Understanding purchase intention in TikTok livestream shopping among Vietnamese Generation Z: A Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) perspective

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ABSTRACT

Livestream shopping is becoming increasingly common among Vietnamese people of all ages. Gen Z, who are digital natives, is one of the most important demographics driving the shift to purchasing goods through livestreams on social media platforms. TikTok has become an important platform in livestream retail. Grounded in the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework, this study examines how perceived entertainment, price promotion, social proof, and streamer credibility influence Vietnamese Generation Z's purchase intention in TikTok livestream shopping through attitude toward livestream as a mediating variable. The research utilized a quantitative method through a cross-sectional questionnaire and was sent to 324 Vietnamese. 312 valid responses were collected and analyzed through SmartPLS software. The results indicate that perceived entertainment, price promotion, social proof, and streamer credibility all positively affect attitude toward livestream, which in turn has a significant positive effect on purchase intention. In terms of relative impact, attitude toward livestream shows the strongest influence on purchase intention, followed by perceived entertainment, price promotion, streamer credibility, and social proof. Theoretically, this study extends the application of the S-O-R framework to TikTok livestream shopping in an emerging market context. From the results, brands can consider and apply adjustments to their strategies or execute specific campaigns to gain more brand awareness, trust and sales volume, especially when communicating with Generation Z.

1. Introduction

As digital commerce has evolved, online shopping has moved beyond a purely transactional activity toward a more interactive and experience-driven form of consumption (Huo et al., 2023; Ngo et al., 2024; Pratama et al., 2024). Contemporary e-commerce no longer depends only on convenience and accessibility (Yin et al., 2023); it increasingly relies on platform environments that allow consumers to engage with sellers, content, and other users in real time (Joo & Yang, 2023). Social media now does more than connect users. It has also become a space where product discovery, interaction, and purchase often happen without users

leaving the platform (Su et al., 2024; Nguyen, 2024). Livestream shopping represents one of the clearest manifestations of this shift, particularly among Generation Z, whose consumption practices are closely connected by entertainment, immediacy, and social participation (Firdausiah et al., 2023; Khine & Dreamson, 2023; Su et al., 2024).

TikTok has become an important platform in this environment because it combines algorithmic content discovery, creator-led communication, and real-time commercial interaction within a single platform architecture (Firdausiah et al., 2023). In Vietnam, the platform is especially relevant for Gen Z because it provides personalized content, products, and recommendations that align with younger consumers' entertainment-oriented and socially interactive digital practices (Mai & Ngo, 2024; Ngo et al., 2024; Su et al., 2024).

Although prior studies have examined purchase intention in livestream shopping and TikTok-related commerce, less attention has been paid to how purchase intention is formed in discovery-based livestream environments such as TikTok, particularly in the Vietnamese context. In traditional e-commerce, consumers often enter a platform with relatively clear purchase goals and rely on search, comparison, and product information to make decisions (Duan, 2025; Mai & Ngo, 2024; Wang & Xie, 2020). By contrast, TikTok livestream shopping is driven more strongly by discovery: users encounter algorithmically curated content, engage in real-time interactions, experience streamer-led persuasion, and observe visible peer reactions before forming purchase intention (Jiang et al., 2024a; Wang et al., 2024). For this reason, the cues operating in TikTok livestream shopping should not be treated as the same as those in conventional e-commerce. Viewers are reacting not only to product information, but also to entertainment, promotions, visible peer responses, and the streamer's credibility at the same time.

Grounded in the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework, this study examines how perceived entertainment, price promotion, social proof, and streamer credibility influence Vietnamese Generation Z's purchase intention in TikTok livestream shopping through attitude toward livestream as a mediating variable. By doing so, the study extends the application of the S-O-R framework to a discovery-based social commerce environment and offers practical implications for brands seeking to engage Gen Z consumers through TikTok livestreams.

2. Theoretical basis

In current e-commerce practice, social media often functions as both a communication space and a point of sale. Consumers can now browse information, interact with sellers, and move toward purchase within the same platform (Le & Pham, 2025; Nguyen, 2024; Pratama et al., 2024). Within this broader development, livestream shopping has emerged as a highly interactive form of social commerce, especially among Generation Z consumers, because it combines real-time communication, entertainment, and promotional cues in ways that differ from traditional online shopping (Feng et al., 2024; Lina et al., 2022; Ngo et al., 2024; Su et al., 2024). This helps explain why livestreaming has become attractive to both sellers and consumers. Compared with text-based interaction, live video makes the exchange feel faster, more personal, and more immediate (Fara & Hartono, 2024; Hu, 2024; Khine & Dreamson, 2023; Yin et al., 2023). Through this format, consumers can ask questions, express feelings, and share prior buying experiences in real time, while streamers respond simultaneously, which can strengthen loyalty, brand community, and even broader industry growth (Hasim et al., 2023; Ngo et al., 2024).

