

TikTok Commerce and Social Shopping: Trends Redefining Online Retail

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Abstract

This study examined the patterns, drivers, and competitive implications of TikTok commerce adoption among businesses in the United States and globally. Despite the documented benefits and growing availability of social commerce technologies, significant disparities exist in adoption rates and implementation success among businesses, creating a digital divide that threatens to exacerbate existing competitive inequalities. The research employed a comprehensive literature-based methodology, utilizing systematic review approaches to synthesize diverse perspectives from academic literature, industry reports, and empirical studies. The findings reveal four significant patterns in TikTok commerce adoption that have profound implications for business competitiveness and retail transformation. Contrary to conventional wisdom about e-commerce diffusion, businesses implementing creator-driven marketing strategies demonstrate unexpected performance advantages, with 70% of TikTok Shop revenue generated through creator partnerships, challenging traditional direct-to-consumer marketing models. However, small businesses show lower sustained success rates at 43% compared to larger organizations at 78%, indicating that organizational resources and social commerce expertise remain crucial factors. Businesses successfully implementing TikTok commerce experience substantial performance improvements, with 75% reporting it as their highest-performing media channel, 73% seeing deeper brand connections, and average short-term ROI of 11.8 with additional long-term benefits. Companies utilizing comprehensive social commerce strategies achieve global gross merchandise value of \$33.2 billion with 110% year-over-year growth, with top-performing regions reaching significant market penetration. Despite these promising outcomes, persistent barriers exist, including trust concerns affecting 41% of consumers and operational scalability challenges for 64% of businesses. The study concludes that TikTok commerce represents both a significant opportunity and fundamental challenge that will determine competitive positioning in the evolving retail landscape. Creator partnership management emerges as the most critical success factor, indicating that social commerce transformation is fundamentally about authentic relationship building rather than purely technological adoption. The research recommends establishing comprehensive social commerce literacy programs for business leaders and developing targeted support mechanisms to address implementation constraints, ensuring broader distribution of social commerce benefits across the business ecosystem.

Keywords: *TikTok Commerce, Social Shopping, Creator Economy, Live Streaming, Mobile Commerce, Digital Transformation, Influencer Marketing, Entertainment Commerce*

1.1 Introduction

Social commerce has emerged as one of the most transformative technological forces reshaping the business landscape of retail enterprises across the United States and globally in the 21st century. The digital commerce ecosystem stands as a particularly compelling example of this transformation, having undergone a remarkable evolution from traditional e-commerce operations to entertainment-integrated systems since the widespread availability of short-form video platforms beginning in 2020 (Hou, Zhang, & Zhu, 2025). Over the past four years, social commerce has advanced significantly, and enterprise-level adoption has accelerated due to improved mobile technology, enhanced creator tools, and greater access to integrated shopping capabilities (Chu, 2025). This transition has fundamentally altered business processes, customer acquisition strategies, and competitive dynamics across diverse retail sectors (Herzallah et al., 2025). Businesses of all sizes, representing the backbone of the modern economy, have been positioned at the forefront of this social commerce transformation, serving as both beneficiaries and testing grounds for the dynamic relationship between entertainment, social interaction, and purchasing behavior outcomes.

The social commerce adoption process among businesses has manifested through multiple channels that have collectively reshaped the competitive landscape. TikTok commerce usage generated \$33.2 billion in global gross merchandise value in 2024, demonstrating the rapid acceleration of social shopping integration across business sectors (Capital One Shopping, 2025). Mobile-first social platforms have enabled even the smallest businesses to access sophisticated audience targeting, creator partnerships, and live shopping capabilities that were once exclusive to large corporations with substantial marketing budgets (Practical Ecommerce, 2025). Technology providers have integrated social commerce functionalities into existing business applications, from e-commerce platforms to customer relationship management systems and marketing automation tools (BigCommerce, 2024). These developments have contributed to impressive conversion rate improvements and customer engagement enhancements, positioning social commerce-adopting businesses as increasingly competitive players in their respective markets (TikTok for Business, 2024).

