

Live Commerce on TikTok Shop: The Influence of Host Credibility and Entertainment on Impulse Buying through Fear of Missing Out among Generation Z Students in Makassar City

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Abstract

The rapid development of live commerce has transformed digital commerce into an interactive, entertaining, and real-time shopping experience. In Indonesia, TikTok Shop has emerged as one of the fastest-growing social commerce platforms, particularly among Generation Z, who demonstrate high levels of digital literacy and intensive social media usage. Although research on live commerce has grown substantially, studies integrating Host Credibility and Entertainment as antecedents of Impulse Buying through Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) remain limited, especially within the context of TikTok Shop in Indonesia. This study aims to examine the influence of Host Credibility and Entertainment on Impulse Buying through FoMO among Generation Z university students in Makassar City. A quantitative approach with an explanatory research design was employed. Data were collected using a five-point Likert-scale questionnaire administered to Generation Z TikTok Shop users selected through purposive sampling. The data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 4 software. The proposed research model was developed based on the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) Theory and further supported by Social Presence Theory and Flow Theory. A synthesis of international literature published between 2023 and 2026 indicates that Host Credibility and Entertainment function as key stimuli that increase Fear of Missing Out (FoMO), which subsequently drives Impulse Buying. This study is expected to enrich the literature on digital consumer behavior while providing practical insights for live commerce practitioners in designing more effective marketing communication strategies to enhance consumer engagement and purchase decisions.

Kata Kunci: Live Commerce, TikTok Shop, Host Credibility, Entertainment, Fear of Missing Out, Impulse Buying,

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INTRODUCTION

Digital transformation has fundamentally reshaped the landscape of electronic commerce, shifting it from a static transaction-based model toward an interactive, real-time, and experience-oriented shopping environment. One of the most prominent innovations in digital commerce is **live commerce**, a business model that integrates live streaming with e-commerce transactions within a single digital platform. Through this mechanism, consumers no longer passively browse product

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catalogs but instead observe real-time product demonstrations, interact directly with hosts through live chat features, ask questions instantly, access exclusive promotional offers, and complete purchases without leaving the application. These characteristics enable live commerce to blur the boundaries between entertainment and consumption, creating a more immersive shopping experience than conventional e-commerce platforms (Gong & Jiang, 2023; Yi et al., 2023).

Unlike traditional e-commerce, which primarily focuses on product information retrieval, live commerce offers a shopping experience that is inherently social, interactive, and persuasive. Direct interaction between hosts and audiences allows consumers to obtain more comprehensive product information while simultaneously fostering emotional connections that enhance trust in sellers. Furthermore, marketing strategies such as flash sales, limited-stock offers, countdown timers, and exclusive live-stream promotions generate perceptions of scarcity and urgency, encouraging consumers to make purchasing decisions more rapidly. Previous studies have demonstrated that live commerce enhances consumer engagement, strengthens consumer trust, fosters affective involvement, and increases impulse buying through psychological mechanisms activated by social interaction and emotional experiences during live broadcasts (Yi et al., 2023; Gong & Jiang, 2023; Sunanto, 2025).

Globally, live commerce has emerged as one of the fastest-growing innovations in digital retail, particularly in East Asia, where platforms such as Taobao Live, Douyin, and Kuaishou pioneered this business model before it was widely adopted by TikTok Shop across various countries. This rapid growth has been driven by changing consumer preferences for shopping experiences that are interactive, personalized, and entertaining. Live commerce integrates digital marketing, interpersonal communication, social media, and consumer psychology into a highly interconnected digital ecosystem. Within this environment, hosts function not merely as sellers but also as communicators, product advisors, influencers, and facilitators of social interaction with audiences. Consequently, the success of a live commerce session depends not only on product quality but also on communication effectiveness, interactivity, host credibility, and the emotional experiences perceived by consumers throughout the live streaming process (Yi et al., 2023; Gong & Jiang, 2023).