Firdausiah et al. (2023) mentioned that TikTok, a Chinese-developed social media platform, has become one of the most successful phenomena in online shopping owing to its cutting-edge technology. Customers, especially Gen Z, can now experience effortlessness in engaging and buying goods in livestreams, and their attitude toward products can also be changed differently (Su et al., 2024; Wang, 2024). In reality, Nabila (2024) provided impressive statistics of TikTok's growth in Indonesian market that a 411% increase in Gross Merchandise Value (GMV) and a 564.1% increase in orders witnessed in less than a year period. In Vietnam, the growth of TikTok has peaked since Covid-19, when consumers became accustomed to purchasing commodities remotely, and this platform probably satisfies their demands. Ngo et al. (2024) and Su et al. (2024) indicated livestreams on TikTok as an effective source of searching product information and buying for Vietnamese customers. With shoppable interaction and personalized content, TikTok is not merely an entertainment app but a powerful tool for generating shopping intention. Therefore, purchase intention can be enormously influenced via livestream because of personalization and targeted interaction (Wahyuni et al., 2024; Mai & Ngo, 2024).

In shopping livestreams, consumers are exposed to different types of external cues at the same time. Some cues make the livestream more enjoyable, some increase the sense of economic benefit, some create social influence, and others shape trust in the streamer (Fara & Hartono, 2024; Ngo et al., 2024; Wang, 2024). These are the stimuli that they usually expose when being led to the livestream shopping. According to the S-O-R model, the organism must be in an internal state that makes it easier for the mind to understand outside events before it can react behaviorally (Ho et al., 2022). Different types of cues are used for TikTok livestream purchases. Perceived entertainment is a hedonic cue, price promotion is a utilitarian and transactional cue, social proof is a social-validation cue, and streamer credibility is a source-related cue. A higher-order evaluative state that can combine cognitive and affective responses (Duan, 2025; Jiang et al., 2024a) is more likely to be useful than a narrowly defined state like pleasure, trust, or utility alone because these stimuli activate many psychological appraisals at the same time. Attitude is how customers think buying livestreams is enjoyable, useful, and wanted. It includes both cognitive assessments (like "a good idea," "beneficial," or "credible") and emotional reactions (like "like," "happy feelings," or "enjoyment"). This is especially important for Generation Z in TikTok's discovery-oriented environment, where people decide to buy things based on a mix of entertainment, social interaction, and promotional impact, rather than just looking on purpose. Attitude performs this integrative function by capturing consumers' overall evaluative response to the livestream experience. In this sense, attitude toward livestream represents the central psychological state through which mixed discovery-commerce cues are translated into purchase intention. Based on this logic, this study focuses on four stimuli that are especially relevant to the TikTok livestream context: perceived entertainment, price promotion, social proof, and streamer credibility. Together, these four factors capture key features of livestream shopping, including hedonic experience, promotional value, peer influence, and source trustworthiness. According to the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework introduced by Mehrabian and Russell (1974). In this model, stimuli refer to external factors that influence consumer perception, the organism reflects the consumer's internal evaluative state, and the response captures subsequent behavioral outcomes such as purchase intention. These stimuli in TikTok livestreams are expected to influence consumers not only directly at the surface level, but also through an internal psychological

evaluation (Lee & Chen, 2021). In this study, attitude toward livestream is served as the organism because it reflects how consumers form an overall evaluation of the livestream experience after being exposed to those external cues. When viewers find a livestream enjoyable, beneficial, socially validated, and trustworthy, they are more likely to develop a positive attitude toward it. That attitude then becomes an important basis for their purchase intention (Feng et al., 2024; Nabila, 2024). Therefore, this study used the S-O-R framework to explain how external livestream cues are translated into purchase intention. The framework is well suited to digital and livestream contexts because it explains how external factors affect behavior through internal processes.

2.1. Perceived entertainment (ENT)

Perceived entertainment refers to the extent to which consumers find a livestream enjoyable, interesting, and emotionally engaging (Liu et al., 2022; Yin et al., 2023). Prior studies consistently show that entertainment is one of the most influential cues in livestream commerce because it sustains attention and makes the shopping experience intrinsically rewarding (Lee & Chen, 2021; Huo et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2025). This role is particularly salient on TikTok, where platform use is strongly shaped by short-form, emotionally engaging, and attention-capturing content (Herzallah et al., 2025). Across livestream and social commerce settings, enjoyable and immersive experiences have been found to enhance consumers' evaluations and increase purchase-related outcomes (Firdausiah et al., 2023; Nabila, 2024). In Vietnam, this pattern is also relevant because TikTok livestreams function not only as information channels but also as entertainment-centered environments for younger users (Ngo et al., 2024). Accordingly, when viewers perceive a livestream as enjoyable, they are more likely to evaluate the livestream format favorably and develop a more positive attitude toward livestream shopping (Nguyen, 2024).

H1: Perceived entertainment influences attitude toward livestream shopping of Gen Z in Vietnam

2.2. Price promotion (PP)

Price promotion refers to discounts, vouchers, and limited-time offers presented during livestream shopping (Feng et al., 2024). In digital commerce, these incentives function as utilitarian cues because they increase perceived value and reduce consumers' sense of financial sacrifice (Huo et al., 2023). Their influence may become even stronger in livestream settings, where promotions are often framed as immediate and time-sensitive opportunities (Nabila, 2024). Prior research suggests that such promotional benefits strengthen positive shopping evaluations by making consumers feel that the transaction is economically worthwhile. This logic is especially relevant for Generation Z, who tend to be highly attentive to price competitiveness and savings opportunities in online environments (Khan & Belk, 2024). Therefore, when consumers perceive TikTok livestreams as offering superior deals or meaningful economic advantages, they are more likely to develop a favorable attitude toward livestream shopping (Liu et al., 2022; Ngo et al., 2024; Pratama et al., 2024).

