

Live shopping practices: The reality of mediated conventional stores

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ABSTRACT

Keywords

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Digital Transactions
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Online transactions are the best choice for today's digital society. Various e-commerce platforms available make online transaction activities easier to do. One of them is through the TikTok platform, which was originally known as a platform that provides a collection of entertainment videos, then transformed into an e-commerce platform with its TikTok Shop feature. The latest digital transaction that also exists on TikTok that we can feel now is live shopping. In the practice of live shopping, there is a practice that is contrary to the practice of previous online transactions, namely the presence of physical stores but mediated. In this paper, we will describe the practice of live shopping using qualitative descriptive research. The data collection technique used is netnography by observing online transaction practices during live shopping on TikTok. Online transactions that occur through TikTok Shop on its live shopping service can increase the desire of users / buyers when deciding to buy products. This happens because there are more real factors such as shopping at conventional stores but this practice is through smartphones. Another development of the latest online transactions through live shopping is the existence of business opportunities that provide complete tools for UMKM and local brands to increase income through live shopping practices.

1. Introduction

The development of technology as it is today has a real impact on all of us. One technology that we are very likely to use now is social media. Through social media as users we can do a variety of activities. Starting from the ease of interacting remotely, for example through WhatsApp Groups, groups of mothers can still connect and discuss each other about maternal and child health (Wenerda, 2019). Through WhatsApp Groups, fellow fanbases connect with each other, sharing information about their idols (Wenerda & Widayanti, 2021). Through WhatsApp Groups, residents can coordinate well during tense conditions when the COVID-19 pandemic hits (Wenerda, 2022). Still during the past COVID-19 pandemic, concertgoers can still enjoy their hobbies through virtual concerts (An Nur et al., 2022). Furthermore, with technology, we can also use various platforms to meet the needs of life online, ranging from the use of marketplace platforms for transactions to digital wallet platforms as payment methods (Darmawan & Wenerda, 2022).

From the last issue that with today's technology makes it easier for us to get anything we want. We have known this benefit since the COVID-19 pandemic hit the world. The pandemic has made activities more limited to do. Moreover, physical activities such as shopping—have been restricted during the pandemic. A possible alternative during a pandemic is to utilize digital transactions so that fulfillment of needs is guaranteed (Monggilo et al., 2021). The advantage when using digital transactions is that the price of goods obtained is cheaper when compared to conventional stores. This happens because digital transaction platforms offer a variety of discounts and promos for buyers. These two points are excellent points offered to its users. With this offer, BPS conducted a survey that almost 90% of Indonesians have made digital transactions. The transaction is carried out with various

platforms available today from marketplaces such as: Shopee, Tokopedia, Buka Lapak, Lazada, Blibli, JD.ID, Orami, Sociolla, Zalora, and others. The digital wallets that are alternative payment methods consist of ShopeePay, OVO, GoPay, DANA, LinkAja, and so on.

Shopee, Tokopedia, Buka Lapak, and so on are platforms that since the beginning of their emergence have acted as marketplaces. If you refer to the definition, a marketplace is a platform that offers a place to sell for sellers to peddle their products and services to buyers / clients. Most products and services sold come from external parties of the platform, although the platform also participates in peddling products and services to buyers or clients (Kawa & Wałęsiak, 2019). Sellers choose to use lokapasar in peddling their products and services supposedly because they can reduce operational costs that are usually incurred if opening a conventional store. For the sake of efficiency and profitability, they choose to increase promotions at marketplaces so that revenue generation is also maximized (Pranashop, 2019). From the other side as a buyer, the presence of a marketplace makes it very easy for users to make buying and selling transactions from anywhere and anytime (Rosusana, 2008). For example, buyers want to find products that are rarely sold in stores in general, in the marketplace we can find what they want to look for. Payment methods that can be used by users if they use marketplaces during online transactions are also more guaranteed security (Mustikasari, 2019) compared to making digital transactions on online stores outside the marketplace. Users will be directed directly to the official account of the marketplace if the transaction will be made.

The existence of the marketplace mentioned above was followed by TikTok social media. TikTok is an app created by a Chinese company, ByteDance Inc that was officially released in 2016. At the beginning of its presence in Indonesia, this application was blocked by Kominfo in 2018 because it contained negative content (Andriani et al., 2023). The initial condition of TikTok is as a social media that can facilitate a variety of creativity of its users through interesting videos. This creativity is poured by users of various age groups. However, lately TikTok has made a new innovation by inviting its users to create creative videos to be continued as a commercial service in its new feature, TikTok Shop. This feature has started to be used by TikTok social media users from 2021 to fulfill their shopping desires (Ajizah & Nugroho, 2023).

