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The Effect of Customer Behavior and Social Presence in TikTok Live Shopping on Purchase Intention with Customer Trust A Mediator

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Abstract

The research aims to analyze the influence of Customer Behavior and Social Presence on Purchase Intention in TikTok Live Shopping, with Customer Trust as the mediating variable. This research was motivated by the phenomenon of the gap between high user engagement and low purchase conversion in live commerce, given Indonesia's position as the biggest TikTok user country in the world. Using a quantitative approach grounded in the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) theory, data were collected from 336 undergraduate students at the Faculty of Economics and Business, UNESA, through cluster sampling. Data analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) with SmartPLS 4. The results indicate that Customer Behavior and Social Presence have a positive and significant influence on Purchase Intention, directly and through the mediation of Customer Trust. These findings indicate that Customer Trust acts as a significant mediating mechanism linking consumer behavior and social presence to purchase intention in the social commerce ecosystem.

Keywords: Customer Behavior; Social Presence; Customer Trust; Purchase Intention; TikTok Live Shopping

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis pengaruh *Customer Behavior* dan *Social Presence* terhadap *Purchase Intention* pada fitur *TikTok Live Shopping* dengan *Customer Trust* sebagai variabel mediasi. Studi ini di latarbelakangi oleh fenomena rendahnya konversi *purchase intention* pada *live commerce*, yang dimana posisi Indonesia sebagai negara pengguna TikTok terbesar di dunia. Menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan landasan teori Stimulus-Organism- Response (S-O-R), data dikumpulkan dari 336 mahasiswa S1 FEB UNESA melalui teknik *cluster sampling.* Analisis data dilakukan menggunakan *Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS)* dengan *SmartPLS 4.* Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa *Customer Behavior* dan *Social Presence* berpengaruh positif dan signifikan terhadap *Purchase Intention*, baik secara langsung maupun melalui mediasi *Customer Trust.* Temuan ini mengindikasikan bahwa *Customer Trust* merupakan mekanisme krusial yang menjembatani perilaku dan interaksi sosial dalam mendorong keputusan pembelian di ekosistem *social commerce.*

Kata kunci*: Customer Behavior; Social Presence; Customer Trust; Purchase Intention; TikTok Live Shopping; SEM-PLS.*

INTRODUCTION

Digital technology advancements have driven significant transformations across various aspects of life, including commercial activities. This is reflected in the rise in the number of global internet users, which reached 5.65 billion individuals by early July 2025 equivalent to 68.7% of the world's total population (DataReportal, 2025). In Indonesia, internet penetration has reached 79.5%, or approximately 221 million people, in 2024 (APJII, 2024). This growth is accelerating the development of e-commerce and changing consumer behavior, as people become increasingly accustomed to conducting transactions online. In this context, purchase intention is a crucial concept as it reflects consumers' tendency to make purchases in response to specific stimuli (Schiffman & Wisenblit, 2019).

Along with these developments, the phenomenon of social commerce has emerged, integrating social interaction into the digital transaction process. One example is the live shopping feature on the TikTok platform, which enables real-time interaction between sellers and consumers. With 194.37 million users in Indonesia (We Are Social, 2025), TikTok offers a more immersive shopping experience through a high level of social presence that is, the extent to which individuals perceive the presence of others in online communication (Lowenthal, 2010). This creates a psychological closeness between sellers and consumers that is not found in conventional e-commerce.

In the context of live shopping, the consumer decision-making process becomes more complex because it is influenced not only by information from the seller but also by the activities of other consumers, such as comments, reviews, and shopping experiences displayed in real time. In this context, consumer behavior serves as a social reference that helps individuals evaluate products. However, a high level of social interaction does not always lead to a transaction, indicating a gap between viewer engagement and actual purchases.

In such situations, customer trust becomes a key factor in determining the final decision. Trust refers to consumers' confidence in the seller's integrity, competence, and good faith in fulfilling promises during the transaction process (Idrus et al., 2024). Without trust, the social stimuli that emerge during live shopping tend to be insufficiently strong to drive purchases. Therefore, customer trust is viewed as a mediating variable that bridges the influence of social interaction on purchase intention.