H2: Price promotion influences attitude toward livestream shopping of Gen Z in Vietnam

2.3. Social proof (SP)

Social proof refers to the influence created by other viewers' presence, comments,

reactions, and engagement during a livestream. In livestream shopping, consumers do not evaluate products in isolation; instead, they interpret viewer counts, comments, and active interaction as cues about whether the product and the livestream are worth attention (Feng et al., 2024; Khine & Dreamson, 2023). In social commerce settings, these cues often appear through electronic word of mouth (e-WOM), peer interaction, and community-based sharing, all of which can shape evaluations of the shopping environment (Su et al., 2024). On TikTok, this mechanism is particularly relevant because users can express opinions publicly, react in real time, and amplify product-related discussions across wider communities (Su et al., 2024). For Generation Z, such peer-generated signals may reduce uncertainty and strengthen the perception that the livestream is credible and socially endorsed, especially when products receive positive comments or attract substantial viewer engagement (Fara & Hartono, 2024; Feng et al., 2024). In this sense, social proof functions as a social-validation cue that supports a more favorable evaluation of the livestream itself. Accordingly, stronger social proof is expected to improve consumers' attitude toward livestream shopping (Gong & Jiang, 2023; Li et al., 2022).

H3: Social proof influences attitude toward livestream shopping of Gen Z in Vietnam

2.4. Streamer credibility (SC)

Streamer credibility refers to the extent to which the livestream host is perceived as trustworthy, knowledgeable, and convincing. In livestream shopping, streamers do more than present products; they explain product features, respond to viewers' questions, and shape the overall tone of the shopping experience (Jiang et al., 2024b; Wang et al., 2022). Prior research has emphasized that streamers often function as product interpreters or quasi-experts whose recommendations can meaningfully influence how consumers evaluate both the livestream and the promoted products (Lee & Chen, 2021). This role becomes especially important in real-time shopping contexts, where consumers must process information quickly and often rely on the streamer's explanations to reduce uncertainty (Yin et al., 2023). When the streamer is perceived as knowledgeable, trustworthy, and convincing, viewers are more likely to accept the information presented and evaluate the livestream more positively (Zhang et al., 2023). In this sense, streamer credibility functions as a source-based reassurance cue that strengthens favorable attitudes toward livestream shopping. Accordingly, stronger streamer credibility is expected to enhance consumers' attitude toward livestream and, in turn, support higher purchase intention (Lina et al., 2022; Huo et al., 2023; Joo & Yang, 2023).

H4: Streamer credibility influences attitude toward livestream shopping of Gen Z in Vietnam

2.5. Attitude toward livestreams (AT)

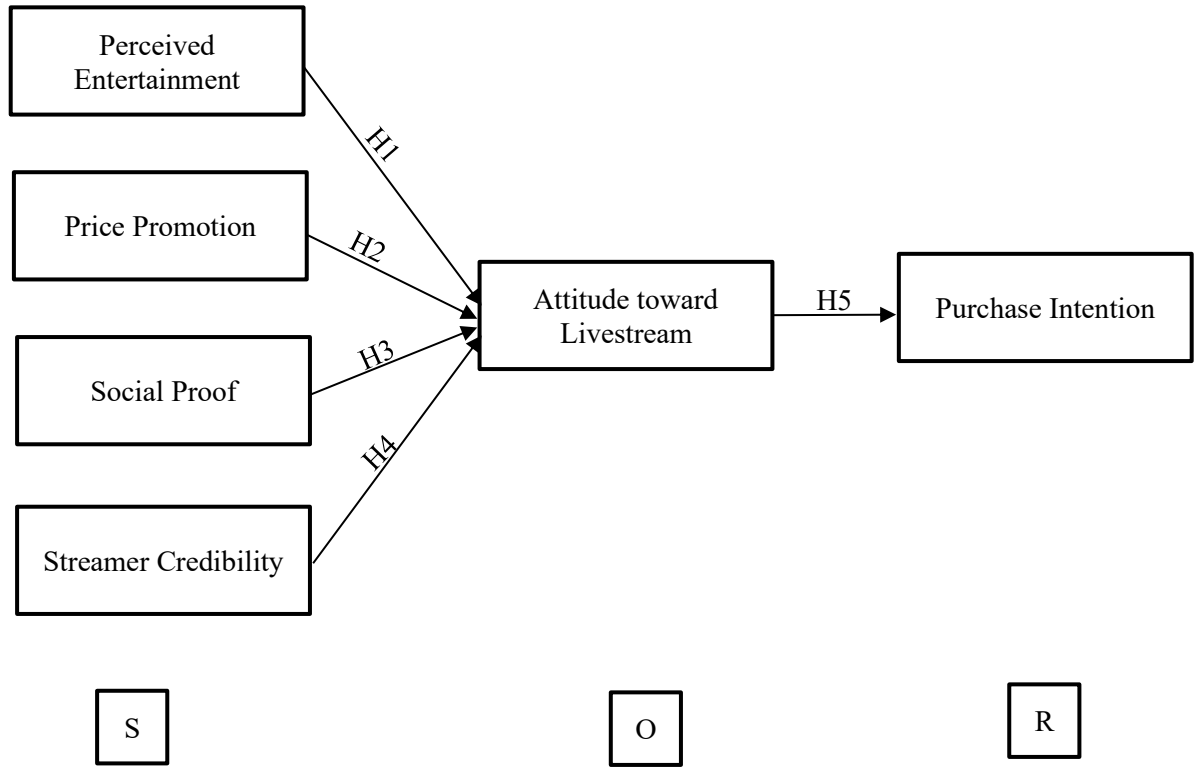
Attitude plays a pivotal role in shaping consumers' behavioral actions, including purchase intention (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2010). Attitude toward livestream reflects consumers' overall positive or negative evaluation of the livestream shopping experience. Within the S-O-R framework, it represents the organism because it captures the internal psychological state formed after exposure to external stimuli. In the present study, attitude toward livestream reflects how Vietnamese Generation Z evaluates TikTok livestream shopping after experiencing entertainment, promotions, social influence, and streamer-related cues (Ngo et al., 2024). While these four constructs all function as external stimuli, they do not influence consumers through