Boomlerg TikTok Shop conducted selective testing of several countries in Europe and Indonesia. This test was conducted to expand TikTok Shop users who compete fiercely with Facebook and Instagram. Another effort made by TikTok Shop in grabbing the attention of users for digital transactions is the quality of service (Nasution, Efendy; Lesmana, 2018). The quality of service from sellers is the final benchmark for buyers / consumers in digital transactions. In addition to service, price and promotions are also important considerations for buyers. The final price determination will be linked to the value that the buyer will receive after making a digital transaction. Meanwhile, promotion is also an important part of attracting consumers.

An interesting phenomenon that we can observe from TikTok Shop is the live shopping feature. In this feature, there is a matter of service quality, price, and promotion that is the final consideration of buyers when deciding to shop online. Starting from the service provided by the seller when consumers ask to show the selected goods on the storefront. Then regarding prices, during live shopping there are different prices between storefront prices and during live commerce. Prices during live commerce are cheaper when compared to storefront prices. Not infrequently buyers also get a variety of promos if they buy during live shopping. This condition certainly affects the buyer's decision. Through these three factors, it becomes a big consideration so that digital transactions take place through TikTok Shop compared to ordinary transactions.

The phenomenon of digital transactions through live shopping features does not only occur on TikTok Shop. The live shopping feature in digital transactions is also carried out by Shopee, Tokopedia, and Lazada. The emergence of live shopping has proven to boost sales on marketplace platforms (Marta, 2021). But in this article, which will be described only on TikTok Shop live shopping because of the changes that occurred on TikTok which was originally only a social media but added the shop feature to its update. In addition, there are security factors that are considered by users / buyers when transacting online. With this factor, it can increase user confidence when making transactions (Park & Kim, 2003). TikTok is still perceived by users in terms of maintaining privacy when transacting online. According to that, 50% of users admit TikTok can keep this in check (Endarwati, Esti Tri; Ekawarti, 2021).

2. Method

This study used a qualitative research approach. The type of approach used is qualitative descriptive with the type of research, namely explanatory research. The data collection method in this study was participant observation on TikTok social media / netnography. Netnografi comes from the words internet and ethnography. Briefly, this method can be interpreted as an ethnographic method carried out on life in the virtual world. Netnography includes observational research of participants in the online world whose communication is mediated by computers as a source of data. Another name for netnography is digital ethnography or virtual ethnography (Gatut Priyowidodo, 2020). In this study, the netnographic form carried out was that the author observed online transaction practices that occurred on TikTok Shop social media through its live commerce feature.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1. Live Shopping Presence in Indonesia

The increase in internet usage in Indonesia has also encouraged the growth of existing marketplaces. If referring to the e-Conomy SEA 2020 report, the market in Indonesia will reach 53 billion US dollars. Seeing this forecast conveyed, market players continue to organize strategies so that there are changes in the shopping behavior of the Indonesian people. Various initiatives to feature innovations on the platform are always created to improve people's shopping experience online. One of them is live shopping. It is predicted that the live shopping method is the future of the marketplace. Real-time interaction is the main attraction with increased engagement between sellers and buyers actively compared to storefront shopping.

Live shopping or according to McKinsey is mentioned as the practice of live commerce (but later in this article the author will mention it as a live shopping term) on It's Showtime! How Live Commerce is Transforming The Shopping Experience was pioneered by Taobao Live Ababa in May 2016 in China. The existence of live shopping in China has changed the landscape of the retail industry and become a major sales center within five years. Live shopping is believed to be an opportunity for brands and e-commerce platforms. If you refer to China's experience through live shopping, it already reached 10 to 20 percent of all e-commerce in 2016 (Marta, 2021). Especially for users of the live shopping feature, according to Timothy Astandu that live shopping from Shopee is the most frequently used live shopping, which is as much as 69%. Then followed by TikTok Live 25%, Tokopedia Play 4% and finally followed by Lazlive as much as 2% (Vidita, 2023). For product categories that use live shopping, the most frequent use are fashion and beauty products.

If you look at live shopping practices further in recent years, this e-commerce model is a strategic marketing tool that is fully accepted by the industry. In practice, sellers do not need direct outlets/stores, but businesses/industries that are carried out can be displayed live. In theory it is almost as practical as shopping offline, that one can see directly the products offered, choose the desired model, try on sizes, and know the quality of the goods directly. Unlike if transactions are carried out online, customers can only carry out these practices through their smartphones without having to leave the house. But there are different things when compared to conventional transactions. Not a few people are deceived because the product is not as expected.

