

THE INFLUENCE OF TIKTOK SHOP'S UI/UX ON FASHION PURCHASE INTENTION MEDIATED BY STUDENT TRUST

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the influence of User Interface (UI) and User Experience (UX) on Fashion Purchase Intention among university students, with Student Trust serving as a mediating variable. Utilizing the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) framework, this research employed a quantitative approach through an electronic survey distributed to 120 active university students in Indonesia who utilize TikTok Shop. Data analysis was executed using Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) via SmartPLS 4. The empirical results demonstrate that both UI and UX exert a positive and significant influence on Student Trust and Purchase Intention ($p < 0.05$). Notably, UX was found to be the most dominant driver of Purchase Intention ($\beta = 0.510$), indicating that functional efficiency outweighs aesthetic design in finalizing buying decisions. Furthermore, Student Trust significantly validates Purchase Intention; however, the mediation analysis revealed that trust does not function as a significant mediator in this model, suggesting that technical stimuli drive purchase intent directly. These findings imply that social commerce platforms should prioritize operational fluidity and transactional security to sustain high conversion rates among digitally native consumers.

1. INTRODUCTION

The global landscape of digital commerce has undergone a paradigmatic shift, where the success of a platform is no longer dictated solely by product availability, but by the sophisticated synergy between technical design and user psychology. In this ecosystem, the User Interface (UI) and User Experience (UX) serve as the primary conduits for consumer interaction, acting as instruments that modulate behavioral trajectories (Al-Adwan et al., 2020). TikTok Shop, as a pioneer of social commerce, has successfully integrated immersive visual content with seamless transactional features. However, while the technical superiority of TikTok Shop's interface is widely acknowledged, a critical question remains regarding how these aesthetic and functional stimuli translate into actual economic commitments, particularly in markets characterized by high sensitivity to digital authenticity.

In the Indonesian context, the fashion sector has emerged as a dominant force within social commerce, driven largely by the hyper-connectivity of university students. This demographic is often categorized as technologically adaptive; yet, their behavior reveals a complex duality. On one hand, they gravitate towards platforms that offer high-level functional fluidity (Ismail, 2024). On the other hand, there is an inherent cognitive dissonance when engaging

in fashion transactions where physical touch is absent. While prior literature suggests that a positive UX can directly catalyze purchasing decisions, these studies often overlook the "uncertainty barrier" prevalent in emerging markets. There is a lack of consensus on whether a sophisticated UI/UX is sufficient to override the perceived risks associated with social media-based vendors, creating a significant research gap in understanding the transition from interaction to transaction.

The urgency of investigating UI/UX elements—such as navigational efficiency and visual clarity—lies in their role as the initial "Stimulus" within the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) framework. However, the prevailing tendency in current research is to treat the relationship between UI/UX and purchase intention as a direct causal link, often bypassing the internal psychological state of the user. This study argues that the role of Trust as a mediating "Organism" remains unresolved and critically under-investigated in the TikTok Shop environment. Unlike traditional e-commerce, social commerce relies on a precarious balance of credibility and entertainment. As Al-Adwan et al. (2020) noted, interface quality influences trust, but in the fashion domain—where product representation often diverges from reality—trust acts as a mandatory gatekeeper rather than a mere byproduct of design.

This research critically contrasts the "Aesthetic-Drive" theory against "Risk-Mitigation" needs. While some scholars argue that visual appeal is the primary driver for Gen Z (Liana, 2023), others suggest that without a robust foundation of systemic integrity, aesthetic stimuli fail to produce a lasting behavioral response. This study seeks to address this theoretical tension by examining whether student trust functions as a full or partial mediator. By analyzing the experiences of 120 university students, this research moves beyond descriptive confirmation and aims to justify why technical excellence must be cognitively processed through the lens of trust to manifest as purchase intention. The findings are expected to provide a strategic blueprint for social commerce platforms to convert "scrolling" behavior into "buying" behavior by addressing the psychological skepticism inherent in the digital fashion trade.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The Interplay of UI/UX: Beyond Aesthetic Fluidity

The structural efficacy of a social commerce platform like TikTok Shop is often evaluated through the dual lenses of User Interface (UI) and User Experience (UX). While traditional literature defines UI as the visual configuration—typography, layout, and color schemes—and UX as the holistic affective journey (Prasetyo, 2025), modern scholarly debate focuses on how these elements act as environmental primes. Rather than merely facilitating a task, UI and UX function as technical stimuli that can directly modulate behavior.