exactly the same pathway; rather, their effects converge in an overall evaluative response toward livestream shopping. Prior evidence suggests that positive attitudes toward social media shopping platforms and livestream interactions can significantly enhance purchase intentions among younger consumers (Mardhiana, 2024). In Vietnam, a similar pattern has been reported, with positive attitudes toward livestream commerce significantly shaping Generation Z's purchase intention (Ngo et al., 2024).

H5: Attitude toward livestream influences purchase intention of Gen Z in Vietnam

Figure 1

Hypotheses Framework based on SOR Model



Note. Suggested by the author

3. Methodology

3.1 Target population and sampling criteria

The target population of this study was Vietnamese Generation Z consumers. To be eligible, respondents had to be between 18 and 35 years old, be TikTok users, and have experience watching TikTok selling livestreams. Because the researcher is originally from Vietnam and the study focuses on Vietnamese consumers, only respondents with Vietnamese nationality were included. Participants could be residing either in Vietnam or abroad, as geographical location was not a required condition of the study as long as all screening criteria were met. The study was conducted under the academic supervision of the School of Communication Arts, Bangkok University, and received ethical approval prior to data collection.

3.2. Measurement scale adaptation and validation procedure

All constructs in this study were adapted from established scales in prior research.

Perceived entertainment was measured with three items adapted from Firdausiah et al. (2023). Price promotion was measured with three items adapted from Lee and Chen (2021); Duong and Ta (2024). Social proof and streamer credibility were each measured with three items adapted from Fara and Hartono (2024). Attitude toward livestream was measured with three items adapted from Patel et al. (2023), while purchase intention was measured with three items adapted from Ajzen and Fishbein (2010). All items were rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. The full list of measurement items is presented in Appendix A.

Because the study adapted existing scales rather than developing entirely new ones, the objective of the measurement preparation stage was to ensure that the items were semantically clear, contextually appropriate, and understandable for Vietnamese Generation Z respondents in the TikTok livestream shopping context. In questionnaire adaptation, this preparatory stage is important because even previously validated items may require wording adjustments when transferred to a different language, platform setting, or respondent group. The questionnaire items were originally adapted from prior studies in English and then translated into Vietnamese for data collection. After translation, the Vietnamese wording was reviewed iteratively by the researcher to improve readability, remove ambiguous expressions, and better align the items with the language commonly used in TikTok livestream shopping. Minor wording adjustments were made to improve clarity and contextual fit, while the conceptual meaning of the original items was retained. Such iterative refinement is consistent with questionnaire pretesting practice, which emphasizes that item wording should be checked carefully before field deployment in order to reduce misunderstanding and measurement error. Before launching the main survey, a pilot check was conducted with a small group of target respondents who matched the study profile. The purpose of this step was to identify potential comprehension problems, ambiguous wording, and response difficulties prior to the full survey. Based on the pilot feedback, several minor wording refinements were made, while the construct structure and item allocation remained unchanged.

It should be noted that this study did not employ a formal expert-panel-based content validation procedure. Instead, the scale adaptation process relied on the use of previously validated items, iterative wording refinement, and pilot checking with target respondents before the questionnaire was distributed on a larger scale. The adequacy of the final measurement model was then further assessed statistically through indicator loadings, internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, discriminant validity, and collinearity diagnostics in the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) analysis using SmartPLS 4. This combined approach does not replace formal expert review, but it helps reduce potential wording problems and supports the practical suitability of the instrument for the present study.

3.3 Research tools

The researcher used an online survey to collect the data of Generation Z in Vietnam about their triggers when shopping through watching livestreams on TikTok (i.e., perceived entertainment, price promotion, social proof, and streamer credibility); in addition, data about their attitude toward livestream shopping as well as purchase intention were gathered as well. The questionnaire was conducted in English and translated to Vietnamese to ensure convenience for respondents. Participants were required to complete the questionnaire on Google Forms, and the whole questionnaire took about 10 - 15 minutes.