Live shopping offers almost the same interaction if shopping is done conventionally. It's just that this transaction is mediated by technology, namely the internet. This feature allows merchants to explain the products sold directly to buyers just like shopping conventionally in the market. In the hope that such a way can reduce the doubts of buyers when they decide to buy something. Word of mouth is one of the concepts that are the advantages of live shopping. Word of mouth through live shopping refers to the exchange of opinions, recommendations between engaged shoppers in real-time during live shopping. Through the word of mouth practice of an influencer, TikTok users/buyers with sellers can provide feedback, questions, and recommendations (Rifani et al., 2023). Word of mouth through live TikTok shop can influence the perception and decision of TikTok Shop users and this is the virtue of live shopping.

With regard to word of mouth that we can observe through live shopping practices both on TikTok Live and others, sellers are in control of sales success during live shopping. When referring to the concept of impression management conveyed by Goffman, sellers must be able to manage the course of live shopping. Because the management of the impression will be directly proportional to the buyer's decision when buying the products offered. Goffman mentioned that there are several elements in the front stage that involve characters (sellers) and audiences (buyers), namely acting venues, restricted acting, settings / settings, one's appearance of self, and equipment that can express themselves (Goffman, 1959).

In the context of word of mouth relevant to Goffman's front stage elements are the seller's acting, the seller's appearance, and the equipment of expressing himself. The implementation of acting for sellers is how the seller's act can serve the buyer when the buyer wants to show the selected goods from the storefront. However, the conditions that are happening in the seller during live shopping must be ruled out. Limited time during live shopping will be very detrimental saying the seller's condition is not physically or mentally healthy. Meanwhile, the appearance of sellers during live shopping can also be implemented by presenting themselves as well as possible. Attractive performances from sellers will influence the audience / audience / buyers more confident when they watch live shopping presented. And finally, the implementation of self-expression equipment is that the variety of products sold can be partially demonstrated at a live time. The products sold are arranged in such a way on a display case that can be seen during live shopping. Several points related to the implementation of impression management from Goffman become a tough challenge for live shopping sellers.

3.2. Live Shopping : Online Store Presence as if Real

Online transactions can be done easily today by the digital community, one of which is through marketplaces. Lokapasar is one of the alternatives to today's digital society with the advantages of transacting such as being able to shorten time and place, advanced technology support when transacting because it has attractions such as images, colors, sounds, shapes, and services that can provoke users when buying products (Anugrah, I Made Angga; Priantara, 2018). In addition, the atmosphere of the store is also another thing that can arouse the interest of buyers to make transactions online. The atmosphere of the store that can be done is by manipulating the interior, building design, wall texture, and sound that can be felt by consumers (Daulay, Raihanah; Handayani, Susi; Ningsih, 2021). Attractive store atmosphere design designed by sellers can also affect the interest of buyers / consumers to make online transactions (Soelton, Mochamad; Ramli, Yanto; Wahyono, Tri; Saratian, Eko Tama Putra; Oktaviar Chairiel; Mujadid, 2021). Management of product display arrangements is also another thing that consumers consider. Because the arrangement of product displays can cause a good image of the store that is accepted by consumers. In addition, the arrangement of product displays can also make it easier for buyers / consumers to see and choose the goods or products to be purchased (Dang, Van Thac; Nguyen, Ninh; Wang, 2021).

With regard to the store atmosphere described above for its implementation in live commerce in various marketplaces today it is still relevant. One of the advantages of sellers who open an online store as mentioned above is that they can reduce operational costs by not requiring a physical store, but for current live commerce practices, sellers need a representation of a physical store that is shot by the camera eye that is partially visible during live commerce. Like the following example :

