



## Exploring Indonesian Consumer Insights and Factors Driving their Food Purchase Intention on TikTok Shop

Siti Zakiyyah Indillah<sup>1</sup>, Kunalai Ploydanai, PhD<sup>2\*</sup> and Asst. Prof. Ajchara Kessuvan, D.B.A<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Graduate student, Department of Agro-industrial Technology, Faculty of Agro-Industry, Kasetsart University.

<sup>2</sup> Lecturer, Department of Agro-industrial Technology, Faculty of Agro-Industry, Kasetsart University.

<sup>3</sup> Lecturer, Department of Agro-industrial Technology, Faculty of Agro-Industry, Kasetsart University.

\*Corresponding author, E-mail: [kunalai.p@ku.ac.th](mailto:kunalai.p@ku.ac.th)

### Abstract

This study applied a qualitative approach to investigate factors influencing Indonesian consumers' food purchase intentions on TikTok Shop. The research addresses a critical gap in existing literature by exploring insights into the intersection of TikTok as a new platform, consumer behavior, and the food market. The objectives are to identify and analyze the factors influencing consumer decisions to purchase food products on TikTok Shop, by examining user interactions and preferences on TikTok Shop, with data derived from semi-structured in-depth interviews with fifteen participants, encompassing content analysis and word coding. The findings revealed that consumer perceptions of TikTok content, influencer credibility and attractiveness and perceived benefits of TikTok Shop significantly impact food purchase intentions on Tiktok shop, with emotional (affective and appetite) and cognitive responses (perceived value and trust) playing mediating roles.

**Keywords:** Food Purchase Intention, TikTok Shop, Emotional Response, Cognitive Response, Consumer Behaviour

### Introduction

In today's digital world, TikTok and TikTok Shop become big player in social platform. With 272.7 million downloads in Q3 of 2023, TikTok goes beyond content presentation. It facilitates closer brand-customer relationships, evident in its high average engagement rate of 4.25% in 2023, surpassing Instagram (0.60%), Facebook (0.15%), and Twitter (0.05%) (Cucu, 2023). Additionally, TikTok Shop also significantly and successfully stimulates impulse product purchase of TikTok users. The food sector is one of the business domains that can gain various benefits via TikTok Shop. Particularly in Indonesia; where there are around 1.5 million food micro and small enterprises (Statistic, 2020). On the demand site, Indonesian TikTok users are highly interested in culinary content, as shown by the trending hashtag #Makananindonesia (Indonesian food), with 1.1 billion views in 2023.



The rapid growth of TikTok has sparked numerous studies on consumer behavior, particularly focusing on social interactions between users and influencers. However, research on shopping behavior, specifically regarding food and beverage purchases on TikTok Shop, remains limited due to the novelty of these platforms. Two studies have demonstrated the direct impact of parasocial interactions, social media marketing factors and product quality on purchase intention (Manaf, 2021; Meliawati et al., 2023). To the best of our knowledge, the studies on underlying purchasing processes at TikTok Shop, namely mediators and moderators, are lacking. Drawing from research on other social commerce platforms, it is anticipated that marketing factors may not only directly influence online purchase intentions, especially on TikTok Shop, where entertainment and emotions play a big role.

Understanding consumer insights and factors driving food purchase intention on TikTok Shop, including emotional and cognitive influences, is vital for modern food businesses. This study explores the mediating roles of cognitive and emotional states between TikTok Shop marketing factors and online food purchase intention using the stimulus-organization-Response theory. Through qualitative research, we aim to grasp consumers' understanding of TikTok and TikTok Shop dynamics.

## Objectives

To provide insights into Indonesian consumers' online platforms usage and the factors underlying their food purchase intentions on TikTok Shop.

## Concept theory framework

### Stimulus Organism Response

Stimulus organism response (S-O-R) is one of the models that is commonly used to explain online commerce behavior. The model explains how external cues (stimuli) shape cognitive and emotional reactions such as perceptions (organism), leading to changes in consumer behavior on s-commerce platforms (response; Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). Based on S-O-R model. This study will investigate the effects of TikTok and TikTok Shops (an external environmental stimulus) on consumers' online purchase intention (response) through the influence of individual internal states (organism). Several underlying factors (explained below) are expected to influence consumers' shopping at TikTok Shop.

