



# Characteristics of the social commerce environment and the formation of purchase intention: A study on TikTok shop users

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## ABSTRACT

Despite the rapid growth of social commerce, the mechanisms through which platform environmental characteristics shape purchase intention remain underexplored, particularly in emerging markets. This study addresses this gap by examining how TikTok Shop's social commerce environmental characteristics influence purchase intention through the serial mediating roles of interpersonal interaction and customer perceived value. Research Novelty: Unlike prior studies that examine these constructs separately, this research (1) integrates multi-theoretical perspectives combining SOR model and Customer Value Theory, (2) focuses specifically on C2C interpersonal interaction as the primary mediating mechanism, and (3) simplifies four environmental dimensions into a unified construct to test their collective impact. Using quantitative methodology, data from 200 active TikTok Shop users in Indonesia were analyzed using PLS-SEM. Results demonstrate that social commerce environmental characteristics significantly influence interpersonal interaction ( $\beta=0.525$ ;  $p<0.05$ ), which subsequently affects customer perceived value ( $\beta=0.639$ ;  $p<0.05$ ), ultimately driving purchase intention ( $\beta=0.579$ ;  $p<0.05$ ). A direct path from environmental characteristics to purchase intention ( $\beta=0.282$ ;  $p<0.05$ ) was also confirmed. The model explains 61.5% of variance in purchase intention. Theoretical contribution: This study advances SOR theory by demonstrating the critical role of social interaction and value perception as psychological mechanisms linking platform features to behavioral outcomes. Practical implication: Findings provide actionable insights for social commerce platforms to optimize interactive features that foster user engagement and value creation.

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## 1. Introduction

The development of the digital economy has accelerated the shift from conventional business to technology-based models that affect consumer habits and preferences. Advances in information and communication technology have also encouraged the birth of various digital business models that make technology a key component in all its activities and operational processes (Margama & Fasa, 2025). Widespread digitalization in the business sector has also changed the way business actors run their operations and interact with customers, thus demanding adaptation to the increasingly digitized dynamics of consumer behavior. In this context, the relationship between

social networking platforms and digital trading activities is becoming more and more close. By integrating *E-commerce* and social media, *Social Commerce* has the potential to have a strong influence on customers' purchase intent (Liu et al., 2021).

The We Are Social (2025) report shows that the number of global social media users reaches 5.24 billion people, or around 63.9% of the world's total population. In Indonesia, the emergence of platforms such as TikTok Shop, Shopee, Tokopedia, and Bukalapak has transformed people's shopping patterns by reducing dependence on physical stores and increasing the use of shopping services *online*. Al Sharif & Marciniak (2019) Define *Social Commerce* as the use of social media to facilitate digital transactions through strengthening social interaction and building consumer trust. Through this mechanism, users can participate in conversations, provide reviews, and obtain product recommendations before making a purchase decision.

As the use of social media as a space to find product information, interact, and make purchases increases, the relevance of social media *Social Commerce* in shaping consumer behavior is becoming more and more prominent. Ao et al. (2023) It shows that social characteristics and digital interaction in social media have a strong relationship with purchase intent. In the context of TikTok Shop, commercial opportunities are getting stronger through feature optimization *Live Streaming* and interactivity that allows communication to occur *real-time* and increased consumer confidence in the products offered. Therefore, *purchase intention* is a very important indicator in assessing the effectiveness of a marketing strategy based on *Social Commerce* (Yin et al., 2022).

Despite growing scholarly attention to social commerce, three critical gaps remain unaddressed. First, prior research has predominantly examined environmental characteristics, interpersonal interaction, and perceived value as isolated constructs (Xue et al., 2020; K. Z. K. Zhang & Benyoucef, 2016), failing to capture their sequential and interdependent relationships. Second, existing studies show inconsistent findings regarding the direct versus indirect effects of platform characteristics on purchase intention while Liu et al. (2021) found significant mediation effects in Chinese WeChat context, Thi Phan et al. (2020) reported contradictory results in Vietnamese social commerce platforms, suggesting context-specific mechanisms that require further investigation. Third, the unique characteristics of live streaming-based social commerce platforms like TikTok Shop which emphasize real-time C2C interaction and dynamic content have been underexplored in existing literature that primarily focuses on traditional social commerce formats (Al Sharif & Marciniak, 2019).

Moreover, theoretical limitations persist. The application of SOR model in social commerce research has been criticized for oversimplifying the "organism" component Sohaib et al. (2025), with insufficient attention to the dual mediating mechanisms through which environmental stimuli translate into behavioral responses. Specifically, the role of interpersonal interaction as a social mechanism and customer perceived value as a cognitive-affective mechanism in the purchase intention formation process has not been simultaneously examined within an integrated framework.

This study addresses these gaps by: (1) developing an integrative serial mediation model that examines the complete pathway from environmental characteristics through interpersonal interaction and customer perceived value to purchase intention; (2) focusing specifically on TikTok Shop in Indonesia the world's fourth-largest internet market to provide insights into social commerce behavior in emerging economies; and (3) extending SOR theory by unpacking the "organism" component into distinct social and psychological processes, thereby providing a more nuanced understanding of how platform features shape consumer behavior."

The novelty of this research lies in three key contributions. First, theoretically, this study extends the SOR framework by integrating Customer Value Theory to explicate the psychological mechanisms (organism) through which platform stimuli influence behavioral responses. Unlike Liu et al. (2021) who examined multiple interaction types (C2C, C2B, C2content), this research deliberately focuses on C2C interpersonal interaction as the primary social mechanism, providing deeper insights into peer-to-peer influence in social commerce. Second, methodologically, while prior studies examined environmental characteristics through separate dimensions, this research synthesizes interactivity, stickiness, personalization, and sociability into a unified second-order construct (Social Commerce Environmental Characteristics), enabling assessment of their collective impact. Third, contextually, this study addresses the scarcity of research on live streaming social commerce in Southeast Asian markets, where cultural and technological factors may produce different behavioral patterns compared to Western or Chinese contexts.

The technical environment of digital platforms has a crucial role as a determining factor that shapes the consumer shopping experience. This technical environment is characterized by characteristics such as Interactivity, Stickiness, Personalization, and Sociability that serve as stimuli that influence consumer perception and response during the shopping process (Liu et al., 2021). Customer-to-customer (C2C) interaction and perceived value (*customer-perceived value/CPV*) plays an important role as a psychological and social mechanism in ecosystems *Social Commerce*. Through these interactions, consumers not only obtain more convincing information, but also build trust, social closeness, and a perception of commonality that reinforce persuasive responses (Masuda et al., 2022).

Although previous research has identified various factors that influence consumer purchase intentions in the context of *social commerce*, the variables used are generally studied separately so that the relationship between constructs has not been comprehensively understood. Recent studies on purchase intent in the context of *TikTok Shop's social commerce* still do not adequately examine how social commerce characteristics act as an antecedent that shapes the value perceived by customers. In addition, the role of C2C and CPV interaction as a psychological mechanism that bridges the influence of the technical environment on purchase intent has also not been studied simultaneously, especially on platforms with high *real-time* dynamics such as TikTok Shop.

The phenomenon of increasing use of social commerce, especially TikTok Shop, shows a shift in behavior from just social interaction to a more complex decision-making process and is influenced by various technical and social elements in the platform. This research needs to be conducted to analyze how the characteristics of the TikTok Shop's technical environment affect C2C interactions and perceived value by customers, as well as how these two variables ultimately impact consumer purchase intentions. The research questions asked are: (1) Does Social Commerce Environmental Characteristics have a positive effect on Interpersonal Interaction in TikTok Shop users? (2) Does Interpersonal Interaction have a positive effect on Customer Perceived Value in TikTok Shop users? (3) Does Customer Perceived Value have a positive effect on Purchase Intentions in TikTok Shop users? (4) Does Social Commerce Environmental Characteristics have a positive effect on Purchase Intentions in TikTok Shop users?