Although the relationship between social presence, trust, and purchase intention has been extensively studied, previous research findings have shown inconsistencies, particularly in explaining whether social presence influences purchase intention directly or indirectly through trust. This inconsistency indicates that the mechanisms of influence in the context of live shopping have not yet been fully understood. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the influence of customer behavior and social presence on purchase intention, with customer trust as a mediating variable, among students in the Faculty of Economics and Business at Surabaya State University.

METHODS

The This study employs a quantitative approach using a survey method targeting undergraduate students in the Faculty of Economics and Business at Surabaya State University (FEB UNESA). The sampling technique used is cluster sampling (sampling based on regions/groups), in which respondents were grouped according to their academic programs at FEB UNESA to ensure data representativeness. Through this procedure, a total of 336 respondents who had used the TikTok Live Shopping platform were selected as the research sample. The data collection instrument used a 1–5 Likert scale questionnaire to measure the variables is Customer Behavior (X1), Social Presence (X2), Purchase Intention (Y), and Customer Trust (Z) as the mediating variable.

Data analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling- Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) with the assistance of SmartPLS 4 software. The analysis began with an evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) to ensure the validity and reliability of the instrument through factor loading, AVE, and composite reliability tests. Subsequently, hypothesis testing was conducted through an evaluation of the structural model (inner model) using the bootstrapping procedure to assess the significance of path coefficients, T-statistics, and P-values. Overall model quality was also assessed based on predictive power (R^2 and F^2) and model fit via the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) value.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The distribution of respondents by gender shows a composition dominated by women. Of the total 336 respondents, 251 (74.7%) were women, while 85 (25.3%) were men. Based on these results, it can be concluded that the majority of FEB UNESA students involved in TikTok Live Shopping activities are women; however, this study still reflects the perspectives of both gender groups.

All respondents in this study are active students of the Faculty of Economics and Business, Surabaya State University, who are TikTok users. The respondents' characteristics met the established criteria, namely having watched or been directly involved in interactions on the TikTok Live Shopping feature. Based on these results, it can be concluded that all respondents had relevant exposure to the social commerce. This study used SmartPLS version 4 to process and analyze the research data.

Convergent Validity

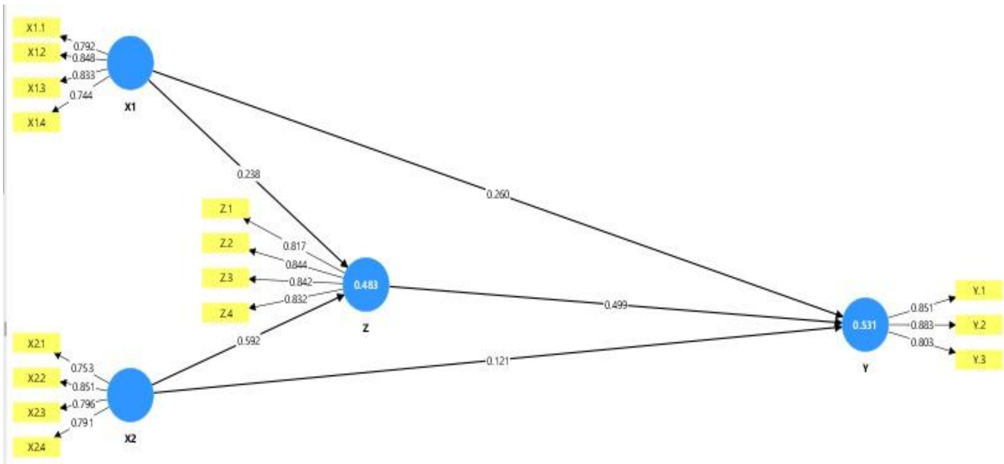

Figure 1 Convergent Validity

Convergent validity is a form of validity based on the understanding that the indicators of a construct must have a strong correlation. In the PLS model with reflective indicators, convergent validity is measured using two criteria: factor loadings must be greater than 0.7 (indicating a correlation between item scores and construct scores) and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) must exceed 0.5 (Ghozali, 2023). This test was conducted on all research variables name Customer Behavior, Social Presence, Customer Trust, and Purchase Intention to ensure the accuracy of the instrument in measuring each construct.