### Factors related to Stimulus

**Perception of Content** In social commerce, stimuli, such as short video content and live streaming have an enormous impact on consumers' emotional experiences, perceptions, and purchase intention (Van Tuan et al. (2023). The content can lead to



different perceptions (e.g., perceived entertainment and informative). *Perceived informativeness of content* refers to consumers' perceptions of the ability of content to provide useful and relevant information to consumers. Informative content can influence the perceived advertisement's value, grab consumer attention, foster a positive attitude, and increase purchase intention (Reyck & Degraeve, 2003). *Perceived entertainment of content* refers to the enjoyment and amusement consumers experience when interacting with the content. Most of the commercials on social commerce are entertaining which is a crucial factor to captivate potential audiences. Research showed that entertaining content could stimulate addictive behavior and is crucial to captivate potential audiences' attention (Araujo et al., 2022; Ma & Hu, 2021).

**Perception toward Influencer** Influencers and their recommendation can effectively influence consumer decisions. Followers tend to buy goods or services recommended by the influencer, particularly those who are considered expert, credible, attractive, or trustworthy (Iqbal et al., 2023; Lou & Kim, 2019). *The attractiveness of influencers* helps form social and interpersonal relationships between influencers and customers (Bowling et al., 2004; Sigall & Landy, 1973). Moreover, research showed that the *Credibility of the Influencer* (i.e., influencer's trustworthiness and expertise) has been an impactful factor in determining an online purchasing decision and customers' trust, especially when there is no physical interaction between the consumers and the product or brand, leading to consumer uncertainty (Grewal et al., 2003; Pornpitakpan, 2004).

**Perception of Benefit** concerns the favorable outcomes that users expect to receive from a particular action (Leung, 2013). A study of online purchases by Chan et al. (2017) shows that perceived benefits, such as product types, convenience, discounts, prices, and product shortages, can influence consumers' online purchases.

**Perceived convenience** in social commerce includes access, search, possession, and transaction (Seiders et al., 2000). Perceived convenience makes purchasing easier for consumers and therefore significantly shapes consumers' attitudes, driving impulse buying and intentions to shop online (Adnan, 2014; Rehman 2018)

**Promotion benefit** is an approach used by advertisers to effectively stimulate consumer purchasing behavior for a product or service (Blattberg & Briesch, 2012). Since TikTok Shop always gives promotions in live streaming, this research expects the promotion benefit to enhance purchase intention and impulse buying.

#### **Factors related to Organism.**

**Appetite** includes the sensation of starving and the desire to consume food. It is expected to be one of the organisms (mediating variable) stimulated after consumers view



food content on TikTok since food content exposure can stimulate metabolic activity, leading to food cravings and hunger (Brookhaven National Laboratory, 2004).

**Trust** is the result of consumers' internal evaluation after receiving stimuli from the social commerce environment. Trust is likely to be a primary antecedent of people's intention to adopt and engage in social commerce (Lu et al., 2016). Therefore, Trust may drive user engagement and purchase intention on the TikTok Shop when the brand or influencer meets consumer expectations.

**Perceived Value** can drive consumers' preferences and choices in today's market. There are numerous types of values consumers can receive. First, functional value reflects the utility value of a product, including quality, price, or other utilitarian aspects. Second, social value considers how consumers connect with others through products or brands to gain approval from social groups. Third, emotional value describes the value that a product or service evokes feelings or affective states of consumers. Fourth, epistemic value is delivered when the products can pique consumers' curiosity or satisfy their desire for knowledge. Lastly, conditional value refers to a situational factor that encourages consumers to purchase, such as seasonal products (Sheth et al., 1991).

#### **Purchase Intention (Response)**

Purchase intention is the final stage in online shopping, reflecting consumers' inclination to buy goods and services, serving as a reflection of behavioral outcomes. (Zhang et al., 2014). Regarding prior studies on social commerce (Chen et al., 2017; Liu et al., 2016), this study addresses purchase intention as the response due to its reflection of customer outcomes and final choices after internal assessments (organism).

### **Materials and Methods**

The study employed semi-structured in-depth interviews and grounded theory to understand the complex process of food purchase intention on TikTok Shop. Since there was a lack of research on the underlying process, the grounded theory principle was applied to explore the construction of hypotheses (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). Fifteen Indonesian Generation Z participants were selected through purposive convenience sampling for their influence and role as primary buyers on TikTok Shop. Themes and theoretical constructs were derived using open coding.