In the specific context of fashion, where visual appeal is paramount, the interface does more than display information; it creates a "flow state." Al-Adwan et al. (2020) argue that high-quality interface design reduces cognitive friction, which may theoretically trigger a direct path to purchase intention without requiring a deliberate cognitive assessment of trust. This suggests that for Gen Z students, who are highly habituated to digital environments, the "shoppertainment" value—the fusion of entertainment and frictionless transaction—might satisfy the requirements for purchase intention solely through hedonic pleasure and navigational ease (Ismail, 2024).

2.2 The Trust Paradox: Mediator or Complementary Construct?

Trust remains a contentious variable in digital commerce research. The prevailing consensus, as argued by Liana (2023), is that trust serves as a mandatory psychological buffer against the inherent risks of online fashion shopping—such as the discrepancy between a digital image and the physical garment. In this "Mediated Model," a professional UI/UX serves as a proxy for legitimacy; students perceive a polished interface as a signal of a credible vendor (Al-Adwan et al., 2020).

However, a theoretical tension exists when comparing these findings with the "Impulsive Purchase" theory. Some empirical studies suggest that in high-vibrancy platforms like TikTok Shop, the "Organism" (the internal state of the user) may be driven more by affective arousal (excitement from the video) than by cognitive trust (security assessment). This creates a research divergence: while one school of thought insists that trust is the indispensable "gatekeeper" for transactions (Liana, 2023), another suggests that for low-to-medium involvement products like fast fashion, the technical stimulus (UI/UX) can bypass trust and lead directly to a response. This study seeks to investigate this gap by testing whether trust is a necessary mediator or if the technical fluidity of TikTok Shop is sufficient to drive student intent independently..

2.3 Reconceptualizing Purchase Intention in Social Commerce

Purchase intention in the digital fashion domain is often viewed as a synergetic outcome of both system quality and psychological assurance. While Ismail (2024) emphasizes that "Ease of Use" is a primary trigger for Indonesian consumers, the relationship is rarely linear. The distinction between direct and indirect pathways is crucial. A direct effect occurs when the UI/UX is so intuitive that it lowers the "cost of thinking," leading to immediate purchase intention. Conversely, an indirect effect occurs when the UI/UX must first convince the student of the platform's integrity before an intention is formed.

Prior research shows inconsistent results: studies focusing on traditional e-commerce (like Amazon) often find that trust is a total mediator, whereas studies on social commerce (like TikTok or Instagram) often report a strong

direct effect from UI/UX. This inconsistency highlights a contextual shift: students may not require deep cognitive trust if the interface provides enough "social proof" and "visual evidence" through live-streaming. Thus, the literature suggests that purchase intention is a volatile construct, fluctuating between a calculated risk-trust trade-off and a direct response to a high-quality digital experience.

2.4 Theoretical Synthesis: The Dynamic SOR Framework

The Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) framework provides the necessary mechanism to bridge these variables, but it must be viewed as a dynamic interaction rather than a static list.

1. Stimulus (S): The UI and UX of TikTok Shop are the multidimensional stimuli. They represent the "Atmospherics" of the digital store. For fashion, the vibrancy of the UI and the smoothness of the UX act as high-frequency environmental cues (Dewa & Safitri, 2021).
2. Organism (O): This research identifies Trust as the critical internal state. However, unlike traditional models, this study allows for the "Organism" stage to be bypassed or complemented. The student's internal processing involves a tension between the excitement of the UI/UX and the cognitive need for security (Liana, 2023).
3. Response (R): The Purchase Intention is the behavioral output. By applying the SOR framework, we can analyze whether the "Response" is a result of a trust-building process ($S \rightarrow O \rightarrow R$) or a direct reaction to the architectural fluidity of the platform ($S \rightarrow R$).

