



## Affordances of Selling through Live Streaming as a New Social Commerce Platform: Sellers' Perceptive

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to investigate the perceptions of online sellers towards using live streaming videos over social networking sites as a platform for social commerce in terms of their modes of operation, opportunities, challenges, and strategies. The study aims to explore sellers' perspective and determine how such a method is adopted in terms of various structural and functional aspects and is considered useful for the sellers of developing countries. In doing so, the study employs a qualitative research approach through semi-structured expert interviews with 11 online sellers who sell their products through live streaming videos over different social media channels. The findings of this study have revealed that social networking sites are perceived as a useful platform of social commerce because of their free of cost availability, easy adaptability, facility for hosting business pages, and international accessibility. The study has determined that there are several challenges that the sellers face during selling through live streaming such as lack of exclusiveness regarding selling activities, difficulty in building customers' trust, fake buyers, and disturbing and negative viewers. To cope with these identified challenges, the sellers adopt off the platform solutions for transactions and customer management, offer cash back rewards or other gifts and maintain high quality at reasonable rates to build trust and win in business competition, ask for full or partial payment in advance to deal with fake buyers, and simply ignore and block disturbing viewers in their live stream.

## 1. Introduction

In today's digital age of globalized knowledge-based economy and information rich society, social media has transformed all the social interactions of people across the world. The present youth is considered as digital natives who are born and spend their lives in a very technology immersive environment, where in the physical objects and activities of people are frequently mediated by digital tools or digital interventions (Martin & Grudziecki, 2006). A decade ago, ever increasing social media platforms, especially social networking sites (abr. SNSs), were merely the source of distance communication, but now these have pervaded in all spheres of everyday life (Al Sulaimani, 2010) and influenced the way people live, work,

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and play (Abdullahi, 2014). As these digital tools are gaining increasing attention among people as a new medium of social interactions, scholars have started to explore and understand the perceptions of users towards their use and effectiveness different kinds of interactions within varying geographies, contexts, and economies. Owing to the recent pandemic of Covid-19 wherein all social activities were brought to halt and people were confined within their homes, social media has been adopted more frequently to enable the interactions that previously people have been undertaking face-to-face in physical environments (Jiang & Cai, 2021). Similarly, this has given an escalating attention and popularity to a new electronic commerce style, more appropriately regraded as social commerce (Lin et al., 2017). Social commerce refers to leveraging social media platforms (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, and other SNSs) for reaching out to customers and doing business with them through business pages, online embedded shops, and live video calls (Huang & Benyoucef, 2013). Particularly, in the times of crisis and pandemic situations where small shops and local businesses face challenges, social commerce facilitates a way for overcoming the challenges and thus continuing business as these platforms allow the content to be freely available and shared with wider audience (Merritt & Zhao, 2022). Basically, Live streaming has been used as a technology for broadcasting instant messages and video content for the leisure and entertainment purposes (Lin et al., 2022), however, recently its popularity and market potential has transformed it into a most favourable technology of social commerce (Liao et al., 2022).

In this realm, the purpose of this paper is to investigate the modes of operation, opportunities, challenges, and strategies of selling through Live streaming on social media platforms. The study aims to explore sellers' perspective and determine how such a method is adopted in terms of structural and functional aspects and is proven effective for the sellers of developing countries who are always affected by low economic situations and have limited resources available at their disposal. Accordingly, the research questions of this study are formulated as

following:

RQ1: How is selling through live streaming adapted by online sellers of developing countries in terms of various structural aspects?

RQ2: How is selling through live streaming perceived by online sellers of developing countries in terms of their functional aspects?

RQ2.1: What are the motivating factors for the adoption of selling through live streaming over social networking sites?

RQ2.2: What are the associated challenges that the sellers face during selling through live streaming over social networking sites?