#### **Interview Protocol**

The interview protocol started with questions about participants' food purchases from the TikTok Shop, proceeding only if they answered positively. Topics covered included social media and S-commerce usage patterns, perspectives on TikTok and the TikTok Shop, and factors influencing food purchase intentions. Questions were adjusted



during interviews to balance differences between student and employed participants, which could potentially bias our findings. Fifteen interviews were conducted via Zoom, comprising 6 males and 9 females, aged 17 to 28, with 9 employed and 6 students.

### Data collection and analysis

Participants were briefed, provided consent, and granted permission for interview recording and transcription. Interviews lasted 30 – 35 minutes, with summaries written afterward. The data was transcribed and translated from Indonesian to English. Domain and content analysis were used. All the transcript text was extracted and assigned to the S-O-R model with the group code.

## Results

### Social media and social commerce usage

Participants reported using TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp, respectively. Students reported spending 40 – 70% of their online time on TikTok due to its entertainment value and user-friendliness. However, workers spend less time on TikTok due to time constraints and engage more in real-life interactions.

In terms of social commerce usage most females (90%) prefer shopping on Shopee, while half of male's favor TikTok Shop. Participants explained that they prefer Shopee because it offers a wider range of products. However, participants noted that TikTok Shop's is relatively new platform and recent resumption after a temporary ban in Indonesia may impact preferences.

*"... I still prefer Shopee because there is a greater variety of products on Shopee..." (P3).*

However, all participants mentioned experiencing impulse buying on TikTok. This may be attributed to TikTok and TikTok shop features including live streaming, enticing promotions, and discounts. Live streams appearing randomly on feeds strongly influence users and prompt unplanned purchases.

### External factors that affect an individual's internal state (stimulus)

Our findings highlight the importance of content on TikTok, influencing both usage and consumer perceptions. Among female respondents, four out of nine prefer entertainment content, enjoying funny videos, and engaging with "fyp" videos. Meanwhile, five out of nine people appreciate TikTok for both entertainment and informative content, finding it beneficial for staying updated and gaining valuable information. Additionally, four out of six male participants prefer informative content, emphasizing TikTok's role in providing valuable information and following trends. In addition to the stimulating content that encourages customers to stay engaged with TikTok, other factors include the perception of influencers, peer reviews, and perceived benefits such as discounts and



convenience of TikTok also stimulate customers' purchases on TikTok shop. Before purchasing a product, most respondents check reviews from influencers. However, they do not rely on just one influencer; instead, they also seek information from other influencers. Additionally, they confirm their decision by looking at comments from other users. *"...I have been influenced by influencers before, but I also check reviews from people who have used the product..." (p8).*

Moreover, most respondents were also swayed by the frequent appearance of product content, creating curiosity and higher preference, and prompting participants to make purchases. All student respondents and three out of seven employee respondents waited for discounts and participated in live streaming when making a purchase. In contrast, the other four employees were not affected by discounts, live streaming, or specific monthly dates for shopping.

#### **Individuals Self Evaluation State (Organism)**

Participants reported that the stimuli from TikTok can activate their internal state including cognitive and affective states. Thirteen out of fifteen participants have enjoyed food content (e.g., ASMR, food culinary, and food review content) on TikTok. and admitted that the food content affects their appetites *"... I enjoy watching Mukbang because it makes me feel hungry..." (P3).* Furthermore, participants stated that engaging with influencers, content, and peer reviews could also enhance their trust before making purchases on TikTok shop.

In addition, participants also considered different values when purchasing food on TikTok Shop, namely functional value, emotional value, and epistemic value. In terms of functional value, ten out of fifteen respondents mentioned that packaging, ingredients, and taste were the important factors influencing their decision to buy food.

*"... the most important things when buying food are the packaging must be secure, and the ingredients should be clear.... (P1).*

Furthermore, four out of fifteen respondents stated that they purchased food when it became viral and trending on TikTok. We categorize this as emotional value, signifying the emotional aspects and personal experiences when making purchases.

*"I have bought food products because the food is trending, and I was feared of missing out (FOMO) since everyone is trying them, so I also want to try them...." (P7).*

The next identified value is epistemic value. Four out of fifteen respondents showed interest when sellers demonstrated the cooking process content, helping consumers better understand the quality of ingredients. This highlights how informational and educational aspects contribute to the attractiveness of food products.



### Purchase Intentions (Response)

Participants decide to buy food on TikTok Shop after being influenced by external factors that affect their internal cognitive and affective states. As explained, all participants reported impulsively purchasing products and food from the TikTok shop (an unplanned purchase) after being stimulated by TikTok's content, influencer, and perceived value.