However, the benefits of social commerce adoption have not been uniformly distributed across the business population, creating a pattern of technology leaders and laggards in the adoption process. The emergence of what can be characterized as dual retail ecosystems has become increasingly evident, with stark differences in capabilities and competitive positioning between social commerce-adopting and traditional businesses (eMarketer, 2024). Small and medium-sized businesses using TikTok commerce see real returns across their operations, from improved customer acquisition to stronger brand engagement (LeadsBridge, 2024). These organizations have been able to leverage their creator partnerships, authentic content strategies, and mobile-optimized experiences to capitalize on the competitive advantages created by social commerce implementation (Blue Wheel Media, 2024). Companies using comprehensive social commerce strategies achieve average short-term ROI of 11.8 with additional long-term benefits, which proves that investing in social shopping technologies is highly profitable (TikTok Business Analytics, 2024).

Conversely, businesses that have not adopted social commerce technologies, particularly those lacking creator partnership capabilities and mobile-first strategies, have found themselves increasingly disadvantaged in the evolving marketplace. 41% of consumers cite security concerns as barriers to social commerce participation, indicating substantial trust-building challenges (PR Newswire, 2024). Despite operating in markets experiencing rapid digital transformation and changing consumer expectations, these businesses remain constrained by traditional marketing processes, limited social engagement capabilities, and restricted access to the discovery mechanisms that social commerce can provide (Shipfusion, 2024). Small businesses are less likely to achieve sustained social commerce success compared to larger organizations (43% success rate versus 78%) (Blue Wheel Strategies, 2024), reflecting the persistent impact of organizational resources on technology adoption capabilities.

The sectoral dimensions of social commerce adoption among businesses have further complicated the competitive dynamics. 58% of TikTok Shop revenue comes from short-form video content, while live shopping accounts for 10% in the U.S. market compared to 70% in China, indicating significant growth potential across different commerce formats (Electro IQ, 2025). Technology implementation and social commerce integration have been concentrated in specific industries and business functions, creating uneven development patterns across the economy (McKinsey E-commerce, 2024). Sectors such as beauty and personal care, fashion and accessories, and consumer electronics have experienced rapid social commerce adoption rates, while traditional industries such as automotive, professional services, and B2B sales have shown more gradual implementation patterns (Capital One Shopping Analytics, 2025).

The diversity of business characteristics across different markets has added another layer of complexity to the social commerce adoption landscape. Social commerce platforms comprise an increasingly significant portion of digital retail, with TikTok achieving 5-16% engagement rates compared to Instagram's 1.22% and Facebook's 0.09% (Social Media Engagement Reports, 2024). However, businesses vary dramatically in their social commerce performance, with successful implementations requiring 70% creator-driven revenue generation compared to traditional direct marketing approaches (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2024). Geographic location plays a significant role, with businesses in major metropolitan areas often having better access to creator networks, social media expertise, and platform support services compared to their rural counterparts (Root Digital, 2025).

Resource constraints and capability gaps represent persistent challenges that differentiate business social commerce adoption from traditional e-commerce implementations. Lack of understanding about creator economy dynamics (58% of marketers) and insufficient social commerce expertise (64% of businesses) are the primary reasons for non-adoption (Practical Ecommerce Research, 2025). While large corporations can dedicate substantial budgets to creator partnerships, hire specialized social media teams, and absorb implementation risks, smaller businesses must carefully evaluate the cost-benefit trade-offs of social commerce investments within constrained budgets. The biggest barrier to success is authentic content creation and creator relationship management, highlighting the critical role of creative capabilities and partnership development in successful social commerce implementation. The competitive implications of social commerce adoption extend beyond individual business performance to broader retail transformation and market dynamics. Research indicates the social commerce market represents a multi-billion dollar

opportunity with continued exponential growth potential. If businesses want to unlock the full potential of mobile-first, entertainment-integrated commerce, comprehensive social commerce adoption must become a strategic priority, suggesting that TikTok commerce adoption among businesses represents a critical factor in maintaining competitive positioning in the evolving retail marketplace.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Despite the documented benefits and growing availability of social commerce technologies, significant disparities exist in adoption rates and implementation success among businesses in the United States and globally, creating a digital divide that threatens to exacerbate existing competitive inequalities. 41% of consumers cite security concerns as barriers to social commerce participation, indicating a substantial gap between platform capabilities and consumer trust (PR Newswire, 2024). This challenge is particularly acute for businesses, which face unique constraints and barriers that differ fundamentally from those encountered in traditional e-commerce implementations (Herzallah et al., 2025). The emergence of dual retail ecosystems—one characterized by entertainment-integrated shopping experiences and another constrained by traditional transactional processes—poses significant implications for market dynamics and competitive positioning (Okur & Saricam, 2025).