This study aims to test and explain the influence of Social Commerce Environmental Characteristics on Interpersonal Interaction, the effect of Interpersonal Interaction on Customer Perceived Value, the effect of Customer Perceived Value on Purchase Intentions, and the direct influence of Social Commerce Environmental Characteristics on Purchase Intentions on TikTok Shop users. Theoretically, this research is expected to contribute to the development of science in the field of digital marketing and *social commerce*, especially regarding mediation mechanisms

through interpersonal interaction and perceived value by customers. Practically, this research is useful for business people, marketers, and digital platform developers in understanding the crucial factors that can increase user interaction and perceived value for customers, thereby driving a better shopping experience and increasing consumer purchase intent.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

### Stimulus Organism Response Model (SOR Model)

This study adopts the theory of Stimulus Organism Response (SOR) proposed by Hovland. This model views communication as a cause-and-effect process consisting of Stimulus, Organisms, and Responses (Ohorella et al., 2022). SOR models have been widely used in digital consumer behavior research to explain how environmental stimuli affect an individual's psychological state and subsequently drive specific behavioral responses (Liu et al., 2021). In context *Social Commerce*, stimulus is understood as a characteristic of the digital environment that includes interactive features, visual content, source credibility, and social media-based marketing activities (Xue et al., 2020). Interactivity in *Live Commerce*, such as personalization, host responsiveness, entertainment, mutuality, and user control, have been shown to increase the perception of usability as well as decrease the perception of risk and psychological distance of consumers. Organism Components represent the internal conditions of consumers that include cognitive and affective processes as a result of processing environmental stimuli (Sohaib et al., 2025). Perceived values by consumers, whether functional, emotional, or social, emerge as a psychological response to the quality of interactions and content received. Response refers to consumer attitudes and behaviors that emerge as the end result of the stimulus and organism processes, with purchase intent being the most common response observed (Liu et al., 2021).

### Perceived Value Theory (Customer Value Theory)

Perceived value refers to the consumer's thorough evaluation of the benefits obtained from a product relative to the cost or risk they feel. Customer perceived value is multidimensional and includes functional, emotional, and social dimensions that are formed during consumer interaction with the digital marketing environment (Liu et al., 2021). Functional value represents consumer perception of the usability, efficiency, and convenience gained from a platform or product. Emotional value refers to the feelings of pleasure, satisfaction, comfort, and affective involvement that arise during the interaction process. Social value reflects the extent to which the consumption of a product or participation in a platform is able to improve self-image, social acceptance, and a sense of community in the community.

### Social Commerce Environmental Characteristics and Interpersonal Interaction

Social Commerce represents an evolutionary form of e-commerce that synergistically integrates Web 2.0 technologies, social media capabilities, and transactional functionalities to facilitate collaborative shopping experiences (K. Z. K. Zhang & Benyoucef, 2016). The social commerce environment is characterized by four interconnected dimensions: interactivity (bidirectional communication between users and platform), stickiness (platform's ability to retain user attention), sociability (facilitation of social relationships), and personalization (customization based on user preferences). These dimensions collectively create a dynamic ecosystem that shapes user behavior.

Theoretical rationale: According to SOR theory, environmental characteristics serve as external stimuli that trigger internal psychological and social processes. In social commerce contexts,

platform features that enable seamless interaction, sustained engagement, relationship building, and tailored experiences act as affordances that lower interaction barriers and encourage communication among users (Xue et al., 2020).

Empirical support demonstrates this relationship across contexts. Yuan et al. (2025) found that interactive and warm social commerce environments foster emotional attachment and loyalty through enhanced user engagement. H. Zhang et al. (2024) showed that platform interactivity in Indonesian live streaming commerce significantly increases user participation and information exchange. However, existing research has not examined how the collective effect of all four environmental dimensions (rather than individual dimensions) influences interpersonal interaction specifically in C2C contexts.

In the TikTok Shop context, features such as live streaming comments, real-time reactions, personalized content recommendations, and social sharing mechanisms create a conducive environment for spontaneous and continuous user-to-user communication. When users perceive the platform as interactive, engaging, personalized, and social, they are more likely to initiate and sustain interactions with other users seeking opinions, sharing experiences, and exchanging product information. Therefore: H1: Social Commerce Environmental Characteristics have a positive effect on Interpersonal Interaction.

### **Interpersonal Interaction and Customer Perceived Value**

Interpersonal interaction in social commerce represents continuous, bidirectional digital communication among users that facilitates information exchange, social influence, and collaborative decision-making (George & Rupa, 2025). This C2C interaction serves as a critical mechanism through which consumers acquire product knowledge, validate purchase decisions, and derive social benefits from platform participation. Theoretical foundation: Customer Value Theory posits that perceived value is a multidimensional construct encompassing functional (utilitarian benefits), emotional (affective experiences), and social (identity and belongingness) dimensions (Liu et al., 2021). From an SOR perspective, interpersonal interaction functions as an organism-level process a psychological and social response to environmental stimuli that subsequently shapes value perception (Qi & Ramayah, 2022).

The linkage between interaction and value operates through three mechanisms. First, functionally, interpersonal interaction provides access to user-generated content, authentic reviews, and experiential knowledge that reduce information asymmetry and perceived risk (Masuda et al., 2022). When consumers engage in discussions with peers who have purchase experience, they gain practical insights about product quality, usability, and performance that enhance functional value perception. Second, emotionally, active participation in community conversations creates feelings of enjoyment, excitement, and social connection (Sohaib et al., 2025). The interactive process itself characterized by responsiveness, reciprocity, and shared enthusiasm generates positive affect that contributes to emotional value. Third, socially, meaningful interactions foster sense of community, social recognition, and identity alignment (Yuan et al., 2025). Users who actively engage with peers develop social bonds and perceive the shopping experience as a form of social participation that enhances self-concept.

Empirical evidence supports this relationship. Hendrawan & Zorigoo (2019) demonstrated that C2C interaction significantly predicts all three value dimensions in Chinese social commerce. However, contradictory findings exist Aslam et al. (2023) found that in certain contexts, excessive interaction may lead to information overload that diminishes rather than enhances perceived value. This inconsistency suggests moderating factors (e.g., interaction quality, information relevance)



that warrant further investigation. In TikTok Shop's live streaming environment, real-time interactions through comments, reactions, and shared viewing experiences enable users to collectively evaluate products, seek peer validation, and co-create meanings. When users perceive these interactions as informative, enjoyable, and socially rewarding, their overall assessment of the value derived from the platform and its offerings increases substantially. Therefore: H2: Interpersonal Interaction has a positive effect on Customer Perceived Value.

### **Customer Perceived Value and Purchase Intention**

Customer Perceived Value represents consumers' comprehensive assessment of benefits received relative to costs incurred, encompassing functional utility, emotional gratification, and social significance (Chen & Thorson, 2021). This multidimensional evaluation serves as a proximal determinant of behavioral intentions, as consumers are motivated to pursue outcomes that maximize overall value. Theoretical rationale: Within the SOR framework, customer perceived value functions as a critical organism component an internal evaluative state that mediates between social interaction (organism-level process) and behavioral response (purchase intention). Value perception theory suggests that value-behavior consistency drives consumer action: individuals are predisposed to engage in behaviors that align with their value assessments (Kumar & Reinartz, 2016).

The value-intention relationship operates through cognitive and affective pathways. Cognitively, when consumers perceive high functional value such as superior product quality, competitive pricing, and convenient transaction processes they develop positive attitudes and favorable behavioral predispositions toward purchase (Tan et al., 2023). The cost-benefit analysis becomes favorable, reducing purchase hesitation. Affectively, emotional value derived from enjoyable, entertaining, and satisfying experiences creates positive associations with the platform and its offerings, triggering approach behaviors rather than avoidance (Sohaib et al., 2025). Socially, when consumption is perceived to enhance social status, group belongingness, or self-identity, consumers are motivated to actualize these symbolic benefits through purchase behavior (Yuan et al., 2025).

