

THE TWO FACES OF E-COMMERCE: A COMPARISON OF E-COMMERCE PLATFORMS AND SOCIAL COMMERCE¹

E-TİCARETİN İKİ YÜZÜ: E-TİCARET PLATFORMLARI VE SOSYAL TİCARETİN KARŞILAŞTIRILMASI

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¹ This study is based on a part of Ali Gülbaşı's PhD Thesis, which is still in progress.

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords

E-Commerce, E-Commerce Platforms, Social Commerce.

Jel Codes: M31

Article History:

Received: 19 August 2024

Received in revised form:

10 September 2024

Accepted: 26 September 2024

MAKALE BİLGİSİ

Anahtar Kelimeler

E-Ticaret, E-Ticaret Platformları, Sosyal Ticaret.

Jel Kodları: M31

Makale Geçmişi:

Başvuru Tarihi: 19 August 2024

Düzeltilme Tarihi:

10 Eylül 2024

Kabul Tarihi: 26 Eylül 2024

ABSTRACT

E-commerce today focuses on two main systems: commerce conducted through e-commerce platforms and social commerce. E-commerce platforms, such as Amazon and Hepsiburada, are large online marketplaces offering a wide range of products, requiring substantial initial investments, and providing a secure shopping experience. Social commerce, on the other hand, takes place through social media platforms, operates with lower costs, relies on personal interactions, and aims to convert user interactions on social networks into shopping activities. While e-commerce platforms stand out with their reliability and comprehensive services, social commerce offers a more direct and interactive shopping experience. In this context, the purpose of this study is to examine the differences between commerce conducted through e-commerce platforms and social commerce in the field of digital marketing. To achieve this objective, the research question "What are the differences between e-commerce platforms and social commerce?" was posed. To reach this goal, document analysis, one of the qualitative analysis techniques, was used, and the differences between e-commerce platforms and social commerce were revealed.

ÖZET

E-ticaret, günümüzde iki ana sistem üzerinde yoğunlaşır, bunlar e-ticaret platformları kullanılarak yapılan ticaret ve sosyal ticarettir. E-ticaret platformları, Amazon ve Hepsiburada gibi geniş ürün yelpazesi sunan, yüksek başlangıç yatırımları gerektiren ve güvenli bir alışveriş deneyimi sağlayan büyük online pazaryerleridir. Sosyal ticaret ise sosyal medya platformları kullanılarak gerçekleşir, düşük maliyetlerle kişisel etkileşimlere dayalıdır ve kullanıcıların sosyal ağlardaki etkileşimlerini alışverişe dönüştürmeye odaklanır. E-ticaret platformları güvenilirlik ve kapsamlı hizmetlerle öne çıkarken, sosyal ticaret daha doğrudan ve etkileşimli bir alışveriş deneyimi sunar. Bu kapsamda bu çalışmanın amacı, dijital pazarlama alanında e-ticaret platformları kullanılarak gerçekleştirilen ticaret ile sosyal ticaret arasındaki farkları incelemektir. Bu amaca ulaşabilmek için e-ticaret platformları ile sosyal ticaret arasındaki farklılıkları nelerdir? Araştırma sorusu sorulmuştur. Amaca ulaşabilmek için nitel analiz tekniklerinden doküman analizi kullanılmış ve e-ticaret platformları ile sosyal ticaret arasındaki farklılıklar ortaya konulmuştur.

Atf vermek için / To cite: Gülbaşı, A. & Taşkın, E. (2024). The two faces of e-commerce: a comparison of e-commerce platforms and social commerce. *Dumlupınar Üniversitesi İİBF Dergisi*, 14, 71-82. DOI: 10.58627/dpuiibf.1535413



The world of e-commerce today is concentrated on two primary avenues where businesses and consumers interact: e-commerce platforms and social commerce. Both approaches represent innovative methods for providing products and services that cater to the needs of the modern consumer, yet they differ significantly in their core features and advantages.

E-commerce platforms, such as Amazon and Hepsiburada, stand out as large online marketplaces offering a broad range of products. These platforms are notable for their robust infrastructure, which includes user reviews, various payment options, and a secure shopping experience. However, the establishment of such platforms requires substantial initial investments and technical prerequisites. Despite these demands, the ability to offer a fast and reliable shopping experience makes these platforms an attractive option for consumers.