RQ2.3: How do the sellers cope with identified challenges of selling through live streaming over social networking sites?

their products through live streaming videos over different social media channels. The study adopts a grounded theory approach whereby an interview guide is used to direct the discussion aspects and discuss the topic with each participant to their individual level of interest and relevance. The findings of this study have revealed that social networking sites are perceived as a useful platform of social commerce because of their free of cost availability, easy adaptability, facility for hosting business pages, and international accessibility. The study has determined that there are several challenges that the sellers face during selling through live streaming such as lack of exclusiveness regarding selling activities, difficulty in building customers' trust, lack of built-in support for dealing with fake buyers and disturbing and negative viewers, absence of transaction support, and no customer/client management mechanism. To cope with these identified challenges, the sellers adopt off the platform solutions for transactions and customer

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management, offer cash back rewards or other gifts and maintain high quality at reasonable rates to build trust and win in business competition, ask for full or partial payment in advance to deal with fake buyers, and simply ignore and block disturbing viewers in their live stream.

The findings of this study should be useful for the social media enthusiasts in understanding how these platforms are perceived useful and determining how people interact within these platforms for carrying out their social commerce activities. Similarly, the results of this study should aid the social media platform developers in understanding the users' satisfaction with existing platforms and outlining their further needs and thus designing new platforms in future accordingly.

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows. The paper sheds some light on relevant literature on the topic in section 2. The methodology is explained in section 3 and data analysis and results are given in section 4. The paper concludes with an outlook to future work in section

## 2. Background

Over the recent years, amid the advancements in web technologies, security and payment methods, the social media has gained increasing attention as a commercial tool and marketing channel (Afrasiabi Rad & Benyoucef, 2011). This growing popularity and commercial use of social media particularly the social networking sites (SNSs) has introduced a new e-commerce style termed as social commerce (Curty & Zhang, 2011; Wang & Zhang, 2012; Zhang & Benyoucef, 2016) as an emerging and rapidly evolving phenomenon (Stephen & Toubia, 2010). Social commerce is defined as a form of e-commerce that is mediated by social media and converges the online and offline environments (Wang & Zhang, 2012). It involves online user communities that support user interactions (Kim & Srivastava, 2007) of marketing, selling, buying, comparing, and sharing of products and services (Zhou et al., 2013). Social commerce enables businesses to reach customers readily and with efficiency and be able to understand their behaviours and determine their shopping experiences and expectations and act accordingly (Carroll, 2008; Constantinides & Fountain, 2008). Meanwhile, the customers can collaborate online about products and services and thereby access social knowledge and experiences, get advice from each other, and make more informed decisions (Dennison et al., 2009; Leitner & Grechenig, 2009; Parise & Guinan, 2008). Thus, social commerce enhances competitive advantage of businesses by enhancing their operational efficiency, customer relationships, buying and selling processes, product and service offerings, and revenue generation (Zhou et al., 2013).

Among the various modes of social commerce, Selling through Live streaming has recently become a popular channel for self-employed small scale sellers with high levels of consumer interaction and engagement (Merritt & Zhao, 2022; Wongkitrungrueng et al., 2020). Live streaming commerce is attributed as an ecommerce style that integrates real-time social interaction among steamers and viewers with commercial activities such as shopping (Cai et al., 2018; Cai & Wohn, 2019; Kim & Park, 2013). Live streaming offers richer information and more interactive experience of product than text descriptions as therein sellers not only show product physical features but also how to use it based on customized demonstrations with relevance to audience questions (Chen et al., 2019). This reduces viewers' product uncertainties and expedite their purchasing decisions (Dimoka et al., 2012; Hong & Pavlou, 2014). The opportunities and popularity of social commerce has gained attention of researchers and practitioners. Several frameworks have been proposed that identify two components of relevance as its fundamental components; i.e. social media platforms and commercial activities (Liang & Turban, 2011). Regarding the enabling component of social media, many social networking sites with varying functionalities and services are currently existing that differ from each other in their style and targeted audience. Many of them are focused on specific type of audience and used geographies; whilst the others are very much open in their

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thematic and regional orientations (Memon & Meyer, 2017). One of the most interesting aspects of general social networking sites in align of the social commerce and business representation is the paradigm of business pages (also referred as company pages) (Memon & Meyer, 2020). The business pages facilitate the businesses in representing themselves in online social sphere and list their basic information, product list or specialties, communicate with customers through page posts and direct messages, solicit reviews and feedback, and answer customer queries in an efficient and effective manner. Research shows that business page architecture across different SNSs can be differentiated in terms of basic business profile, content types, community services, discovery approaches, and page analytic and reviewing services.

