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*Indexterms:* social media, photo posting, social commerce.

*Classification:* LCC Code: HF5549

*Language:* English



Great Britain  
Journals Press

LJP Copyright ID: 146441

Print ISSN: 2633-2299

Online ISSN: 2633-2302

London Journal of Research in Management & Business

Volume 24 | Issue 4 | Compilation 1.0





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**Indexterms:** social media, photo posting, social commerce.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The emergence of Web 2.0 technologies has significantly transformed the landscape of online communication and social interaction, which bring about online social media including social network sites (SNS) (e.g., Meta and LinkedIn), micro blogging (e.g., X and Threads), photo sharing platform (e.g., Instagram and Flickr), and video sharing site (e.g., YouTube), has changed the way we live our lives [1, 2]. Social media provides an ideal platform for sharing interests and facilitating social interaction amongst groups with common thoughts on a particular topic [3]. According to recent data, the rate of posting photos online in Britain has continued to increase, with a significant rise noted over the past few years. In 2024, the rate of posting photos online is around 70%, up from 64% in 2013. This trend reflects the growing integration of visual content sharing in daily online activities, with platforms like Instagram and Facebook playing a crucial role [2].

With its user base exceeding 300 million, Instagram has emerged as the leading platform for photo sharing in recent times. The impact of photography on social media cannot be understated, as it has proven to be a powerful tool for communication and the shaping of individual identities. With its widespread popularity, Instagram has revolutionized the way people interact and express themselves online. The platform's user-friendly interface and plethora of filters and editing tools have made it easier than ever for individuals to showcase their creativity and share their experiences through captivating visuals. Furthermore, Instagram's emphasis on visual content has given rise to a new wave of influencers and artists who have leveraged the

platform to build personal brands and connect with a global audience. As Instagram continues to evolve and innovate, it is evident that the role of photography in shaping digital culture will only continue to grow. The platform's ability to facilitate meaningful connections and enable self-expression makes it a vital component of the modern social media landscape. [4].

The prevalence of photo posting on social media has significantly impacted consumer behavior and marketing strategies. With the emergence of specialized platforms and tools for social media marketing, companies recognize the importance of leveraging customer opinions and recommendations embedded within these photos. Whether showcasing a new product, highlighting a unique service, or sharing an enjoyable experience, individuals actively post photos to express their consumer experiences. As a result, companies are increasingly focusing on developing social commerce strategies that capitalize on the vast amounts of customer insights available through these visual posts. The visually engaging nature of photos on social media has created a new landscape for businesses to navigate, prompting them to reevaluate their marketing approaches and prioritize their presence on these platforms. Consequently, the activity of posting photos on social media has become a critical consideration for companies seeking to connect with and influence consumers in the digital age effectively.

Prior studies of information systems (IS), communication, and psychology fields have discussed photo-posting behavior differently [5]. Some IS studies have stressed the functionality and usability of photo posting from media characteristics [6, 7]. Their studies focus on information technology (IT), such as tag and location-based services to enhance SNS functions. Meanwhile, several studies have concentrated on determining the basic antecedent variables for posting photos on social media arising from social factors [8, 9]. Their studies have confirmed social media photos as a practical and informative means of interpreting self-image, interpersonal impressions, and identity management [10, 11]. Their findings show that privacy [12, 13],

personality [4, 14], and image strategy [12] influence users to upload photos and then present themselves.

The examination of users' posting photo behavior on social media is motivated by at least two significant reasons. Firstly, in terms of media characteristics, image-based communication offers a diverse range of visual excitement and cognitive stimulation, capable of conveying a wealth of information beyond what text-based communication can achieve. With features such as tagging friends, sharing with others, and placing check-ins, it is no surprise that an increasing number of users are opting to post photos rather than written content on social networks. Additionally, the ease and convenience of uploading photos compared to crafting written posts enable users to update their status on social networking sites more efficiently. While some studies have delved into online photo-related activities, there remains a gap in research focusing on the factors influencing photo posting behavior. Secondly, from a social process perspective, while some individuals may showcase their entire daily lives on the internet, most users tend to share their experiences and information with others selectively. Previous research has explored the impact of self-disclosure on social media usage; however, further investigation into the interpersonal factors that influence photo sharing is a critical area for exploration.