In contrast, social commerce refers to commerce conducted through social media platforms, aiming to transform users' social network interactions into shopping activities. This model is distinguished by its low initial costs and reliance on personal interactions. In social commerce, users are often influenced by recommendations from friends or influencers, which leads to a more personalized and interactive shopping experience. The success of social commerce largely depends on the ability to maintain an active presence and mastery of social media platforms. This form of commerce, which fully integrates social media, enhances communication between buyers and sellers, thereby prioritizing customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Both models have their own distinct advantages and disadvantages. E-commerce platforms represent a model with high entry barriers due to the significant initial investments and technical requirements they demand. However, the reliable and comprehensive services they offer make them appealing to consumers. On these platforms, it is easier for sellers to establish trust, which in turn reduces the likelihood of opportunistic behavior. Social commerce, on the other hand, provides a more accessible option with lower investment costs and operating expenses. Nevertheless, this model is more susceptible to risks such as poor customer service, fraud, and delayed refunds.

In terms of interaction levels, social commerce enhances the interactions between buyers and sellers, whereas e-commerce platforms are based on more traditional buyer-seller relationships. Social commerce allows customers to make purchases directly through social networks, while e-commerce platforms typically direct customers to their sites via social media and search engines. Regarding payment options, both models can integrate various flexible payment systems; however, social commerce tends to offer more direct and faster payment methods.

In the literature, Şenbayram (2023) emphasizes the rapid spread of digital transformation and its significant impact, particularly on the e-commerce sector. In his research, he highlights the critical importance of elements such as implementing legal regulations, developing infrastructure, and training a skilled workforce to enhance the success of e-commerce. Yoşumaz (2024) proposes a model for the virtualization of office leasing transactions in technology development zones within the scope of B2B. Mainardes et al. (2020) describe e-commerce as a method through which businesses conduct their commercial transactions over the internet. They conclude that e-commerce enables businesses to transform their ways of operating by developing new business models and offers new opportunities for consumers. Arslan and Yavuz (2020) stress that social media has become a crucial marketing tool for businesses today. In their study, they state that consumers shape their purchasing decisions based on comments, advertisements, and content on social media platforms. They also conclude that by effectively utilizing social media, businesses can reach consumers more quickly and directly, understand their needs, and develop marketing strategies accordingly. Additionally, they note that the dynamic nature of social media and its influence on users help brands gain a competitive advantage. Thus, maintaining a strong presence on social media and accurately analyzing consumer behavior are of great importance for business success. Yurgiden (2023), in his study, emphasizes that social commerce has emerged as a significant sub-branch of e-commerce due to the rapid development of social media platforms and the increasing number of users. The study highlights that the widespread use of mobile devices and the accessibility of the internet facilitate shopping on social media. It is found that the success of social commerce is directly related to users' ability to obtain information about products and services from their close networks through social media. Furthermore, the study concludes that social media plays a more effective role in commercial branding and marketing strategies compared to traditional media tools, and it is a vital tool for companies to increase brand awareness.

In conclusion, e-commerce platforms and social commerce, which represent the two faces of e-commerce, serve consumers with different strategies and features. Both models offer significant opportunities in terms of digital marketing strategies and customer interaction. The aim of this study is to examine the differences between e-commerce platforms and social commerce within the field of digital marketing. Based on the research question, "What are the fundamental differences between e-commerce platforms and social commerce?", document analysis, a qualitative analysis technique, was employed to identify the

differences between these two models. This study aims to compare the advantages, disadvantages, effects on customer interaction, and potential risks of e-commerce platforms, which offer a wide range of products and a reliable shopping experience, with the benefits of social commerce, which is based on personal interaction and low-cost advantages. The insights gained from this analysis are intended to guide digital marketing strategies.

1. DIGITAL MARKETING

The term digitalization generally refers to the transformation of business processes and society through digital technologies. We can examine digital transformation in two stages. The first stage involves the transition of tasks traditionally performed on paper to digital environments with the advent of computers, as well as the process of storing this data. The second stage involves the changes in business models brought about by the emergence of the internet, a global communication infrastructure. In the field of marketing, this transformation of business models is referred to as digital marketing (Lagner, 2017:301).

Digital marketing is the process of promoting products or services using digital technologies such as computers, mobile phones, television, and the internet. Businesses leverage digital channels like websites, social media, email, and search engines to communicate with current and potential customers (Desai and Vidyapeeth, 2019:196). Digital marketing is a broad term for marketing products or services using digital technologies. Its primary goal is to promote brands, shape consumer preferences, and increase sales traffic through various digital marketing techniques (Prasetyowati et al., 2020:9). Panda and Mishra, in their study, identified that the most crucial aspect of digital marketing is connecting with users, concluding that this requires the design and management of an effective digital platform. In their research on the impact of digital marketing on purchasing decisions, Al-Azzam and Al-Mizeed found that independent variables such as email marketing, online advertising, social commerce, and mobile marketing all positively influence purchasing decisions.

