	Effective utilization of Shopee Live, affiliate, and flash sale features
Digital Branding Capability	Stronger digital identity through storytelling and content marketing
Marketplace Dependency	Dependence on promotions and marketplace algorithms
Barriers to Digital Transformation	Limited digital literacy and content creation capability

The findings support previous studies explaining that social commerce can strengthen brand equity, customer loyalty, and digital business performance through interactive digital communication.

c. The Role of Shopee and Tokopedia in Social Commerce Practices

Shopee and Tokopedia demonstrated different strategic characteristics in supporting social commerce implementation among Banyumas MSMEs. Shopee emphasized aggressive digital promotions and customer interaction features, while Tokopedia focused more on transaction stability and long-term business ecosystem development, as presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Comparison of Shopee and Tokopedia Social Commerce Characteristics

Indicators	Shopee	Tokopedia
Main Strength	High customer engagement	Stable digital ecosystem
Live Shopping Feature	Highly interactive	Available but limited
Affiliate Marketing	Strong integration	Limited integration
Promotional Features	Aggressive flash sale & vouchers	Moderate promotion
Customer Interaction	Very high	High
Branding Orientation	Viral marketing	Long-term business branding
Suitable MSME Types	Culinary, fashion, beauty	Electronics, household products

The findings revealed that Shopee was particularly effective for MSMEs targeting younger consumers and fast-moving products, while Tokopedia was more suitable for structured and sustainability-oriented business management.

d. Supporting and Inhibiting Factors for Social Commerce Implementation

This study identified several supporting and inhibiting factors influencing social commerce implementation among Banyumas MSMEs, as presented in Table 8.

Table 8. Supporting and Inhibiting Factors of Social Commerce Implementation

Supporting Factors	Inhibiting Factors
High smartphone penetration	Low digital literacy
Easy internet access	Limited content creation skills
Social media development	Dependence on marketplace promotions
Marketplace innovation	Intense price competition
Digital community support	Limited production capacity

The qualitative findings revealed that many MSMEs still lacked the capability to develop consistent digital branding strategies and marketplace analytics utilization. This finding indicates that social commerce competitiveness should not rely solely on promotional intensity but must also be supported by sustainable digital capability development.

e. Social Commerce Optimization Strategy and Research Implications

Based on the research findings, several strategic approaches can be implemented to optimize social commerce among Banyumas MSMEs, as presented in Table 9.

Table 9. Recommended Social Commerce Optimization Strategies

Strategies	Expected Outcomes
Digital marketing training	Improved digital literacy
Live commerce optimization	Increased customer engagement
Social media integration	Higher traffic and sales conversion
Local branding development	Stronger product differentiation
Customer review management	Increased trust and loyalty

The findings also indicate that customer engagement capability represents a strategic intangible resource supporting MSME competitiveness, consistent with the Resource-Based View (RBV) perspective adopted in this study.

The theoretical implication of this study lies in extending the application of RBV theory within the context of social commerce and regional MSME competitiveness. Practically, the findings provide strategic recommendations for MSMEs, local governments, and marketplace providers to develop sustainable digital ecosystems and improve MSME competitiveness through customer engagement-driven social commerce strategies.

4. Conclusion

This study concludes that social commerce plays a strategic role in strengthening the competitiveness of MSMEs in Banyumas Regency within the digital transformation era. The findings demonstrate that marketplace-based social commerce capability significantly influences MSME competitiveness through enhanced customer engagement, digital branding, market expansion, and customer loyalty, with quantitative analysis showing a positive and significant effect ($\beta = 0.684$; $p < 0.001$) and a coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.468, indicating that social commerce contributes 46.8% to improving MSME competitiveness. The study further reveals that features such as live shopping, customer reviews, affiliate marketing, promotional videos, flash sales, and social media integration effectively improve business performance in digital marketplaces,

where Shopee excels in interactive engagement and promotional strategies, while Tokopedia demonstrates strengths in transaction stability and long-term digital branding. The successful implementation of social commerce is strongly influenced by digital literacy, content creation capability, marketplace feature optimization, customer interaction quality, and adaptability to digital consumer behavior, although MSMEs continue to face challenges related to limited digital skills, intense competition, and production constraints. Theoretically, this study extends the application of the Resource-Based View (RBV) by positioning social commerce capability as a strategic intangible resource that supports sustainable competitive advantage. Practically, the findings provide implications for MSMEs, local governments, and marketplace providers to strengthen digital ecosystems through digital literacy training, branding development, marketplace mentoring, and customer engagement-oriented digital marketing strategies. However, since this study focuses only on MSMEs in Banyumas Regency and specifically on Shopee and Tokopedia, future studies are recommended to employ longitudinal approaches, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), or comparative multi-region analyses to further examine the long-term impact of social commerce capability and digital business sustainability in broader digital marketplace ecosystems.

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