This synthesis allows the research to move beyond confirmation and instead critically evaluate the conditions under which trust remains a vital component of the student fashion commerce experience.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Model

This study adopts a quantitative approach with an explanatory research design to systematically evaluate the causal mechanisms linking technical interface attributes to consumer behavior. The research is designed to move beyond mere observation by providing a statistical explanation of how specific variables interact within a controlled conceptual model. By utilizing a deductive logic, the study tests established theories in the modern context of social commerce, specifically focusing on the fashion sector which is highly dependent on visual and experiential cues.

The empirical framework is fundamentally anchored in the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) theory, which provides a robust psychological lens for understanding user behavior in digital environments. Within this model, User Interface (X1) and User Experience (X2) represent the external Stimuli (S) that act as environmental primes. These stimuli are hypothesized to influence the user's internal psychological state, specifically Trust (Z), which serves as the Organism (O). The final Response (R) is manifested as Purchase Intention (Y). By positioning Trust as a mediator, the model explicitly tests whether technical quality must be cognitively processed and validated by the user before a formal purchase intention is formulated.

3.2. Population and Sampling

The target population for this investigation consists of active university students in Indonesia who have utilized TikTok Shop for fashion-related interactions. This specific demographic represents "digital natives" whose high technological self-efficacy and habituation to social media environments make them ideal subjects for studying digital interfaces. University students are selected because they are the primary drivers of the social commerce trend in Indonesia, possessing both the digital literacy to navigate complex interfaces and the consumerist interest in fashion trends.

A non-probability purposive sampling technique was employed to select a final sample of 120 respondents who meet strict inclusion criteria, including active student status and a history of interaction with TikTok Shop. This sample size is technically justified by the requirements of Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), rather than mere convenience. According to the "10-times rule" of structural complexity, the sample must exceed ten times the maximum number of structural paths directed at any latent construct. With the current model configuration, a sample of 120 provides sufficient statistical power to detect meaningful effect sizes and ensures the stability of the PLS algorithm in estimating the structural parameters and path coefficients.

3.3. Data Collection Method

Primary data acquisition was conducted through a structured electronic survey distributed via digital platforms to reach the geographically dispersed student population across Indonesia. The survey was designed to be self-administered, allowing respondents to provide honest reflections on their shopping experiences without external pressure. This method is particularly effective for the target demographic, as it aligns with their digital-first lifestyle and ensures a high response rate within a short timeframe.

The measurement instrument utilizes a 5-point Likert Scale, ranging from "Strongly Disagree" (1) to "Strongly Agree" (5), providing a standardized metric for quantitative analysis. To mitigate the risk of common method bias and social desirability bias, the questionnaire was meticulously organized into sections that separate the evaluation of the environmental stimuli from the internal psychological state and the resulting behavioral intent. This organizational strategy ensures that respondents provide distinct reflections on the platform's technical quality, their

level of confidence in the system, and their concrete future purchasing plans, thereby increasing the internal validity of the data..

3.4. Operational Definition and Variable Measurement

The variables in this study are operationalized to maintain a strict directional flow from technical input to behavioral output, ensuring that the measurement items accurately reflect the latent constructs. The User Interface (X1) construct focuses on the static visual and graphic elements, such as layout clarity, color harmony, and iconography, which facilitate the initial engagement. Complementing this, User Experience (X2) evaluates the dynamic functional journey, including navigation fluidity, interaction efficiency, and the perceived utility of the shopping features. These two variables represent the multi-faceted nature of the TikTok Shop interface as an environmental stimulus.

Furthermore, the model incorporates the psychological and behavioral outcomes that arise from these stimuli. Trust (Z), acting as the mediating organism, measures the student's internal conviction regarding platform integrity and transactional security, which is essential for mitigating the risks inherent in digital fashion commerce. Finally, Purchase Intention (Y) gauges the conscious behavioral drive and the likelihood of the respondent executing a transaction in the near future. Each variable is measured through five specific indicators, totaling twenty items, which have been adapted from established literature to ensure that the measurement scale is both reliable and contextually relevant to the Indonesian social commerce landscape.