The most critical phase in the development of digital marketing was the advent of the internet. The evolution of the internet can be divided into three distinct phases: Web 1.0, Web 2.0, and Web 3.0.

Web 1.0 is considered a technology that directs users to information, focusing on consuming this information without modification. During this period, businesses established their online presence by designing websites that typically included catalogs and brochures (Yeniçeri, 2020:27).

The new technology that emerged in 2004, known as Web 2.0, provided an interactive platform for information exchange and allowed consumers to produce and share their own media content. Web 2.0 is recognized as an internet technology that enables two-way communication and interaction, allowing people to generate new content or modify and share existing content (e.g., images, videos, graphics, music, animations) (Bucak, 2024:19). Web 2.0 is defined as a user-centric technology. Users do not merely consume the resources of various services; they also develop their own content and share it with other users (Yeniçeri, 2020:27).

Web 3.0 refers to the integration of artificial intelligence that can learn from individual user interactions with the internet. This technology aims to produce faster and more meaningful results by analyzing the data obtained from users' interactions on the web (Yeniçeri, 2020:27).

Digital marketing is a vast field that encompasses various techniques and resources, including marketing through e-commerce platforms, social marketing, mobile marketing, content marketing, search engine optimization (SEO), search engine marketing (SEM), email marketing, and digital advertising. The next section of this study will focus on the definition of e-commerce and its two significant branches: e-commerce platforms and social commerce.

2. E-COMMERCE

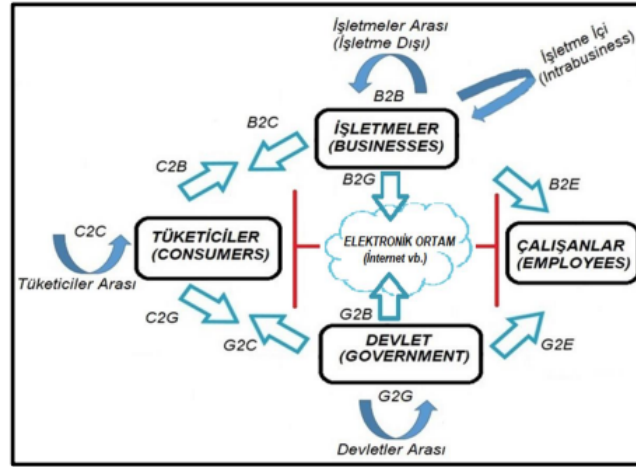
E-commerce (electronic commerce) refers to the buying and selling of goods and services through electronic means, primarily via the internet. It involves the process where a seller offers products and services to customers through their own website or various online platforms. This form of commerce allows for transactions to be conducted on online platforms using digital payment systems, rather than in physical stores (Jain et al., 2021:665). E-commerce has enabled small, medium, and large enterprises to expand their businesses, discover new markets, increase product variety, and grow their customer base (Costa and Rodrigues, 2023:2).

The benefits of e-commerce for businesses can be summarized as follows:

- Offering uninterrupted service to customers by operating 24/7.
- Providing easy access to new distributors and suppliers.

- Enhancing supply chain management.
- Gaining the opportunity to enter global markets.
- Achieving global recognition and visibility.
- Expanding geographic reach to access more customers.
- Reducing overall business costs.
- Minimizing communication costs.
- Developing strategies for more effective promotion at a lower cost.
- Increasing profitability by reducing procurement costs.
- Utilizing marketing budgets more efficiently.
- Offering more options to customers by diversifying product selections.
- Improving customer satisfaction through advancements in customer relations.
- Providing real-time information to customers and receiving instant feedback.
- Offering personalized products and services.
- Establishing more effective relationships through direct communication with customers.
- Utilizing various marketing channels (social media, email, viral marketing, etc.).
- Quickly updating information related to products, prices, and other company details (logo.com.tr).

Figure 1: Types of E-Commerce



Source: Ozanözgü, 2023:32.

- **Business-to-Business (B2B) E-Commerce:** This model refers to the exchange of goods and services between various sellers and buyers through the internet. It involves commercial transactions between businesses conducted via digital platforms, often in the form of bulk purchases or sales (Varnali, 2023:290).
- **Business-to-Consumer (B2C) E-Commerce:** This is the most well-known form of e-commerce, where businesses sell products and services directly to consumers via their own websites and mobile applications. This model reduces the need for physical stores while providing the opportunity to reach a broad geographic area. With global internet access, businesses can market their products and services worldwide and increase their sales (Gedik, 2021:193).