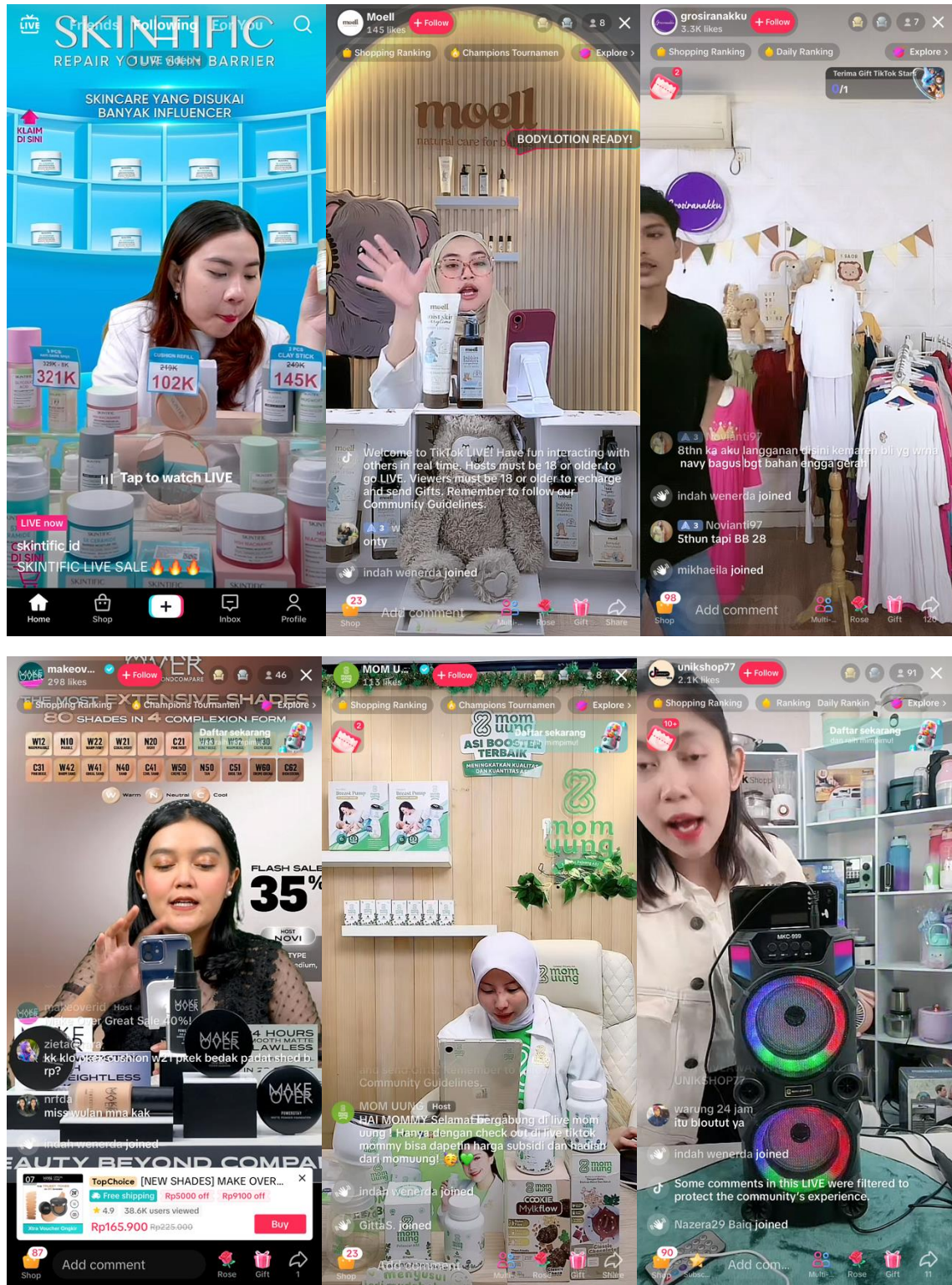


Figure 1. Screenshot Live commerce of multiple brands on TikTok Shop Live

Some of the online store appearances attached above show a representation of each store. Starting from showing the variety of products sold in such a way arranged on the storefront. It even shows the same thing as a conventional store, with shelves used along with products that can be seen by prospective returners on camera during live shopping. For example, a cosmetics store shows that a variety of cosmetic products from one brand are arranged in such a way in front of the seller's screen (assuming that during live shopping buyers can easily see the products sold right in front of their

smartphone screen). So it is with drug stores. What is interesting from the author's observation is that in clothing stores and knick-knacks / household appliances stores, sellers arrange such that the products sold are exactly like in conventional stores in general. The use of clothes hangers that we usually observe when we visit an offline store of a boutique, during live shopping we can also find this condition. Such is also what the author observed in home appliance stores. The shelves for placing goods are used by sellers to represent their online stores as if they were present in the eyes of buyers even though transactions were carried out online. Shop atmosphere (Daulay, Raihanah; Handayani, Susi; Ningsih, 2021) and product display arrangement (Dang, Van Thac; Nguyen, Ninh; Wang, 2021) If you refer to previous research that occurred in conventional stores, according to the author, it is still relevant if it is associated with conditions that occur during live shopping. In addition, in the above point previously referring to Goffman's front stage concept, there are equipment that can be used when expressing yourself. Product displays are also pieces of equipment that can be used in the context of expressing themselves by sellers during live shopping. This can influence buyers to stay for a while paying attention to a store's products amid the tendency to change other stores' live shopping screens.