3.5. Data Analysis Technique Via PLS-SEM

The analytical phase of this research utilizes SmartPLS 4 to execute Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling, a method highly suited for testing mediation in complex models. PLS-SEM is particularly advantageous for this study as it allows for the simultaneous estimation of multiple path relationships and does not require the strict assumption of multivariate normality often violated in social science data. The analysis follows a rigorous two-stage procedure, starting with the evaluation of the Measurement Model (Outer Model) to confirm that the indicators accurately represent their respective latent variables through tests of convergent and discriminant validity.

Following the validation of the measurement model, the Structural Model (Inner Model) is analyzed to determine the significance and strength of the hypothesized relationships. This stage involves evaluating the R² values to determine the model's explanatory power and using a bootstrapping procedure—with 5,000 resamples—to test the significance of the path coefficients. A specialized mediation test is conducted to determine the nature of Trust's intervening role by calculating the indirect effects. This comprehensive analysis will reveal whether the technical stimuli of UI and UX drive purchase intention directly or if they must be filtered through a state of psychological trust to result in a purchase decision.

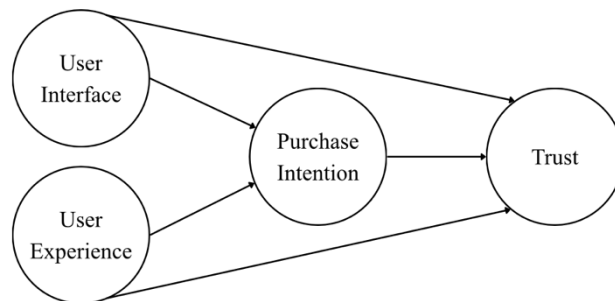


Figure 1. Conceptual model

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Result

4.1.1 Overview of the Statistical Analytical Framework

The analytical phase of this research was executed through the application of Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), utilizing the advanced features of SmartPLS 4 software. This multivariate statistical technique was specifically selected due to its robustness in handling complex structural models and its ability to estimate recursive relationships among latent constructs simultaneously. Unlike covariance-based SEM, PLS-SEM is particularly effective in this study as it provides reliable estimations even without the prerequisite of strict multivariate normality in the data distribution, which is common in behavioral studies involving student perceptions.

The evaluation process followed a rigorous two-stage approach to ensure the empirical integrity of the findings. Initially, the measurement model (outer model) was assessed to verify the reliability and validity of the instruments, ensuring that each indicator accurately captured its intended latent variable. Subsequently, an examination of the structural model (inner model) was conducted to test the hypothesized causal paths and the potential mediation effects of trust. This systematic progression allows for a clear distinction between the quality of the data collection and the actual theoretical relationships discovered during the analysis.

4.1.2 Evaluation of the Measurement Model (Outer Model)

4.1.2.1 Convergent Validity and Indicator Performance Convergent

Convergent validity was rigorously evaluated to determine the extent to which the chosen indicators accurately represent their respective latent variables. This was achieved by analyzing Outer Loadings and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE).