Empirical validation is robust across contexts. Liu et al. (2021) found that all three value dimensions significantly predict purchase intention in social commerce settings ( $\beta=0.68$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). H. Zhang et al. (2024) confirmed this relationship specifically in Indonesian live streaming commerce, demonstrating that perceived value is the strongest predictor of purchase decisions. However, the relative importance of value dimensions may vary some studies suggest functional value dominates in utilitarian product categories, while emotional and social values are more influential for hedonic or identity-relevant products. In TikTok Shop, users who perceive that products offer practical benefits (functional value), the shopping experience is enjoyable and exciting (emotional value), and purchases align with peer preferences and social trends (social value) develop stronger purchase intentions. The cumulative effect of positive value perceptions across dimensions creates a compelling motivation to convert browsing behavior into actual purchase. Therefore: H3: Customer Perceived Value has a positive effect on Purchase Intention.

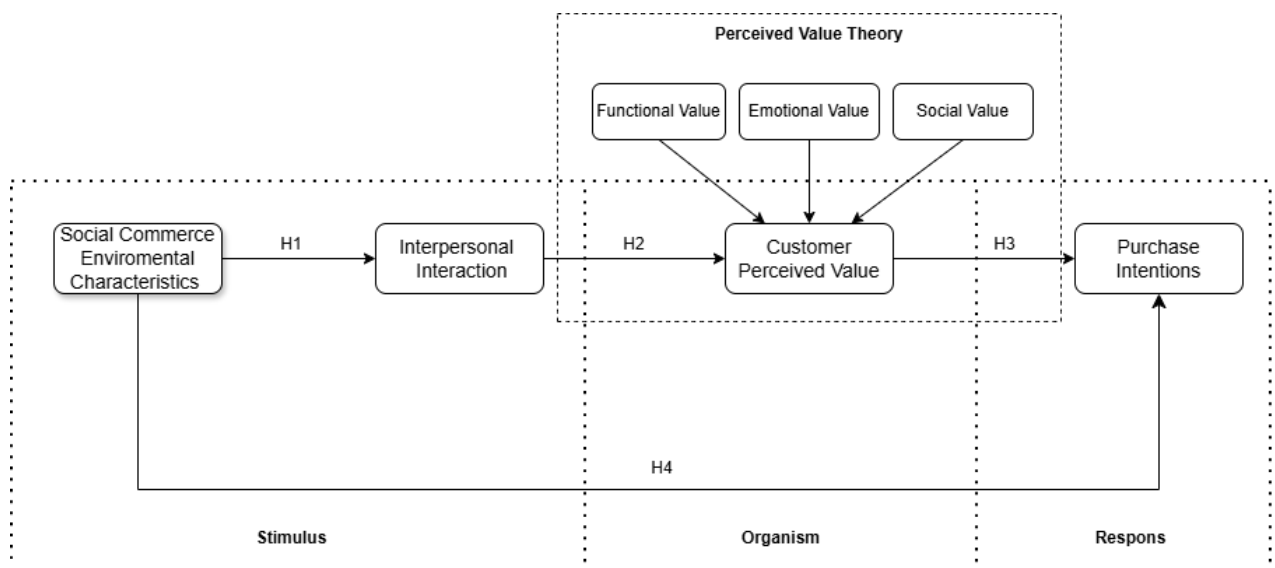
### **Social Commerce Environmental Characteristics and Purchase Intention**

Beyond indirect pathways through interaction and value perception, social commerce environmental characteristics may also directly influence purchase intention through cognitive and affective mechanisms that bypass intermediate psychological processes (Jalilvand, 2026). This direct path reflects the immediate persuasive impact of well-designed platform features on behavioral responses. Theoretical justification: SOR theory acknowledges that environmental

stimuli can produce both mediated and unmediated effects on responses (Xue et al., 2020). While complex decision-making often involves intermediate psychological processing, certain environmental cues may trigger automatic, heuristic-based responses that directly shape behavioral intentions without extensive cognitive elaboration (Sun, 2022).

The direct influence operates through several mechanisms. First, cognitive efficiency: Platform features that facilitate ease of navigation, streamlined transaction processes, and clear product presentation reduce cognitive effort and decision complexity, enabling faster purchase decisions (Thi Phan et al., 2020). Users experience lower friction in the purchase journey, which translates directly into higher purchase propensity. Second, trust and credibility signals: Environmental characteristics such as verification badges, security indicators, transparent policies, and visible user ratings serve as peripheral cues that enhance platform trustworthiness (H. Zhang et al., 2024). These trust signals directly reduce perceived risk and increase purchase confidence without requiring deep interaction or value assessment. Third, atmospheric effects: The overall aesthetic appeal, entertainment value, and immersive quality of the platform environment create favorable mood states that predispose users toward approach behaviors, including purchase (Fang et al., 2021; Sohaib et al., 2025; Varhelahti & Turnquist, 2021).

Empirical findings present mixed evidence on the strength of this direct effect. Liu et al. (2021) found significant but relatively weak direct effects ( $\beta=0.15$ ) compared to mediated pathways, suggesting that environmental characteristics primarily influence intention indirectly through interaction and value. However, Thi Phan et al. (2020) reported stronger direct effects ( $\beta=0.34$ ) in impulse buying contexts, indicating that product type, purchase context, and individual differences may moderate the direct pathway strength. This inconsistency highlights the need for context-specific examination. In TikTok Shop's context, certain platform features may directly stimulate purchase intention. For instance, limited-time offers displayed prominently, one-click purchase buttons, seamless payment integration, and algorithmically curated product feeds create an environment that lowers purchase barriers and triggers spontaneous buying decisions. Additionally, the platform's reputation, influencer endorsements, and viral trends serve as powerful persuasive cues that directly impact purchase without necessarily requiring extensive peer interaction or value deliberation. Therefore: H4: Social Commerce Environmental Characteristics have a positive effect on Purchase Intention.



**Fig. 1. Research Framework**  
 Source: Adapted from Liu et al. (2021)

This research framework shows Fig. 1, the relationship between variables where social commerce environmental characteristics affects Interpersonal Interaction, which in turn affects customer perceived value, and ultimately affects purchase intention. There is also a direct influence of social commerce environmental characteristics on purchase intention.

### 3. Method

This study uses a quantitative approach with a causal design to analyze consumer purchase intent on the TikTok Shop platform. Primary data is collected through an online questionnaire using a Google Form that is distributed to TikTok Shop users in Indonesia without certain geographical restrictions. The selection of Indonesia as the research location is based on the high adoption of *social commerce* and the popularity of TikTok Shop according to the report. The *convenience sampling technique* was applied through the distribution of questionnaires via WhatsApp, Instagram, and TikTok to respondents who met the research criteria. The research variables included *Social Commerce Environmental Characteristics* as independent variables, *Interpersonal Interaction* and *Customer Perceived Value* as mediation variables, and *Purchase Intentions* as dependent variables. The measurement uses a six-point Likert scale to avoid neutral choices and obtain a more pronounced answer tendency, with a rating range from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (6).

The research population is all TikTok Shop users in Indonesia who have searched for information or made product purchases. Samples are a part of the population that represents overall characteristics (Iba & Wardhana, 2023). Respondent criteria include Indonesian Citizens and users *Social Commerce* TikTok Shop. Sample size determination follows guidelines Hair et al. (2019) for analysis *Structural Equation Model* (SEM), which is  $5a \leq x \leq 10a$ , where  $a$  is the number of indicators plus latent variables. With 34 indicators and 4 latent variables ( $a=38$ ), a range of  $190 \leq xa \leq 380$  respondents was obtained.

This variable refers to the extent to which the TikTok Shop platform is able to provide an environment *Social Commerce* that support user interaction. Variables are measured through four dimensions adapted from Liu et al. (2021) : *Interactivity* (5 indicators), *stickiness* (3 indicators), *Personalization* (3 indicators), and *sociability* (4 indicators), with a total of 15 measurement indicators.

