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# Hooked by Content, Sold by Features: Predictors of Gen Z Buying Intention on TikTok Shop

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### ABSTRACT

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The popularity of "shoppertainment" has increased due to the growth of social commerce, with TikTok Shop being a well-known platform that combines in-app purchases with short-form entertainment. This study examines the key determinants influencing Generation Z TikTok users' purchase intentions on TikTok Shop by analysing the effects of platform features, shopping lifestyle, positive emotions, and social influence. A total of 450 valid responses were collected from Gen Z TikTok users through an online questionnaire administered using a cross-sectional quantitative research design. All constructs had high measurement reliability which supported the scales' internal consistency. The multiple regression analysis showed good explanatory power. Platform attributes, happy emotions, shopping lifestyle, and social influence were all positive and significant predictors. According to these findings, Gen Z TikTok users' inclination to make purchases through TikTok Shop is strengthened by interactive features (such as livestreaming, reviews, and frictionless checkout), emotionally engaging content, lifestyle alignment with deal-seeking and online shopping routines, and influencer/peer validation.

## 1. Introduction

TikTok has become a major player in the digital media space in recent years, particularly with younger audiences. Since its 2016 launch by ByteDance, TikTok has quickly grown from a platform for short videos to a broader ecosystem that blends creativity, entertainment, social interaction, and, increasingly, business. This rise is mostly due to TikTok's user-centered design and personalized algorithm, which make content that is very specific to each user and keep them interested. During the COVID-19 pandemic, people relied more on online platforms for entertainment and communication. This led to an increase in TikTok usage, which sped up its growth and solidified its status as a major global platform. TikTok Shop was launched on the back of this success. It added e-commerce directly to the app and popularized "shoppertainment," a business strategy that combines

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shopping with entertainment content. In addition to being entertained, Gen Z TikTok viewers are exposed to trends, influencer marketing, and interactive platform elements that may affect their future purchasing intentions [15].

Recent research indicates that TikTok's commercial ecosystem, which integrates social interaction, persuasive content, and streamlined checkout, influences consumer behavior. Tee *et al.*, [18] discovered in Malaysia that TikTok's product-related cues can alter internal states like perceived utility and enjoyment, which in turn affect impulsive purchase intention consistent with the platform's capacity to swiftly turn attention into action. TikTok Shop is also becoming more popular for live commerce formats, where people can interact with each other and see how the creator affects their purchases in real time [12]. In a similar vein, research on e-commerce livestreaming demonstrates that social indicators and broadcaster traits can accurately predict buy intention.

This study investigates the key determinants influencing Generation Z TikTok users' purchase intentions by examining the effects of platform features, shopping lifestyle, positive emotions, and social influence. Prior research has primarily focused on impulsive buying, livestream commerce dynamics, and isolated psychological constructs like perceived enjoyment and usefulness. There is a dearth of integrated studies examining platform features, shopping lifestyle, positive emotions, and social influence on purchase intention within TikTok Shop. Additionally, while Generation Z actively drives digital consumption trends, evidence specifically addressing their structured purchase intentions beyond impulse buying is limited. Most studies do not differentiate Gen Z behaviors, such as digital nativity and reliance on peer and influencer validation. In Malaysia, although social commerce research exists, comprehensive quantitative studies evaluating technological, emotional, lifestyle, and social determinants within TikTok Shop are lacking. This study seeks to fill these gaps with an integrated, empirically validated model for Gen Z TikTok users.

This study enhances social commerce and consumer behavior literature by applying purchase intention models to the shoppertainment context, specifically focusing on Gen Z consumers on TikTok Shop. It integrates platform attributes, emotional responses, shopping lifestyle, and social influence to offer a comprehensive understanding of their decision-making processes, moving beyond impulsive buying to highlight deeper drivers of purchasing behavior. The findings provide valuable insights for digital marketers and sellers on TikTok Shop, emphasizing the importance of interactive features, engaging content, lifestyle fit, and influencer validation in shaping purchase intentions.

### *1.1 Background*

Because TikTok Shop makes it harder to distinguish between shopping and having fun, it is a significant advancement for platform-based retail. This setting operates through social and emotional processes in addition to rational evaluations (pricing, convenience, etc.). Users in Generation Z are particularly affected by this, as they are frequently exposed to peer approval, trend-based consumption, and influencer-led product demos.