- **Consumer-to-Business (C2B) E-Commerce:** In this model, individuals market their own products or services to businesses and other consumers via the internet. Consumers formulate their own offers and wait for businesses to evaluate these offers (Ozanözgü, 2023:31).
- **Consumer-to-Consumer (C2C) E-Commerce:** The C2C e-commerce model allows individuals to sell their own products, unused items, or second-hand goods to other consumers. This model typically involves intermediaries who provide services such as payment processing, logistics, and returns, facilitating and securing transactions between buyers and sellers (Pir and Derinözlü, 2021:131).
- **Business-to-Government (B2G) E-Commerce:** The B2G e-commerce model refers to transactions between businesses and government entities conducted through digital platforms. This model addresses new needs arising in the e-commerce era while complementing the government's role in regulating the economy. Examples include government tenders, electronic signatures, notary services, customs, and foreign trade operations (Ertürk, 2022:18).
- **Consumer-to-Government (C2G) E-Commerce:** C2G e-commerce involves citizens performing transactions with government entities over the internet. This model focuses on public benefit rather than commercial purposes, aiming to deliver services more efficiently through electronic means. Citizens can easily complete various bureaucratic tasks, such as tax payments, health services, and permit and passport applications, through platforms like e-Government portals (Ertürk, 2022:18).
- **Government-to-Government (G2G) E-Commerce:** The G2G e-commerce model involves electronic transactions between public institutions in different countries. It also encompasses electronic commerce transactions occurring within a single government's various institutions (Ertürk, 2022:18).

3. COMPARISON OF E-COMMERCE PLATFORMS AND SOCIAL COMMERCE

E-commerce platforms and social commerce represent two distinct shopping models in the digital world. Both models approach online sales and shopping processes in different ways, offering various opportunities to consumers and sellers. This comparison aims to highlight the differences and similarities between these two models.

3.1. E-Commerce Platforms

E-commerce platforms have gained momentum with the proliferation of the internet and advancements in technology, and are used across many industries worldwide. E-commerce began with Michael Aldrich's invention of online shopping in 1979 and gained significant momentum with the use of the internet in the 1990s. Pioneer platforms such as Amazon and eBay played a significant role in this field with services like online book sales and auctions. Today, the widespread use of mobile devices has made mobile e-commerce increasingly important. Companies use technologies such as mobile applications and augmented reality (AR) to provide faster and more efficient services to consumers. E-commerce sites must have secure, user-friendly, and interactive designs. Additionally, emerging technologies like the metaverse and cryptocurrencies are becoming important for the future of e-commerce. Setting up e-commerce sites involves legal procedures and required documentation.

E-commerce encompasses various models beyond just producer-consumer relationships, including business-to-business (B2B) and business-to-consumer (B2C) models (Özbek and Sarıkaya, 2022:6). E-commerce platforms are digital marketplaces where thousands of companies showcase their products. These platforms host products from many firms for online shopping, and standing out among numerous e-commerce platforms is quite challenging. The success of a platform in being preferred depends directly on its performance. Achieving preference involves providing high-quality services in areas such as reliability, security, timeliness, product variety, and fast delivery, which helps gain customer satisfaction and loyalty (Özdemir, 2024:613). Prominent e-commerce platforms used globally and in Türkiye include Amazon, eBay, Alibaba, Trendyol, Hepsiburada, and n11.

3.2. Social Commerce

Social commerce is a form of commerce that bridges online and offline environments through social media. Generally, social commerce involves using social media on the internet to promote, sell, compare, select, purchase, and share products and services in online marketplaces and communities. Social commerce has garnered significant interest due to the emergence of new commercial channels. Many e-retailers leverage social technologies and services to expand their businesses. As social media has become easily accessible, more consumers use it as a source of information about companies, brands, products, and services (Zhou, 2013:61). Social commerce has evolved beyond traditional e-commerce with the influence of Web 2.0 technologies and social media. This evolution aims to enhance customer loyalty, strengthen customer relationships, and

increase economic value. Social media platforms have established a commerce environment focused on sharing and interaction by transforming consumers into collaborative actors. This new approach has reshaped traditional business models and marketing strategies (Esmaceli and Hashemi, 2019:317). Social commerce represents a model where e-commerce integrates with social media platforms. This approach aims to increase interaction between customers and businesses using Web 2.0 tools and social networks. Social commerce includes not only product purchases but also experience sharing and information transfer. This strengthens customer relationships and increases economic value (Meilatinova, 2021:2). Zhou et al. (2013) have noted that activities in social commerce are not limited to buying and selling products or services between firms and customers but also include sharing experiences and information about products or services in both online and offline environments.