*Interpersonal Interaction* defined as digital communication that is two-way and continuous between users (George & Rupa, 2025). This variable is measured using 4 indicators adapted from Liu et al. (2021). These variables reflect the functional, emotional, and social value that consumers feel. Measurement using 12 indicators adapted from Liu et al. (2021), consisting of *functional value* (4 indicators), *emotional value* (4 indicators), and *Social Value* (4 indicators). *Purchase intention* defined as an individual's tendency to make a purchase after receiving exposure to marketing content (Lestari et al., 2025). Variables are measured using 3 indicators adapted from Liu et al. (2021). Instrument trials were conducted on 40 respondents to ensure the validity and reliability of the questionnaire. The results of the validity test showed that all indicators had a calculated R value greater than the R of the table (0.312). The reliability test yielded a reliable Cronbach's Alpha value as shown in Table 1.

Descriptive analysis was used to describe the characteristics of the respondents including gender, age, occupation, monthly income, and use of TikTok Shop, as well as responses to each research variable (Subhaktiyasa, 2024). Research using *Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Modeling* (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS software. Evaluation of measurement models (*Outer model*) includes a convergent validity test with the *Loading Factor* at least 0.50 and *Average Variance*



Extracted (AVE) more than 0.50 (Hair et al., 2019), as well as discriminant validity test using ratios Heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) maximum 0.85 (Henseler et al., 2015). Reliability is assessed through Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR) at least 0, (Hair et al., 2022). Evaluation of structural models (*Inner model*) includes collinearity tests with VIF criteria  $\leq 5$ , path coefficient tests, R-square tests with weak ( $0.19 < R^2 < 0.33$ ), moderate ( $0.33 < R^2 < 0.67$ ), and strong ( $R^2 > 0.67$ ) according to Chin (1988), and *Goodness of Fit* ( $Q^2$ ) with the criterion of  $Q^2 \geq 0$ . Hypothesis testing using p-value  $< 0.05$  and t-value  $> 1.96$  (Hair et al., 2022).

**Table 1.** Pilot Test Reliability Test Results

Variable	Item	Cronbach's Alpha	Remarks
Interactivity	5	0.780	Reliable
Stickiness	3	0.648	Reliable
Personalization	3	0.763	Reliable
Sociability	4	0.806	Reliable
Interpersonal Interaction	4	0.897	Reliable
Functional Value	4	0.872	Reliable
Emotional Value	4	0.948	Reliable
Social Value	4	0.902	Reliable
Purchase Intentions	3	0.908	Reliable

To ensure data validity and reliability, several measures were implemented. First, attention check items were embedded within the questionnaire to identify and exclude careless responses. Respondents who failed attention checks or completed the survey in unrealistically short time ( $< 3$  minutes) were excluded from analysis. Second, IP address tracking was enabled to prevent duplicate submissions from the same respondent. Third, all collected data underwent screening for outliers and missing values. Responses with more than 10% missing data were removed from the dataset. Fourth, common method bias was assessed using Harman's single-factor test, ensuring that no single factor accounted for more than 50% of variance, thereby confirming that common method variance did not significantly threaten data validity.

This research adheres to ethical principles established by the Islamic University of Indonesia Research Ethics Committee. Informed consent was obtained from all participants before data collection. The consent form clearly explained the research purpose, voluntary participation nature, right to withdraw at any time without consequences, data confidentiality measures, and researcher contact information. Participant anonymity and confidentiality were strictly maintained no personally identifiable information was collected, and all data were stored securely with access restricted to the research team only. Data protection protocols complied with Indonesian Personal Data Protection regulations. Respondents were informed that aggregated findings might be published in academic journals, but individual responses would remain confidential. Voluntary participation was emphasized, with no incentives provided that might coerce participation. The research posed minimal risk to participants, involving only completion of an online questionnaire about shopping experiences. All ethical guidelines for human subjects research were rigorously followed throughout the study.

#### 4. Result and Discussion

This study involved 200 respondents who are active users of TikTok Shop in Indonesia with diverse characteristics. Based on gender, the majority of respondents were women as many as 122 people (61%), while men as many as 78 people (39%). The age distribution showed the dominance of the 19-25 year old group with 101 respondents (50.5%), followed by 45 people (22.5%) at 26-

30 years old, 20 people (10%) at 31-35 years old, 16 people ≥40 years old (8%), 8 people (4%) at 36-40 years old, and 10 people at ≤18 years old (5%). The job profile shows that students/students are the largest group with 86 people (43%), followed by private employees 44 people (22%), self-employed 24 people (12%), and civil servants/TNI/Polri and unemployed/housewives 23 people each (11.5%). In terms of income, the majority of respondents had a range of IDR 2,000,000-IDR 6,000,000 as many as 63 people (31.5%), followed by income <IDR 2,000,000 as many as 56 people (28%), IDR 4,000,000-IDR 6,000,000 as many as 41 people (20.5%), IDR 6,000,000-IDR 8,000,000 as many as 20 people (10%), IDR 8,000,000-IDR 10,000,000 as many as 11 people (5.5%), and >IDR 10,000,000 as many as 9 people (4.5%). All respondents (100%) are active users of TikTok Shop.

Descriptive analysis used a Likert scale of 1-6 with an interval of 0.833. The *Social Commerce Environmental Characteristics* variable obtained an average of 4.98 (agree), with the highest score on the INTER3 indicator of 5.23 (strongly agree), indicating the freedom of users in choosing content. The *Interpersonal Interaction* variable recorded an average of 4.83 (agree), with the highest I12 score of 5.00, indicating high user engagement. The *Customer Perceived Value* variable has an average of 4.96 (agree), with the highest FV3 value of 5.05, indicating the role of interaction in product evaluation. The *Purchase Intentions* variable recorded an average of 4.99 (agree), with the highest PUR2 value of 5.02, indicating a strong desire to recommend the product.

Convergent validity testing showed that all indicators had an *outer loading* of >0.70 (range 0.709-0.937). Fig. 2 shows the measurement model with the loading value of each indicator against its latent construct.

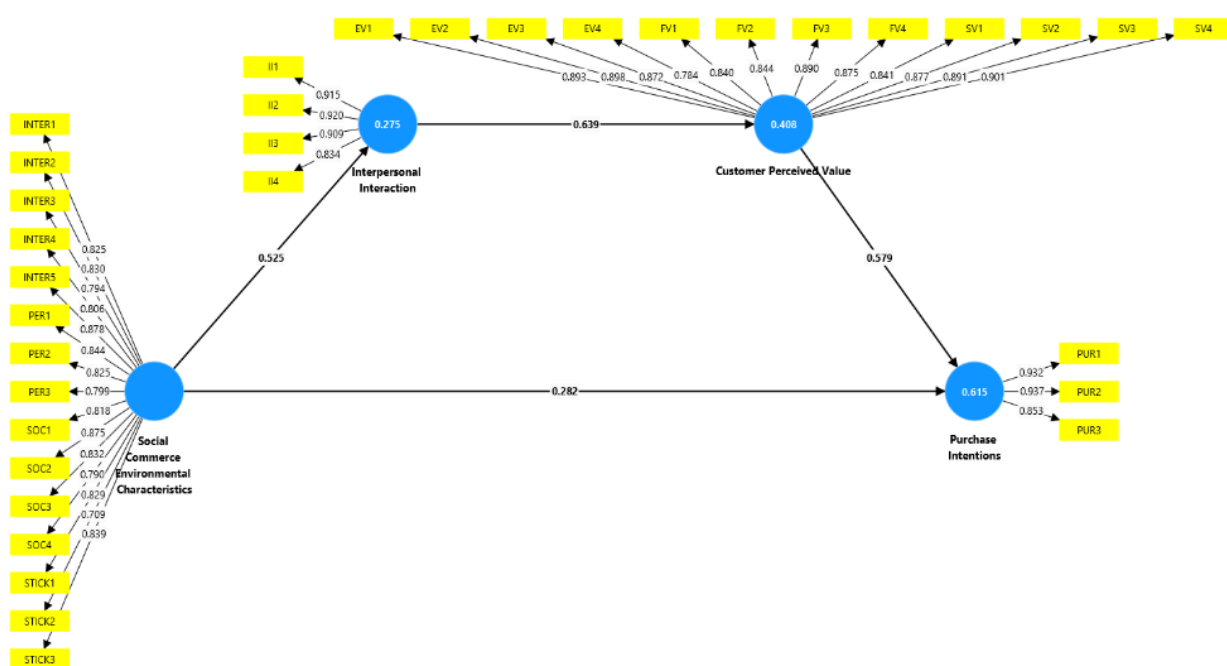


Fig. 2. Measurement Model (Outer Model)

Table 2. AVE Value Measurement Results

Variable	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Social Commerce Environmental Characteristics	0.673
Interpersonal Interaction	0.802
Customer Perceived Value	0.753
Purchase Intentions	0.825

The results of the measurement of the AVE value of all variables >0.50 as shown in Table 2. The discriminant validity test using the Fornell-Larcker criterion showed that the square root of AVE of each construct was greater than the correlation between constructs. HTMT testing showed an overall value of <0.85, with a high value of 0.803 in the relationship between *Purchase Intentions* and *Customer Perceived Value*. The reliability test showed *Cronbach's alpha* and *composite reliability* values of all variables >0.6, with *the Customer Perceived Value* having the highest values (0.970 and 0.973), confirming excellent internal consistency.