3.4 Data collection

The data collection process started in August and finished in September 2025 using convenience and snowball sampling techniques. The questionnaire was distributed through various social media platforms commonly used by Vietnamese respondents, including Facebook, Twitter, Messenger, and Zalo. Prior to the main distribution, the questionnaire had been pilot-checked with a small number of target respondents to ensure that the instructions and item wording were sufficiently clear for the intended population. Questionnaire pretesting is commonly recommended at this stage because it helps detect response-process problems before the instrument is administered on a larger scale.

Initially, 324 responses were collected. After screening for completeness, eligibility, and attention-check performance, 312 valid responses were retained for analysis. The final sample size was therefore N = 312.

To further assess sample adequacy, a post-hoc statistical power analysis was conducted using G*Power 3.1, following the regression-based procedure commonly recommended for structural models. Using the maximum number of predictors pointing at an endogenous construct in the model (four predictors for attitude toward livestream), an alpha level of 0.05, the final sample size of 312, and the observed effect size derived from the structural model, the achieved statistical power was greater than 0.999. For purchase intention, which had one direct predictor in the model, the achieved power was likewise greater than 0.999. To provide an additional conservative check, the smallest observed effect size in the model ($f^2 = 0.080$) was also evaluated using the fixed-model R^2 increase option, and the resulting power remained above 0.99. Taken together, these results indicate that the sample size was more than adequate to detect the hypothesized effects and clearly exceeded the recommended minimum statistical power threshold of 0.80 (Faul et al., 2009; Kang, 2021). The post-hoc power results are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1

*Post-Hoc Power Analysis (G*Power 3.1)*

Endogenous construct	Test setting	Predictors	N	Effect size (f^2)	Alpha	Achieved power
Attitude toward Livestream	Linear multiple regression: fixed model, R^2 deviation from zero	4	312	1.614	0.05	> 0.999

Endogenous construct	Test setting	Predictors	N	Effect size (f^2)	Alpha	Achieved power
Purchase Intention	Linear multiple regression: fixed model, R^2 deviation from zero	1	312	0.586	0.05	> 0.999
Smallest observed effect	Linear multiple regression: fixed model, R^2 increase	1 tested / 4 total	312	0.080	0.05	> 0.99

Note. G*Power 3.1

4. Results and discussion

4.1. Sample

Among the 312 valid respondents, the largest age group was 23 - 27 years old. Most respondents held a bachelor's degree, the most common level of TikTok use was 03 - 04 hours per day, and the most frequently reported purchasing frequency through TikTok livestreams was 06 - 10 times per month. The full demographic profile is presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Demographic Summary of Respondents

Characteristic	Frequency	Percent (%)
Age		
18 - 22 years old	95	30.4
23 - 27 years old	162	51.9
28 - 32 years old	34	10.9
32 - 35 years old	21	6.8
Educational level		
High school diploma	78	25
Bachelor's degree	187	59.9
Master's degree	25	8
Doctoral degree	4	1.3
Others	18	5.8

Characteristic	Frequency	Percent (%)
Using TikTok frequency		
Less than 1 hour per day	32	10.3
01 - 02 hours per day	74	23.7
03 - 04 hours per day	138	44.2
05 - 06 hours per day	57	18.3
More than 06 hours per day	11	3.5
TikTok purchasing frequency		
Under two times a month	23	7.4
02 - 05 times a month	49	15.7
06 - 10 times a month	154	49.4
11 - 15 times a month	74	23.7
Over fifteen times a month	12	3.8

Note. The study results

4.2. Evaluation of the Measurement Model

PLS-SEM analysis was conducted in two stages: assessment of the measurement model and assessment of the structural model. The measurement model showed satisfactory reliability and validity. As presented in Table 3, all constructs met the recommended thresholds for internal consistency and convergent validity, with Cronbach's alpha values, outer loadings, and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) exceeding the suggested cut-off levels (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2014).

Table 3

Construct Reliability and Validity

Construct	Items	Loading	t-Value	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Composite Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha
Perceived Entertainment	ENT1	0.885	50.264	0.756	0.903	0.839
	ENT2	0.859	40.234			
	ENT3	0.865	40.048			
Price Promotion	PP1	0.875	46.638	0.776	0.912	0.855
	PP2	0.888	62.610			
	PP3	0.879	44.157			
Social Proof	SP1	0.859	37.188	0.770	0.910	0.851
	SP2	0.900	60.614			
	SP3	0.873	47.504			

Construct	Items	Loading	t-Value	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Composite Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha
Streamer Credibility	SC1	0.873	40.714	0.774	0.911	0.854
	SC2	0.909	63.198			
	SC3	0.857	38.315			
Attitude toward Livestream	AT1	0.891	49.693	0.778	0.913	0.857
	AT2	0.885	52.013			
	AT3	0.870	46.581			
Purchase Intention	PI1	0.880	45.570	0.782	0.915	0.861
	PI2	0.906	64.996			
	PI3	0.867	44.931			

Note. SmartPLS 4

Common Method Bias (CMB) was also assessed because the data were collected using a single self-reported questionnaire. Following the collinearity-based assessment, all outer VIF values ranged from 1.909 to 2.520, while the inner VIF values ranged from 1.430 to 1.555. As all values were below the recommended threshold, common method bias is unlikely to be a serious concern in this study.