E-commerce platforms and social commerce are two significant concepts in the digital shopping world. E-commerce platforms refer to large online marketplaces such as Amazon and Hepsiburada, while social commerce encompasses shopping processes conducted through social media platforms. E-commerce platforms are distinguished by features such as a wide range of products, user reviews, and various payment options. On the other hand, social commerce is based on converting users' interactions on social networks into shopping experiences, often involving personal recommendations, influencer marketing, and direct messaging sales. While both models provide convenience to consumers, e-commerce platforms offer a more traditional shopping experience, whereas social commerce provides a more personalized and interactive shopping experience, enhancing consumer engagement. The most commonly used social media channels are illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1: *Social Media Channels*

Channel Type	Description	Examples
Microblogs	Text-focused, typically featuring short posts with character limits.	Twitter, Tumblr, Sina Weibo, Tencent Weibo
Blogs	Interactive writing platforms where personal experiences, thoughts, and information are shared.	Blogger, Sina Blog, Blogbus
Social Networking Sites (SNS)	Platforms where users develop personal profiles, establish connections with others, and share various types of content.	Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn, Renren, Douban
Virtual Worlds	Platforms where users develop personal profiles, establish connections with others, and share various types of content.	Second Life, World of Warcraft, 51.com
Collaborative Projects	Platforms where users collectively generate and organize content. Examples include wikis and social bookmarking sites.	Wikipedia, Delicious, Baidu.com
Content Communities	Platforms for sharing content such as text, photos, and videos, including video and music sharing sites.	YouTube, Youku, Tudou
Feedback Sites	Platforms where users share their experiences, reviews, and discussions. Forums and review sites fall into this category.	TripAdvisor, Yelp, dianping.com, tianya.com, mafengwo.com
Mobile Social Applications	Applications that support social interaction on mobile devices.	WhatsApp, WeChat

Source: Gedik, 2020: 256.

4. METHODOLOGY

The aim of this study is to examine the differences between e-commerce conducted through e-commerce platforms and social commerce within the field of digital marketing. This examination will be conducted under the headings of investment level, social media impact, social media integration, entry barriers, opportunistic behaviors, level of interaction, referral usage, payment options, mobility, advertising strategies, and return policies. To address the research question of the study, document analysis, a qualitative analysis technique, has been employed. Document analysis can be used as a standalone qualitative

analysis method or as a supporting method for other analysis processes (Sak et al, 2021:243). The documents reviewed are all references in the findings section of this study.

4.1. Research Question

RQ1: What are the differences between e-commerce platforms and social commerce?

4.2. Findings

Table 2: Comparison of E-Commerce Platforms and Social Commerce

	*Social Commerce	**E-commerce Platforms	References
Investment Level	<p>*It is a sales model that stands out for its low initial costs, especially for small businesses and individual entrepreneurs. In this model, sellers typically only need to maintain an active presence on social media, have internet access, and own a smartphone to operate. This means that sellers can promote their products, build a customer base, and make sales directly through social media platforms without the need to establish a large website or make significant investments in infrastructure. Consequently, social commerce becomes an attractive option for entrepreneurs with limited budgets.</p> <p>**For entrepreneurs looking to establish their own infrastructure, this typically requires high initial investments. These investments include costs related to website development, payment system integration, security measures, and inventory management. However, sellers seeking to avoid these expenses can opt for third-party e-commerce platforms, or online marketplaces, which allow them to engage in online sales with lower investments. These platforms provide ready-made infrastructure and access to a broad customer base, enabling sellers to quickly enter the market. This allows businesses to step into the world of e-commerce without substantial capital expenditures.</p>		Arslan & Yavuz, 2020; Kanani & Glavee-Geo, 2021; Torlak & Acar, 2022.
Social Media Dominance	<p>*It is a model where social media predominates and trade transactions are conducted through these platforms. In this model, social media channels play a central role in the processes of product promotion, sales, and customer relationship management. Social commerce is often considered a subset of e-commerce because it combines the online shopping experience with social interactions. Consumers can engage directly with brands through social media, review products, and make purchasing decisions on these platforms. Thus, social commerce stands out as a more social and user-focused version of e-commerce.</p> <p>**The level of social media integration can vary depending on the business's strategy. Some e-commerce platforms aim to enhance customer engagement by extensively utilizing social media integration, while others may maintain it at a minimal level. This variation is shaped by the business's marketing needs and target audience. Similarly, social commerce may either be part of e-commerce activities or exist as an independent model. Some businesses use social commerce as an extension of their e-commerce operations, while others may pursue a completely independent sales strategy through social media. This is determined by the overall approach of the business to commerce and its positioning in the digital marketplace.</p>		Ahmadov, 2019; Kanani & Glavee-Geo, 2021.
Social Media Integration	<p>*It refers to the complete integration of social media and networking elements into online platforms for the sale of products and services. In this model, social media platforms and networks are used to enhance and make the shopping experience more interactive. All processes, from product promotion to sales, are conducted through social media channels; users can discover, comment on, like, and purchase products directly through social media. Social commerce thus eliminates the boundaries between social media and e-commerce, making shopping a more social and dynamic experience.</p> <p>**It can integrate social media elements into online product and service sales processes. This integration combines marketing and customer interactions on social media platforms with e-commerce transactions. For example, users can obtain information about products via social media, make purchases directly, or share products on social media to reach a broader audience. This integration strengthens e-commerce strategies by enhancing both sales and customer experience.</p>		Alt & Zimmermann, 2020; Kanani & Glavee-Geo, 2021; Özge & Küsbeci, 2021.