Given the functionalities of social media, the other important component that plays an important role in social commerce are the commercial activities which are in turn highly influenced by the customer buying behaviour and their purchasing intentions (Lin et al., 2022). In the current digital era, customers have practical transparency of absolute brand because of the rise of this age. They are so empowered in this increasingly networked world that everything for them is now replaceable, and they are proactively conducting technology based online facilities or purchasing/shopping, online consultation, playing online games, purchasing online movie/flight tickets as they become more skilled with developing communication platforms. Given this transformation in the interactive world, engaging consumers has become a strategic requirement for marketers, and they are looking forward to boosting their profitability by nurturing customer brand connections and delivering customers with seamless digital experiences and rapid personalized solutions to engage them with their brands (Engelbrecht et al., 2021). Many studies have studied customers' responses towards online shopping. According to Guo et al. (2022), there are discrepancies in numerous linkages among diverse groups' attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived satisfaction. It is concluded that the customer satisfaction is positively impacted by product quality, word of mouth and information quality, processing and shipping services and delivery quality, online publicity and brand popularity, and system availability and functioning (Cang & Wang, 2021; Huang et al., 2021). Furthermore, consumers' buying intentions are also positively influenced by online shopping benefits such as cash back incentives and reward points. Customers buying intentions also vary according to socio-demographic factors such as gender, age, education, profession, financial status, knowledge, technological efficacy, and living styles (Augsburger et al., 2020; Deng & Gu, 2021; González et al., 2021; Jiang et al., 2017). In addition, online purchasing intentions and actual behaviour of customers are also influenced by some external objective factors such as offline convenience and weather, as well as the effect of the surrounding environment. The willingness of prospective customers will rise as more customers use online purchasing (Zhao et al., 2017).

## Methodology

This is an exploratory study that aimed to understand the sellers' perceptions regarding the potential of social networking sites towards facilitating a new social commerce platform. Therefore, in-depth expert interviews (Coombes et al., 2009) were conducted with practitioners who sell their products through Live streaming on different social networking sites (cf. Figure 1). The interviews were convened in a semi-structured style (Knox & Burkard, 2009) following a grounded theory approach (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). This means that we started with pre-defined questions and then explored the perceptions, understanding, and experiences of respondents with question probing and fact finding techniques to dig further to their individual relevance and concern. The interviews were conducted between October 2021 to January 2022. Participant search and selection: As the research involved qualitative interviews, the participants were selected through snowball technique. Accordingly, at first few respondents were identified from visiting different social networking sites, and through personal recommendations from family and friends.

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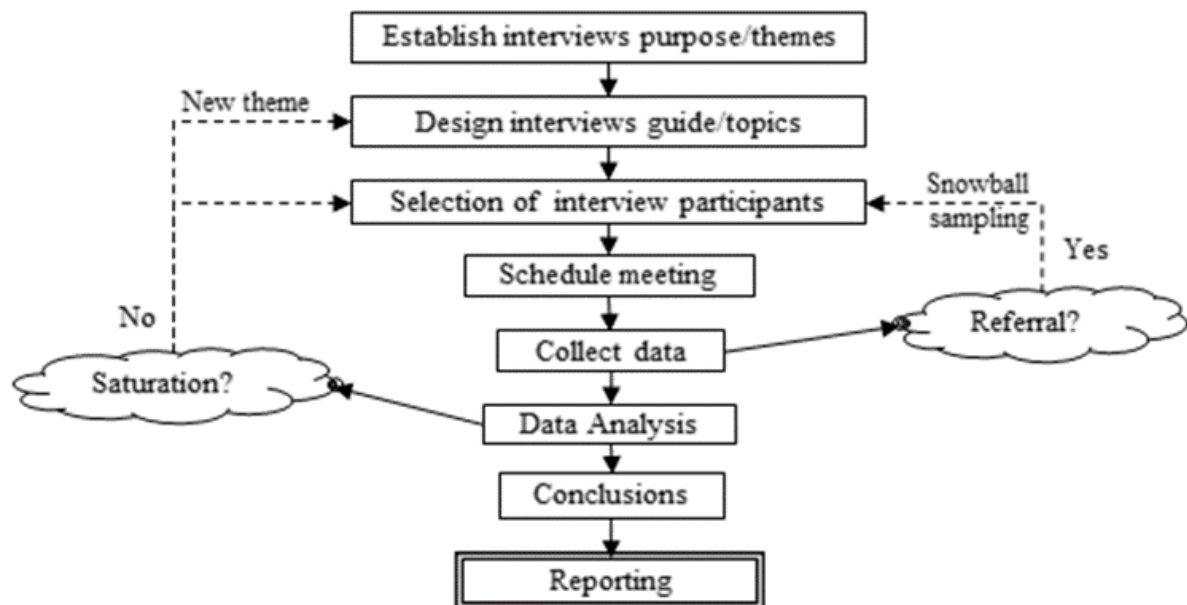
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Afterwards, further recommendations for possible respondents were also solicited from previous interview respondents. The respondents were first contacted for an appointment and upon agreement, interview was scheduled and convened on prescribed time. The expert interviews enable the accumulation of useful information even from very small sample sizes (Kumar, 2011) which does not necessarily need to be quantitatively exhaustive. Also, after interviewing 11 participants, we were receiving similar views so the data saturation was achieved and interview process was completed