### Underlying Factor

This study uncovers that social media marketing elements, including influencers and content, not only directly shape product purchase intentions but also evoke cognitive and emotional state and lead to the intention to buy. TikTok food content particularly fences emotions, satisfaction, enjoyment, and appetite. These factors signal the mediating roles on purchase intention on TikTok Shop, especially impulsive buying. Trust and perceived product values emerge as mediators relating to the internal cognitive evaluations. Our study outlines the underlying process in the purchasing journey on TikTok Shop, indicating that stimuli from content, influencers, and perceived benefits influence self-evaluation, shape perceptions of product values, trust, and personal preferences, and ultimately drive consumer food purchase intention and purchasing behavior on TikTok Shop. Therefore, the proposed research model is as follows:

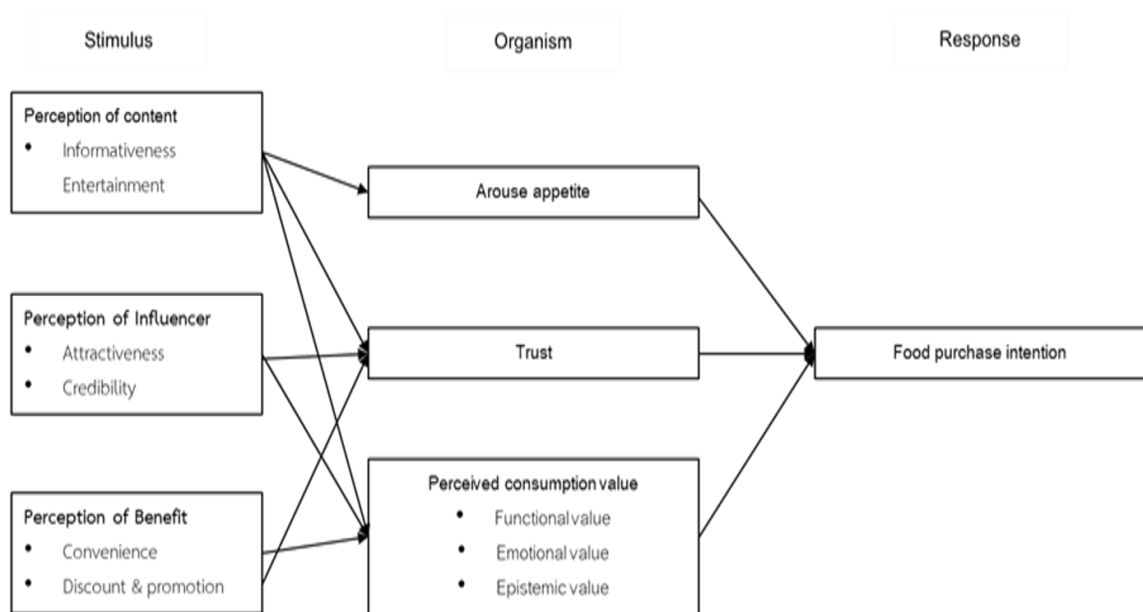


Figure 1: Proposed model



## Conclusions and Discussion

Previous studies have examined the impact of external factors on food purchase intention in online commerce, including influencers, social media marketing, price expectations, and product quality (Manaf, 2021; Meliawati et al., 2023; Tran et al., 2023). However, little attention has been given to how these external factors affect the internal state of individuals before they decide to purchase food from TikTok Shop. This study applies S-O-R theory to uncover the underlying process. We found that TikTok frequently impacts impulsive buying behavior. Furthermore, when consumers are exposed to food related content on TikTok and TikTok shop (external stimuli), they subsequently assess these cues before making a purchase decision. The current research found that consumers' evaluation and perceptions towards external stimuli, such as the influence of content, recommendations from influencers, peer reviews, and benefits like discounts, pricing, and convenience can impact consumers' trust in products and their assessment of the product's value before making a purchase decision.

This research supports Lou Kim (2019) that awareness of influencer integrity is pivotal for sustaining consumer trust in social commerce platforms. Additionally, while influencer recommendations are important, many consumers highlighted the crucial of validating influencer reviews with feedback from fellow online customers. Therefore, companies should apply a reward program (e.g., cashback) after reviewing items on TikTok to boost consumer motivation for sharing experiences. Ultimately, it enhances user engagement and trust within the TikTok Shop community.