The practice of live shopping when referring to the concept of computer mediated communication (CMC) is the practice of shopping mediated through computers synchronously (Synchronous Computer Mediated Communication). Shopping practices can occur between sellers and buyers who are intertwined in communication through their respective smartphone devices at the same time. Looking further than the concept CMC consists of communication concepts, mediation concepts, and computer concepts (Hosseini, 2015). The concept of communication is a dynamic, transactional, multifunctional and multi-modal concept. In the practice of live shopping, the concept of communication includes transactional, because there will be the possibility of buyers making transactions when viewing live commerce from a store. Furthermore, the concept of mediation, is psychological, social, and cultural. In the practice of live shopping involving buyers, especially those who decide to buy a product, is one implementation of the concept of mediation. Because buyers who make buying and selling transactions after watching live shopping practices can channel their pleasure by buying certain items. Meanwhile, the concept of computers is the current condition that almost most people have electronic / digital devices that can connect them into various activities. This concept is certainly found in the implementation of live shopping, because with smartphones that most people have today can make people do various activities at one time, including shopping online.

The emergence of live shopping practices by presenting physical stores but mediated by the internet and its devices, actually presents new jobs for those who can see opportunities. Social Bread is one of the social media agencies in Jakarta. This agency is here to help MSMEs and local brands to develop their business on digital platforms. Social Bread helps MSMEs and local brands in creating content in the form of promoting products that can be shared on social media Instagram, TikTok, photshoot, and video shooting (Indonesia, 2023). But not only helping in content creation, Social Bread sees an opportunity with the latest from the marketplace, namely live shopping. Not all MSMEs and local brands are ready for the latest updates presented by lokapasar. Social Bread some time ago released their ability by providing sets (shooting booths), even hosts, and lighting for live shopping along with digital devices for sellers from MSMEs and local brands for live shopping purposes. As the author argued above, that in the practice of live shopping, sellers must have sets and equipment (products to be traded) that are targeted by cameras to convince potential buyers. Indirectly, you have to present a physical store, although not as a whole during live shopping. There is a possibility that this must be a difficulty for some MSMEs and local brands when following the latest from this marketplace. Namun kondisi ini dapat ditepis oleh penemuan Social Bread dalam membantu kesulitan UMKM dan brand lokal untuk terlibat pada keterbaruan lokapasar yakni live shopping. MSMEs and local brands can trust agencies like Social Bread to increase revenue from live shopping. Likewise, with the readiness of word of mouth and in the context of carrying sellers during live shopping, not all sellers are able to place themselves to be hosts during live shopping. Agencies such as Social Bread also serve hosts who act as if they are sellers who are certainly equipped with knowledge of the products to be traded. Such as involving celebrities, influencers, and so on who already have a lot of followers on TikTok. Here are some screenshots of the author for Social Bread releasing live shopping services for MSMEs and local brands :