*Figure 1 - Research procedure of the study*

Data collection and analysis: The interviews were conducted online over the phone. The interviews convened in a semi-structured style wherein an interview guide was used to assist the discussion. The interview guide consisted of several discussion areas relating to the respondents' demographics and other structural factors, opportunities/facilities of existing SNSs, customer and platform related challenges that they encounter, and the strategies that they employ to cope up with identified challenges and shortcomings and thereby enhance the applicability of SNSs. Interview guide is given in Appendix A. Each interview began with an open introduction of the respondent and their business. Each interview lasted for 15-20 minutes. The interviews were tape-recorded (voice only) with the prior permission of respondents for the future reference during the data analysis. For the data analysis, the interviews were pseudo-transcribed in a spreadsheet. Accordingly, the keywords were used to record answers to the specific questions. In addition, sample extracts from interviews were also recorded to support the interpretations and conclusions drawn herein. Afterwards, the responses to individual questions were analysed and conclusion were drawn with several rounds of group discussion.

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## Results and Discussion

### 4.1. Demographics and Structural Factors of Selling through Live Streaming

Table 1 shows the distribution of interview participants in terms of various structural aspects of their operation. Different structural factors are included from the questionnaire guide and their corresponding categories are solicited through thematic data analysis of interviews data and successively a statistical distribution of interview participants across identified categories are computed and given herein. The structural factors of selling through live streaming videos over SNSs include number of platforms the sellers use, ownership of dedicated business page, main identity, team size, session frequency and average length, average number of viewers in the session, number of customers, prior session announcement, geographic orientation of customers, product range, payment options offered, and presence of physical point of sale of the particular business.

As shown, while selling through live streaming interview participants utilize more than one platform to gain wider visibility and thus cater more customers. Only 3 participants (27.3%) are present on a single platform, the remaining use 2-5 different sites (54.5%) or even more than 5 sites (18.2%). Among these sellers, many (72.2%) have established dedicated business pages on chosen platforms and mainly conduct their activities with a business page identity. It is interesting to note here that out of these only 2 businesses have a physical outlet and the rest are purely online businesses selling products through social media either alone (18.2%) or in a team of 2-5 people (63.6%) or more than 5 people (18.2%). It was reported by the participants that having a dedicated business page enables them to have a business oriented web representation and appear more credible to their customers. This also facilitates them to be in direct communication with their audience, solicit and share customer reviews, and thereby build trust and grow their business. On the other hand, it allows customers to follow the page and stay updated through notification. Sellers leverage this opportunity to announce live selling sessions some time before in order to increase visibility and viewers count.