The test results showed that all variable indicators in this study had factor loadings above 0.7, indicating that these indicators met the criteria for Convergent Validity. Thus, all indicators were deemed suitable and valid for use in the study and could proceed to the next stage of analysis. In addition to analyzing outer loading values, Convergent Validity was also evaluated using an alternative method, namely by reviewing the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values. Based on the analysis of data from FEB UNESA students, the AVE values for each variable were greater than 0.5, so the measurement model in this study was considered to meet the criteria.

Table 1. Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

Variable	AVE Value	Standard AVE
Customer Behavior	0.649	0.5
Social Presence	0.638	0.5
Customer Trust	0.698	0.5
Purchase Intention	0.716	0.5

Source: Data processed by authors (2026)

Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity is a type of validity based on the principle that indicators of different constructs should not have high correlations. Discriminant validity is measured using cross-loading values, which must be greater than 0.7, as well as by comparing the square root of the AVE for each construct against the interconstruct correlation values in the model using the Fornell-Larcker criteria for the variables Customer Behavior, Social Presence, Customer Trust, and Purchase Intention.

Table 2. Forner Larcker

Variable	X1	X2	X3	X4
Customer Behavior (X1)	0.805			
Social Presence (X2)	0.308	0.798		
Customer Trust (Z)	0.581	0.635	0.835	
Purchase Intention (Y)	0.447	0.523	0.683	0.848

Source: Data processed by authors (2026)

The Fornell Larcker Criterion values indicate that the correlations among indicators within each construct are stronger than their correlations with other constructs, indicating good discriminant validity.

Composite Reliability

Composite reliability analysis was applied to ensure the consistency and stability of the instruments used in the study. A questionnaire is considered reliable if the research subjects' responses remain consistent even when the measurement is repeated at different times. This study evaluated the reliability of the indicators using PLS by examining the Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values for each variable. The established criterion is a minimum value of 0.7 to ensure good reliability, although a value of 0.6 is still considered the lowest acceptable threshold.

Table 3. Composite Reliability

Variable	X1	X2	M
X1 Customer Behavior	0.816	0.880	>7,0
X2 Social Presence	0,810	0,876	>7,0
Z Customer Trust	0,854	0,901	>7,0
Y Purchase Intention	0,821	0,883	>7,0

Source: Data processed by authors (2026)

The results of the composite reliability analysis indicate that all research constructs have Cronbach's Alpha (X1) and composite reliability (X2) values that exceed the minimum criterion of 0.7 (M). These results confirm that the instruments used meet the established criteria. Thus, it can be concluded that each variable in the study meets high standards of internal consistency and stability.

R-Square

The structural model was evaluated by measuring the percentage of variance in the variables, as evidenced by the R-Square values for the endogenous latent constructs. The results of the R-Square test are as
follows:

Table 4. R-Square

Variable	R-Square	R-Square
CT	0.483	0.480
PI	0.531	0.526

Source: Data processed by authors (2026)

The results of the coefficient of determination analysis reveal that the variables Customer Behavior, Social Presence, and Customer Trust collectively account for 51.0% of the variation in Purchase Intention (Y), while the remaining 49.0% is attributed to factors outside the scope of this study. On the other hand, the variables Customer Behavior and Social Presence were found to explain 55.1% of the variance in the variable Customer Trust (Z), with the remaining 44.9% influenced by variables outside this study. discriminant validity and convergent validity have been met, this research model is deemed valid.

F-Square

Based on the criteria established by Hair et al. (2019), the F-square value is interpreted as follows: an F^2 of 0.02 is considered a small effect, 0.15 a moderate effect, and 0.35 a large effect.