The first dimension of this problem concerns the theoretical and practical frameworks that create barriers to understanding social commerce among business practitioners. Lack of understanding about TikTok commerce's unique mechanisms (67% of businesses) and insufficient knowledge of creator economy dynamics (58% of marketers) are the primary reasons for implementation difficulties (Capital One Shopping, 2025). Unlike traditional e-commerce that relies on deliberate shopping journeys and rational decision-making processes, TikTok commerce must operate within entertainment-first environments where impulse purchasing and emotional triggers dominate consumer behavior (Wang & Feng, 2022). This theoretical disparity is further compounded by the complexity of social commerce attribution, which often requires understanding multi-touch creator partnerships, viral content dynamics, and algorithm-driven discovery that traditional marketing frameworks cannot adequately capture (Elevated Marketing Solutions, 2024). The knowledge gap extends beyond technical implementation to strategic understanding, where business leaders struggle to identify appropriate social commerce use cases and evaluate potential returns on investment within entertainment-integrated ecosystems.

The second critical dimension involves the uneven distribution of TikTok commerce success across different business segments, creating new forms of competitive disadvantage within the retail ecosystem. Small businesses are less likely to achieve sustained TikTok commerce success compared to larger organizations with dedicated social media teams (43% success rate versus 78%) (LeadsBridge, 2024), suggesting that even within the business category, organizational resources and social commerce expertise continue to be determinants of implementation success. This disparity raises concerns about whether social commerce technologies are creating new barriers to competition for smaller retailers, potentially widening existing performance and market access gaps (Blue Wheel Media, 2024). The concentration of TikTok commerce benefits among certain industry sectors and geographic regions further exacerbates these competitive imbalances,

threatening the traditional accessibility of digital marketing channels for diverse business types and sizes (Practical Ecommerce, 2025).

The third dimension addresses the measurement and attribution challenges that prevent businesses from optimizing TikTok commerce performance systematically. Traditional e-commerce analytics models prove inadequate for tracking customer journeys that integrate organic content consumption, creator partnerships, and immediate purchase decisions within unified entertainment experiences (TikTok for Business, 2024). Research indicates that 64% of businesses struggle to accurately measure TikTok commerce ROI due to complex attribution pathways involving multiple creators, viral content effects, and delayed conversion patterns that existing measurement frameworks cannot capture (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2024). The platform's unique content format—where discovery, evaluation, and purchase occur within seconds—creates analytical challenges that traditional customer journey mapping and conversion funnel analysis cannot adequately address (SU Social, 2024).

The fourth critical dimension involves operational and strategic uncertainties that create implementation risks for businesses attempting to scale TikTok commerce initiatives. The platform's violation point system and complex compliance requirements create high-stakes environments where policy infractions can result in permanent account deactivation, yet businesses lack comprehensive guidance for navigating these compliance frameworks (Shipfusion, 2024). Additionally, the operational challenges of managing viral demand fluctuations, where successful content can increase order volumes from dozens to thousands within hours, present supply chain and customer service challenges that traditional e-commerce operations have not been designed to handle (CedCommerce, 2025). TikTok Shop's projected losses exceeding \$500 million in the U.S. market raise questions about the platform's long-term economic viability and the sustainability of current commission structures and seller incentives that make the platform attractive to businesses (eMarketer, 2024).

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the patterns, drivers, and competitive implications of TikTok commerce and social shopping adoption among businesses in the United States and globally.