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Attribute	Scales with distribution across interview sample			
<b>Experience</b>	Up to 1 year 2 (18.2%)	2-5 year experience 5 (45.4%)	6-10 year experience 4 (36.4%)	
<b>Number of sites</b>	1 site 3 (27.3%)	2-5 sites 6 (54.5%)	6-10 sites 2(18.2%)	
<b>Business page ownership</b>	Yes 8 (72.7%)		No 3 (27.3%)	
<b>Main identity</b>	Business page 8 (72.7%)		Personal account 3 (27.3%)	
<b>Team size</b>	1 person 2 (18.2%)	2-5 people 7 (63.6%)	6-10 people 2 (18.2%)	
<b>Session frequency</b>	Once a month 1 (9.1%)	Once a week 1 (9.1%)	Once a day 6 (54.5%)	Multiple time a day 3 (27.3%)
<b>Average session length</b>	Up to 30 minutes 2 (18.2%)	Around 1 hour 3 (27.3%)	1-2 hours 5 (45.4%)	More than 2 hours 1 (9.1%)
<b>Average session viewers</b>	Up to 50 1 (9.1%)	51-100 4 (36.4%)	101-200 5 (45.4%)	More than 200 1 (9.1%)
<b>Prior session announcement</b>	Yes 8 (72.7%)		No 3 (27.3%)	
<b>Number of customers</b>	Up to 50 2 (18.2%)	51-100 5 (45.4%)	101-200 3 (27.3%)	More than 200 1 (9.1%)
<b>Geographic orientation</b>	Local / city level 1 (9.1%)	National 7 (63.6%)	International 3(27.3%)	
<b>Product range</b>	Single product 3 (27.3%)	Multiple products in same category 6 (54.5%)	Multiple products in different categories 2 (18.2%)	
<b>Physical business</b>	Yes 2 (18.2%)		No 9 (9.1%)	
<b>Payment options</b>	Cash on Delivery 2 (18.2%)	Advance payment 2 (18.2%)	Both 7 (63.6%)	

*Table 1 - Interview participants distribution in terms of structural aspects (N = 11)*

In terms of session characteristics, many participants do frequent sessions. About 54.5% participants do a daily session while 27.3 even do multiple session in a day. Average length of individual session is between 1 and 2 hours (54.5%) followed by about 1 hour (27.3%) and about half hour (18.2%). One of

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the participants reported sessions even being longer than two hours on average (9.1%). It was stated by the participants that when showing multiple products or having huge number of viewers, sessions tend to be lengthy as they have to answer all questions, show product as different customers want to see and satisfy them with the quality and all other aspects of products. Majority of participants also reported average number of viewers to be between 51 and 200 (81.8%) and that they sell multiple products either in same category (54.5%) or different categories (18.2%). Furthermore, interviews data shows that majority of online sellers sell their products at the national level and employ both payment models (63.6%); i.e. advance payment and cash on delivery. It was also reported that they have customer count to be between 51 and 200 (72.7%). This need the sessions to be lengthy and descriptive so that many customers can be satisfied with multiple products being displayed in a single session. It was also indicated by the participants that viewers count increases while showing multiple products in a single session as they expect some product to be of their demand and choice there in the session.

#### **4.2. Motivating Factors, Challenges, and Strategies of Selling through Live Streaming**

From the content analysis of interviews data, it was revealed that social networking sites are an effective and very useful platform for the small and home-based businesses. Interview participants reported that main advantages of leveraging these platforms as social commerce tool through live streaming are their free of cost availability, easy adaptability, facility for hosting business pages, and international accessibility.

The foremost advantage that the interviews reported is that the phenomenon is available free of cost so that anyone can readily start selling over these platforms without any operational investment. Furthermore, operating such a method requires very minimal technical skills or knowledge so anyone capable of handling a smart device (phone or computer), an internet connection, and a social network account can start their business. Furthermore, the business page paradigm supported over these sites is very helpful in developing a business identity in a similar manner to a physical outlet. Having a business page identity allows the sellers to remain in constant communication with their customers, solicit and publish customer reviews, announce live session and provide pre-recorded videos and pictures of relevant products at one place.

“It is very easy. You do not need to learn anything difficult or invest much money. You just need a phone and know how to use it and you are ready to go. You can create business page and start your business with live videos by yourself.”