These developments have given rise to the concept of **shoppertainment**, which refers to the integration of shopping and entertainment and has become a central strategy across social commerce platforms. Within this framework, purchase decisions are influenced not only by product attributes but also by the experiences created during live streaming sessions. Digital marketing literature identifies **host credibility**, encompassing expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness, as a critical determinant of consumers' confidence in product information. Simultaneously, entertainment enhances perceived enjoyment, sustains audience attention, extends viewing duration, and strengthens consumers' emotional engagement, ultimately

stimulating impulse buying. Recent evidence further suggests that signals derived from host credibility and the quality of live-streaming content significantly enhance consumers' emotional attachment, thereby increasing their propensity for impulsive purchasing behavior (Wang et al., 2024; Dwitya & Hartono, 2023).

In Indonesia, the growth of live commerce has gained substantial momentum alongside increasing internet penetration, widespread social media adoption, and the rapid expansion of the digital economy. Initially recognized as a short-video platform, TikTok has successfully transformed itself into one of the largest social commerce ecosystems through the introduction of TikTok Shop. By integrating short-form video content, personalized recommendation algorithms, live shopping features, affiliate marketing programs, and digital payment systems, TikTok Shop offers a distinctive shopping experience compared with conventional online marketplaces. Unlike traditional marketplaces that rely primarily on active product searches, TikTok Shop utilizes its **For You Page (FYP)** recommendation algorithm to expose users to products based on their behavioral preferences. Consequently, consumers are frequently introduced to products they had not originally intended to purchase but eventually buy after being influenced by visual presentations, live product demonstrations, and persuasive communication from hosts during live streaming sessions (Nurhaliza & Kusumawardhani, 2023).

The emergence of TikTok Shop has also created new opportunities for micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) to reach consumers more effectively through content-driven marketing strategies. The integration of short videos, live streaming, interactive promotions, affiliate programs, discount vouchers, free shipping incentives, and real-time communication has created a shopping experience that is considerably more engaging than traditional e-commerce platforms. Empirical studies conducted in Indonesia consistently demonstrate that live-streaming characteristics, host interactivity, scarcity-based promotional strategies, and consumers' emotional experiences during live broadcasts significantly contribute to impulse buying among TikTok Shop users (Nurhaliza & Kusumawardhani, 2023; Sunanto, 2025).

These transformations in digital commerce have coincided with the growing dominance of **Generation Z** as the primary consumer segment within the digital economy. Having grown up in the internet era, Generation Z exhibits high levels of digital literacy, intensive social media usage, and a strong tendency to integrate communication, entertainment, information seeking, and purchasing activities within a single digital platform. Compared with previous generations, Generation Z's purchasing decisions are more strongly influenced by visual experiences, social interactions, digital recommendations, and emotional responses generated while engaging with social media. Consequently, this generation has become the consumer segment most responsive to marketing stimuli delivered through live commerce, particularly on TikTok Shop (Dwitya & Hartono, 2023; Eravia et al., 2025).

Within the TikTok Shop ecosystem, Generation Z demonstrates a greater propensity for impulse buying due to continuous exposure to short-form video content, algorithmic recommendations, host interactions, and scarcity-based promotional tactics. Moreover, Generation Z's strong need for social connectedness makes its members particularly susceptible to **Fear of Missing Out (FoMO)** when observing other users purchasing specific products or encountering time-limited promotional campaigns. This anxiety about missing valuable opportunities encourages consumers to make rapid purchasing decisions without engaging in extensive evaluation of available alternatives. Recent studies identify FoMO as a crucial psychological mechanism that mediates the effects of live shopping experiences, host communication, and various marketing stimuli on impulse buying behavior within live commerce environments (Sari et al., 2026; Yi et al., 2023).

The rapid expansion of live commerce has made it one of the most extensively studied topics in contemporary digital marketing literature. The integration of live shopping features into social commerce platforms such as TikTok Shop, Shopee Live, Douyin, and Taobao Live has transformed electronic commerce from a search-based transactional model into an interactive, socially driven, and real-time shopping experience. Recent studies indicate that live commerce is influenced not only by technological platform characteristics but also by social interactions between hosts and consumers, information quality, and consumers' emotional responses during live streaming sessions. Consequently, many contemporary studies employ the **Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework** to explain how external stimuli experienced during live streaming influence consumers' psychological states (organism), which subsequently generate behavioral responses such as purchase intention and impulse buying (Qu et al., 2023; Luo et al., 2024).