This is in line with the Stimulus Organism Response (SOR) theory, which holds that internal emotions like enjoyment, trust, and excitement are triggered by external stimuli like platform interaction, livestream features, and influencer endorsement. These moods subsequently affect behavioural outcomes like purchase intention. This approach is supported by empirical evidence from livestream commerce demonstrated that telepresence and social presence in live streaming have a beneficial impact on trust and flow, which in turn encourage impulsive purchasing [23].

Simultaneously, research on technology adoption highlights the importance of platform design and usability. According to the Technology Acceptance Model, behavioural intention is mostly

predicted by perceived usefulness and simplicity of use. While UTAUT2 expands on this by highlighting hedonic motivation in consumer contexts, the UTAUT model also emphasises social influence as a major driver of desire to use a technology both of which are extremely pertinent to TikTok Shop's entertainment-led design.

## *1.2 Statement of Problems*

Even though TikTok Shop has grown quickly and is well-liked by Gen Z users, more research is still required to completely grasp why Gen Z users switch from scrolling to buying, particularly when utilizing TikTok Shop's shoppertainment model. As study previously notes, there is currently a dearth of research on TikTok Shop, especially when it comes to how consumers evaluate its sustainability and benefits. Because Gen Z's purchase intention is frequently influenced by a combination of platform experience, emotion, and social reinforcement rather than just product qualities, this difference becomes even more significant when concentrating on them.

Defining and evaluating the functions of platform features, shopping lifestyle, pleasant feelings, and social impact within a comprehensive explanatory framework presents a particular challenge.

Evidence currently available indicates that each component may be important. For example, research on TikTok-related purchase intention emphasises the importance of social influence, while research on livestream commerce demonstrates the flow of social presence, trust, and purchasing motivation. It is challenging to determine which mix of psychological, social, and technological elements best explains Gen Z TikTok Shop users' purchase intention, though, because many studies look at these predictors separately or outside of a TikTok Shop-specific context.

To better understand how platform features, shopping lifestyle, pleasant emotions, and social influence simultaneously predict purchase intention in a shoppertainment-driven commerce scenario, this study focusses on Gen Z TikTok Shop customers. This immediately addresses the requirement to explain consumer behaviour in new social commerce settings where social validation, entertainment, and technology adoption all occur.

## *1.3 Literature Review*

### *1.3.1 Gen Z TikTok Shop users and purchase intention*

In line with social commerce research, which explains that purchasing decisions are the result of platform stimuli plus user psychology plus social cues, this research's framework places platform features, shopping lifestyle, positive emotions, and social influence as important predictors of purchase intention [5,22]. This evaluation addresses these constructs especially for Gen Z TikTok users (i.e., digital natives that primarily rely on social media for product discovery and purchase decisions) to link the study with the most recent scope [11]. Findings indicate that social media usefulness enhances consumer trust and increases purchase intention [24].

### *1.3.2 Social Commerce and TikTok Shop as a "shoppertainment" environment*

According to Liang and Turban [13], social commerce is the term used to describe business ventures made possible by social media platforms that facilitate communication, user participation, and community-driven decision-making. In contrast to traditional e-commerce, social commerce combines shopping with social proof (reviews, referrals, community), which can lower uncertainty and shape intentions through trust and social presence [6,7]. TikTok Shop amplifies this reasoning because short video and live formats combine entertainment and real-time persuasion what recent

research refers to as shoppertainment, where social proof, commerce, and entertainment content are closely integrated [16]. Stimulus Organism Response (SOR) logic has been used to explain TikTok's impact on consumer impulse-related outcomes in Malaysia. This logic asserts that platform/content stimuli cause internal states (such as enjoyment or usefulness) that influence purchasing decisions [8,18].

### *1.3.3 Theoretical Foundation for the Model*

According to Herzallah *et al.*, [8] and Zhang *et al.*, [22] the SOR paradigm is frequently employed in social commerce to describe how platform cues (stimuli) influence psychological states (organism) and subsequently purchase outcomes (response). Because various stimuli (live interaction, algorithmic recommendations, influencer demonstrations) are intended to elicit instantaneous affective and social emotions that can be converted into intention, this is especially appropriate for TikTok Shop [14]. Simultaneously, theories of technology adoption, particularly TAM and UTAUT/UTAUT2, provide evidence for the importance of hedonic motivation, ease, usefulness, and social impact in influencing customer usage and purchase intention in digital contexts [4].