The field of social media research has seen a significant number of studies aimed at understanding the various factors that influence user behavior. However, there has been a noticeable gap in the literature when it comes to the specific phenomenon of photo posting activities. This study seeks to address this gap by introducing a new model that focuses on image-based communication on social media platforms. The primary objective is to empirically examine how characteristics of media and social factors impact individuals' photo posting behavior. In order to gain a comprehensive understanding of this research area, the study will integrate two crucial elements of social media: media functions and social processes. By doing so, we aim to shed light on the complex interplay

between these factors and their influence on users' engagement in photo sharing on social media. This research is expected to contribute to the existing body of knowledge by providing valuable insights into the motivations and behaviors underlying photo posting activities, ultimately enhancing our understanding of user engagement on social media platforms [15].

In considering the concept of media function, it is essential to recognize the significance of individuals' media selection and use. A comprehensive understanding of individuals' IT selection necessitates a simultaneous examination of multiple theories, particularly in light of the increasingly diverse functions and multifaceted roles that today's technologies offer. By acknowledging the complex interplay of various theoretical perspectives, we can gain valuable insights into the dynamic nature of media function and its implications for individuals' interactions with technology. This holistic approach enables us to appreciate the nuanced factors that influence media selection and use, encompassing considerations such as cognitive processes, social dynamics, and technological affordances. By integrating these diverse theories, we can develop a more comprehensive framework for understanding the intricate relationship between individuals and their chosen media. Ultimately, this multifaceted perspective provides a solid foundation for exploring the evolving landscape of media function in contemporary society and its impact on individuals' experiences with technology [16]. Therefore, this study relies on three theories in the field of media: social presence theory, media richness theory, and use and gratification theory (U&G). Furthermore, with respect to the social dimension of social media, prior research has highlighted broad social reasons for using social media, such as a general sense of motivation to participate or of belonging and influence [17, 18]. The concept of self-disclosure states that in any type of social interaction, people wish to control the impressions other people form of them [15]. Self-disclosure has been considered a function of contextual properties such as relationship quality and communication context [19]. People often

talk or write about themselves or something related to themselves proudly or self-admiringly. Hence, this study addresses self-disclosure and boast motive as a social dimension to explore the effect on photo posting intention.

To address these gaps, the present study examines the following relationships: Firstly, it seeks to understand the impact of photo posting intention on users' social commerce intentions within the realm of social media. Secondly, the study aims to explore the influence of social presence, media richness, and gratification derived from social media on an individual's intention to post photos. Lastly, the study will examine how self-disclosure and boast motive towards social media can impact a user's intention to post photos. By addressing these relationships, the study aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of user behavior on social media platforms and its implications for social commerce.

## II. LINKING THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND RESEARCH MODEL

We adopt the media dimension and social dimension as antecedents of the behavior dimension. In addition, cultural differences are also examined in the current study. The research model, divided into three dimensions, is illustrated in Figure 1.