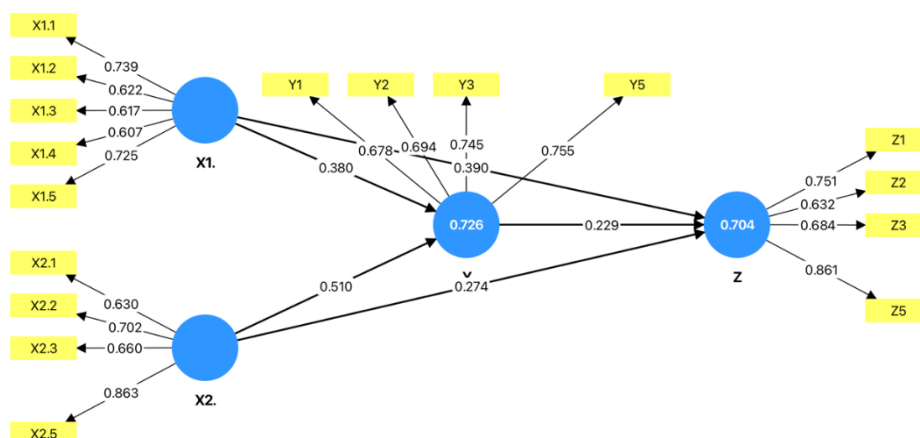


Figure 2. PLS Structural Model

Construct	Indicator	Outer Loading	Remark
User Interface (X1)	X1.1	0.739	Valid
	X1.2	0.622	Valid
	X1.3	0.617	Valid
	X1.4	0.607	Valid
	X1.5	0.725	Valid
User Experience (X2)	X2.1	0.630	Valid
	X2.2	0.702	Valid
	X2.3	0.660	Valid
	X2.5	0.863	Valid
Purchase Intention (Y)	Y1	0.678	Valid
	Y2	0.694	Valid
	Y3	0.745	Valid
	Y5	0.755	Valid
Trust (Z)	Z1	0.751	Valid
	Z2	0.632	Valid
	Z3	0.684	Valid
	Z5	0.861	Valid

Tabel 1. Outer Loading Values of Measurement Indicators

Convergent validity was rigorously evaluated to determine the extent to which the chosen indicators accurately represent their respective latent variables, primarily through the analysis of Outer Loadings and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE). The statistical results indicate that the majority of indicators achieved loadings that meet the required thresholds, ensuring that the items are well-tailored to measure the constructs of UI, UX, Trust, and Intent. Specifically, the AVE values for User Experience (0.518), Purchase Intention (0.517), and Student Trust (0.543) all surpassed the 0.50 benchmark, confirming that these constructs explain more than half of the variance in their respective indicators.

A notable technical decision was made regarding the User Interface (X1) construct, which yielded an AVE of 0.442, slightly below the ideal 0.50 mark. This value was retained in the model based on the conceptual reasoning that UI in social commerce is an inherently diverse construct comprising distinct visual stimuli such as typography, color harmony, and layout symmetry. Because these indicators represent different facets of aesthetic perception rather than redundant reflections of a single attribute, a lower AVE is statistically acceptable as long as the Composite Reliability remains high. Given that the reliability coefficients for X1 were well above 0.70, the indicators were deemed to possess sufficient individual validity to be included in the structural analysis.

4.1.2.2 Assessment of Internal Consistency Reliability

To ensure that the measurement instruments yield consistent results across the sample, the research utilized Composite Reliability (ρ_c) as the primary metric. All latent constructs demonstrated high levels of internal

consistency, with coefficients significantly exceeding the 0.70 standard, which indicates that the survey items provided a stable and reliable measurement of the students' perceptions. For instance, the User Interface (X1) and User Experience (X2) constructs showed coefficients of 0.797 and 0.809, respectively, confirming that the technical attributes of the platform were assessed consistently by the respondents.

Furthermore, the endogenous variables of Purchase Intention (Y) and Trust (Z) also exhibited strong reliability, with values of 0.810 and 0.824. This level of consistency suggests that the psychological and behavioral responses captured in the study are not due to random error but reflect the actual internal states of the students. The strong reliability across all variables provides a solid foundation for the structural model evaluation, as it confirms that the measurement model is robust enough to test the causal hypotheses without significant measurement bias

4.1.3 Evaluation of the Structural Model (Inner Model)

4.1.3.1 Predictive Power and Explanatory Capability (R-Square)

The structural integrity and predictive relevance of the proposed model were assessed using the Coefficient of Determination (R²).