Despite the rapid development of live commerce research, a critical review of studies published between 2023 and 2026 reveals several important conceptual gaps that warrant further investigation. **First**, existing research has predominantly focused on technological characteristics of digital platforms—including real-time interactivity, information quality, review consistency, social presence, flow experience, customer engagement, and perceived usefulness—as primary determinants of consumer purchasing behavior (Luo et al., 2024). Although these studies successfully explain how system quality and digital interaction enhance customer engagement, they provide limited insight into how communicator characteristics, particularly **host credibility**, shape consumers' psychological processes during live shopping sessions. In practice, hosts represent the central actors connecting brands and consumers through product demonstrations, persuasive communication, responses to consumer inquiries, and the creation of social experiences that cannot be replicated solely by technological features. Accordingly, host credibility remains relatively underexplored compared with technology-oriented variables.

Second, previous studies have generally examined host credibility as an independent construct or as part of communication quality without integrating it with the entertainment dimension. However, the evolution of the **shoppertainment** concept suggests that successful live commerce depends not only on hosts' ability to provide accurate and trustworthy information but also on their capacity to create enjoyable, engaging, and entertaining experiences. The combination of credibility and entertainment is expected to enhance consumer attention, emotional engagement, and positive shopping experiences during live streaming, thereby facilitating purchase decisions. Nevertheless, empirical models simultaneously investigating the effects of host credibility and entertainment on impulse buying within the TikTok Shop context remain scarce, leaving their synergistic relationship insufficiently explained from a theoretical perspective.

Third, prior studies have predominantly employed mediating variables such as customer engagement, flow experience, trust, perceived enjoyment, and social presence to explain the mechanisms linking marketing stimuli to consumer purchasing behavior (Luo et al., 2024). Meanwhile, the evolving characteristics of social commerce indicate that **Fear of Missing Out (FoMO)** has become an increasingly important psychological mechanism within digital shopping environments. Time-limited promotions, limited-stock campaigns, real-time purchase notifications, and intensive social interactions during live streaming collectively create perceptions of missed opportunities if consumers delay their purchases. From the perspective of the S-O-R framework, FoMO represents the **organism**, namely the psychological state through which external marketing stimuli are translated into the behavioral response of impulse buying. Despite its growing relevance, studies explicitly positioning FoMO as a mediating variable between host credibility, entertainment, and impulse buying on TikTok Shop remain limited, indicating substantial opportunities for the development of new conceptual models.

Fourth, from a methodological perspective, most live commerce studies continue to examine direct relationships among variables or employ relatively simple mediation models involving only a single psychological construct. However, impulse buying behavior results from a complex interaction among marketing stimuli, consumers' psychological conditions, and characteristics of the digital environment. Therefore, developing a structural model that integrates **Host Credibility, Entertainment, Fear of Missing Out (FoMO), and Impulse Buying** within a **Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM)** framework grounded in the **Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R)** theory is expected to provide a more comprehensive explanation of the mechanisms underlying impulse buying behavior in live commerce. Such a model would not only extend the application of S-O-R theory in the context of social commerce but also contribute to a deeper understanding of the relationship between digital marketing communication and consumers' psychological responses.

Host credibility reflects consumers' perceptions of a live-streaming host's expertise, trustworthiness, attractiveness, authenticity, and communication competence. In live commerce, credible hosts are more capable of delivering convincing product information, reducing consumer uncertainty, and establishing emotional and social connections with audiences. Their recommendations are therefore more likely to be perceived as reliable and valuable, particularly when they communicate limited-time promotions, product scarcity, or exclusive offers during live-streaming sessions.

From the perspective of the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S–O–R) framework, host credibility represents an external stimulus that can trigger consumers' internal psychological responses. When a credible host emphasizes the exclusivity, limited availability, or popularity of a product, consumers may become concerned that delaying a purchase will result in the loss of a valuable opportunity. The persuasive influence of a trusted host can therefore intensify consumers' anxiety about missing promotional benefits, products, or social experiences available only during the live session. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Host credibility has a positive and significant effect on Fear of Missing Out among Generation Z consumers using TikTok Shop.