To examine whether each construct has the tendency to coincide or be distinctive, a discriminant validity test was executed. The suggested value of each construct after making a calculation of the square root itself should be greater than the correlation of other constructs, respectively (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2014). In Table 4, all the square roots of AVE for constructs are higher than the value of correlation, meaning that each construct is different from the others.

Table 4

Discriminant Validity Results

	AT	ENT	PI	PP	SC	SP
AT	**0.882**					
ENT	0.636	**0.870**				
PI	0.608	0.439	**0.884**			
PP	0.611	0.482	0.419	**0.881**		
SC	0.564	0.440	0.404	0.414	**0.880**	
SP	0.612	0.484	0.469	0.470	0.469	**0.878**

Note. Numbers (in bold) are the square root values of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), AT = Attitude toward Livestream; ENT = Perceived Entertainment; PI = Purchase Intention; PP = Price Promotion; SC = Streamer Credibility; SP = Social Proof. SmartPLS 4

In addition to the Fornell-Larcker criterion, discriminant validity was further assessed using the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT). As shown in Table 5, all HTMT values are below the recommended threshold of 0.85, indicating that discriminant validity is established for all constructs.

Table 5

Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

Constructs	**AT**	**ENT**	**PI**	**PP**	**SC**	**SP**
AT	-					
ENT	0.748	-				
PI	0.708	0.516	-			
PP	0.713	0.568	0.488	-		
SC	0.660	0.519	0.470	0.482	-	
SP	0.715	0.571	0.550	0.549	0.550	-

Note. SmartPLS 4

4.3. Evaluation of the structural model

Since the study utilized SmartPLS software to analyze the data gathered from respondents, all the hypotheses were tested meticulously. The researcher explored causal relationships by running Bootstrapping test to examine two crucial factors that are magnitude as well as significance of the hypotheses.

Table 6 and Figure 2 report the structural path results of the proposed S-O-R model. All hypothesized relationships were positive and statistically significant ($p < 0.001$), providing full support for the structural model. The four livestream-related stimuli: perceived entertainment, price promotion, social proof, and streamer credibility, each showed significant positive effects on attitude toward livestream, indicating that viewers' evaluations of TikTok livestream shopping are shaped by both incentive-based and social-based cues. In comparative terms, perceived entertainment had the strongest effect on attitude ($\beta = 0.297$, $p < 0.001$), followed by price promotion ($\beta = 0.267$, $p < 0.001$), streamer credibility ($\beta = 0.245$, $p < 0.001$), and social proof ($\beta = 0.208$, $p < 0.001$). This pattern suggests that while all four stimuli matter, incentive-based cues exert relatively stronger influence on viewers' evaluative responses in the livestream context.

In addition, attitude toward livestream had a strong and statistically significant positive effect on purchase intention ($\beta = 0.608$, $p < 0.001$). As the strongest path in the model, this finding reinforces the role of attitude as the key organism state through which livestream-related stimuli are translated into behavioral intention. Overall, the results indicate that purchase intention in TikTok livestream shopping is formed through an evaluative mechanism in which multiple livestream cues are first integrated into attitude toward livestream before

influencing consumers' intention to buy.