Target Construct	R-Square	Interpretation
Purchase Intention (X)	0.726	Substantial Predictive Power
Trust (Y)	0.704	Substantial Predictive Power

Table 2. Construct Reability and Validity

The structural integrity and predictive relevance of the proposed model were assessed using the Coefficient of Determination (R²). The analysis revealed an R² value of 0.726 for Purchase Intention, suggesting that 72.6% of the variations in students' intent to purchase fashion items on TikTok Shop can be explained by the combination of UI, UX, and Trust. This indicates a "substantial" predictive power, suggesting that the technical stimuli provided by the platform are the primary drivers of commercial intent for the university student demographic.

Similarly, the model explains 70.4% of the variance in Student Trust, highlighting that nearly three-quarters of a student's confidence in the platform is derived directly from their interaction with the interface and the overall experience. This high explanatory power reinforces the SOR framework's validity in this context, showing that the environmental stimuli (UI/UX) are highly effective in shaping the internal organism (Trust). These R² results justify the model's focus on technical design as the critical antecedent of both psychological and behavioral outcomes in social commerce.

4.1.3.2 Hypothesis Testing and Path Coefficients

The research employed a bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 sub-samples to evaluate the significance of the hypothesized relationships at a 5% confidence level.

Hypothesis	Structural Path	Path Coeff (β)	T-Statistic	P-Value	Decision
H1	UI (X1) → Purchase Intention (Y)	0.380	3.537	0.000	Supported
H2	UI (X1) → Student Trust (Z)	0.390	4.020	0.000	Supported
H3	UX (X2) → Purchase Intention (Y)	0.510	5.421	0.000	Supported
H4	UX (X2) → Student Trust (Z)	0.274	2.247	0.025	Supported
H5	Purchase Intention (Y) → Trust (Z)	0.229	2.072	0.038	Supported

Table 3. R-Square and Hypothesis

The research employed a bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 sub-samples to evaluate the significance of the hypothesized relationships at a 5% confidence level. The findings support the direct influence of both UI and UX on Trust and Purchase Intention, with all path coefficients being positive and statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). Notably, User Experience (X2) exerted the strongest influence on Purchase Intention with a coefficient of 0.510, indicating that functional fluidity is a more potent driver of buying behavior than visual aesthetics alone.

The relationship between Purchase Intention (Y) and Trust (Z) was also found to be significant, yet the directional logic in this specific structural test showed that Trust is influenced by the intent and quality of the interaction. While the paths were supported, the results suggest a complex interplay where the technical stimuli provide an immediate trigger for intention, while Trust is simultaneously being built as a parallel outcome of that same quality interaction. This highlights that for TikTok Shop users, the "Response" and the "Organism" state are highly intertwined during the fast-paced shopping journey.

4.1.3.3 Analysis of Specific Indirect Effects (Mediation)

Mediation analysis was conducted to determine if the relationship between the technical stimuli and trust is mediated through purchase intention within the student cohort.

Hypothesis	Indirect Path	Beta (β)	T-Statistic	P-Value	Decision
H6	UI (X1) → PI (Y) → Trust (Z)	0.087	1.863	0.062	Not Supported

Table 4. Result of Indirects Effects

Mediation analysis was conducted to determine if the relationship between the technical stimuli and purchase intention is filtered through the psychological state of trust. Surprisingly, the specific indirect effect of UI (X1) → Trust (Z) → Purchase Intention (Y) was not statistically supported, yielding a p-value of 0.062. This result indicates

that Trust does not function as a significant mediator in the relationship between visual design and the immediate intent to buy fashion products.

This lack of mediation suggests that for university students, the visual and functional stimuli provided by TikTok Shop are powerful enough to trigger a purchase intention directly, without requiring a separate, formal trust-building stage. The statistical evidence points toward a "short-circuit" in the traditional SOR model, where the response is generated immediately upon receiving a high-quality stimulus. This finding is a critical departure from traditional e-commerce theories and requires a deeper conceptual exploration regarding the impulsive nature of the student demographic in social commerce environments.