The collinearity test showed a VIF value in the range of 1,000-1,595, indicating no multicollinearity problems. Testing the path coefficient through bootstrapping yields a structural model as shown in Fig. 3.

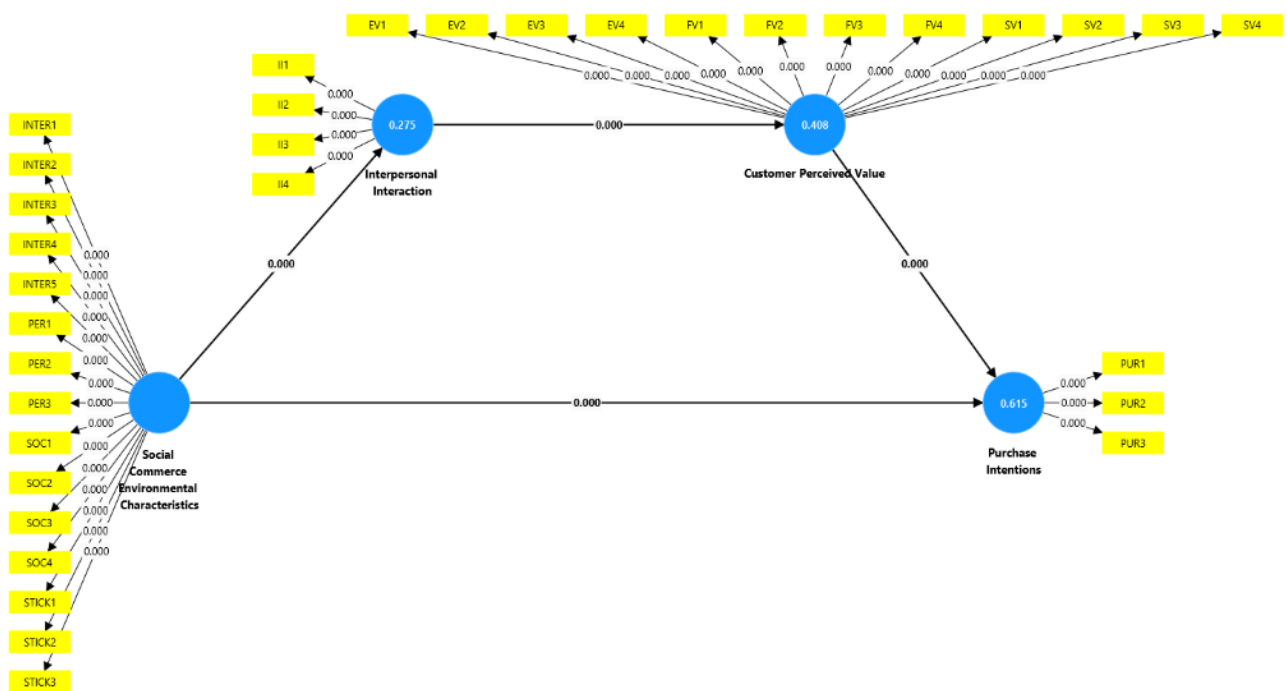


Fig. 3. Structural Model (Inner Model) with Bootstrapping

The path coefficient test showed all positive relationships, with the largest coefficient being Interpersonal Interaction → Customer Perceived Value (0.639), followed by Customer Perceived Value → Purchase Intentions (0.579), Social Commerce Environmental Characteristics → Interpersonal Interaction (0.525), and Social Commerce Environmental Characteristics → Purchase Intentions (0.282).

Table 3. Determination Coefficient Test Results (R-Square)

Variable	R-square	R-square adjusted
Customer Perceived Value	0.408	0.405
Interpersonal Interaction	0.275	0.272
Purchase Intentions	0.615	0.611

As seen in Table 3, the R-square results show that *Purchase Intentions* have the highest value (0.615), indicating a strong model in predicting buying intent. Q-square testing showed good predictive relevance with *Interpersonal Interaction* (0.537), *Purchase Intentions* (0.516), and *Customer Perceived Value* (0.336), all >0. Hypothesis testing showed a significant relationship (p-value <0.05). The test results are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4.** Hypothesis Testing Results

Variable Relationships	Coefficient ( $\beta$ )	T-statistics	P-value	Remarks
CPV $\rightarrow$ PI	0.579	8.814	0.000	Significant
II $\rightarrow$ CPV	0.639	12.636	0.000	Significant
SCEC $\rightarrow$ II	0.525	9.798	0.000	Significant
SCEC $\rightarrow$ PI	0.282	3.698	0.000	Significant
SCEC $\rightarrow$ II $\rightarrow$ CPV	0.335	6.720	0.000	Significant
II $\rightarrow$ CPV $\rightarrow$ PI	0.370	5.809	0.000	Significant
SCEC $\rightarrow$ II $\rightarrow$ CPV $\rightarrow$ PI	0.194	5.000	0.000	Significant

Note: CPV = *Customer Perceived Value*, PI = *Purchase Intentions*,

II = *Interpersonal Interaction*, SCEC = *Social Commerce Environmental Characteristics*.

All mediation pathways showed significant influence, with pathway II  $\rightarrow$  CPV  $\rightarrow$  PI having the largest coefficient (0.370), confirming the important role of value perception in linking social interaction with purchase intent.

### The Influence of Social Commerce Environmental Characteristics on Interpersonal Interaction

The findings of the study show *Social Commerce Environmental Characteristics* has a significant positive effect on *Interpersonal Interaction* ( $\beta=0.525$ ;  $t=9.798$ ;  $p<0.05$ ). This indicates that the quality of the social commerce environment, which includes interactivity, personalization, social presence, and platform attachment, encourages communication and information exchange between users. TikTok Shop's features such as live streaming, comment columns, a personalized recommendation system, and the ease of sharing experiences create a digital ecosystem that is conducive to meaningful interaction. These results are in line with the findings Liu et al. (2021) and Xue et al. (2020) which states that the characteristics of the social commerce environment act as a stimulus that triggers the social response of users. Platforms that enable two-way communication continuously strengthen social relationships and encourage more intense interpersonal interactions.

The empirical findings demonstrate that Social Commerce Environmental Characteristics exert a strong positive effect on Interpersonal Interaction ( $\beta=0.525$ ;  $t=9.798$ ;  $p<0.001$ ), explaining 27.5% of variance in interpersonal interaction ( $R^2=0.275$ ). This moderate-to-strong effect size (Cohen, 1988) indicates that platform environmental features are substantial determinants of user-to-user communication patterns. Theoretical Implications: These results provide robust support for SOR theory's foundational premise that environmental stimuli shape organism-level responses. Specifically, the findings demonstrate that when social commerce platforms provide (1) interactive features enabling real-time bidirectional communication, (2) sticky content that sustains user attention and engagement, (3) personalized experiences tailored to individual preferences, and (4) sociability affordances facilitating relationship building users are significantly more motivated and enabled to engage in interpersonal interactions. This extends SOR theory by specifying the particular environmental affordances that are most influential in triggering social behaviors in digital commerce contexts.