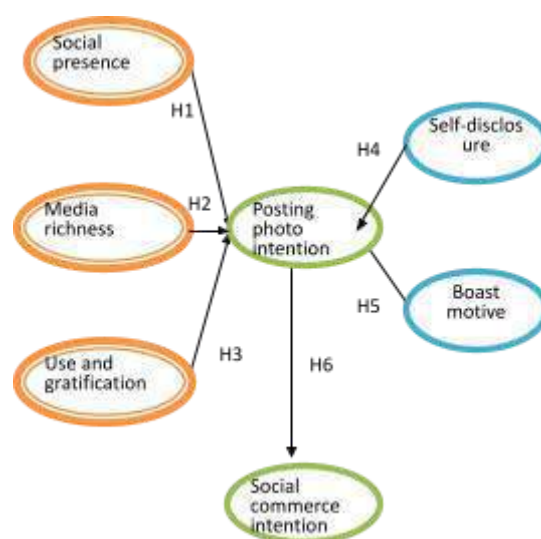


Figure 1: Research model



The significance of social presence in a virtual environment cannot be overstated, as it signifies the existence of direct or indirect human interaction. This concept has been extensively utilized to examine user engagement within the context of social networking sites (SNS), primarily due to the fact that individuals engaging in SNS activities are able to communicate in a manner that closely resembles face-to-face interaction. The presence of other individuals in a virtual setting not only adds a sense of human connection, but also enhances the overall user experience. This is particularly relevant in the context of SNS, where the ability to interact and engage with others plays a pivotal role in shaping the platform's appeal and utility. As such, understanding and fostering social presence within virtual environments, especially within the realm of social networking, remains a crucial consideration for researchers and practitioners alike [20] [21-23]. Shen et al. [20] defined social presence as the awareness of the other sentient beings accompanied by affective and cognitive engagement with others in computer-mediated social spaces. They proposed that three dimensions (i.e. awareness, affective social presence and cognitive social presence) are identified to capture a user's holistic experience with the computer-mediated social space [20]. In order to accomplish this objective, it is imperative to cultivate a high level of social presence within the platform. This will enable users to effectively articulate their thoughts, obtain relevant information, engage in meaningful interactions, and forge valuable social connections. By fostering an environment rich in social presence, individuals will feel empowered to express themselves authentically, thereby contributing to a vibrant and dynamic community. Furthermore, the facilitation of information exchange and seamless interaction among users will serve to enhance the overall user experience, ultimately leading to the establishment of robust social networks. It is through the cultivation of such a conducive environment that the platform can truly fulfill its potential as a hub for meaningful social engagement and connectivity [24]. We assume that social presence plays an important

role in the intention to post online photos, which leads to our first hypothesis.

H1: Social presence of social media is positively associated with users' photo posting intention.

The richness of a media is based on the following four criteria. First, the capacity for immediate feedback. This refers to the speed and quality of common interpretation transmitted through the medium. Second, the capacity to transmit multiple cues. An array of cues, including physical presence, voice inflections, body gestures, words, and numbers, even graphic symbols, facilitate conveyance of interpretation information. Third, language variety. It means the level of concept conveyance. For example, numbers and formulas could provide greater precision, but natural language conveys a broader set of concepts and ideas. Fourth, the capacity of the medium to have a personal focus. This represents to either the conveying of emotions and feelings, or the ability of the medium to be tailored to the specific needs and perspectives of the receiver [25]. Similar, the high degree of media richness build more real online environment and then facilitate users to express themselves and interact with each other by posting photos.

H2: Media richness of social media is positively associated with user's photo posting intention.

A large number of previous studies have taken the uses and gratification approach to define the motivational factors of users' Internet engagements based on psychological needs and the gratifications they seek [4]. Since U&G has been considered a useful approach for understanding users' motivations in the context of media [22, 26], many research employ it to understand users' motivation of SNS usage [18, 21, 22, 27-31]. Past studies indicate that users' gratifications influence SNS users' continuance intention and then identify categories of needs driving SNS usage, including emotional needs, cognitive needs, and social needs [32]. Lee and Ma [33] show that individuals who are driven by gratifications of information seeking, entertainment, socializing, and status seeking are more likely to share news in social media platforms. Echoing previous literature, this study

posits that users are goal-directed in their behavior and are aware of their needs [21]. We assume informativeness and playfulness as the U&G dimension to influence the use of social media.

H3: User's perceive gratification of social media is positively associated with user's photo posting intention.

To date, there is a dearth of prior findings and established theoretical underpinnings that help us examine online self-disclosure [34]. Sharma and Crossler [35] find that intention to self-disclose in social commerce is affected by privacy apathy and benefits of disclosure and fairness of information exchange. Ko's research [36] also shows that the habit of self-disclosure and perceived self-benefits of social media are the major factors affecting continuous self-disclosure. We propose that to build and shape their social networks, people must prove themselves attractive to potential network members. In social media, self-disclosure is an essential element of this process, and is part of user's motive to initiate or deepen social relationships [37]. Thus, it is proposed that:

H4: User's self-disclosure is positively associated with user's photo posting intention toward social media.

Social media user can make himself look good, pick the best picture of himself, put on a cool skin, show off his coolest friends and just look fun [38]. There are plenty of ways to make sure people know how brilliantly you are doing in life. Several studies indicate that show-off motivation influence users' check-in intention when they have holiday or go to restaurant. Wang and Stefanone [39] suggest that personality traits of narcissism influences self-disclosure, in turn, impacts the intensity of check-ins on facebook. Su's [40] study indicates that show-off motivation affect the check-in intention toward social media. Therefore we expect:

H5: User's boast motive is positively associated with user's photo posting intention toward social media.

Social media have distinct features that make them unique and highlight the reasons for their successful growth in most countries. These features of social media are construction of a list of other users with whom a user shares messages, and visibility and traverse of connected links that enable users to extend their social networks beyond their direct ties [41, 42]. Social commerce reflects the delivery of e-commerce activities and transactions via SNS environments [43]. Social media not only enable users to build various social relationships [44], but also allow them to develop transactional relationships, such as participating actively in the marketing and selling of products and services, in terms of social commerce [43, 45]. The popularity of social media has increased the opportunities of social commerce as it now drives the purchasing decision of the majority of buyers [35]. Therefore, the hypothesis is:

H6: User's photo posting intention toward social media is positively associated with user's social commerce intention.

