

Factors Influencing Consumer Purchase Behavior on TikTok Shop-Based on Tiktok Case Study

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Abstract. In the context of the rapid development of global social e-commerce and TikTok Shop's breakthrough in business format based on content planting, this paper takes TikTok Shop as a research case to explore the influence mechanism of platform algorithm, talent and live broadcast on consumers' purchasing behavior. Based on literature review and industry open data analysis, the research finds that: firstly, platform personalization algorithm relies on users' browsing and interactive data to accurately push goods, which leads to a large number of unplanned impulse consumption; Second, bloggers rely on content credibility and circle influence to build user trust, and rely on word of mouth to drive product transformation; Third, live real-time interaction and limited-time concessions create a consumer atmosphere, further stimulating instant orders. At the same time, the existing algorithms of the platform induce four kinds of shortcomings: irrational consumption, uneven quality control of goods, privacy leakage and false propaganda of talents, which restrict users' retention for a long time. This study enriches the consumption theory of discovery e-commerce, which can provide practical reference for TikTok and similar content e-commerce to optimize platform rules, improve quality control and privacy management, and refine operations.

Keywords: TikTok Shop, consumer behavior, social commerce, livestreaming commerce, algorithmic recommendation

1. Introduction

In recent years, social platforms have had a profound impact on online shopping. People no longer only use these applications for chatting or browsing videos. Many platforms have integrated shopping functions, and social e-commerce has gradually become common. TikTok Shop is a typical example. Since entering the US market in 2023, it has been popular among young consumers. This application integrates short videos, live streaming, creator recommendations, and online shopping.

Compared with traditional e-commerce websites, TikTok Shop operates in a different way. On platforms like Amazon, users usually actively search for the desired products. For example, people who want to buy headphones will enter keywords into the search box and then compare different products. However, TikTok Shop is different. Many users do not have any intention of shopping at the beginning. They may just want to open TikTok to relax, watch videos, and browse content. They

may suddenly see the products recommended by the system. So, sometimes people become interested in a certain product without any expectations.

TikTok Shop's blowing up lately, so more and more people are curious how it's changing how people shop. Normally, there've been studies on trust, live shopping and social e-commerce already, but barely anyone's put all the different factors together to look at how everything works on TikTok Shop. Things like the recommendation algorithm, creator influence, live stream interactions, and consumer psychology all work together at the same time, but researchers usually don't talk about these factors as a whole.

In view of this, this article will first explore the motivations behind users shopping on TikTok Shop, that is, what exactly drives consumers to place orders? So how do the functions of the platform, social interactions, and personal psychology work together to influence these purchasing decisions? To answer the above question, a retrospective study was conducted on relevant existing literature, utilizing secondary data and conducting specialized case analysis on TikTok Shop to gain a deeper understanding of the changing trends in consumer behavior on social e-commerce platforms.

2. Development of TikTok shop and social commerce

As an emerging shopping platform, TikTok Shop integrates functions such as short videos, live streaming, creator promotion, and online shopping. In September 2023, TikTok officially launched this feature in the United States, marking an important step forward from being just a social application and beginning to transform into an e-commerce platform.

The operation mode of TikTok Shop is different from traditional shopping websites such as Amazon, that is, it differs from them. In traditional platforms, users usually actively search for products they have already purchased, while TikTok Shop is different. Users usually use videos and content recommendations to discover products. Many times, people do not have any intention of shopping at the beginning, just watching videos for leisure. When sliding through the information flow, products will naturally appear in front of them. Therefore, consumers will be more likely to develop interest in products, changing their previous shopping methods and purchasing decision-making patterns.

2.1. Platform structure and key features

TikTok Shop has several unique features that make online shopping more convenient, including shopping videos, live shopping, product displays, affiliate marketing programs, and app payments.

Specifically, shopping videos allow users to directly click on the product links in the video while watching content. Sellers can showcase their products while promoting them, and live shopping is also a popular feature on TikTok Shop. During live streaming, consumers can view products, ask questions, and interact with sellers in real time. Live streaming usually offers discounts, or limited time offers to attract consumers to extend their stay or encourage them to place orders faster.

In addition, TikTok Shop has launched an alliance marketing program, which allows creators to earn revenue by recommending products, thereby encouraging more internet celebrities and creators to promote their products on the platform.

Another convenient aspect is having a payment system. Users can complete payment operations on TikTok without leaving the application, which saves time and makes the shopping process smoother. For many consumers, the entire shopping experience is easier compared to traditional e-commerce platforms.

2.2. User base and market context

TikTok's user base has expanded, and the platform's transaction volume has continued to grow, especially among young people who are more receptive to new lifestyles. According to data from the Pew Research Center, approximately 37% of adults in the United States use TikTok, and young consumers use it more frequently than older groups. Generation Z users are particularly active on social media.