<p>Barriers to Entry</p>	<p>*It is a model with low entry barriers in terms of investment costs, operational expenses, and technical requirements. In this model, it is generally sufficient for entrepreneurs to be active on social media platforms and use basic digital tools. Without the need for a comprehensive website or high-cost infrastructure investments, they can promote and sell products through social media. This makes social commerce a more accessible and attractive option for small businesses and individual entrepreneurs.</p> <p>**It is a model that requires high investment, operational costs, and technical requirements. These platforms typically involve establishing and managing a comprehensive e-commerce infrastructure, which includes high-cost elements such as website development, payment system integration, security measures, and inventory management. Additionally, specialized e-commerce infrastructure or software may be needed, requiring additional technical knowledge and capital investment. For these reasons, e-commerce platforms are generally more suitable for businesses with larger budgets and technical resources.</p>	<p>Ahmad et al., 2018; Arslan & Yavuz, 2020; Coşkun, 2004; Kanani & Glavee-Geo, 2021; Kim & Park, 2013.</p>
<p>Opportunistic Behavior</p>	<p>*It carries certain risks, including poor customer service, fraud, delayed refunds, limited product return periods, and the risk of misinformation. While social media platforms allow for direct interaction between users, this can sometimes lead to lower quality customer service, the spread of fraudulent activities, or delays in refunds. Additionally, because product information can spread quickly through social media, the risk of misinformation is also prevalent. Therefore, the success of social commerce depends on the ability to manage and mitigate these risks effectively.</p> <p>**On e-commerce platforms, risks are generally lower compared to social commerce. These platforms often use easily verifiable and costly signals to establish seller reliability. Such signals may include customer reviews, certifications, and security protocols, which help reduce fraud and scam risks. Additionally, e-commerce platforms typically offer more professional customer service and manage refund processes more systematically, providing a safer shopping experience for customers.</p>	<p>Kanani & Glavee-Geo, 2021; Kim & Park, 2013.</p>
<p>Level of Interaction</p>	<p>*It is a model characterized by intense interactions not only between buyers and sellers but also among buyers themselves. Social media platforms enable users to engage not just with sellers but also with other buyers. These interactions occur in various forms, such as product recommendations, reviews, ratings, and experience sharing. Such social processes can influence purchasing decisions and support community-building efforts, but they also carry risks such as the spread of misinformation or customer dissatisfaction.</p> <p>**Commerce typically relies on one-on-one interactions between buyers and sellers. On these platforms, the transaction process usually involves users reviewing and selecting products, making purchases, and processing payments directly. Buyers and sellers often communicate through messaging systems or customer service on the platform. This structure makes the shopping experience more orderly and controllable, but it may lack the community dynamics provided by social media interactions.</p>	<p>Arslan & Yavuz, 2020; Gibreel et al., 2018; Kanani & Glavee-Geo, 2021; Şirzad, 2019; Yurdigen, 2023.</p>
<p>Referral Usage</p>	<p>*In addition to directing customers from social networks to e-commerce sites, this model allows for the completion of all purchase transactions within the social network itself. Users can discover, review, purchase, and pay for products directly on social media platforms, providing them with the opportunity to complete their shopping experience without leaving the social media environment. This integration makes the shopping process smoother and enriches it with social interactions, foster a more engaging experience.</p> <p>**Various referral systems are used to direct customers to e-commerce sites through social media, social networks, and search engines. These systems, as part of digital marketing strategies, present targeted advertisements, links, and content to potential customers, guiding them directly to the e-commerce site. Techniques such as social media campaigns, SEO (search engine optimization), and SEM (search engine marketing) are employed to drive traffic to e-commerce sites and increase conversion rates. These strategies make users' online shopping experiences more effective and broaden sales opportunities.</p>	<p>Arslan & Koçum, 2020; Gibreel et al., 2018; Kanani & Glavee-Geo, 2021; Yurdigen, 2023.</p>