Table 6

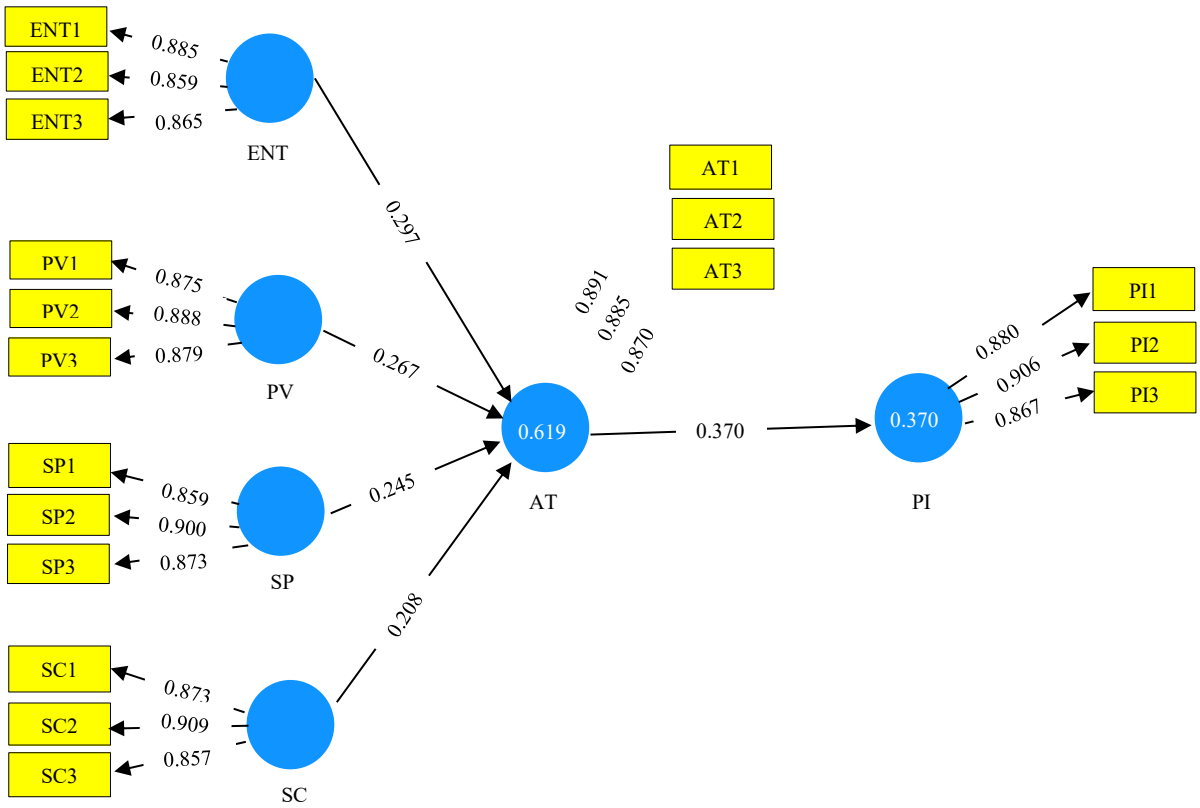
Test of Hypothesized Relationships

	Path Coefficient	T-Values	P Values	Result
H1: Perceived Entertainment → Attitude toward Livestream	0.297	7.551	0.000	Supported
H2: Price Promotion → Attitude toward Livestream	0.267	6.557	0.000	Supported
H3: Social Proof → Attitude toward Livestream	0.208	5.070	0.000	Supported
H4: Streamer Credibility → Attitude toward Livestream	0.245	5.057	0.000	Supported
H5: Attitude toward livestream → Purchase Intention	0.608	16.109	0.000	Supported

Note. SmartPLS 4

Figure 2

The Result of Hypotheses Test



Note. AT = Attitude toward Livestream; ENT = Perceived Entertainment; PI = Purchase Intention; PP = Price Promotion; SC = Streamer Credibility; SP = Social Proof. SmartPLS 4

Effect size (f^2) was also examined to assess the contribution of each exogenous construct to the endogenous constructs in Table 7. Following the recommended thresholds, f^2 values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 indicate small, medium, and large effects, respectively. In this study, perceived entertainment shows a medium effect on attitude toward livestream ($f^2 = 0.151$), while price promotion ($f^2 = 0.126$), social proof ($f^2 = 0.101$), and streamer credibility ($f^2 = 0.080$) show small effects. In contrast, attitude toward livestream has a large effect on purchase intention ($f^2 = 0.588$).

Table 7

Summarization of f^2 Value

	Attitude toward livestream (AT)	**Purchase intention (PI)**
Perceived Entertainment (ENT)	0.151	
Price Promotion (PP)	0.126	
Social Proof (SP)	0.101	
Streamer Credibility (SC)	0.080	

Attitude toward livestream (AT)	0.588

Note. SmartPLS 4

Predictive relevance was assessed in Table 8 using the blindfolding procedure. The Q^2 values for attitude toward livestream (AT) and purchase intention (PI) were 0.477 and 0.288, respectively. As both values are greater than zero, the model demonstrates predictive relevance for the two endogenous constructs.

Table 8

Predictive Relevance (Q^2)

Construct	**Q^2**
Attitude toward livestream (AT)	0.477
Purchase intention (PI)	0.288

Note. SmartPLS 4

Since attitude toward livestream was specified as the organism state in the proposed S-O-R model, the indirect effects from the four stimuli to purchase intention through attitude were examined. As shown in Table 9, all indirect paths were positive and statistically significant ($p < 0.001$), confirming that attitude toward livestream serves as the mechanism through which livestream-related cues are translated into purchase intention. This finding suggests that in TikTok livestream shopping, consumers do not respond to entertainment, promotions, social proof, or streamer credibility independently at the level of behavioral intention; rather, these stimuli are first integrated into an overall evaluative response toward the livestream itself.

In terms of relative strength, the strongest indirect effect was found for perceived entertainment ($\beta = 0.181$, $p < 0.001$), followed by price promotion ($\beta = 0.162$, $p < 0.001$), streamer credibility ($\beta = 0.149$, $p < 0.001$), and social proof ($\beta = 0.127$, $p < 0.001$). These results provide additional support for the mediating role of attitude toward livestream and reinforce the argument that both incentive-based and social-based stimuli shape purchase intention through a shared evaluative mechanism.

Table 9

Evaluation Table of Indirect Relationships through Bootstrapping Analysis

	Original Sample (O)	**Sample Mean (M)**	**Standard Deviation (STDEV)**	**TStatistics (|O/STDEV|)**	**P Values**
ENT → AT → PI	0.181	0.181	0.026	7.062	0.000
PP → AT → PI	0.162	0.163	0.026	6.282	0.000
SP → AT → PI	0.127	0.128	0.026	4.921	0.000
SC → AT → PI	0.149	0.150	0.033	4.452	0.000

Note. AT = Attitude toward Livestream; ENT = Perceived Entertainment; PI = Purchase Intention; PP = Price Promotion; SC = Streamer Credibility; SP = Social Proof. SmartPLS 4