### *1.3.4 Purchase intention in social commerce*

According to intention-based theories, purchase intention is a powerful proximal predictor of actual conduct and reflects a person's preparation or plan to engage in a purchasing behaviour [1]. In social commerce situations, trust, social presence, and peer or influencer signals all of which serve as short cuts in the face of uncertainty all influence intention in addition to product assessments [6, 7]. This is especially true for Gen Z, whose shopping experiences are frequently integrated into social media platforms where they discover, assess, and check out in a single scroll experience rather than in discrete "search website cart" phases [11].

### *1.3.5 Platform features and purchase intention*

The useful and immersive elements of TikTok Shop that make purchasing easy, entertaining, and socially instructive are platform features like in-app checkout, livestream shopping, reviews, suggestions, and creator-led product tagging. According to social commerce theory, these platform affordances are significant because they enhance information quality, reduce perceived effort, and increase confidence through social mechanisms (reviews, recommendations, and communities), all of which reinforce intention [6,7]. Empirical research indicates that platform features and interaction can boost purchase intention by enhancing perceived value and social presence that is, the sense that actual people are present which is crucial in live commerce [10,12]. By enhancing the consumer experience through customized journeys, intuitive navigation, and reliable post-purchase services, e-commerce platforms may convert client happiness into recurring business [25].

According to research on livestream commerce on TikTok in particular, immersive presentations and real-time interactivity can increase purchase impulses by promoting flow-like attention, lowering deliberation time, and boosting engagement [14]. According to recent research on TikTok Shop, the platform is framed as a commerce system centred on entertainment content and quick feedback cues (likes, comments, and artist demonstrations), which might influence buy outcomes and intents associated to impulses [16]. Therefore, by making the process simple and socially validated, well-designed platform features can plausibly increase purchase intention among Gen Z TikTok users [10].

### *1.3.6 Shopping lifestyle and purchase intention*

A consumer's habitual inclination towards browsing, bargain hunting, and shopping as a regular activity ingrained in daily life is reflected in their shopping lifestyle. Shopping can provide hedonic value (fun, excitement, escape) in addition to functional value, and these values predict significant downstream results (attitudes, intention, repeat activity), according to consumer behaviour studies [2]. Gen Z customers may adopt buying habits that are closely related to platform browsing patterns, trend monitoring, and "always-on" product discovery since they frequently view social media as both entertainment and discovery infrastructure [11].

Hedonic motivation, or the enjoyment or pleasure gained from utilising a technology, is a key predictor of behavioural intention in consumer tech contexts and is related to technology adoption [20]. When Gen Z users with an exploratory, entertainment-seeking shopping lifestyle come across compelling product content, limited-time offers, or creator-led must-have narratives, they may be more likely to form purchase intentions because TikTok's interface is designed for continuous engagement [16].

### *1.3.7 Positive emotions and purchase intention*

Because TikTok is an entertainment-first platform, users often feel emotive reactions before engaging in rational comparison, making positive emotions (such as enjoyment, excitement, and delight) crucial to TikTok commerce [16]. According to the affect-as-information perspective, people frequently use their present emotions as information when making decisions, particularly when faced with difficult decisions or under time constraints [17]. Because short-form and live formats produce quick, emotional micro-experiences (humour, relatability, excitement) that might be mistaken for product attractiveness or purchasing rightness, this process is pertinent to TikTok Shop [14].

Emotions are frequently positioned as organism states that convert stimuli (such as vivid visuals and interactivity) into desires and intents in literature on impulse purchase [3]. In a similar vein, this project article observes that purchasing decisions are significantly influenced by emotionally charged TikTok material, such as narratives, livestreams, and brief films. This emotional pathway is arguably greater in Gen Z groups since platform use is usually high-frequency and driven by entertainment, making affective cues crucial to the evaluation and sharing of items [11].