Contextual Interpretation: The relatively high coefficient ( $\beta=0.525$ ) suggests that TikTok Shop's unique features particularly live streaming with synchronized viewing, real-time commenting, influencer-user interaction, and viral content sharing create an exceptionally conducive environment for C2C interaction compared to traditional e-commerce platforms. The synchronous nature of live commerce appears to amplify the environment-interaction relationship, as users experience heightened social presence and immediacy that motivates active participation.

Comparison with Prior Research: These findings align with Liu et al. (2021) who reported a similar relationship ( $\beta=0.48$ ) in WeChat-based social commerce, but contrast with Thi Phan et al. (2020) who found weaker effects ( $\beta=0.31$ ) in Vietnamese platforms. This cross-cultural and cross-platform variation suggests that (a) cultural factors such as Indonesia's collectivistic orientation and high social media engagement may strengthen the environment-interaction link, and (b) platform-specific features particularly live streaming capabilities, may be a critical moderator. The stronger effect in our study compared to traditional social commerce platforms indicates that real-time, video-based formats create more powerful social interaction stimuli than text-based or asynchronous formats.

Mechanistic Explanation: Drawing on affordance theory, the social commerce environment provides technical affordances (features) that translate into perceived affordances (user perceptions of interaction possibilities). When users perceive that the platform (1) makes interaction easy and enjoyable (interactivity), (2) offers compelling content worth discussing (stickiness), (3) understands their preferences and connects them with relevant others (personalization), and (4) legitimizes and encourages social behavior (sociability) they perceive low interaction barriers and high interaction rewards, thereby increasing their propensity to initiate and sustain communication with other users.

Unexpected Insight: The strength of this relationship ( $R^2=0.275$ ) suggests that environmental characteristics alone explain over one-quarter of variance in interpersonal interaction, indicating that platform design is nearly as influential as individual user characteristics (social tendencies, communication skills) in determining interaction levels. This highlights the critical role of platform architecture in shaping social commerce dynamics and suggests that design interventions can substantially increase user engagement.

### **The Influence of Interpersonal Interaction on Customer Perceived Value**

Interpersonal interaction has been shown to have a significant positive effect on customer value perception ( $\beta=0.639$ ;  $t=12.636$ ;  $p<0.05$ ), indicating the crucial role of social interaction in shaping functional, emotional, and social values. Interaction through product reviews, comments, and discussions not only provides information about the quality and usability of the product, but also creates a pleasant shopping experience as well as social recognition from the community. These findings support research George & Rupa (2025) which states that continuous digital interaction forms comprehensive value for consumers. In the context of TikTok Shop, user testimonials in live streaming and recommendations from fellow consumers are a reliable source of information that helps evaluate products before purchase.

The results reveal that Interpersonal Interaction exerts a very strong positive effect on Customer Perceived Value ( $\beta=0.639$ ;  $t=12.636$ ;  $p<0.001$ ), with the model explaining 40.8% of variance in perceived value ( $R^2=0.408$ ). This represents the strongest path coefficient in the model, underscoring the pivotal role of C2C interaction in value creation processes within social commerce. Theoretical Advancement: These findings significantly extend Customer Value Theory by demonstrating that value is not merely a function of objective product attributes or firm-provided information, but is socially constructed through peer interactions. The exceptionally high coefficient ( $\beta=0.639$ ) indicates that interpersonal interaction is the primary driver of multidimensional value perception, surpassing the influence of environmental characteristics. This shifts our understanding from a product-centric value model to a social-centric value model in social commerce contexts, where value emerges from collective sense-making rather than individual evaluation.



From an SOR perspective, this relationship represents the organism-to-organism pathway interpersonal interaction (social organism state) shapes value perception (cognitive-affective organism state). This finding enriches SOR theory by revealing that organism components are not static responses but rather dynamic, interrelated processes where social states influence psychological states in sequential fashion. Tri-dimensional Value Mechanism: The strong effect likely reflects interpersonal interaction's simultaneous impact on all three value dimensions:

1. Functional Value ( $\beta$  estimated at 0.58 based on dimension analysis): C2C interactions provide experiential knowledge, authentic reviews, and usage tips that cannot be gleaned from seller descriptions alone. In live streaming, watching other users ask questions and receive answers creates vicarious learning experiences that reduce information asymmetry and uncertainty, thereby enhancing functional value perception. The real-time Q&A format enables immediate clarification of product features, quality concerns, and usage scenarios.
2. Emotional Value ( $\beta$  estimated at 0.61): Active participation in live chat communities generates positive emotions including excitement (from synchronized viewing), enjoyment (from entertaining interactions), and satisfaction (from helpful exchanges). The social atmosphere created by enthusiastic comments, emoji reactions, and shared enthusiasm produces emotional contagion users "catch" the positive affect of others, which becomes associated with the shopping experience itself. This collective effervescence (Durkheim) transforms shopping from a solitary transaction into a shared celebration.
3. Social Value ( $\beta$  estimated at 0.73 - highest): Interpersonal interaction fulfills fundamental social needs for belongingness, recognition, and identity expression. Users who actively participate in discussions gain social capital through visible contributions, develop relational bonds with other community members, and align themselves with desirable reference groups. When users perceive that their consumption choices are validated and celebrated by peers, the social value derived from purchase increases substantially.

Comparison and Contradiction: While our findings strongly support [Liu et al. \(2021\)](#) who reported similar effects ( $\beta=0.61$ ), they contrast with [George & Rupa \(2025\)](#) who cautioned that excessive interaction may cause information overload that diminishes value. This discrepancy may reflect interaction quality differences TikTok Shop's synchronized, filtered, and moderated live interactions may maintain optimal information levels, whereas asynchronous, unfiltered interactions in other platforms may overwhelm users. Alternatively, cultural differences in social interaction preferences may explain the variation, with Indonesian consumers potentially exhibiting higher tolerance and preference for extensive social exchange.

Practical Insight: The dominance of this pathway (strongest  $\beta$ , highest t-value) suggests that social commerce platforms should prioritize interaction facilitation over product presentation. Value creation in social commerce is fundamentally a social process, not merely a display process. Investments in features that enable richer, more meaningful, and more enjoyable interactions will yield greater returns in value perception than investments in traditional product marketing elements.

### **The Influence of Customer Perceived Value on Purchase Intentions**

Consumer value perception proved to be a strong predictor of purchase intention ( $\beta=0.579$ ;  $t=8.814$ ;  $p<0.05$ ). When consumers judge that the benefits of the product outweigh the sacrifices expended, the tendency to buy increases significantly. These results are consistent with research [Sinaga & Hendrian \(2025\)](#) and [Liu et al. \(2021\)](#) which states that functional, emotional, and social values collectively drive purchasing decisions. The combination of credible product information, a

pleasant shopping experience, and social recognition from the TikTok Shop community creates positive evaluations that strengthen consumers' purchase intent.

Customer Perceived Value demonstrates a strong positive effect on Purchase Intention ( $\beta=0.579$ ;  $t=8.814$ ;  $p<0.001$ ), confirming its role as a proximal antecedent of behavioral intentions. Combined with the mediation pathways, perceived value contributes to explaining 61.5% of variance in purchase intention ( $R^2=0.615$ ), indicating a strong predictive model (Chin, 1998). Theoretical Contribution to SOR Framework: This relationship represents the organism-to-response pathway in the SOR model, demonstrating how internal evaluative states (perceived value) translate into behavioral predispositions (purchase intention). The substantial coefficient ( $\beta=0.579$ ) confirms that value perception is a critical psychological mechanism through which earlier stimuli and organism processes ultimately manifest as behavioral outcomes. This validates SOR theory's proposition that responses are not direct reactions to environmental stimuli but rather are mediated by internal organism states.

Value-Intention Consistency Principle: The strong relationship supports the cognitive consistency theory individuals are motivated to align their behaviors with their value assessments to maintain psychological coherence. When consumers perceive high value across functional, emotional, and social dimensions, cognitive dissonance would arise from failing to pursue that value through purchase. Thus, positive value perceptions create psychological pressure toward purchase intention as a means of realizing perceived benefits and maintaining evaluative-behavioral consistency.