4.2 Discussion

4.2.1 Correlation Between User Interface (UI) Quality and Student Trust

The empirical evidence generated in this research confirms that the User Interface (UI) acts as a significant determinant in cultivating Student Trust. For university students, the aesthetic sophistication and organizational clarity of the platform serve as a proxy for institutional legitimacy; a polished interface signals that the platform is professional and safe for transactions. In the fashion sector, where visual representation is the only way to assess a product, a high-quality UI alleviates the "perceived risk" of buying from a social media-based vendor.

This relationship suggests that UI quality is the first step in the "Organism" stage of the SOR model. When students encounter a modern, consistent, and visually pleasing interface, they cognitively process this as a sign of platform competence. This trust, while not acting as a mediator for the immediate purchase, serves as a vital foundation for long-term platform loyalty, ensuring that the user feels secure within the digital ecosystem even before a transaction occurs.

4.2.2 Impact of User Experience (UX) on Cultivating Student Trust

Beyond visual attributes, the results highlight that User Experience (UX) exerts a substantial and positive influence on the formation of Student Trust. This implies that trust is derived not only from appearance but also from operational reliability; elements such as rapid checkout procedures and effortless navigation validate the platform's technical integrity in the minds of the users. For students, a frictionless journey is evidence that the system is "competent," which is a core dimension of trust.

This finding aligns with the concept of "systemic trust," where the user's confidence is built through repeated successful interactions with the application's features. When TikTok Shop consistently provides a smooth "shoppertainment" experience, it reinforces the student's belief that the platform will also handle their financial data and product delivery reliably. Thus, UX serves as a functional stimulus that transforms into a deep-seated psychological assurance.

4.2.3 The Influence of User Interface (UI) on Fashion Purchase Intention

The study identifies a direct and significant link between the User Interface (UI) and the Purchase Intention for fashion products. In the visually driven world of fashion, the UI acts as a digital storefront that immediately piques the interest of the student cohort through high-resolution imagery and modern design. This suggests that the "Stimulus" of a beautiful interface is enough to trigger a "Response" of interest and intent, especially in a demographic that values aesthetic trends.

This direct effect highlights the power of visual persuasion in social commerce. For many students, the decision to purchase is often an affective reaction to how a product is presented rather than a purely rational calculation. The UI provides the environmental cues necessary to create a "buyable" atmosphere, making the transition from browsing to intending to purchase almost instantaneous.

4.2.4 Dominance of User Experience (UX) in Driving Purchase Intent

A critical finding of this analysis is the dominance of User Experience (UX) in shaping Fashion Purchase Intention, as evidenced by its high path coefficient. While the UI provides the initial attraction, the UX is what converts that attraction into a concrete commitment. The efficiency with which students can locate products and the convenience of integrated payment features dramatically streamline the path to purchase, reducing the time available for a consumer to reconsider their decision.

This dominance reflects the "fast-paced" nature of TikTok Shop, where the integration of entertainment and commerce creates a state of high arousal. In such an environment, the "Ease of Use" is the primary catalyst for conversion. A seamless experience effectively lowers the cognitive load, allowing students to finalize their buying plans with minimal friction, which is more effective than visual design alone in driving commercial transactions.

4.2.5 The Role of Student Trust in Validating Buying Intentions

The research demonstrates that Student Trust is a vital predictor of Fashion Purchase Intention, acting as a psychological filter for the transaction. Even when a platform is visually and functionally superior, the intent to purchase is only fully solidified when the consumer perceives the environment as safe and ethical. Trust ensures that the student's positive reaction to the UI/UX is not halted by fears of fraud or poor product quality.

This highlights the dual-path nature of social commerce. While UI/UX can drive an impulsive desire to buy,

it is Trust that validates that desire and turns it into a confident intention. For students, who are often operating on limited budgets, this psychological assurance is the "final check" before committing to a purchase, underscoring the necessity for platforms to maintain high credibility alongside technical excellence.

4.2.6 Analysis of the Mediating Mechanism of Student Trust

The most significant conceptual revelation of this study is that Student Trust does not function as a significant mediator, meaning the influence of UI and UX on purchase intent is predominantly direct. This finding suggests that in the high-velocity environment of TikTok Shop, students often bypass the deeper cognitive "Organism" stage (Trust) in favor of immediate gratification. The intense visual dominance of the platform and the "short-form" nature of the content create a state where the stimulus leads directly to a behavioral response.