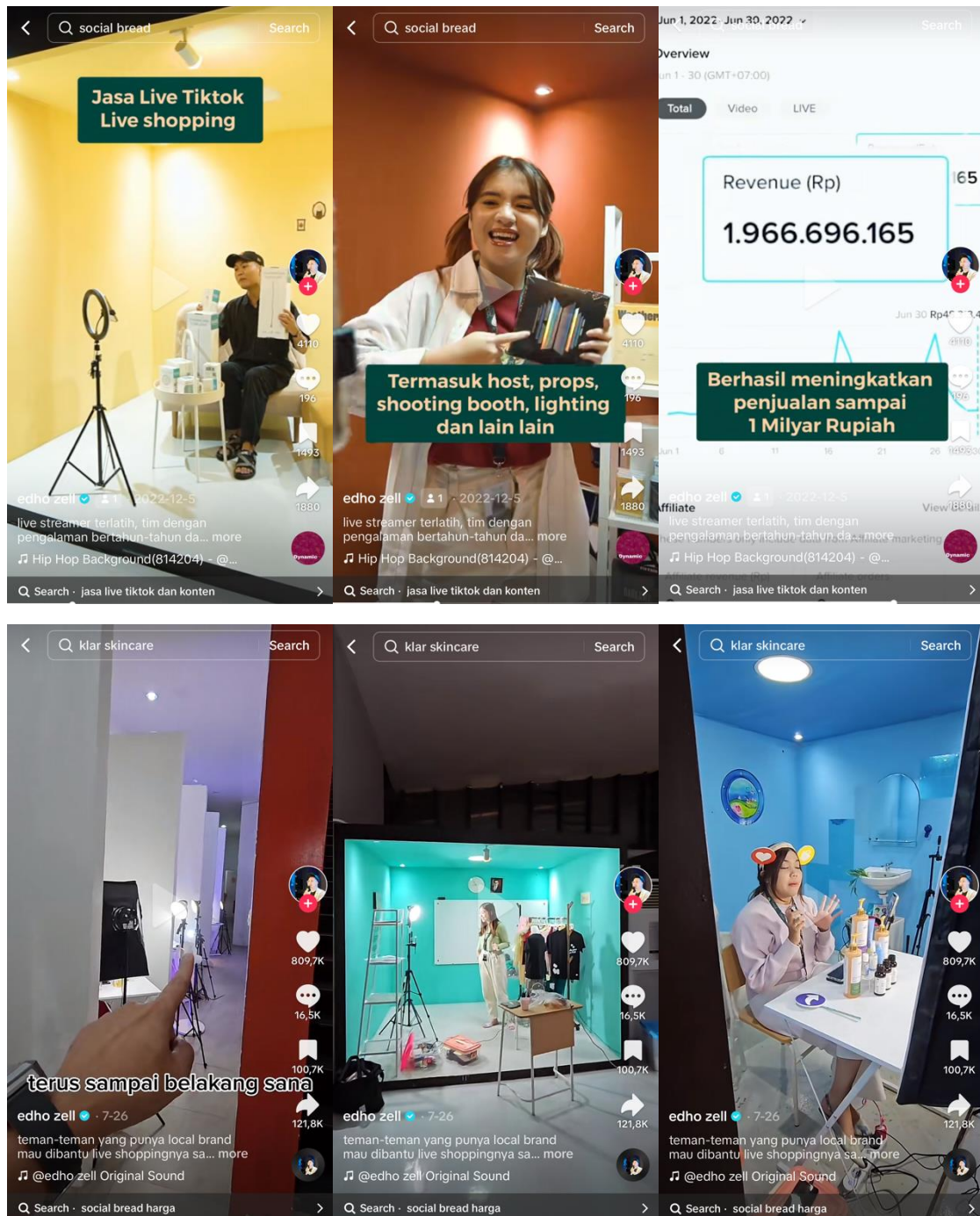


Figure 2. Screenshot of a Shooting Booth That Becomes a New Opportunity the presence of Live Shopping

Another phenomenon that arises besides the presence of Social Bread as an agency that can serve live shopping for MSMEs and local brands is the live multicam phenomenon. The phenomenon of live multicam allows sellers with current technological capabilities. Live Multicam is done with the aim of making the distribution of audiences / buyers even wider. With the hope that online transactions that occur in the live multicam phenomenon can occur as widely as possible for each follower on a smartphone account that is part of a live multicam. As follows: live multicam practice :



Figure 3. Multicam Live Shopping Practice Screenshot

Van Dijk mentioned that the CMC concept can be used in the global flow of the economy both in the flow of production, distribution, and consumption. By referring to the characteristics of new media, CMC can support a company to move and develop flexibly and efficiently by interacting through new media. The presence of new media greatly provides fresh air to the economic world by creating new industries that involve big players with media network designs (Schumann, 2013) that suits their respective businesses. The concept conveyed by Van Dijk is very relevant to the presence of the live shopping model as the latest breakthrough from the marketplace. With the live shopping model, it can increase revenue for users of this feature, because with a limited time when live shopping takes place does not discourage buyers from shopping. In fact, the desire to spend on a limited duration is increasing. Likewise, the emergence of new opportunities that come along with live shopping such as Social Bread and multicam live shopping above.

4. Conclusion

Not only as a novelty that we can feel as a digital society in fulfilling the needs of life, the presence of live shopping practices brings its own development for UMKM and local brands in Indonesia. This development also affects their growth and development in following technological readiness which is directly proportional to income. Not all UMKM players and local brands are ready for this new technology. However, sooner or later readiness in facing this latest technology must be undertaken by MSMEs because it is related to the income obtained.

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