*(Interview respondent)*

Another key advantage of these sites mentioned by interviewees is their international accessibility. Interview participants reported that as social networking sites are used worldwide without any geographic borders, it is very convenient for them to target international customers and sell their product globally. This aids them in approaching a greater number of viewers and ultimately the customers without any extra financial or operational costs. As there is real-time streaming, sellers can easily switch between different languages with relevance to each viewer/customer and thus be able to deal with customers from different nationalities in an efficient and effective manner. Another benefit of using social networking sites for live selling mentioned by interviewees is their facility to share live streaming videos in different user groups. By sharing videos, the viewers are multiplied and a broader reach is achieved. Furthermore, sellers believe that they can easily expand their businesses through this channel by putting in more efforts as the external factors and financial obstacles are less influential in such a way and success and failure of business mainly depends on their dedication, efforts, and strategies. Also, selling through live streaming is seen very useful to the sellers who wants to

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do home-based business and cannot go out of their homes.

“If you ask me, what I like most is that here you can reach more customers. More viewers from different areas of world means more buyers and more business success.”

*(Interview respondent)*

Regarding the challenges that the sellers face in leveraging social networking sites as a platform for social commerce through live streaming, several challenges have been identified from interviews data; i.e. lack of exclusiveness with regard to selling activities such as absence of transaction support and no customer/client management mechanism, difficulty in building customers’ trust, fake buyers, and disturbing and negative viewers.

The first and foremost platform-related challenge that the sellers face while selling through live streaming is the non-exclusivity of social networking sites with regard to selling activities. It was discussed that as social networking sites are mainly general user interaction oriented and live videos are supported in a very basic format, they lack the support for selling activities in a specific way. For example, there is no support for handling transactions within the platform. Also, there is lack of support for client management. The account interacted with or fake account blocked in a single live are not inherited in future lives. Each live session is handled separately and there is no tracking or general management facilities. It is believed that live streaming itself supports the half way business only. In order to deal with this, sellers leverage off the shelf payment (online transactions) and client and order management applications in addition to live streaming videos to support the entire business process.

“It is very general. You have to manage most of the business yourself. You can show product and interact with user but cannot handle payment and other options inside.”

*(Interview respondent)*

The second challenge of selling through live streaming is the customers’ trust. It is of prime importance and very difficult at the same time to build trust of customers. As most of online sellers have no physical outlet or long selling history, they face difficulty in building trust of customers and convincing them to buy from them. In this regard, various fears play their role at the customers’ end such as concerns about product quality, fear of not timely and improper delivery, concerns about damages and return policy, etc. Failing to build trust means business failure. In this regard, the main strategy that the sellers adopt is to offer quality products and maintain reasonable prices especially at the start of the business. As one of the interviewees reported:

“Initially, I tried to maintain good quality, and also offer cheap prices. This makes them to buy. Good quality is very important and that’s the only way to gain and retain customers with you.”

*(Interview respondent)*

By offering quality products at reasonable prices, they can get few customers to buy from them and then when they are satisfied they continue buying and also their reviews and feedback during live sessions support the trust of new customers and thereby business credibility is achieved. In addition to this, sellers also offer some discounted items during the initial business period and some gifts or cash back rewards to new customers so that the customers are motivated to buy once and then they are satisfied with the product and continue buying on regular basis. This, in addition to building trust, also helps them to deal with ever

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competitive business in online sphere. Sellers have witnessed that as the phenomenon of selling through live streaming on social media is getting popularity, the business competition is rapidly growing. Therefore, they have to take measures for attracting and keeping with more customers. As one interview participant mentioned that:

“There is a lots of competition. I want to gain more viewers to my live sessions to have more customers. And, I am continuously thinking about how to do this.”

*(Interview respondent)*

The third challenge is that the sellers struggle with dealing with fake buyers. The viewers who joined live streams, order items but when items are shipped they either do not receive the parcel or their given address and other contact details prove to be fake. This is mentioned as most important challenge by most of the interviewees of this study. Because of these fake buyers, sellers also find it difficult to take order of everyone and they believe there is not much they can do about this while using social networking sites for social commerce. Encountering with fake buyers brings financial loss to the sellers in terms of order processing and shipping costs as well as selected items are kept reserved for some time and therefore sellers have to resell them at a later time. This results in wastage of money as well as time and efforts. As a respondent of the interviews mentioned that:

“There are fake buyers. They order but when the parcel arrives, they do not receive. I have faced this problem several times. And this is a loss for us.”