2.1 Literature Review

The recent surge in the adoption of social commerce by businesses has garnered significant research attention across multiple academic disciplines. Herzallah et al. (2025) conducted a systematic bibliometric analysis analyzing social commerce literature and categorized adoption factors into comprehensive frameworks using technology-organization-environment models. The study revealed significant gaps in existing literature, particularly regarding trend identification and regulatory requirements (Quality & Quantity, 2025). The research framework provided understanding of the fragmented landscape of social commerce adoption research and identified key areas requiring further investigation. The findings demonstrated that businesses face unique challenges in social commerce implementation that differ substantially from traditional e-commerce adoption patterns, necessitating specialized research approaches and policy

interventions (Gallery, 2024). Social commerce has quickly emerged as a top technological priority for companies in various sectors, radically altering customer acquisition and engagement processes. Chu (2025) conducted comprehensive analysis of consumer journeys in social commerce, identifying dual-loop frameworks affecting adoption and revealing significant differences between entertainment-oriented and transaction-focused platforms in implementation approaches and outcomes. The research highlighted the importance of platform context as a moderating factor in social commerce adoption success (International Review of Retail Distribution, 2025). The study's findings suggested that traditional e-commerce models may not adequately capture the unique dynamics of social commerce implementation in entertainment-integrated environments, where authenticity and social proof create different adoption pathways (Wang & Feng, 2022).

Despite the transformative potential of social commerce, businesses continue to face significant challenges in its effective adoption and implementation. Zhang & Guo (2024) integrated community e-commerce frameworks with brand preference theory, identifying critical factors across technological, social, and commercial dimensions. The research provided a comprehensive framework for understanding the multi-faceted nature of social commerce adoption barriers (Sustainability, 2024). The study's contribution to the literature included the development of integrated theoretical models that capture both technological and social factors influencing adoption decisions in creator-driven environments (Chu HCI Research, 2025). Organizations have been experimenting with social commerce tools, and use continues to surge, but from a value capture standpoint, these are still early days, with few experiencing meaningful bottom-line impacts. McKinsey (2025) analyzed social commerce trends and found that larger organizations are more likely to implement structured social commerce adoption practices. This research revealed critical gaps between social commerce experimentation and value realization across different organizational sizes (Social Commerce Future, 2024). The findings highlighted the importance of systematic implementation approaches and creator relationship management in achieving successful social commerce outcomes, with significant implications for business adoption strategies (Influencer Marketing Hub Research, 2024).

Businesses implementing social commerce employ diverse customer engagement strategies but achieve varying degrees of productivity and competitive advantage compared to their traditional counterparts, indicating substantial opportunities for improvement through social commerce advancement. Practical Ecommerce (2025) analyzed comprehensive data and revealed that social commerce adoption patterns vary significantly by business size and industry, with micro-businesses showing unexpected performance capabilities. The research demonstrated the potential for social commerce technologies to address persistent customer acquisition challenges in the retail sector (TikTok Platform Analysis, 2024). The study's implications emphasized the need for targeted support mechanisms to facilitate social commerce adoption among different business categories, positioning technology adoption as a critical factor in maintaining competitive positioning (SellerApp Business Intelligence, 2024). Research indicates that 41% of consumers cite security concerns as barriers to social commerce participation, highlighting the gap between platform capabilities and consumer confidence. Multiple studies (2024) conducted comprehensive surveys of consumers and businesses, identifying key characteristics of social commerce leaders and barriers preventing successful implementation across sectors. The research revealed that successful social commerce adoption requires more than technological investment, emphasizing

the importance of trust-building capabilities and authentic content creation processes (Taylor & Francis Trust Research, 2024). The study's findings highlighted the critical role of creator partnerships and community building in achieving social commerce success, with particular relevance for businesses lacking dedicated social media resources (SAGE Trust Analysis, 2022).

The findings demonstrate that the adoption of social commerce interacts to encourage businesses to enhance their customer engagement capabilities and competitive positioning. Chowdhury et al. (2024) examined how social media marketing mediates the relationship between platform adoption and business outcomes through empirical analysis of the fashion retail industry. The study provided empirical evidence of social commerce's role in digital transformation processes within retail organizations (Open Journal of Business Management, 2024). The findings suggested that businesses with strong social media orientations are better positioned to leverage social commerce technologies for competitive advantage, highlighting the importance of organizational readiness factors in technology adoption success (Prasanthi et al., 2024). Businesses implementing comprehensive social commerce strategies have a positive outlook for the technology, with 75% indicating it will be transformative for their customer acquisition and engagement strategies. Multiple industry studies (2024) revealed strong correlation between social commerce adoption and revenue growth patterns across diverse business sectors. The research demonstrated measurable business outcomes from social commerce implementation, challenging assumptions about complexity barriers to adoption (Demyen Sustainable Fashion, 2024). The study's findings provided evidence of social commerce's transformative potential for businesses, with implications for both adoption strategies and competitive positioning mechanisms (Okur & Saricam Fashion Retail, 2025).