### *1.3.8 Social influence and purchase intention*

According to Ajzen [1], social influence is a fundamental predictor of behavioural intention in UTAUT, wherein intention is shaped by the perceived expectations and views of significant individuals, especially when it comes to socially conspicuous technology and behaviours. Ratings, reviews, viral trends, creator endorsements, and influencer reputation are all examples of social influence in social commerce that go beyond direct peers. These factors all contribute to social proof and lower perceived risk [6,7]. This is especially important on TikTok, because influencer demos and popularity signals (likes, comments, and shares) can quickly build confidence and speed up decision-making [16].

According to research on influencer marketing, message credibility and value can increase trust in branded content and improve results connected to purchases [14,15,21]. Social commerce studies contend that social-cognitive mechanisms and observational learning that is, learning from the experiences and results of others help explain why peer feedback and creator material become

significant drivers of intention, especially among Gen Z [5,11]. Additionally, this study supports the hypothesis that social influence predicts purchase intention among Gen Z TikTok Shop users by showing that peer recommendations and influencer credibility favourably impact purchase-related decisions in TikTok environments [1].

## **2. Methodology**

To investigate the factors influencing Generation Z TikTok users' desire to make a purchase on TikTok Shop, this study used a quantitative, cross-sectional survey approach. The dependent construct (buy intention) and four important predictors platform features, shopping lifestyle, pleasant emotions, and social influences operationalised in the questionnaire items were the focus of the study. This method is commonly used because researchers can collect more accurate data, improve the quality of the data collected and can avoid bias elements [26].

### *2.1 Research Design and Population*

An online questionnaire sent via Google Forms was used to collect data in accordance with the study's objective of gathering self-reported attitudes and behaviours about TikTok Shop usage. The target respondents are Gen Z users who actively use TikTok and are exposed to TikTok Shop shopping capabilities.

### *2.2 Sample Size and Sampling Technique*

To ensure that responses were gathered from people best qualified to assess TikTok Shop experiences, a purposive sampling technique was employed to find respondents who met the study's requirements (Gen Z TikTok users with relevant shopping exposure). The Krejcie and Morgan approach was cited in the original study to justify sample size, and a minimum target consistent with large populations was adopted; in the project paper, the required minimum was set at 379, and the study obtained 450 valid responses, improving statistical stability and generalisability within the intended respondent group.

### *2.3 Instrumentation and Measures*

(i) Demographic and usage questions (e.g., age group, gender, frequency of TikTok Shop shopping) and (ii) construct measures for purchase intention and the four predictors made up the questionnaire.

Items measuring respondents' propensity to make purchases through TikTok Shop and their inclinations to suggest the platform were used to measure the dependent variable, purchase intention. Affective responses were recorded as positive emotions, behavioural tendencies were recorded as shopping lifestyle, interpersonal/creator-driven effects were recorded as social influence, and items reflecting perceptions of TikTok Shop's interactive and convenience-related platform features were used to measure the independent variables.

### *2.4 Data Collection and Data Analysis*

To effectively reach the targeted respondent group, the survey link was disseminated online using popular platforms including Telegram, Instagram, and WhatsApp. Informed consent was provided at

the start of the questionnaire, and participation was entirely voluntary. No personally identifiable information was gathered beyond the minimal demographics needed for profiling, and anonymity and secrecy were upheld.

A clean dataset of 450 completed replies was obtained after data screening was done to exclude inconsistent or incomplete entries prior to analysis. SPSS was used to conduct the statistical analysis (Version 27). Respondents were profiled using descriptive statistics, and the internal consistency of the constructs was then evaluated by reliability testing with Cronbach's alpha. To evaluate the impact of platform characteristics, shopping lifestyle, positive emotions, and social influence on purchase intention, correlation analysis was used to examine relationships among variables, and multiple regression analysis was used to test hypotheses.

### **3. Result**

450 valid responses from Gen Z, university-aged TikTok Shop users were examined in this study. The majority of respondents were between the ages of 21 and 23 (32.9%) and 24 and 26 (32.2%), and 40.4% said they shop on TikTok Shop very regularly (7+ times/month). The sample was fairly balanced by gender (52.7% male, 47.3% female).