*(Interview respondent)*

One strategy that the sellers have adopted to deal with such fake buyers is to ask the buyers for advance payment. Few of the sellers ask for full payment in advance, few ask for half payment in advance, whilst the others ask for just the delivery charges in advance. Sellers believe that when people pay in advance they are bound to be genuine buyers and parcel is likely to be received. However, this also has some disadvantage. Most of the buyers prefer cash on delivery so when asked for advance payment, they are hesitant to buy. Thus, this works two ways. Sellers deal with fake buyers by advance payment but then buyers (even the serious buyers) may doubt on genuineness of the sellers and avoid buying fearing that their advance may be just carried away and items are not provided. Another challenge linked in this regard is that some buyers order the products during live sessions but then while conforming the order engage in bargaining and likewise. This makes it difficult for the sellers as they cannot offer discount on individual basis and as a result the buyers just cancel the order. Herein, even the advance payment cannot help and sellers have to resell the items at a later time.

“Because of the fake buyers, I implement advance payment. I suggest there should be half advance payment at least so that to keep fake buyers away.”

*(Interview respondent)*

The fourth challenge that the sellers face is the disturbing viewers during live sessions. Such viewers joined the live sessions and then start making negative and offending comments about the product or the seller. They disturb the sellers and try to mislead other viewers with fake reviews and fake claims of being dissatisfied customers. Sellers get disturbed by such comments and strive to clarify these false claims and guide serious buyers more than focusing on defining their products. As one interview participant mentioned that:

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“Bad comments and negativity coming in live sessions disturbs a lot. This is, I believe, main obstacle I face in selling through live streaming on social media.”

*(Interview respondent)*

Interviewees mentioned that initially they try to ignore such comments, but when there need may be they block such viewers in their live stream to minimize the distortions. But, one shortcoming there face therein is that these blocked persons can join live with different profiles/IDs as it is very easy to create profiles (may be fake profiles) on these platforms. And, the same viewers may also join future live sessions.

“Negative comments are obvious to every session. I simply try to ignore them to the possible level, and then just block them.”

*(Interview respondent)*

## 5. CONCLUSION

The current study through the qualitative analysis of interviews data gathered from online sellers of a developing country of Pakistan has revealed that social networking sites are perceived as a useful platform of social commerce because of their free of cost availability, easy adaptability, facility for hosting business pages, and international accessibility. The study has determined that there are four main challenges that the sellers face during selling through live streaming. First, the social networking sites offer no exclusive business specific support for live streaming videos. Second, building customers’ trust is difficult as there is no physical outlet available in most cases. Third, there are some fake buyers who order products but fail to receive the parcel. They bring loss to the finance and also the time and efforts of the sellers. Last, there are disturbing viewers who bring in bad comments and negativity to live session and make it difficult for the sellers to proceed and focus on their product demonstrations. To cope with these identified challenges, the sellers leverage off the shelf add-on application to support the business process, offer cash back rewards or other gifts and maintain high possible quality at reasonable rates (to build trust and win in business competition), ask for full or partial payment in advance (to deal with fake buyers), and simply ignore and block disturbing viewers in their live stream.

### 5.1. Research Implications

The findings of this study should be useful for the social media enthusiasts in understanding how these platforms are perceived useful and determining how people interact within these platforms for carrying out their social commerce activities. The study offers foundation information and open further research avenues on the topic of social commerce. Similarly, the results of this study should aid the social media platform/application developers to understand the users’ satisfaction with existing platforms and to conceptualize, develop, and implement new applications that can support selling through live streaming in more effective way.

### 5.2. Limitations and Future Research Agenda

The conclusions drawn herein are based on 11 interviews. The sample size is apparently small; however, as the data saturation was achieved and afterwards similar views were being generated by later interviews, the authors believe that the data was enough to reveal key facts of the paradigm. Further research on larger samples is, however, necessary to verify the generalizability and conclusiveness of the research findings. Future research may also be conducted in other regions to discover any more challenges and strategies of handling the identified challenges of selling through live streaming.

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