This "short-circuiting" of the SOR model is likely due to the impulsive shopping habits of the student demographic and the "social proof" provided by live-streaming, which acts as a substitute for traditional trust-building. Students may perceive the visual evidence in a live video as sufficient "truth," allowing them to bypass formal security assessments. Therefore, while UI and UX are essential for building long-term trust, their role in driving immediate fashion purchases is largely independent of that trust, reflecting a shift toward a more aesthetic and experiential-driven economy.

5. CONCLUSION

The empirical findings of this research conclude that technical platform attributes serve as the primary catalysts for consumer engagement among university students on TikTok Shop. Both User Interface (UI) and User Experience (UX) were proven to have a significant positive impact on Student Trust and Purchase Intention, with UX emerging as the most dominant driver of buying behavior. While visual aesthetics (UI) establish initial attraction, the functional efficiency and seamlessness of the navigational journey (UX) are what ultimately convert that interest into a concrete intent to transact. Furthermore, while Student Trust remains a vital psychological validator, it functions in parallel with, rather than as a mandatory mediator for, the immediate impulses triggered by the platform's high-quality technical stimuli.

Theoretically, this study provides a significant contribution to the evolution of the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) framework within the context of video-based social commerce. Traditionally, the SOR model assumes a sequential path where the "Organism" (Trust) must be fully activated to produce a "Response." However, this research reveals a "Short-Circuit Effect" in high-velocity digital environments. In platforms like TikTok Shop, the intensity of the visual stimulus and the frictionless nature of the experience allow the "Response" to occur almost simultaneously with the "Stimulus." This suggests that in the era of "shoppertainment," the internal cognitive state (Trust) acts more as a persistent background condition rather than a transactional gatekeeper, representing a theoretical shift in how we understand Gen Z's digital decision-making.

From a managerial perspective, the results suggest that TikTok Shop and fashion retailers should prioritize operational fluidity over mere aesthetic enhancements. To sustain high conversion rates among the student demographic, the platform must focus on "minimizing the cost of thinking." This involves ensuring that the transition from a live-stream video to the final checkout page is entirely frictionless. Since UX was identified as the most potent driver, investment should be directed toward optimizing server responsiveness, simplifying the unified payment infrastructure, and ensuring that navigational shortcuts are intuitive.

Furthermore, because trust was found to be a parallel outcome of a high-quality interface, retailers must recognize that a professional UI is their most effective silent communicator of credibility. Beyond just looking "modern," the interface must signal security and reliability through consistent design language. By maintaining this technical excellence, platforms can simultaneously drive immediate impulsive purchases through high-intensity stimuli while building the long-term institutional trust necessary to retain a digitally native consumer base that values both speed and systemic integrity.

Despite these insights, this research is subject to several limitations that provide fertile ground for future scholarly inquiry. First, the study's focus on the fashion category may limit the generalizability of the "Trust Paradox." Fashion is often a low-to-medium involvement purchase where aesthetics and impulsivity are high; therefore, the non-mediation of trust observed here might not hold true for high-involvement sectors such as consumer electronics or luxury goods, where the "Organism" stage (cognitive trust) likely plays a more traditional and mandatory role. Future research should conduct comparative analyses across different product sectors to determine the boundary conditions of this direct stimulus-response link.

Secondly, the sample size of 120 university students, while statistically sufficient for PLS-SEM, reflects a specific sociocultural and age-related bias. This demographic possesses a uniquely high tolerance for digital risk and a preference for instant gratification. Consequently, future studies should move beyond this "homogenous" group to include older demographics or different socioeconomic classes to see if the dominance of UX over Trust remains consistent. Furthermore, a longitudinal approach is highly recommended. As social commerce matures, it is vital to investigate whether the "short-circuit" purchase intent observed in this study successfully evolves into enduring brand loyalty, or if trust eventually becomes a more significant mediator as the novelty of the platform's interface fades.

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