The validity of the measuring tool was supported by reliability testing, which revealed strong internal consistency across constructs (e.g., Platform Features  $\alpha = .946$ , Shopping Lifestyle  $\alpha = .940$ , Positive Emotions  $\alpha = .940$ , Social Influence  $\alpha = .938$ ). Strong explanatory power was shown by the multiple regression model ( $R = .787$ ;  $R^2 = .619$ ; Adjusted  $R^2 = .615$ ), showing that platform features, shopping lifestyle, good emotions, and social impact account for 61.9% of the variance in TikTok Shop purchase intention. The model as a whole was statistically significant ( $F = 130.316$ ,  $p = .000$ ).

Every predicted factor was significant ( $p < .05$ ) and positive. All four hypotheses were verified by standardised effects, which revealed that the strongest predictors were Platform Features ( $\beta = .253$ ,  $p = .000$ ) and Positive Emotions ( $\beta = .249$ ,  $p = .000$ ), followed by Shopping Lifestyle ( $\beta = .229$ ,  $p = .000$ ) and Social Influence ( $\beta = .218$ ,  $p = .000$ ). The results demonstrate that a combination of emotional, technological, lifestyle, and social factors influence Gen Z TikTok Shop users' purchase intentions. This aligns with the theory of social commerce, which combines shopping and entertainment into shoppertainment. According to SOR explanations of how platform stimuli trigger internal states (organisms) that shape behavioural responses, TikTok's short videos and live streams can create immediacy, excitement, and relatability that lower decision friction and amplify impulse-oriented buying. For this reason, positive emotions emerged as a key driver in this dataset.

However, TikTok Shop's in-app checkout, product reviews, livestream shopping, and algorithmic recommendations make the process from discovery to purchase exceptionally easy for mobile-first users, which makes platform features a strong predictor. This pattern is in line with the Technology Acceptance Model's (TAM) claims that perceived usefulness and simplicity of use encourage greater intentions to use a technology for transactions. This is especially true for Gen Z consumers who anticipate quick feedback loops and low-friction interfaces.

The shopping lifestyle was also significant, indicating that users who often check for specials, compare items, and view online shopping as an integral part of their daily routine and identity have higher purchase intentions. This suggests that TikTok Shop is not just a marketplace but also a recurring, lifestyle-integrated activity for many Gen Z users, which is in line with consumer-technology theories that highlight hedonic motivation and habit as significant intention drivers in consumer contexts.

Lastly, social influence continued to be statistically significant, confirming that peer validation, influencer legitimacy, and trend diffusion all play a role in the social construction of Gen Z's buy

intention on TikTok Shop. This is consistent with evidence that TikTok can influence purchase intention through social and behavioural pathways. In live or highly interactive formats, creator cues and socially shared signals can speed up the creation of trust and replace traditional product inspection [21]

#### 4. Conclusion

According to the study's findings, platform design, emotional engagement, a shopping-oriented lifestyle, and social influence all significantly influence Gen Z TikTok Shop users' purchase intentions. The four predictors platform features, positive emotions, shopping lifestyle, and social influence collectively account for a significant amount of purchase intention, according to the regression model, suggesting that Gen Z's TikTok Shop purchasing decisions are influenced by an integrated shoppertainment experience rather than a single factor.

Gen Z users are more likely to make a purchase when TikTok Shop provides a seamless and interactive shopping experience (e.g., convenient in-app buying and engaging commerce features) and when content elicits enjoyment, excitement, and positive feelings during browsing or livestream sessions, according to the predictors that had the strongest effects. These results also show that TikTok Shop purchase intention rises when users' shopping habits include regular online shopping, deal-seeking, and frequent browsing. Additionally, social influence from peers and influencers reinforces intention by offering cues of trust and validation.

Practically speaking, the findings indicate that TikTok Shop sellers and brands aiming to reach Gen Z should focus on platform-optimized content and shopping experiences, such as transparent product demonstrations, interactive livestream engagement, reliable creator partnerships, and easy purchase processes. They should also create campaigns that use social proof (such as reviews, user-generated content, and influencer endorsement) and elicit positive emotions (such as engaging storytelling and time-limited promotions). Overall, this study adds to the body of research on social commerce by presenting empirical evidence that, in an entertainment-led commerce setting, the combined influence of technology-related features, affective responses, lifestyle tendencies, and social validation best explains Gen Z's purchase intention on TikTok Shop.

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