Table 5. F-Square

	Value F^2	*Effect Size*
CB (X1) → CT (Z)	0.102	moderate effect
CB (X1) → PI (Y)	0.112	moderate effect
SP (X2) → CT (Z)	0.630	large effect
SP (X2) → PI (Y)	0.018	small effect

	Value F^2	*Effect Size*
CT (Z) → PI (Y)	0.274	moderate effect

Source: Data processed by authors (2026)

Model Fit

The quality of the structural model in this study is indicated by the SRMR value; if the value is below the threshold of 0.08, the model is considered to fit well or to have a very high level of fit with the field data (Hair et al., 2021).

Table 6. Model Fit

	Saturated Model	Stimated Model	Keterengan
SRMR	0.068	0.068	Good Fit

Source: Data processed by authors (2026)

Bootstrapping Test

Table 7. Path Test

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values	Description
X1 → Y	0.260	0.260	0.046	5.642	0.000	Significant
X1 → Z	0.238	0.238	0.046	5.172	0.000	Significant
X2 → Y	0.121	0.123	0.060	2.039	0.041	Significant
X2 → Z	0.592	0.593	0.038	15.450	0.000	Significant
Z → Y	0.499	0.498	0.059	8.471	0.000	Significant

Source: Data processed by authors (2026)

Customer Behavior (X1) has a positive and significant effect on Purchase Intention (Y) among TikTok Live Shopping users

The results of the bootstrapping analysis show a T-statistic value of 5.642 (> 1.96) with a P-value of 0.000 (< 0.05), so H1 is accepted. This indicates that the Customer Behavior variable (X1) influences Purchase Intention (Y). The path coefficient is positive at 0.260, meaning that Customer Behavior (X1) contributes to increasing Purchase Intention (Y) by 26.0%. This finding demonstrates that the behavior of UNESA FEB students, who are accustomed to the ease and security of transactions on TikTok Live Shopping, effectively fosters strong purchase intent.

This finding is supported by the research of Kholimatul et al. (2024) and Dwi et al. (2024), which shows that consumer experiences and behavior within the digital ecosystem significantly influence purchase intent. Practically, these results emphasize that businesses need to maintain the quality of the user experience, such as transaction ease and security, to sustain consumer shopping habits. When students feel comfortable and accustomed to the platform's functionality, the tendency to make purchases both immediately and in the future will continue to increase.

Social Presence (X2) has a positive and significant effect on Purchase Intention (Y) among TikTok Live Shopping users

The results of the bootstrapping analysis show a T-statistic value of 2.039 (> 1.96) with a P-value of 0.041 (< 0.05), so H2 is accepted. This indicates a positive influence of the Social Presence variable (X2) on Purchase Intention (Y) with a path coefficient of 0.121, meaning that Social Presence contributes to increasing purchase intention by 12.1%. These findings demonstrate that real-time interaction, host responsiveness, and personal communication in TikTok Live Shopping successfully foster emotional closeness and reduce consumers' psychological distance. These results are supported by studies by Mishra (2025) and Huang et al. (2022), which state that social presence in live commerce significantly triggers purchasing decisions through a shopping experience that resembles face-to-face communication, thereby strengthening consumer confidence in the products offered.

Customer Behavior (X1) has a positive and significant effect on Customer Trust (Z) among TikTok Live Shopping users.

The bootstrapping analysis results show a T-statistic of 5.172 (> 1.96) with a P-value of 0.000 (< 0.05), so H3 is accepted. A path coefficient of 0.238 indicates that Customer Behavior (X1) contributes 23.8% to Customer Trust (Z), with an effect size (F^2) of 0.102 (moderate category). These findings demonstrate that the frequency of transactions and students' repeated experiences on TikTok Live Shopping gradually build confidence in the seller's credibility. This aligns with Wang et al. (2025), who state that consistent consumer behavior on digital platforms plays a crucial role in building trust through guarantees of transaction security and service quality.

Social Presence (X2) has a positive and significant effect on Customer Trust (Z) among TikTok Live Shopping users.