Moreover, we also found the appetite as an additional underlying process or organism when the stimuli are related to food content. Participants mentioned their interest in food-related video content or culinary reviews such as Mukbang or ASMR, which leads them to make a purchase because it affects their internal feelings by stimulating their appetite. Therefore, business owners should pay attention to strengthening the quality of content's visuals and audio and live streaming to ensure that consumers see product details. The good-quality content will elevate consumer experience and ultimately enhance consumer interest in food. These findings align with studies by Chen (2021) that indicate voice, sounds, and visual mediate the effect of advertisements on purchase intention.

Furthermore, this study reveals that consumption values, such as functional value, emotional value, and epistemic value, are factors considered by individuals before purchasing food products through TikTok Shop. Functional value, especially *packaging* and *ingredients*, is the most frequently mentioned factor by respondents. Aligns with Underwood & Klein (2002), our findings indicate that marketers should prioritize secure





packaging and provide clear storage instructions to enhance consumer trust. Essentially, the packaging can directly affect consumers' perceived quality of the product. Participants emphasized the emotional value, particularly from trending items on TikTok. Hence, businesses should enhance their product visibility by collaborating with influencers and utilizing affiliate marketing. Establishing strong partnerships with influential individuals can help products reach a broader audience through recommendations and positive reviews. Creating a sense of "fear of missing out" (FOMO) can also stimulate impulse purchases. Furthermore, in TikTok culinary content, participants value the epistemic aspect, where sellers showcase the cooking process and creative serving techniques. This highlights the importance of the journey of products shown in video, and livestreaming in capturing consumers' attention. This result supports findings in previous studies that Epistemic value has been suggested as one of the important reasons for leading consumers' choice behavior to purchase local food (Yeon Ho Shin, 2020).

Finally, for future research, quantitative research needs to be employed to validate our proposed underlying process. Moreover, the current research is limited to past food purchasing behavior which focuses on general food. However, it is important to acknowledge that different foods may be related to diverse internal state such as values for consumers (cognitive or affective). Some foods may be dominant in emotional value, while others may provide higher functional value. Therefore, to gain deeper understanding of the underlying process, it is crucial to consider the variations in values that may arise within the context of consumer preferences for specific types of food (moderator).

## References

- Chan, T. K., Cheung, C. M., & Lee, Z. W. (2017). The state of online impulse-buying research: A literature analysis. *Information & Management*, 54(2), 204-217.
- Cucu, E. (2023). Social Media Industry Benchmarks 2023 Reveal How TikTok's Engagement Rate Is Decreasing. Retrieved January 17, 2024. From <https://www.socialinsider.io/blog/tag/studies/>
- Manaf, P. A. (2021). The Impact of Influencers' Attractiveness, Credibility, and Parasocial Relationship Towards Purchase Intention on TikTok for Food and Beverage Industry. *Turkish Online Journal of Qualitative Inquiry*, 12(7).
- Mehrabian, A., & Russell, J. A. (1974). *An approach to environmental psychology*. [MIT Press] [Cambridge, Mass.]. <http://books.google.com/books?id=EthOAAAAMAAJ>
- Meliawati, T., Gerald, S. C., & Aruman, A. E. (2023). The effect of social media marketing Tiktok and product quality towards purchase intention. *Journal of Consumer Sciences*, 8(1), 77-92.



- Rubin, H. J., & Rubin, I. S. (2011). Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data. United states of America: Sage Publication Ltd.
- Sheth, J. N., Newman, B. I., & Gross, B. L. (1991). Why we buy what we buy: A theory of consumption values. *Journal of Business Research*, 22(2), 159-170.
- Statistic, I. C. A. o. (2020). Profil industri mikro dan kecil. Retrieved November 15, 2023. From <https://www.bps.go.id/publication/2022/03/04/a6375ea4a72374e3bedd0b00/profil-industri-mikro-dan-kecil-2020.htm>.
- Tran, T. H., Ho, M. P. U., Le, H. A., & Le, M. K. C. (2023). How does the social media platform TikTok influence the intention to buy snacks: An empirical study of the Vietnamese youth generation. *Journal of Business & Management*, 1(3), 244-262.
- Van Tuan, P., Le Anh Chan, D. T. N., Huy, N. Q. A., Giang, P. C., Trang, N. Q., & Uyen, N. P. (2023). Discussion on Analysis of Effects of Short-Form Video Advertising on the Purchase Intention of Gen Z in Vietnam-And Future Research Directions. *Asian Journal of Applied Science and Technology (AJAST)*, 7(1), 01-18.