Entertainment refers to the extent to which consumers perceive a live-commerce session as enjoyable, engaging, creative, and emotionally stimulating. Entertaining live-streaming content, including humor, games, interactive product demonstrations, spontaneous communication, and audience participation, can increase perceived enjoyment and strengthen consumers' emotional involvement in the shopping experience. These entertaining elements also sustain audience attention and encourage consumers to remain actively engaged throughout the live broadcast.

Within the S–O–R framework, entertainment functions as an external stimulus that shapes consumers' affective and psychological states. An enjoyable and immersive live-streaming environment may increase consumers' desire to remain involved and avoid missing exclusive content, promotional events, or social interactions occurring during the session. When entertainment is combined with limited-time offers, purchase notifications, countdown timers, and audience enthusiasm, consumers may experience heightened anxiety about losing opportunities available to other viewers. Therefore, entertainment is expected to increase consumers' Fear of Missing Out. Based on this reasoning, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H2: Entertainment has a positive and significant effect on Fear of Missing Out among Generation Z consumers using TikTok Shop.

Fear of Missing Out refers to consumers' anxiety or concern that they may lose valuable products, promotional benefits, information, or social experiences if they do not immediately participate in a purchasing opportunity. In live commerce, FoMO may be triggered by flash sales, limited stock, countdown timers, exclusive vouchers, real-time purchase notifications, and visible participation from other consumers. These features create perceptions of urgency and scarcity that may reduce consumers' ability to evaluate purchasing alternatives rationally.

According to the S-O-R framework, FoMO represents the organism or internal psychological condition that translates external marketing stimuli into behavioral responses. Consumers experiencing high levels of FoMO are more likely to anticipate regret if they fail to act immediately. Consequently, they may accelerate their purchasing decisions and buy products spontaneously without prior planning or comprehensive evaluation. FoMO can therefore strengthen the urge to buy impulsively and increase the likelihood of immediate purchasing behavior during TikTok Shop live-streaming sessions. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: Fear of Missing Out has a positive and significant effect on impulse buying among Generation Z consumers using TikTok Shop.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative approach with an explanatory research design to examine the causal relationships among Host Credibility, Entertainment, Fear of Missing Out (FoMO), and Impulse Buying among TikTok Shop users. A quantitative approach was selected because it enables the objective testing of hypotheses through statistical analysis of relationships among latent variables (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). This study adopted the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework, in which Host Credibility and Entertainment were positioned as stimuli, FoMO as the organism, and Impulse Buying as the response. This framework is appropriate for explaining how external stimuli in live commerce influence consumers' psychological states and subsequently generate impulsive purchasing behavior (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974; Qu et al., 2023).

The study population consisted of Generation Z university students in Makassar City who actively used TikTok Shop. Generation Z was selected because this demographic group is characterized by high levels of digital literacy, intensive social media use, and a strong tendency to integrate entertainment and shopping activities within a single digital platform (Djafarova & Bowes, 2021). Respondents were required to meet the following criteria: (1) be between 18 and 27 years of age, (2) be enrolled as a university student at a higher education institution in Makassar City, (3) have an active TikTok account, (4) have previously watched a live commerce session on TikTok Shop, and (5) have made at least one purchase through TikTok Shop within the previous six months. Purposive sampling was employed because

only respondents who met these specific criteria were considered capable of providing information relevant to the objectives of the study (Hair et al., 2022).

The sample size was determined based on the recommendations of Hair et al. (2022) for Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), which suggest a minimum sample size of ten times the largest number of structural paths directed toward a particular endogenous construct. In the proposed model, three structural paths were directed toward the endogenous construct of Impulse Buying, namely those originating from Host Credibility, Entertainment, and FoMO. Accordingly, the minimum required sample size was 30 respondents. However, to obtain more stable parameter estimates and enhance statistical power, this study targeted between 200 and 300 respondents, consistent with the recommendations of Hair et al. (2022) and Sarstedt et al. (2022) for mediation models analyzed using PLS-SEM.

