

Social Commerce Transformation through In-App Checkout and Live Selling

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Abstract

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This article examines how social commerce is being reshaped by two transformative features: in-app checkout and live selling. The central question guiding the study is how these mechanisms jointly influence consumer trust, engagement, and conversion in digital marketplaces. Employing a systematic literature review, the study synthesizes findings from peer-reviewed research across information systems, marketing, and retail disciplines. The analysis reveals that live selling enhances authenticity, social presence, and immediacy through real-time interaction, while in-app checkout reduces friction and secures transactions by embedding payments directly within platforms. Together, these features operate synergistically, streamlining the consumer journey from discovery to purchase. The discussion highlights both opportunities—such as higher conversion rates and stronger engagement—and challenges, including impulse-driven buying and sustainability concerns. Overall, the study concludes that the alignment of trust-building interaction and seamless payment integration is critical to the future development of effective and accountable social commerce systems.

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1. Introduction

Social commerce has accelerated from peripheral experimentation to a mainstream commerce model as platforms weave transactional features into social interaction. Two design shifts—native, in-app checkout and live selling—are central to this transformation. In-app checkout removes cross-site redirects and payment frictions, promising shorter paths from discovery to purchase, while live selling fuses real-time demonstration, creator charisma, and two-way chat to stimulate urgency and social proof. Understanding how these mechanics jointly reshape conversion, trust, and buyer readiness is timely for scholars and practitioners alike, and well suited to a systematic review that integrates fragmented findings across information systems, marketing, and retail research. Early social commerce frameworks emphasized how community, content, and commerce interlock, laying conceptual foundations for today’s embedded commerce flows (Liang & Turban, 2011).

Prior literature shows that social features—ratings, recommendations, and peer cues—build relational capital that reduces perceived risk and increases purchase intention. These effects are mediated by trust, perceived usefulness, and social support within platform communities (Hajli, 2015). Synthesizing this base clarifies why embedding the full transaction cycle within the social app (from product discovery to checkout) is not merely a usability tweak but a structural reconfiguration of the decision journey.

Live selling, in particular, has emerged as a powerful conversion engine. Studies attribute its effect to IT affordances such as visibility, metavoicing, and real-time interaction, which heighten telepresence, reduce information asymmetry, and

catalyze impulse buying (Sun et al., 2019). Streamer-viewer reciprocity, Q&A responsiveness, and social contagion cues (e.g., concurrent viewers, likes) help translate attention into action, especially for experiential or credence goods. Yet, the same affordances can amplify hype cycles and overload, raising questions about sustainability and post-purchase satisfaction. Research also highlights trust as a pivotal mechanism: signals of authenticity, product demonstration quality, and seller reputation during the stream significantly predict purchase intention (Wongkitrungrueng & Assarut, 2020).

Concurrently, the evolution of mobile payments underpins in-app checkout by standardizing secure, low-latency, one-tap transactions. Reviews of mobile payment adoption identify perceived security, ease of use, and network externalities as key determinants (Dahlberg et al., 2015), while cross-technology studies (e.g., NFC vs. QR) reveal heterogeneous drivers that platforms must accommodate to keep checkout truly “native” across markets (De Luna et al., 2019). This suggests that payment rails are not neutral infrastructure but active moderators of social commerce outcomes—shaping abandonment rates, trust transfer, and repeat buying.

Taken together, the converging literatures imply that social commerce performance hinges on the alignment of sociotechnical affordances (live interaction, social proof) with seamless, embedded payments. However, empirical results are dispersed across contexts and methods, with limited comparative synthesis of in-app checkout and live selling as a coupled system. A systematic literature review can map

constructs, reconcile mixed findings, and surface design and policy implications for platforms pursuing embedded commerce at scale.

2. Literature Review

Research on social commerce highlights the interplay of social interaction, trust, and technological affordances in shaping consumer decision-making. Foundational studies frame social commerce as the convergence of social networking and e-commerce, where community features and peer-generated content reduce information asymmetry and foster relational capital (Liang & Turban, 2011; Hajli, 2015). Trust consistently emerges as a critical determinant of purchase intention, influenced by user reviews, ratings, and the credibility of sellers or influencers (Chen & Shen, 2015). These insights suggest that social mechanisms extend beyond information sharing to actively co-create value in commerce ecosystems.

Live selling extends this foundation by leveraging real-time interaction to enhance perceived authenticity and immediacy. Studies demonstrate that IT affordances such as visibility, guidance, and metavoicing amplify telepresence and drive impulse buying behaviors (Sun et al., 2019). The sense of co-presence between seller and buyer facilitates trust-building, while the performative aspects of streaming reinforce product credibility (Wongkitrungrueng & Assarut, 2020). However, scholars also caution that excessive promotion may lead to consumer fatigue or skepticism, pointing to the need for sustainable engagement strategies (Park & Lin, 2020).

Parallel research on payment systems underscores the importance of seamless in-app checkout. Mobile payment adoption is shaped by perceived ease of use, security, and compatibility with consumer habits (Dahlberg et al., 2015; De Luna et al., 2019). Secure and frictionless payment integration is not merely a technical issue but a moderator of trust and satisfaction in the social commerce journey (Slade et al., 2013). Furthermore, cross-market studies reveal that cultural and institutional contexts affect how consumers adopt and evaluate in-app transactions (Zhou, 2013), suggesting that platforms must adapt strategies across diverse regions.

Overall, the literature underscores that the transformative potential of social commerce rests on aligning interactive engagement with trustworthy and convenient payment infrastructures. Yet gaps remain in synthesizing how live selling and in-app checkout operate together as a coupled system, a question that motivates this review.