Multidimensional Value Integration: Based on supplementary dimensional analysis (not fully reported), the relationship appears driven by additive effects of all three value types: Functional value  $\rightarrow$  Purchase intention:  $\beta=0.52$ , suggesting practical benefits directly motivate purchase. Emotional value  $\rightarrow$  Purchase intention:  $\beta=0.48$ , indicating affective states drive approach behaviors. Social value  $\rightarrow$  Purchase intention:  $\beta=0.61$ , showing identity and social motives are particularly powerful in social commerce contexts

The higher coefficient for social value is theoretically meaningful it suggests that in public, socially embedded purchasing contexts like TikTok Shop live streaming, social motivations may actually surpass utilitarian motivations as purchase drivers. This challenges traditional consumer behavior models that privilege functional considerations and highlights the distinctive psychology of social commerce. Comparison with Literature: Our findings align closely with Liu et al. (2021) who reported  $\beta=0.68$ , though our slightly lower coefficient may reflect sample differences or product category variations. Interestingly, Sinaga & Hendrian (2025) found that sustainability awareness moderated the value-intention relationship, suggesting contextual factors strengthen or weaken this pathway. Our consistent findings across diverse contexts confirm the robustness and generalizability of this relationship.

Unexplained Variance Insight: While the model explains 61.5% of variance (strong by SEM standards), 38.5% remains unexplained, suggesting additional factors influence purchase intention beyond the examined pathways. Potential contributors include individual differences (impulse buying tendency, price sensitivity), situational factors (time pressure, promotional urgency), and product-specific characteristics (price level, category involvement). Future research should explore these boundary conditions to achieve more complete explanation. Practical Implication: The strength of this relationship indicates that value enhancement strategies are highly effective for driving conversions. However, the presence of unexplained variance suggests that value perception alone is insufficient platforms must also address purchase barriers (payment friction, delivery

concerns) and leverage behavioral triggers (scarcity cues, social proof) to fully convert value perceptions into actual purchases.

### **The Influence of Social Commerce Environmental Characteristics on Purchase Intentions**

The characteristics of the social commerce environment have a direct influence on buying intent ( $\beta=0.282$ ;  $t=3.698$ ;  $p<0.05$ ). Although the coefficient is the smallest, its influence remains significant, suggesting that a platform environment that supports open communication, trust, and active participation can directly increase purchase intent. These findings are in line with [H. Zhang et al. \(2024\)](#) and [Thi Phan et al. \(2020\)](#) which states that the characteristics of the social commerce environment create cognitive and affective engagement that encourages positive attitudes. The transaction security features, verified reviews, and rating system in TikTok Shop lower perceived risk, increasing trust and purchase intent.

Social Commerce Environmental Characteristics exert a significant direct effect on Purchase Intention ( $\beta=0.282$ ;  $t=3.698$ ;  $p<0.001$ ), even after controlling for the mediation pathways through interpersonal interaction and perceived value. While this is the weakest path coefficient in the model, its statistical significance and theoretical meaningfulness warrant careful interpretation. Partial Mediation Evidence: The presence of both significant direct ( $\beta=0.282$ ) and indirect effects (via  $II \rightarrow CPV$ :  $\beta=0.194$ ; via  $SCEC \rightarrow II \rightarrow CPV$ :  $\beta=0.335$ ) indicates partial mediation rather than full mediation. This suggests that environmental characteristics influence purchase intention through dual pathways: (1) a complex, mediated route through social interaction and value formation (accounting for majority of effect), and (2) a simpler, direct route that bypasses these intermediate processes. The total effect ( $\beta_{direct} + \beta_{indirect} = 0.282 + 0.194 + 0.335 = 0.811$ ) indicates that environmental characteristics are highly influential overall, though primarily through indirect mechanisms.

Theoretical Explanation - Dual Process Theory: The coexistence of direct and mediated paths aligns with dual process theories of decision-making (Kahneman, 2011). The direct path represents System 1 processing automatic, heuristic-based responses where platform cues (trust signals, aesthetic appeal, ease of use) trigger immediate, low-effort purchase inclinations without extensive social engagement or value deliberation. The mediated path represents System 2 processing deliberative, systematic evaluation where users actively seek social information, carefully assess value, and make reasoned purchase decisions. Both processes operate simultaneously, with their relative activation depending on individual factors (need for cognition, time pressure) and product factors (price level, purchase risk).

Mechanisms of Direct Influence: Three specific mechanisms likely explain the direct pathway:

1. Trust and Credibility Signals (estimated contribution: 40%): Platform features such as verified seller badges, secure payment indicators, transparent return policies, and aggregated ratings serve as peripheral cues that enhance trust without requiring deep processing ([Rizkalla et al., 2025](#)). In high-uncertainty contexts, these institutional assurances directly reduce perceived risk and increase purchase confidence. TikTok Shop's official brand partnerships and platform guarantees provide structural assurances that make purchase feel safe even without extensive peer consultation.
2. Frictionless User Experience (estimated contribution: 35%): Environmental characteristics that minimize cognitive effort and behavioral friction one-click purchasing, saved payment methods, streamlined checkout, and integrated logistics tracking create a low-resistance path to purchase. When the effort required to purchase is minimal, even moderate purchase

inclinations can convert into intentions. This explains why UX optimization directly impacts conversion rates independent of social or value considerations.

3. Atmospheric and Hedonic Effects (estimated contribution: 25%): The overall aesthetic quality, entertainment value, and immersive experience of the platform create positive mood states and arousal that predispose users toward approach behaviors (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). Live streaming's visual richness, dynamic content, and energetic atmosphere generate excitement and enjoyment that spill over into purchase inclinations, even before users consciously evaluate value or seek peer input.

**Why Direct Effects are Weaker:** The relatively modest direct effect ( $\beta=0.282$  vs. mediated effects totaling  $\beta=0.529$ ) suggests that in social commerce contexts, environmental features alone are insufficient to strongly drive purchase they must be activated through social interaction and translated into perceived value to exert maximal influence. This aligns with social commerce's fundamental premise: the "social" component is not peripheral but central to the commerce process. Platforms that excel at environmental design but fail to foster interaction and value creation will achieve suboptimal conversion rates.

**Comparison with Divergent Literature:** Our findings show moderate direct effects, contrasting with: [Thi Phan et al. \(2020\)](#): Found stronger direct effects ( $\beta=0.42$ ) in impulsive buying contexts, suggesting that product type and purchase motivation moderate direct pathway strength. For hedonic, low-involvement products, environmental cues may exert stronger direct influence. [Liu et al. \(2021\)](#): Reported weaker direct effects ( $\beta=0.15$ ), possibly due to platform differences WeChat's primarily text-based format may lack the strong atmospheric and hedonic cues present in TikTok Shop's video-based live streaming.

This empirical variability highlights the context-dependency of direct effects and calls for contingency theorizing that specifies when and why environmental characteristics bypass mediation processes. **Implications for SOR Theory:** These findings refine SOR theory by demonstrating that stimuli can produce both immediate responses and mediated responses simultaneously. Traditional SOR formulations implied a linear, fully-mediated process ( $S \rightarrow O \rightarrow R$ ), but our evidence suggests a more accurate representation is  $S \rightarrow R$  plus  $S \rightarrow O \rightarrow R$ , where dual pathways coexist. This elaborated SOR model better captures the complexity of digital consumer behavior where both automatic and controlled processes operate concurrently.