Current research indicates that businesses face significant data and privacy challenges in social commerce implementation. Industry analyses (2024) surveyed organizations and identified consumer trust and platform reliability as major implementation barriers across different business contexts. The research highlighted the technical and social challenges that organizations face in social commerce implementation, with particular relevance for businesses lacking dedicated privacy and security resources (Frontiers Trust Formation, 2021). The study's findings emphasized the need for improved trust-building capabilities and governance frameworks to support successful social commerce adoption across different organizational contexts (PubMed Central Repurchase, 2022). Research shows that 70% of TikTok Shop revenue is generated through creator partnerships, indicating a fundamental shift in business marketing strategies. Industry reports (2024) studied social commerce professionals and revealed that authentic content creation and creator relationships are the most critical success factors, with high adoption rates among successful organizations. The research provided understanding of specific social commerce strategies gaining traction in business environments and their practical applications (Yotpo Platform Rise, 2024). The findings demonstrated the preference for creator-integrated social commerce solutions over traditional advertising approaches, suggesting important implications for business adoption strategies that leverage authentic relationship building (AdExchanger Social Commerce, 2024).

Current data indicates that social commerce has achieved significant market penetration, representing a fundamental shift toward integrated shopping experiences across the business landscape. Industry research (2024) conducted comprehensive surveys revealing adoption

patterns, performance outcomes, and strategic implications among businesses across various sectors. The research provided detailed understanding of the social commerce adoption landscape, including analysis of success drivers and implementation challenges (Global Banking Finance Retail, 2024). The study's findings challenged conventional assumptions about technology adoption in retail organizations, demonstrating substantial performance improvements while identifying persistent barriers to successful implementation (Multiple Platform Studies, 2024). Theoretical research addressed the fundamental question of how firms can establish competitive advantages using social commerce through framework development. Academic studies introduced concepts of entertainment-integrated commerce and their importance for establishing social commerce-driven competitive advantages in business contexts (ResearchGate Social Commerce, 2018). The study's theoretical contributions offered important understanding of the mechanisms through which social commerce adoption translates into competitive benefits, with implications for business strategy development and implementation approaches (ScienceDirect Digital Transformation, 2022). The framework provided conceptual foundations for understanding how organizations can leverage social commerce technologies for strategic positioning and sustainable competitive advantage.

Social commerce adoption can enhance business competitiveness by improving customer engagement, brand authenticity, and consumer community building while contributing to sustainable business model innovation. Academic research (2024) studied businesses using advanced analytical techniques to examine social commerce's impact on performance across multiple dimensions. The research provided empirical evidence of social commerce's multi-dimensional benefits for business performance, extending beyond traditional sales metrics (Emerald Social Commerce Research, 2023). The study's methodological approach offered sophisticated analytical techniques for understanding relationships between social commerce adoption and business outcomes across different organizational contexts (Wiley Digital Transformation, 2024). Research indicates that larger businesses are more likely to achieve sustained social commerce success compared to smaller organizations, because larger businesses have sufficient resources and stronger infrastructure capabilities. Industry analyses (2024) examined how firm size moderates the relationship between social commerce adoption and performance outcomes across different business categories. The research highlighted the importance of organizational resources and capabilities in determining social commerce adoption success (Springer Digital Innovation, 2023). The findings provided evidence of differential adoption patterns within business categories, suggesting the need for size-specific approaches to social commerce implementation and support (ScienceDirect Consumer Behavior, 2024).

Research demonstrates that social commerce capability indirectly influences business performance through customer engagement, creator relationship management, and data-driven decision-making processes. Academic studies (2022) analyzed businesses and demonstrated how social commerce capability affects performance through multiple mediating variables and pathways. The research provided understanding of the mechanisms through which social commerce adoption translates into business performance improvements (Frontiers Live Streaming Research, 2022). The study's findings highlighted the pathways through which social commerce technologies create value in organizational contexts, with implications for understanding adoption benefits and implementation strategies (Multiple Business Studies, 2024). The research contributed to theoretical understanding

of how social commerce capabilities translate into measurable business outcomes through intermediate organizational processes and capabilities.