3. Methods

This study employed a systematic literature review approach to synthesize insights on the transformation of social commerce through in-app checkout and live selling. Following established review protocols, the process began with the identification of peer-reviewed journal articles from major academic databases, including Scopus, Web of Science, and ScienceDirect. Keywords such as “social commerce”, “in-app checkout”, “mobile payments”, “live streaming commerce”, and “consumer trust in social commerce” were used in various combinations to ensure comprehensive coverage. Studies were included if they directly examined consumer behavior, platform strategies, or technological affordances related to social

commerce transactions. To ensure quality, only peer-reviewed journal articles were retained, while conference papers, theses, and non-scholarly reports were excluded.

The initial search yielded a broad pool of studies, which were screened for relevance through title, abstract, and keyword review. Full-text analysis was conducted on the remaining papers to assess their contribution to the central themes of trust, consumer engagement, and payment integration. Data extraction focused on research objectives, theoretical frameworks, methodologies, and key findings, which were then coded into thematic categories. This structured process enabled the identification of cross-study patterns, gaps in the literature, and emerging conceptual linkages between live selling dynamics and seamless in-app checkout.

4. Results and Discussion

The synthesis of reviewed studies reveals that social commerce transformation through in-app checkout and live selling is anchored in the interplay of trust, interactivity, and transaction convenience. Trust consistently appears as a foundational driver of consumer decision-making, reinforced by product reviews, real-time seller interaction, and secure payment infrastructures. In live selling, trust is strengthened through visual demonstrations and the perceived authenticity of sellers, which reduce information asymmetry and make consumers more confident in purchase decisions (Wongkitrungrueng & Assarut, 2020). Similarly, in-app checkout enhances trust by ensuring transactions occur within the secure environment of the platform, minimizing risks tied to external websites (Dahlberg

et al., 2015). Together, these features reduce both psychological and technical uncertainties in digital commerce.

Another important finding is the role of interactivity in shaping engagement and purchase intention. Live selling enables synchronous communication, where consumers can ask questions and receive immediate responses, fostering a sense of co-presence and personalization (Sun et al., 2019). Features such as likes, comments, and virtual gifting provide social proof that strengthens credibility and purchase motivation (Park & Lin, 2020). Research indicates that these dynamics often lead to impulse buying, especially when combined with scarcity cues and time-limited offers (Cai & Wohn, 2019). Thus, live selling is not only informational but also an affective mechanism that leverages urgency and social influence to accelerate decision-making.

Seamless in-app checkout amplifies these effects by shortening the purchase journey. When users can complete transactions without leaving the platform, conversion rates significantly increase (De Luna et al., 2019). Frictionless payment removes barriers such as repeated logins, aligning with consumer demand for convenience. Adoption, however, depends on perceptions of security, ease of integration, and cultural context, highlighting the need for platforms to adapt systems to diverse markets (Zhou, 2013; Liébana-Cabanillas et al., 2021). Convenience therefore functions as both a technological and contextual enabler of social commerce success.

The interaction between live selling and in-app checkout demonstrates a synergistic effect. Live selling builds emotional engagement and trust, while

embedded payments capture consumer intent at the point of highest motivation. This creates an end-to-end commercial journey where discovery, evaluation, and purchase are seamlessly integrated (Chen & Shen, 2015). However, the same mechanisms that drive conversion may also increase post-purchase regret, as impulse-driven decisions can undermine long-term satisfaction. Scholars caution that persuasive design in commerce must be balanced with transparency and consumer protection (Luca, 2017).

Finally, gaps remain in the literature. Most studies examine live selling or payment integration in isolation, and evidence of their combined impact is limited. Regional focus is also skewed, with much of the empirical research conducted in East Asian markets where live commerce is highly developed, while Western and emerging economies remain underexplored (Lu et al., 2018). This uneven distribution underscores the need for comparative research to understand how cultural and institutional factors mediate adoption and effectiveness. Questions also persist regarding sustainability, as constant exposure to promotional live streams may contribute to consumer fatigue and erode trust in platforms over time.

Overall, the findings suggest that social commerce transformation depends on aligning interactive trust-building with seamless, secure payments. Live selling and in-app checkout, when effectively integrated, offer powerful potential to boost engagement and conversion. Yet platforms must balance innovation with accountability, ensuring that consumer welfare and market diversity remain central as social commerce continues to evolve.

5. Conclusion

This review highlights that the transformation of social commerce through in-app checkout and live selling is driven by the convergence of trust, interactivity, and transaction convenience. Live selling enhances engagement by creating real-time interaction, authenticity, and social proof, which stimulate purchase intention and, at times, impulsive buying. In-app checkout complements these dynamics by reducing friction and ensuring seamless, secure payment experiences, thereby capturing consumer intent at the peak of motivation. Together, these features form a coupled system that shortens the decision-making process and integrates discovery, evaluation, and purchase within a single platform.

At the same time, the findings underscore that the effectiveness of these mechanisms is not without challenges. While interactivity and embedded payments can accelerate sales, they also introduce risks of consumer fatigue, post-purchase regret, and trust erosion if persuasive techniques are applied excessively. Moreover, evidence is unevenly concentrated in East Asian contexts, leaving important gaps in understanding how cultural, institutional, and technological environments influence adoption in Western or emerging markets. Addressing these gaps is crucial to developing more generalizable insights into the sustainability of social commerce practices.

Overall, the review suggests that the future of social commerce depends on platforms' ability to balance innovation with accountability. Integrating live selling and in-app checkout offers immense potential for enhancing conversion and consumer engagement, but long-term success requires building transparent,

adaptive, and context-sensitive systems. By aligning technological affordances with consumer trust and welfare, platforms can ensure that social commerce remains both effective and sustainable as it continues to reshape the digital marketplace.

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