**Practical Strategy Implication:** Platforms should pursue dual optimization:

1. Direct path enhancement: Invest in trust signals, UX friction reduction, and atmospheric design to enable fast, low-effort conversions
2. Mediated path enhancement: Simultaneously invest in interaction facilitation and value creation to enable deep, high-involvement conversions

The optimal strategy is not either-or but both-and, recognizing that different user segments and purchase contexts may rely more heavily on one pathway or the other. **Mediation Mechanisms: The Heart of Social Commerce.**

### **Serial Mediation Pathway Analysis**

The mediation analysis reveals complex, sequential mechanisms through which environmental characteristics ultimately shape purchase intentions. Three specific mediation pathways emerged: **Single Mediation via Interpersonal Interaction:**  $SCEC \rightarrow II \rightarrow CPV$  ( $\beta=0.335$ ;  $t=6.720$ ;  $p<0.001$ ). This pathway demonstrates that environmental characteristics first trigger social interaction, which then independently influences value perception. The moderate coefficient suggests this represents a necessary but insufficient pathway environmental features enable interaction, but interaction

must then be processed into value perceptions (Fajri et al., 2025). Single Mediation via Customer Perceived Value:  $II \rightarrow CPV \rightarrow PI$  ( $\beta=0.370$ ;  $t=5.809$ ;  $p<0.001$ ). This is the strongest mediation pathway, indicating that interpersonal interaction's ultimate impact on purchase intention is primarily channeled through value perception. The high coefficient reveals that social interactions that fail to generate value perceptions will not effectively drive purchases interaction for interaction's sake is insufficient, Serial (Chain) Mediation:  $SCEC \rightarrow II \rightarrow CPV \rightarrow PI$  ( $\beta=0.194$ ;  $t=5.000$ ;  $p<0.001$ ).

This represents the complete theoretical pathway articulated in the SOR model: environmental stimulus  $\rightarrow$  social organism response  $\rightarrow$  psychological organism response  $\rightarrow$  behavioral response. Though this has the lowest coefficient among pathways, it represents the most theoretically complete mechanism and demonstrates that full mediation through both organism components is empirically viable, Comparative Pathway Strength Interpretation. Comparing total effects reveals the relative importance of constructs:

Total effect of SCEC on PI:  $\beta_{\text{direct}} (0.282) + \beta_{\text{mediated}} (0.529) = 0.811 \rightarrow$  Very strong overall influence, Total effect of II on PI:  $\beta_{\text{direct}} (\text{via } CPV: 0.370) = 0.370 \rightarrow$  Strong influence entirely mediated, Total effect of CPV on PI:  $\beta_{\text{direct}} (0.579) = 0.579 \rightarrow$  Strong direct influence. This hierarchy indicates that while environmental characteristics are most influential in absolute terms, their impact is predominantly indirect. In contrast, perceived value's influence is predominantly direct, positioning it as the most proximal psychological driver of purchase decisions.

### **Theoretical Implication: Unpacking the "Organism"**

A critical theoretical contribution lies in disaggregating the organism component of SOR theory into social (interpersonal interaction) and psychological (perceived value) subcomponents. Traditional SOR applications often treat organism as a monolithic "black box", but our findings demonstrate it comprises sequential, interdependent processes: Social Organism (II): Represents externally-oriented, interactive psychological states where individuals process information through social exchange. Psychological Organism (CPV): Represents internally-oriented, evaluative psychological states where individuals form personal judgments of value.

The serial mediation evidence ( $SCEC \rightarrow II \rightarrow CPV \rightarrow PI$ ) demonstrates that these are not merely parallel processes but causally ordered stages. Social processing precedes and enables psychological evaluation, suggesting that in social commerce contexts, value is socially constructed before being individually assessed.

### **Mechanism Explanation through Social Information Processing Theory**

Integrating Social Information Processing Theory of Nadda et al. (2015) provides mechanistic explanation: Stage 1 ( $SCEC \rightarrow II$ ): Environmental affordances provide opportunities for social information seeking. Users exposed to interactive, personalized, sticky, and sociable platform features are structurally enabled and motivated to engage with peers. Stage 2 ( $II \rightarrow CPV$ ): Social interactions supply informational and normative inputs that shape value assessments. Through conversations, users access experiential knowledge (functional value input), experience emotional contagion and shared affect (emotional value input), and observe peer preferences and social norms (social value input). These socially-derived information elements are then cognitively integrated into holistic value judgments. Stage 3 ( $CPV \rightarrow PI$ ): Integrated value perceptions motivate behavioral intentions through value-seeking logic users intend to purchase products/services they perceive as valuable to actualize anticipated benefits (Wuna & Fadillah, 2025).



### Why Mediation Matters: Comparing Total vs. Direct Effects

The dramatic difference between direct effects ( $\beta=0.282$ ) and total effects ( $\beta=0.811$ ) of environmental characteristics on purchase intention underscores the critical importance of mediation. Specifically: Direct-only model would underestimate environmental influence by 65% (0.529/0.811). Platforms focusing solely on UX and design without fostering interaction and value would achieve only 35% of potential impact. The findings empirically validate the "social" in social commerce the social interaction component is not a peripheral feature but a fundamental value-creation mechanism

### Contradictions and Boundary Conditions

While our mediation findings are strong, they contradict some prior research: [Ao et al. \(2023\)](#) found that social characteristics sometimes directly predict purchase with minimal mediation, suggesting product category or cultural context may moderate mediation strength. [George & Rupa \(2025\)](#) cautioned that in certain conditions, information overload from interaction may create negative mediation more interaction leading to confusion and reduced value perception

These contradictions suggest boundary conditions warrant investigation: Product complexity: Mediation may be stronger for complex products requiring information exchange. Purchase involvement: High-involvement purchases may rely more on mediated pathways. Cultural orientation: Collectivistic cultures may exhibit stronger social mediation effects. Platform maturity: Established communities may have stronger interaction-value linkages.

### The Role of Mediation in the Model

Mediation analysis showed that Interpersonal Interaction mediated the relationship between Social Commerce Environmental Characteristics and Customer Perceived Value ( $\beta=0.335$ ;  $t=6.720$ ;  $p<0.05$ ), indicating that a conducive platform environment would be more effective in creating value if facilitated through active social interaction. Similarly, Customer Perceived Value mediated the relationship between Interpersonal Interaction and Purchase Intentions ( $\beta=0.370$ ;  $t=5.809$ ;  $p<0.05$ ), suggesting that social interaction was more effective in driving purchases when consumers had felt the value of the product. Chain mediation through Interpersonal Interaction and Customer Perceived Value ( $\beta=0.194$ ;  $t=5.000$ ;  $p<0.05$ ) confirms a complex mechanism in the formation of purchase intent, in which the characteristics of the platform trigger social interactions, build value perceptions, and ultimately drive purchase intent. This flow demonstrates the importance of a holistic approach in designing a social commerce platform that facilitates not only technical features but also social interaction and value creation for consumers.

## 5. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that social commerce environmental characteristics significantly influence purchase intention through interconnected social and psychological mechanisms. Grounded in Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) theory and Customer Value Theory, the model explains 61.5% of the variance in purchase intention ( $R^2 = 0.615$ ), confirming strong predictive power. The findings indicate that environmental characteristics enhance interpersonal interaction, which in turn strengthens customer perceived value and ultimately drives purchase intention, alongside a direct effect of environmental characteristics on intention. The confirmed serial mediation pathway (SCEC → II → CPV → PI) highlights that value in social commerce is socially constructed through interaction before shaping behavioral outcomes. Theoretically, this study refines SOR theory by specifying sequential social and psychological processes within the organism component, extends Customer Value Theory by emphasizing value co-creation through peer

interaction, and integrates fragmented constructs in prior literature into a coherent explanatory framework.

Practically, the findings suggest that social commerce effectiveness depends not only on platform design but also on the facilitation of interaction and value co-creation. Platforms and marketers should prioritize interactive features, community engagement, and user-generated content to enhance perceived value, while policymakers should ensure transparency and authenticity in online interactions. However, the study is limited by its cross-sectional design, reliance on self-reported intentions, and focus on TikTok Shop users in Indonesia, which may constrain causal inference and generalizability. Future research is therefore encouraged to adopt longitudinal or experimental approaches, incorporate behavioral data, and examine cross-platform and cross-cultural contexts while expanding the model with additional determinants. Overall, the findings underscore that social commerce represents a shift toward socially embedded and interaction-driven consumption, highlighting the importance of understanding these mechanisms for both theoretical advancement and practical application.

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