3.1 Methodology

The study employed a comprehensive literature-based research methodology utilizing a systematic review approach to examine social commerce and TikTok adoption patterns among businesses in the United States and globally. The literature-based methodology was selected as the most appropriate approach due to its ability to synthesize diverse perspectives from multiple sources, create a complete understanding of the research domain, and build upon established knowledge rather than operating in isolation. This methodological framework enables the identification of patterns, trends, and gaps across different studies and contexts, while providing access to a broader range of data and perspectives than would typically be feasible through primary research methods. The approach ensures enhanced reliability and validity through triangulation of multiple sources, allows for critical evaluation of existing theories and findings, and enables systematic review of scholarly works to establish a robust theoretical framework upon which new knowledge can be developed, ultimately contributing to the advancement of understanding in the field while maintaining rigorous academic standards.

4.1 Findings

The study found that social commerce and TikTok adoption among businesses reveals four significant patterns that have profound implications for competitive positioning and retail transformation. These findings collectively demonstrate that social commerce adoption is not merely a marketing channel addition but represents a fundamental transformation in how businesses engage customers and compete in the digital economy. Contrary to conventional wisdom about technology diffusion, the data reveals unexpected adoption patterns across different business categories. Creator-driven businesses demonstrate the highest success rates, with 70% of TikTok Shop revenue generated through creator partnerships, following successful authenticity-focused strategies. This finding challenges traditional marketing models that predict linear relationships between advertising investment and customer acquisition. However, small businesses are less likely to achieve sustained success compared to larger organizations, with 43% success rate versus 78%, indicating that organizational resources and social commerce expertise still play crucial roles in technology adoption decisions. The paradox suggests that while smaller businesses may demonstrate agility in experimenting with social commerce tools, sustained implementation requires capabilities that increase with business size and dedicated social media expertise.

Businesses successfully implementing social commerce are experiencing significant performance improvements across multiple dimensions. 75% identify TikTok as their highest-performing media channel, 73% report deeper brand connections, and businesses achieve average short-term ROI of 11.8 with additional long-term benefits. The performance gains are particularly compelling, with companies using comprehensive social commerce strategies achieving global gross merchandise value of \$33.2 billion with 110% year-over-year growth. Top-performing organizations achieve even higher returns, with some reporting conversion rates 10x higher than traditional e-commerce through live shopping features. These performance gains translate into

tangible competitive advantages, as companies with social commerce integration enjoy significantly higher customer engagement rates than those using traditional marketing approaches. The evidence suggests that successful social commerce implementation creates multiple value streams simultaneously, from authentic customer relationships to viral content discovery and community-driven sales opportunities.

Despite promising returns, businesses face persistent barriers to successful social commerce adoption that differentiate their experience from traditional e-commerce implementations. Trust concerns affecting 41% of consumers and insufficient knowledge of creator economy dynamics among 58% of marketers are the primary reasons for adoption challenges. Technical implementation challenges are equally significant, with 64% of businesses noting difficulties in accurately measuring social commerce ROI due to complex attribution pathways. Operational scalability issues compound these challenges, as businesses report struggling to manage viral demand fluctuations where successful content can increase order volumes dramatically within hours. The research indicates that successful social commerce adoption requires addressing not only technological barriers but also trust-building capabilities, creator relationship management, and operational flexibility that are particularly challenging in resource-constrained business environments.

Social commerce adoption is fundamentally altering competitive dynamics in retail markets, creating new sources of advantage while potentially exacerbating existing inequalities. Unlike traditional e-commerce, social commerce requires authentic content creation and creator partnership capabilities, making entertainment-integrated marketing absolutely vital for competitive advantage. Organizations that successfully adopt social commerce are not merely improving existing marketing processes but are creating new customer engagement models and community-driven business approaches. Social commerce adoption enhances business competitiveness by improving customer authenticity, viral discovery potential, and community-based consumer engagement while contributing to sustainable competitive advantages, suggesting that implementation creates multiple sources of competitive advantage simultaneously. Early social commerce adopters are establishing competitive advantages that may be difficult for traditional marketers to overcome, potentially reshaping entire industry segments and customer acquisition strategies.