Meanwhile, data from the US Census Bureau shows that the proportion of e-commerce in total retail sales in the United States is increasing, and more and more consumers are gradually adapting to online shopping. Digital consumption is showing a continuous growth trend.

All these changes have created such an opportunity for social commerce. Now that more and more people are hanging out on social media and shopping online, platforms like TikTok Shop are getting way more chances to blow up.

2.3. TikTok shop as a discovery-based commerce model

Unlike traditional online shopping platforms, TikTok Shop does not mainly depend on keyword searching. One of the most prominent features of TikTok Shop is its "discovery based shopping" model, where the platform uses users' "For You Pages" to push content based on their interests and online behavior. Consumers can accidentally discover products while watching entertainment videos. This is precisely the logic behind the operation of this model. Many times, users may not have the intention to purchase, but after repeatedly seeing product recommendations, they may gradually become interested. This shopping method has stronger impulsivity and weaker planning. Therefore, consumer behavior on TikTok Shop is more spontaneous and easily influenced by entertainment content.

According to official data from TikTok, many users have expressed that they use this platform to discover new products and brands. This is precisely the key difference between TikTok Shop and traditional e-commerce platforms. In this model, people are more willing to try new products, which in turn drives platform revenue to increase.

3. Key factors influencing consumer purchase behavior

3.1. Algorithmic recommendation

Algorithmic recommendation will directly affect users' purchasing behavior. TikTok Shop will carry out content push work based on users' interests, viewing history, and interactive behavior. With algorithmic recommendation, users can see products without actively searching, thus transforming online shopping from a "search based" experience to a more inspiring and exploratory experience [1].

TikTok data shows that many users discover new products and brands while using the platform, which means that platform recommendations can effectively attract consumers' attention [2]. A certain product often appears in recommended videos, and users may gradually become interested, which can trigger unplanned or impulsive purchasing behavior.

In the social e-commerce environment, the innovation and interactive mechanisms developed by the platform itself have also played an important role [3]. The recommendations carried out by TikTok Shop are not random. Considering the analysis of users' historical behavior, this will make users more willing to pay attention to the recommended products. The platform will collect users'

viewing time, likes, comments, shares, and purchase records, and based on this information, push content that matches their interests.

Scholars pointed out that personalized recommendations and user engagement can have an impact on consumers' willingness to purchase on social e-commerce platforms [4, 5]. The platform will continue to recommend products that users like, so that users will rely more on and trust the platform and form a positive impression of related products. The more times a user sees a certain product, the easier it is to develop a sense of familiarity, thereby increasing their willingness to purchase.

Many people open apps such as TikTok mainly for entertainment purposes. Imagine that when users browse content they are interested in and come across related advertisements or recommendations, they may suddenly want to verify whether a certain product is really as effective as advertised. TikTok and other platforms provide sellers with convenient promotion channels, while also making users' shopping behavior more targeted and convenient. Therefore, the longer users stay on the platform, the greater the possibility of shopping.

3.2. Creator credibility and social influence

Recently, many consumers have been influenced by buying products based on content created by social media influencers on TikTok. Many products are being promoted in the form of short videos and live streaming. Most of the creators in these videos will introduce product features, share their own experiences using the products, and talk to viewers. Therefore, some users will find this kind of recommendation more accessible and trustworthy than traditional advertising. Some consumers will be interested in the products recommended by creators because they trust these creators.

Trust is also required for the above reasons, and previous studies have found that trust can promote people's participation and intention to buy [6]. Putri and others have also pointed out that trust and privacy are problems for Generation Z consumers on TikTok Shop [7]. When consumers have confidence in the creators, they are more willing to try the recommended products; thus, trust can boost people's confidence in online shopping.

People can be easily swayed by others. The more bloggers recommend a particular product, the more people will trust it. The number of people buying and when they buy is all visible to the users. Therefore, when people see others purchasing a certain product, they will think that this purchase behaviour is more reliable. Many users will continue to follow the same creator for a long time and gradually come to know him better. TikTok creators' sense of closeness with their fans is relatively close compared with that of traditional celebrities.

Ahmad and others have indicated that trust and social interaction are required for social commerce, and TikTok Shop encourages users to talk and interact with creators and other users through comments, replies, live-streaming, etc [6]. Some popular products and hot items have also made people want to buy things, especially young people.

3.3. Livestreaming interaction

Live-streaming is used relatively often for the shopping activities on TikTok. Sellers and creators can go live to talk with the audience and answer their questions about the products they sell, etc. It will help consumers get to know the product better before buying it. Live-streaming is more direct and interesting than static pictures. Previously, it has been shown by studies that social feelings and interactivity are relatively important in live-streaming sales. If the consumer can get immediate

answers and suggestions, they will be less confused about the product and also less concerned about purchasing the wrong one [8].