The results of the bootstrapping analysis show a T-statistic of 15.450 (> 1.96) with a P-value of 0.000 (< 0.05), so H4 is accepted. A path coefficient of 0.592 (contributing 59.2%) with an effect size (F^2) of 0.630 (large category) confirms that Social Presence (X2) has the strongest influence on Customer Trust (Z) in this model. These findings demonstrate that real time interaction and host responsiveness effectively reduce psychological distance and enhance the perception of seller credibility in the eyes of consumers. These results are supported by Cheng et al. (2022) and Gefen & Straub (2004), who state that social presence in digital environments is crucial for minimizing perceived risk and strengthening the foundation of customer trust through shopping experiences that resemble face to face communication.

Customer Trust (Z) has a positive and significant effect on Purchase Intention (Y) among TikTok Live Shopping users.

Empirical evidence from bootstrapping analysis indicates that H5 is accepted with a T-statistic of 8.471 (> 1.96) and a P-value of 0.000 (< 0.05). A path coefficient of 0.499 confirms that Customer Trust (Z) contributes 49.9% to Purchase Intention (Y), with an effect size (F^2) of 0.274 (moderate to large). These findings confirm that trust acts as a key element in reducing psychological barriers and the risks of online shopping, where consumers' confidence in the seller's honesty and product suitability directly strengthens purchase intention. These results align with Gefen et al. (2003) and Qing (2025), who identify trust as the primary determinant in reducing consumer uncertainty and driving purchasing decisions within the e-commerce ecosystem.

Table 8. Mediation Test

	Original sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values	Description
X1→ Z→ Y	0.119	0.119	0.029	4.085	0.000	Significant
X2→ Z→Y	0.295	0.295	0.039	7.546	0.000	Significant

Source: Data processed by authors (2026)

Customer Trust (Z) mediates the effect of Customer Behavior (X1) on Purchase Intention (Y)

The results of the bootstrapping test for indirect effects show a T- statistic of 4.085 (> 1.96) with a P-value of 0.000 (< 0.05), so H6 is accepted. Customer Trust (Z) was found to mediate the effect of Customer Behavior (X1) on Purchase Intention (Y) with a positive coefficient of 0.119, or 11.9%. Customer Trust acts as a partial mediator because the direct effect of Customer Behavior on Purchase Intention remains significant (0.260) and the indirect effect through trust is also significant (0.119). This finding aligns with Rahmawati et al. (2024), who explained that trust serves as a cognitive link that reinforces customer behavior in driving purchase intention. This confirms that the success of transactions on TikTok Live Shopping depends not only on platform usage habits but also on the ability to build a reputation that creates an emotional trigger a sense of trust prompting immediate purchase.

Customer Trust (Z) mediates the effect of Social Presence (X2) on Purchase Intention (Y)

The bootstrapping results for the indirect effect show a T-statistic of 7.546 (> 1.96) with a P-value of 0.000 (< 0.05), so H7 is accepted. Customer Trust (Z) was found to mediate the effect of Social Presence (X2) on Purchase Intention (Y) with a positive coefficient of 0.295, or 29.5%. Customer Trust acts as a partial mediator, given that the direct effect of Social Presence on Purchase Intention is also significant (0.121). These findings indicate that social presence primarily operates through the development of trust as the primary foundation before purchase intention emerges. These results are supported by Hewei & Youngsook (2022) and Qing (2025), who state that in the social commerce ecosystem, trust serves as a vital bridge connecting social factors with purchase responses. Overall, this model has a good data fit with an SRMR value of 0.068 and is able to explain the variance in Purchase Intention through an R^2 value of 0.531 or 53.1%.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the dynamics of Customer Behavior and Social Presence serve as the primary foundation for driving Purchase Intention among undergraduate students at the Faculty of Economics and Business, UNESA, when interacting within the TikTok Live Shopping ecosystem. These findings confirm that the presence of warm and responsive social elements is not merely a marketing tool but an emotional bridge that significantly strengthens Customer Trust. Customer trust has been proven to act as a crucial partial mediator; that is, the intention to transact does not arise instantly but grows through the sense of security and credibility built by the seller. Theoretically, these results enrich the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) paradigm by placing the human aspect at the core of digital purchasing decisions. Practically, businesses are advised to shift from merely pursuing sales volume toward building an honest reputation, in order to foster more meaningful loyalty amidst the intense competition in live commerce.

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