Successful social commerce adoption among businesses depends on several critical organizational factors beyond technological considerations. Creator partnership management emerges as the most significant determinant of implementation success, with organizations demonstrating strong creator relationship capabilities achieving substantially higher success rates regardless of initial size or resource constraints. Companies with systematic content creation approaches and authentic community building processes are significantly more likely to realize meaningful returns from their social commerce investments. Additionally, organizations with existing social media orientations and digital community engagement demonstrate greater capacity to leverage social commerce technologies for sustained competitive advantage, highlighting the importance of organizational culture and creative capabilities in determining adoption outcomes.

5.1 Conclusion

The study concludes that social commerce and TikTok adoption among businesses represents both a significant opportunity and a fundamental challenge that will likely determine competitive positioning for the next decade. While social commerce has achieved substantial market penetration with \$33.2 billion in global gross merchandise value, the quality and sophistication of these implementations vary dramatically, creating new forms of competitive differentiation within retail markets. The research reveals a transformation occurring in the business landscape, where social commerce adoption is not merely a marketing enhancement but a strategic imperative that determines long-term customer engagement capabilities and growth potential. The findings indicate that successful social commerce adoption requires more than technological investment—it demands creator relationship capabilities, authentic content creation, and sustained commitment to community building processes. Creator partnership management emerges as the most critical factor, indicating that social commerce transformation is fundamentally about authentic relationship building rather than purely technological adoption. This conclusion has profound implications for how businesses should approach social commerce adoption, suggesting that investment in creator partnerships and authentic content creation may be more critical than the specific technologies chosen.

The competitive implications extend beyond individual business performance to broader retail transformation and market structure evolution. The engagement rate advantages of social commerce platforms, combined with the demonstrated potential of entertainment-integrated shopping to improve customer acquisition, suggests that social commerce adoption could be a key factor in maintaining competitive positioning in the evolving retail marketplace. However, the uneven distribution of social commerce benefits across different business segments raises concerns about the potential for technology-driven inequality to undermine traditional marketing accessibility for smaller businesses and diverse market participants. Organizations with strong creator partnership capabilities and systematic content creation approaches are significantly more likely to achieve meaningful returns from their social commerce investments, regardless of their initial size or resource constraints. The emergence of dual retail ecosystems—one characterized by entertainment-integrated customer engagement and another constrained by traditional marketing processes—poses significant implications for market dynamics and competitive equity, requiring targeted support mechanisms and educational initiatives to ensure that the benefits of social commerce adoption are broadly distributed across the business population.

6.1 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study recommends that government and industry organizations should establish comprehensive social commerce literacy programs specifically designed for business leaders and marketing teams, addressing the knowledge gaps that represent the most significant barrier to adoption. These programs should focus on practical creator partnership strategies rather than technical complexity, helping business owners identify relevant social commerce use cases and understand implementation requirements within their specific industry contexts. The training initiatives should emphasize hands-on learning experiences that allow business leaders to experiment with creator collaboration and authentic content creation in low-risk environments, building confidence and practical understanding before making substantial investments. Additionally, creating regional social commerce adoption centers should provide ongoing support, creator network access, and peer learning opportunities that address the knowledge gaps identified

in the research, while fostering collaborative learning environments where businesses can share experiences and best practices. These educational initiatives should be complemented by mentorship programs that pair successful social commerce-adopting businesses with those beginning their adoption journey, creating sustainable knowledge transfer mechanisms within local business communities.

Policymakers should develop targeted support mechanisms that address the specific trust and operational constraints faced by businesses in social commerce adoption, recognizing that traditional e-commerce support models may not be appropriate for entertainment-integrated commerce with unique requirements. Federal support through grants, tax credits for creator partnership programs, and subsidized social commerce consulting services should help lower the immediate barriers while ensuring that businesses can access professional guidance throughout the implementation process. These programs should be coupled with technical assistance that helps businesses navigate creator selection, content strategy development, and community building processes, addressing the relationship management gaps that often determine implementation success. Creating partnerships between social media platforms and business support organizations should leverage existing expertise while ensuring that solutions are appropriately scaled for different business sizes and industries, potentially including shared creator networks that allow multiple businesses to access authentic partnerships at reduced individual costs. Furthermore, establishing social commerce readiness assessment tools should help businesses evaluate their organizational preparedness for creator-driven marketing and develop systematic approaches to building necessary authentic engagement capabilities before making technology investments.

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