<p>Payment Options</p>	<p>*It provides price and payment information directly on the social commerce page. In this model, users can view product prices and complete payment transactions through social media platforms. Additionally, flexible payment options such as credit card payments, digital wallets, and, in some cases, cardless payment methods can be integrated. This integration allows users to finalize their shopping process within the social media environment, making the shopping experience faster and more convenient.</p> <p>**Payment information and processes are typically handled on the e-commerce site. Users enter their payment details on this platform after completing their shopping. Additionally, various third-party payment systems can be integrated to facilitate and diversify payment processes. These third-party systems allow users to use different payment methods such as credit cards, digital wallets, or bank transfers, making the user experience more flexible and user-friendly.</p>	<p>Kanani & Glavee-Geo, 2021; Öztürk & Arıkan, 2022.</p>
<p>Mobility and Advertising</p>	<p>*Peer-to-peer advertising is a common practice, and social commerce heavily relies on social media for advertising. In this model, users can comment on products and services, make recommendations, and share their experiences on social media platforms. These interactions provide potential customers with a more trustworthy and personalized advertising experience. Additionally, advertisements on social media, targeted campaigns, and influencer collaborations are used to reach a broad audience. Consequently, social commerce offers a more effective marketing strategy by encouraging organic advertising among users and amplifying the impact of social media.</p> <p>**Strategies such as mobile compatibility and peer-to-peer advertising can be implemented. Mobile-compatible e-commerce platforms ensure a seamless shopping experience on smartphones and tablets, achieved through responsive design and mobile-optimized payment processes. Additionally, e-commerce platforms can support peer-to-peer advertising, allowing users to share products on their social media accounts, recommend them to friends, and leave customer reviews. This enables users to organically promote products and enhance the impact of word-of-mouth marketing. Both strategies can improve user experience and marketing effectiveness.</p>	<p>Arslan & Yavuz, 2020; Kanani & Glavee-Geo, 2021; Lin et al., 2017.</p>
<p>Using Third Parties for Returns</p>	<p>*Returns are often limited, and on some platforms, buyers may pay after receiving the product or follow a specific payment structure. Due to the nature of social commerce, return processes can sometimes be stricter or more limited when products are purchased via social media. Buyers may have the option to pay after receiving products in social commerce transactions, which can make the payment process more flexible. Additionally, some social commerce platforms may offer installment payments or specific payment plans. However, return and exchange policies can vary depending on the nature of social commerce and the rules of the relevant platform, and they are often more restrictive.</p> <p>**Flexible return policies can be facilitated through intermediaries. These platforms often collaborate with third-party service providers and logistics partners to offer customers a broader return and exchange process. This flexibility makes the return process more manageable and user-friendly. For example, e-commerce platforms may offer easy return labels, free return shipping services, and quick processing times for product returns and exchanges. Additionally, they manage return requests effectively through customer service and support teams. Such flexible return policies help enhance customer satisfaction and increase the likelihood of repeat purchases.</p>	<p>Altın & Kırçova, 2024; Kanani & Glavee-Geo, 2021; Varnalı, 2023.</p>

4.3. Discussion

The findings of this study reveal the fundamental differences between social commerce and e-commerce platforms, highlighting the advantages and limitations of each model. Social commerce emerges as an appealing option for small businesses and individual entrepreneurs due to its low-cost and accessible nature. However, this model also presents certain risks. Specifically, the integration of social media and the level of interaction underscore the user-centric and interactive characteristics of social commerce. Nonetheless, issues such as reliability, customer service quality, and information accuracy on social media platforms represent potential challenges that businesses must effectively manage to succeed in this space.

Conversely, e-commerce platforms offer a more professional shopping experience, but they come with higher costs and technical requirements. This typically makes e-commerce platforms more suitable for businesses with larger budgets. The comprehensive infrastructure and security measures provided by e-commerce platforms can enhance consumer confidence and

ensure a more secure shopping experience, coupled with professional customer service. However, these high costs may pose a barrier for smaller businesses and entrepreneurs.