### III. DATA ANALYSIS

Social presence is measured using items adapted from Gefen and Straub [46]. Media richness is measured using items adapted from Daft and Lengel [47]. Regarding construct of use and gratification, items for measuring playfulness are adapted from Wu et al. [48] and Dholaka et al. [49], while informativeness is measured by items adapted from Chang and Zhu [50]. Items for measuring self-disclosure are from Ko [36]. Photo posting intention and social commerce intention are measured using items adapted from Liang et al. [51]. Besides, items for measuring boast motive are based on Su [40] and modified to fit the context of photo posting activities.

Except for demographic questions, all items are measured using a five-point Likert scale with anchors ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Data analysis was carried out to validate our research model, and SmartPLS [52] was used to analyze user's photo posting intention.

The adequacy of the measurement model was evaluated based on the dual criteria of reliability

and validity. Reliability is examined using the composite reliability values. As shown in Table 1, all the reliability values exceed 0.7, meeting the suggested threshold. Beside, convergent validity is adequate when constructs have an average variance extracted (AVE) of at least 0.5 [53]. All AVEs in this study ranged from 0.65 to 0.84, suggesting the principal constructs capture a higher amount of construct-related variance than error variance.

Table 1: Reliability and AVE

	AVE	Composite Reliability	R Square
Self-disclosure	0.534	0.773	
Boast motive	0.715	0.881	
Posting photo intention	0.796	0.939	0.712
Social commerce intention	0.712	0.880	0.685
Use and gratification	0.755	0.902	
Social presence	0.700	0.874	
Media richness	0.702	0.903	

The PLS-SEM approach was used to test the hypothesized relationships in the research model. Figure 2 illustrates the estimated coefficients in the structural model.

Social presence as well as use and gratification positively influenced posting photo intention ( $\beta=0.530, 0.273$ ;  $t=8.697, 4.265$ , respectively), meaning that H1 and H3 were supported. The path between boast motive and posting photo intention was significant ( $\beta=0.105, t=2.286$ ), supporting H5. Social commerce intention was strongly predicted by posting photo intention ( $\beta=0.828$ ;  $t=32.387$ ). Therefore, H6 was supported.

The path coefficients indicated that media richness and self-disclosure do not exert a significant impact on posting photo intention ( $\beta=0.011, 0.023$ ;  $t=0.247, 0.526$ , respectively), meaning H2 and H4 were not supported.

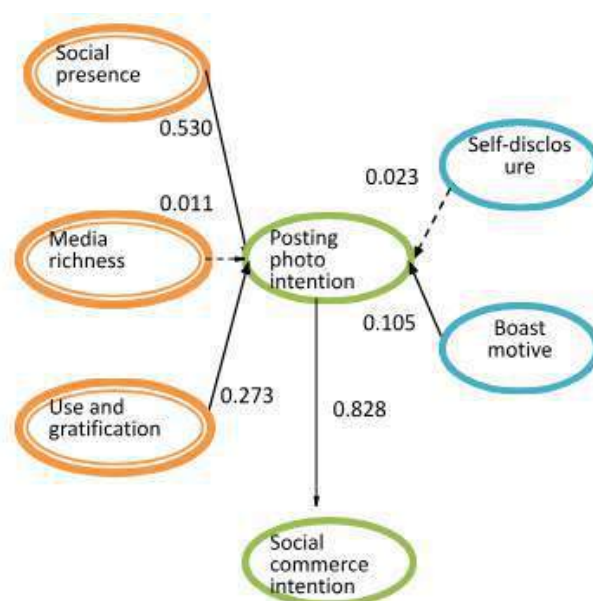


Figure 2: Path analysis

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The study conducted successfully validated the significant impact of photo posting intention on users' social commerce intentions towards social media. In addition, the research acknowledged the influence of social presence and the use of gratification in social media on users' photo posting intention. Furthermore, the study identified that users' boast motive in social media also plays a substantial role in influencing their photo posting intention. These findings have important implications for scholars in the field of e-commerce, as they provide valuable insights into understanding users' social commerce intentions. Additionally, the results presented in this paper offer a foundation for both researchers and social network developers to consider and address the usability of photo posting features on social media platforms. This study contributes to the existing body of knowledge by shedding light on the intricate dynamics between user behavior, social media features, and social commerce intentions, thereby providing a basis for further exploration and development in this area.

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