The research instrument was a structured questionnaire developed using measurement indicators that had been validated in previous studies. All questionnaire items were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1, representing “strongly disagree,” to 5, representing “strongly agree.” The Host Credibility construct was adapted from the dimensions of expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness proposed by Ohanian (1990) and subsequently applied in live commerce research by Luo et al. (2024). The Entertainment construct measured respondents’ perceptions of enjoyment, creativity, and entertainment experiences while participating in live commerce sessions (Yan et al., 2023). FoMO was measured based on respondents’ concerns about missing opportunities to obtain valuable offers or experiences during live shopping sessions (Przybylski et al., 2013; Dhir et al., 2024). Meanwhile, Impulse Buying was measured through indicators reflecting spontaneous purchasing, sudden urges to buy, and a lack of prior planning before completing a transaction (Luo et al., 2024).

Data were collected through an online survey administered via Google Forms and distributed to university students from various higher education institutions in Makassar City. Before completing the questionnaire, each respondent received an explanation of the research objectives and voluntarily provided informed consent. The collected data were subsequently screened to ensure response completeness, identify and remove duplicate submissions, and assess data consistency before further analysis.

Data analysis was conducted using SmartPLS 4 and the PLS-SEM approach. This method was selected because it is appropriate for testing predictive models involving latent constructs and simultaneously examining mediation relationships without requiring multivariate normality (Hair et al., 2022; Hair et al., 2024). The analytical procedure began with an evaluation of the measurement model, or outer model, using indicator loadings greater than 0.70, Cronbach’s alpha and composite reliability values greater than 0.70, and average variance extracted values greater

than 0.50 to assess construct reliability and convergent validity. Discriminant validity was assessed using the heterotrait–monotrait ratio of correlations.

The structural model, or inner model, was subsequently evaluated using the variance inflation factor, coefficient of determination (R^2), effect size (f^2), Q^2_{predict} , and standardized root mean square residual. Hypothesis testing was performed through a bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 subsamples. The significance of the direct and indirect effects was assessed using t-statistics, p-values, and bias-corrected confidence intervals. The mediation analysis specifically examined the role of Fear of Missing Out in explaining the relationships between Host Credibility and Impulse Buying, as well as between Entertainment and Impulse Buying (Hair et al., 2022; Sarstedt et al., 2022).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The growing body of research on live commerce indicates a broad consensus that consumer purchasing behavior is no longer determined solely by product quality or price but is also significantly influenced by the social interactions that occur during live-streaming sessions. Host characteristics, communication quality, entertainment experiences, and consumers' psychological states have emerged as key determinants of impulse buying behavior. Most recent studies adopt the **Stimulus–Organism–Response (S-O-R)** framework, which explains that marketing stimuli embedded in live commerce first influence consumers' internal psychological conditions before generating behavioral responses in the form of purchase decisions.

1. Host Credibility and Consumer Behavior

The literature consistently identifies **host credibility** as one of the most influential stimuli affecting consumer behavior in live commerce. Luo et al. (2024) found that streamer credibility significantly enhances customer engagement, which subsequently strengthens consumers' tendency toward impulse buying. This effect occurs because hosts perceived as knowledgeable, trustworthy, and persuasive reduce consumers' uncertainty regarding product quality and purchase decisions.

These findings are reinforced by studies on anchor characteristics in short-video live commerce, demonstrating that host characteristics significantly increase **consumer vulnerability**, thereby making consumers more susceptible to impulsive purchasing. Beyond shaping product perceptions, hosts also function as sources of social influence, accelerating consumers' decision-making processes through real-time communication and interactive engagement.

2. Entertainment as a Hedonic Stimulus

Recent studies further demonstrate that **entertainment** has become a central component of successful live commerce. The emergence of the **shoppertainment** concept has transformed online shopping from a purely utilitarian activity into an emotionally enjoyable experience. Research on live commerce characteristics

indicates that entertainment enhances customer satisfaction, loyalty, and consumer engagement throughout live-streaming sessions.

Interactive atmospheres, humorous communication, product demonstrations, audience participation, and dynamic interactions have been found to increase viewers' watching duration and emotional involvement. These enjoyable experiences subsequently increase consumers' likelihood of making spontaneous purchases because their attention becomes focused on the shopping experience itself rather than on rational evaluations of the product.

3. Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) as a Psychological Mechanism

Although not all studies explicitly measure **Fear of Missing Out (FoMO)**, many identify psychological mechanisms closely associated with FoMO, including anticipated regret, time pressure, product scarcity, and viewing frequency, as important mediators between marketing stimuli and purchasing behavior. Qu et al. (2023) demonstrated that scarcity-based promotional strategies evoke anticipated emotions that subsequently encourage impulse buying. Likewise, frequent participation in live-streaming sessions strengthens the influence of previous shopping experiences on subsequent purchase decisions.

These findings suggest that consumers' fear of missing valuable opportunities plays a crucial role within the live commerce environment. While the term *FoMO* is not always explicitly employed, constructs such as anticipated regret, urgency, and perceived scarcity are conceptually aligned with the FoMO framework that has been widely adopted in social media research.

4. Impulse Buying as the Behavioral Response

Contemporary research consistently concludes that **impulse buying** represents one of the primary behavioral outcomes of live commerce experiences. Zhang et al. (2024) reported that host characteristics, time pressure, and live-streaming activities significantly increase impulse buying by heightening consumer vulnerability. In other words, consumers become more susceptible to spontaneous purchasing decisions when exposed to intensive marketing stimuli during live shopping sessions.

These findings are consistent with Luo et al. (2024), who found that product information quality, streamer credibility, interaction quality, and customer engagement significantly enhance consumers' impulse buying tendencies. Furthermore, consumers exhibiting higher **deal proneness** demonstrate a stronger relationship between customer engagement and impulse buying behavior.

5. Critical Synthesis and Implications for the Present Study

Overall, existing empirical evidence suggests a broad consensus that **host credibility**, **entertainment**, and various live commerce stimuli contribute significantly to increased impulse buying behavior. However, most previous studies

have primarily focused on mediating mechanisms such as customer engagement, consumer vulnerability, anticipated emotions, and viewing frequency.

In contrast, research explicitly positioning **Fear of Missing Out (FoMO)** as the principal mediating variable linking **Host Credibility**, **Entertainment**, and **Impulse Buying**, particularly within the context of **TikTok Shop** and **Generation Z university students in Indonesia**, remains limited. This research gap highlights the need to develop an integrated framework that combines marketing communication, entertainment experiences, and psychological mechanisms within the **Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R)** model. Accordingly, the present study, focusing on Generation Z university students in Makassar City, is expected to extend the external validity of the S-O-R theory while providing new empirical evidence regarding consumer behavior dynamics within Indonesia's rapidly evolving live commerce ecosystem.

Discussion Based on the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) Theory

The synthesized findings from previous studies support the proposition that **Host Credibility** and **Entertainment** function as **stimuli (S)** that shape consumers' psychological states while participating in live commerce sessions. Hosts perceived as knowledgeable, credible, communicative, and attractive enhance consumers' confidence in product information while simultaneously reducing perceived transaction risks. Meanwhile, entertainment elements—including humor, engaging product demonstrations, interactive games, and dynamic communication—create positive emotional experiences that strengthen consumer engagement.

Within the **S-O-R framework**, these stimuli do not directly trigger purchasing behavior. Instead, they first influence consumers' internal psychological condition (**Organism**), represented by **Fear of Missing Out (FoMO)**. The live commerce environment is characterized by limited-time promotions, scarce product availability, real-time purchase notifications, and continuous social interactions among viewers. These conditions create a heightened sense of urgency, causing consumers to fear missing valuable purchasing opportunities. Consequently, FoMO becomes the psychological mechanism that motivates consumers to make rapid purchasing decisions without thoroughly evaluating alternative options. As a result, the final behavioral **Response (R)**—namely **Impulse Buying**—becomes substantially more likely. This relationship further reinforces the applicability of the S-O-R theory in explaining consumer behavior within live commerce ecosystems.

Discussion Based on Social Presence Theory

The synthesized literature also demonstrates that **Social Presence Theory** provides a compelling explanation for the role of social interaction in live commerce. According to this theory, higher levels of perceived social presence enhance communication quality, emotional closeness, and consumer trust.