The literature supports the view that social commerce provides significant advantages in terms of accessibility and flexibility, particularly for small businesses and individual entrepreneurs. At the same time, e-commerce platforms are recognized for their suitability for larger enterprises due to their extensive infrastructure and professional services. In this context, the low entry barriers associated with social commerce allow for a rapid and cost-effective market entry, which is particularly advantageous for entrepreneurs with limited budgets. However, the risks inherent in social commerce necessitate a robust risk management strategy to achieve success.

This study provides a comprehensive evaluation of the advantages and limitations of social commerce and e-commerce platforms, offering a crucial foundation for understanding the impact of each model on business strategies and marketing approaches. The ability of social commerce to facilitate quick and low-cost market entry provides entrepreneurs with valuable opportunities, while the extensive infrastructure and professional services of e-commerce platforms offer strategic advantages for larger-scale enterprises. For both models to be effectively implemented, businesses must adopt approaches that align with their budgetary constraints, target audiences, and marketing strategies.

This discussion presents a deeper examination of the advantages and limitations of social commerce and e-commerce platforms, offering insights into the practical application of each model and their suitability for different types of businesses.

5. CONCLUSION

This study explores the fundamental differences between two primary commerce models in the e-commerce sector: e-commerce platforms and social commerce. Our findings reveal that while both models have similarities, they each possess distinct advantages and disadvantages.

E-commerce platforms are typically favored by large businesses and brands for their comprehensive trade infrastructure, reliability, and organized system. These platforms excel in offering a wide range of products, ensuring a secure shopping experience for users, and enhancing customer satisfaction. However, e-commerce platforms usually require substantial initial investments. Costs associated with website development, security system integration, and offering various payment methods result in significant financial outlays, making e-commerce platforms a less attractive option for small businesses and individual entrepreneurs.

Conversely, social commerce emerges as a low-cost and interaction-focused trade model due to the widespread use of social media platforms. It is an ideal option for small businesses and individual entrepreneurs. Social commerce allows social media users to directly participate in the shopping process, providing a more personal and interactive shopping experience. One of the significant advantages of social commerce is its low startup costs and accessibility. However, social commerce may be more susceptible to fraud and security risks, which are among its disadvantages.

The success of social commerce largely depends on the interactions of social media users on these platforms. User reviews, interactions with sellers, and engagement with other users are crucial factors influencing purchasing decisions. In contrast, e-commerce platforms generally offer more limited interactions, focusing more on direct sales rather than user-to-user engagement. Additionally, e-commerce platforms typically offer broader and more flexible return policies, which play a significant role in enhancing customer satisfaction.

In summary, e-commerce platforms and social commerce each have complementary features as different trade models. E-commerce platforms stand out for their reliability and comprehensive service offerings, while social commerce presents a lower-cost, flexible, and interaction-oriented alternative. Businesses must carefully consider their strategies and target audiences when choosing between these two models. Social commerce's potential for rapid growth offers opportunities for small and medium-sized enterprises, while e-commerce platforms can be viewed as a more reliable and sustainable option for larger businesses.

This study contributes significantly to the literature on digital commerce by examining the characteristics and differences between e-commerce platforms and social commerce. It provides valuable insights into how businesses can utilize these models to enhance their digital marketing strategies. Additionally, by focusing on issues related to security and user interaction in social commerce, it offers new information on potential risks and opportunities in these areas. This research benefits both academic literature and practical applications.

Future studies could delve deeper into the effects of e-commerce and social commerce on consumer behavior. Specifically,

examining which commerce model is more effective for different demographic groups, how consumer purchasing decisions are influenced, and the factors that play a decisive role in these processes could be valuable. Such analysis may help businesses optimize their marketing strategies according to demographic segments. Furthermore, focusing on the security risks faced by social commerce and exploring potential solutions to minimize these risks-such as fraud, data security, and consumer rights protection-could enhance the reliability of social commerce. Research in these areas could improve the overall effectiveness of both e-commerce and social commerce, enhance user experience, and strengthen consumer trust.

AUTHOR DECLARATIONS

Declarations of Research and Publication Ethics: This study has been prepared in accordance with scientific research and publication ethics.

Ethics Committee Approval: Since this research does not include analyzes that require ethics committee approval, it does not require ethics committee approval.

Author Contributions: Authors contributed equally to the study.

Conflict of Interest: There is no conflict of interest arising from the study for the author or third parties.

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