Live shopping often has discounts and promotions to attract more people to buy. Many live-streaming shows have limited-time discounts, flash sales, special deals, etc., to motivate people to buy quickly. Gao and others believe that, after observing the live-streaming broadcast and interaction, consumers will be more motivated to buy from [9]. Zhang and others believe that the collaboration of popular creators with the public can boost the visibility of products and motivate people to purchase them more readily [10].

Live-streaming on TikTok Shop is a combination of shopping and entertainment; it is not traditional e-commerce. Some viewers will remain in the live room to enjoy watching the creator talk or display products; others are out of curiosity or waiting for discounts and special offers. People who did not initially plan to buy some products are interested in them after watching live-streaming programs for a while. Live-streaming rooms are more lively than regular shopping websites; there are always new things to see, and it is more convenient for people to invest in them.

The first feature of live-streaming is that some people are afraid they will miss a good deal. Many live-streaming rooms have added countdown timers, limited-time offers, and other restrictions to the purchase of goods in a short time. Therefore, some consumers will be in a hurry and not spend much time comparing prices. Wu and Huang believe that consumers are generally more willing to buy goods after receiving some benefits [11]. Sometimes, it is not only the products themselves that motivate people to buy; a good shopping scene can also make people feel excited.

Trust is also one of the reasons for carrying out live-streaming. Zhang and Liu have found that interaction can help to reduce the uncertainty of online shopping [8]. In the TikTok Store, users can post questions, see various views of products, and have creators explain how they work. Since it will be more convenient for people to make purchases quickly, they may decide to buy. Many people find live-streaming to purchase goods to be more convenient for them than reading about the products.

4. Challenge

Although it has been developing rapidly and significantly changing the way people shop online, there are still some problems that could affect consumers' long-term trust in the platform and the development of TikTok Shop.

The other is that the algorithm of the platform for recommending products may be biased. As products have been added to various forms of entertainment, consumers are frequently shown personalised recommendations without making conscious searches. The shopping environment may lead people to make impulsive purchases and thus fail to make rational choices, particularly young people who spend more time watching short videos.

Another problem is the quality of the products and sellers. Traditional e-commerce platforms have often been known for a long time, but TikTok Shop has many small businesses and independent sellers, and their product quality is also inconsistent. Consumers are sometimes in a hurry during live-streaming and promotional periods and do not pay much attention to product information. As a result, there will be issues with false advertising, poor quality, etc., after which consumers will lose faith in the platform.

Privacy and Data Security are also problems that need to be solved. The personalised recommendation system of TikTok Shop is based on data about the browsing and purchase history of users, etc. Although personalisation can help people shop more easily, they are also uneasy about how their personal data is collected and used. Therefore, they will be reluctant to use the platform.

Finally, influence in marketing may sometimes encourage people to consume deceptively. Creators often present the products in a charming or appealing way, making people want to buy them out of emotion rather than for practical reasons. There is a risk that the advertisement is false or lacks disclosure about sponsorship.

TikTok Shop has built a very attractive shopping system, but to continue attracting consumers and developing the business, it must solve these problems.

5. Conclusion

Based on the review of related studies, secondary data analysis and case studies will be used in this paper to investigate the factors affecting consumer purchase behaviour on TikTok Shop. Based on the results of this study, it can be seen that the algorithm for recommending goods on TikTok Shop has begun to shape people's consumption patterns. According to the user's viewing record and other reasons, some popular short dramas on the platform will be recommended to that user. Therefore, consumers are often exposed to such products without having sought them out first. A new form of discovery will increase the visibility of new products and encourage impulsive purchases by combining shopping with entertainment content.

Another significant finding is that the credibility and social influence of the creator affect people's desire to buy. TikTok Shop uses many famous people, such as influencers and content creators, to introduce and sell goods through their own shows, reviews, etc. Creators' works are considered more genuine and trustworthy by the public than typical advertising. Generation Z is very influenced by the opinions of other young people and online communities.

It has been shown that Live-streaming interaction also improves the interest of consumers in shopping. Live-streaming can be used by sellers and content creators to talk with consumers in real-time, answer questions, show how to use products, offer limited-time promotions, etc. The above environment can establish a sense of the presence of society and be felt closely by the consumer. Livestreaming is also an entertainment and promotion method that can give people a more relaxed shopping mood. Therefore, consumers are more likely to buy spontaneously during the live broadcast.

In addition, the general trend of the market has also promoted the development of TikTok Shop. The development of e-commerce and the growing popularity of social media have created a good environment for the expansion of social commerce. Younger consumers are getting more used to consuming content and shopping at the same time, thus further boosting the competitiveness of TikTok Shop in the digital market.

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