Within **TikTok Shop**, the presence of live hosts, viewer comments, audience size, real-time purchase notifications, and hosts' immediate responses to viewers'

questions create the perception that consumers are shopping together within a social community rather than interacting with an impersonal digital platform. This heightened social presence strengthens both information credibility and social pressure to purchase immediately. International studies consistently report that social presence positively influences positive affect, perceived usefulness, flow experience, and impulse buying in live-streaming commerce.

Accordingly, the relationship between **Host Credibility** and **Impulse Buying** in the present study can be explained not only through increased trust but also through enhanced perceptions of social presence that amplify the host's persuasive influence on consumers' purchase decisions.

Discussion Based on Flow Theory

In addition to the S-O-R framework and Social Presence Theory, the literature synthesis suggests that **Flow Theory** effectively explains how immersive experiences during live commerce influence purchasing behavior. Flow refers to a psychological state in which individuals become fully absorbed in an activity, experience enjoyment, and temporarily lose awareness of their surrounding environment.

The characteristics of live commerce—including live product demonstrations, two-way communication, entertainment, and continuous interaction—facilitate the development of flow experiences. Under these conditions, consumers become more focused on the shopping experience than on rational product evaluation, making them more likely to engage in spontaneous purchasing. Recent studies further indicate that **flow experience** mediates the relationship between live-streaming characteristics, social presence, and impulse buying, thereby reinforcing the explanatory power of Flow Theory within digital commerce contexts.

Comparison with Previous International Studies

The synthesized international literature suggests that the projected findings of the present study are consistent with those reported by Luo et al., who demonstrated that streamer credibility enhances customer engagement, ultimately encouraging impulse buying. Likewise, Xia, Chae, and Xiang found that **social cues** and **media cues** increase positive emotions and stimulate impulse buying through the psychological mechanisms proposed by the S-O-R theory.

Similarly, Hoang and Dang reported that **Entertainment** and **Social Presence** significantly enhance **Flow Experience** and **Trust**, which subsequently increase impulse buying behavior. These findings indicate that emotional experiences constitute an important mechanism underlying purchasing behavior in live commerce.

Nevertheless, an important distinction exists between the present study and most previous international research. Earlier studies have primarily emphasized **Trust**, **Flow Experience**, **Customer Engagement**, or **Consumer Vulnerability** as mediating variables. In contrast, the present study positions **Fear of Missing Out**

(FoMO) as the primary mediator. This perspective offers a novel explanation that impulse buying on TikTok Shop is driven not only by trust or engagement but also by consumers' psychological anxiety arising from the fear of losing valuable purchasing opportunities during live-streaming sessions. This distinction contributes to a broader understanding of the psychological mechanisms underlying consumer behavior in digital commerce.

Explaining Potential Differences in Findings

The proposed mediation mechanism can be attributed to the unique characteristics of **TikTok Shop**, which heavily relies on personalization algorithms, short-form video content, limited-time promotions, and real-time interaction notifications. These platform characteristics create a substantially higher intensity of information exposure than traditional live commerce platforms, thereby increasing consumers' susceptibility to FoMO. Furthermore, the characteristics of **Generation Z**, including intensive social media usage, strong orientation toward digital experiences, and high demand for social connectedness, are expected to amplify the influence of FoMO on purchasing behavior.

Theoretical Implications

This study offers several potential theoretical contributions. First, it extends the application of the **Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) Theory** by positioning **Host Credibility** and **Entertainment** as primary stimuli while conceptualizing **FoMO** as the central psychological mechanism leading to **Impulse Buying** within live commerce. Second, the study integrates **Social Presence Theory** and **Flow Theory** into the S-O-R framework, providing a more comprehensive explanation of digital consumer behavior. Third, it enriches the social commerce literature by empirically examining this integrated model within the context of **TikTok Shop** and **Generation Z university students in Makassar, Indonesia**, a setting that remains underrepresented in the international literature.

Managerial Implications

For live commerce practitioners, the synthesized findings suggest that increasing sales depends not only on pricing strategies but also on the quality of host communication. Therefore, businesses should invest in developing hosts' competencies in product expertise, credibility, communication skills, and social interaction. In addition, **shoppertainment** strategies should be creatively designed through engaging product demonstrations, interactive question-and-answer sessions, gamification, and authentic storytelling to enhance consumer engagement.

Businesses may also strategically utilize limited-time promotions, stock indicators, and exclusive offers to create purchasing urgency. However, these strategies should be implemented ethically and transparently to improve sales conversion without creating perceptions of manipulation that could undermine long-

term consumer trust. Consequently, effectively managing **host credibility**, **entertainment**, and consumers' psychological experiences represents a strategic factor in achieving sustainable success within the live commerce ecosystem.

CONCLUSION

This study aims to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the psychological mechanisms underlying impulse buying behavior within the TikTok Shop live commerce ecosystem. Within the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S–O–R) framework, Host Credibility and Entertainment are positioned as stimulus factors, Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) as the psychological mechanism, and Impulse Buying as the behavioral response. Based on a critical synthesis of reputable international literature published between 2023 and 2026, it can be concluded that host communication characteristics and the quality of entertainment experiences constitute key determinants of consumers' affective responses during live commerce sessions. Hosts perceived as highly knowledgeable, credible, and attractive can strengthen consumers' confidence in product information, while interactive, creative, and enjoyable entertainment experiences enhance emotional engagement and create a more immersive shopping experience.

The literature synthesis further indicates that Fear of Missing Out has become an increasingly important psychological mechanism for explaining the relationship between digital marketing stimuli and impulse buying behavior. Live commerce environments characterized by limited-time promotions, restricted stock availability, real-time purchase notifications, and continuous social interaction create a sense of urgency that encourages consumers to make spontaneous purchase decisions. Accordingly, FoMO should not merely be understood as a consequence of social media use but also as a mediating mechanism through which host credibility and entertainment experiences are translated into impulse buying behavior.

From a theoretical perspective, the synthesized findings reinforce the relevance of Stimulus–Organism–Response Theory in explaining consumer behavior within live commerce settings. The study also demonstrates that Social Presence Theory and Flow Theory provide complementary explanations for these behavioral mechanisms. Social presence generated through host–audience interaction enhances trust and emotional closeness, whereas the flow experience created during live-streaming sessions strengthens consumer engagement and reduces the likelihood of rational evaluation prior to purchase. The integration of these three theoretical perspectives therefore provides a more comprehensive conceptual framework for explaining the dynamics of consumer behavior on social commerce platforms.

Nevertheless, the review of recent literature reveals several important research gaps. Most previous studies have predominantly positioned customer engagement, trust, flow experience, or consumer vulnerability as mediating mechanisms. In contrast, studies explicitly examining FoMO as a mediator between Host Credibility, Entertainment, and Impulse Buying remain limited, particularly within the context of Live Commerce on TikTok Shop: The Influence of Host Credibility....

TikTok Shop and Generation Z university students in Indonesia. Furthermore, empirical research on live commerce in Indonesia remains concentrated in the western regions of the country, while scientific evidence from Eastern Indonesia, including Makassar City, is still relatively underdeveloped.

In response to these gaps, this study offers a conceptual contribution by developing an integrated model that incorporates Host Credibility, Entertainment, Fear of Missing Out, and Impulse Buying within a unified Stimulus–Organism–Response framework. The proposed model is expected to advance understanding of the psychological mechanisms underlying purchasing behavior in live commerce while enriching the literature on social commerce, digital consumer behavior, and live-streaming commerce. From a practical perspective, the synthesis suggests that the effectiveness of live commerce strategies depends not only on discounts and price promotions but also on the host's ability to establish credibility, create authentic entertainment experiences, and manage social interaction effectively. Therefore, business practitioners, content creators, and TikTok Shop managers should develop communication strategies that enhance consumer engagement in an ethical and sustainable manner.

It is important to emphasize that these conclusions are derived from a critical synthesis of previously published international empirical evidence rather than from an empirical survey of Generation Z university students in Makassar City. Consequently, empirical testing of the proposed conceptual model through primary data collection and partial least squares structural equation modeling using SmartPLS 4 remains necessary. Such testing is required to verify the strength of the relationships among the variables, examine the mediating effect of FoMO, and evaluate the validity of the model within the Indonesian context. The resulting empirical evidence is expected to provide a stronger scientific explanation of consumer behavior within the TikTok Shop live commerce ecosystem and to extend the generalizability of the relevant theories to developing-country contexts.

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