4.4. Discussion

This research studies the impact of TikTok Livestream on the purchase intention of Generation Z (Gen Z) in Vietnam. This study adopted the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) model, in which perceived entertainment, price promotion, social proof, and streamer credibility were identified as stimulus, attitude toward livestream as Organism and purchase intention as response. Collecting answers from 312 respondents (N=312) who are Generation Z in Vietnam, the researcher utilized the PLS-SEM test to empirically evaluate the research. The researcher also explored the associated relationships between numerous factors, including perceived entertainment, price promotion, social proof, streamer credibility and attitude toward livestream, which eventually influence the purchase intention of Vietnamese Gen Z. Empirically, this choice is also supported by the model results, as attitude toward livestream exerts the strongest effect on purchase intention ($\beta = 0.608$, $t = 16.109$) and significantly mediates the effects of all four stimuli, indicating that it functions as the central internal evaluative mechanism in this Gen Z TikTok livestream context.

The findings provide support for the proposed S-O-R model and, more importantly, offer insight into how purchase intention is formed in TikTok livestream shopping among Vietnamese Generation Z. Rather than responding to isolated cues independently, consumers appear to evaluate the livestream experience as a whole before translating that evaluation into purchase intention. This pattern is consistent with the argument that TikTok livestream shopping operates as a discovery-based commerce environment, in which entertainment, promotional appeal, social validation, and streamer-related trust cues are encountered simultaneously and integrated through attitude toward livestream.

First, the results show that perceived entertainment exerts the strongest effect among the four antecedents of attitude toward livestream. This suggests that, in the TikTok context, shopping is not experienced merely as a functional transaction but as an entertainment-centered activity. This interpretation is broadly consistent with prior research showing that enjoyment and engagement are powerful drivers of livestream-related consumer responses (Liu et al., 2022; Yin et al., 2023). At the same time, the present finding appears particularly crucial in the Vietnamese Gen Z context, where TikTok functions as both a content-consumption platform and a shopping interface. In this respect, the result aligns with research from Indonesia indicating that emotional engagement and parasocial connection can strongly motivate younger users' purchase-related behavior in live-streaming social commerce (Firdausiah et al., 2023; Nabila, 2024). Taken together, these studies suggest that affective stimulation plays a structurally important role in livestream shopping across Asian digital markets, although the specific platform logic may shape how this effect is expressed.

Second, price promotion also positively influences attitude toward livestream, indicating that utilitarian and economic cues remain important even in a discovery-driven shopping environment. This finding suggests that Vietnamese Gen Z consumers do not respond to entertainment alone; they also evaluate whether the livestream offers meaningful transactional advantages. In other words, the attractiveness of the livestream depends partly on whether it creates the perception of a worthwhile deal. This pattern is broadly compatible with Chinese livestream-shopping research, which has shown that promotional cues can significantly stimulate consumers' internal states and downstream behavioral responses (Feng et al., 2024; Huo et al., 2023; Liu et al., 2022). However, the present study suggests a slightly different

mechanism: rather than leading directly to impulse-oriented outcomes, promotional attractiveness in TikTok livestream shopping appears to work through an overall evaluative response toward the livestream format. This highlights that in Vietnam's TikTok environment, promotional appeal is embedded within a broader attitudinal judgment rather than functioning only as a short-term trigger.

Third, social proof positively affects attitude toward livestream, although its relative effect is weaker than that of entertainment and price promotion. This indicates that visible peer reactions, viewer comments, and audience engagement still matter, but they may operate more as reassurance cues than as primary drivers of evaluation. This interpretation is consistent with broader livestream-commerce literature emphasizing the role of social presence and peer-generated signals in reducing uncertainty (Fara & Hartono, 2024; Feng et al., 2024). It is also comparable to TikTok streaming-commerce research showing that consumer-to-consumer interaction enhances social and functional value (Khine & Dreamson, 2023; Su et al., 2024). However, the more moderate coefficient in the present study suggests that for Vietnamese Gen Z, social proof may be influential mainly when integrated with other cues rather than acting as an independently dominant element. Thus, social validation appears necessary, but not sufficient on its own, to produce a strongly favorable attitude toward livestream shopping.

Fourth, streamer credibility significantly improves attitude toward livestream, confirming that source-related trust remains central in real-time commerce. In a livestream setting, the streamer does not merely present products but also interprets product information, manages uncertainty, and shapes the tone of the shopping experience. This result is consistent with prior works, especially from China, emphasizing the role of streamer expertise, attractiveness, and trustworthiness in shaping purchase-related evaluations (Jiang et al., 2024b; Lee & Chen, 2021; Wang et al., 2022), and. At the same time, the present finding can be read alongside broader TikTok streaming-commerce evidence showing that streamer-related qualities often enhance social value and immersion. For Vietnamese Gen Z, the role of streamer credibility seems especially important because the shopping experience is fast-paced and information must be processed immediately; under such conditions, consumers are more likely to rely on the streamer as a trusted interpretive source.

A particularly important contribution of the present study concerns the role of attitude toward livestream. The strong path from attitude to purchase intention suggests that attitude functions as the key organism state through which mixed livestream cues are translated into behavioral intention of Vietnamese Gen Z, which aligns with the finding of Ngo et al. (2024). This is theoretically significant because it indicates that Vietnamese Generation Z users do not appear to process entertainment, promotions, social proof, and streamer credibility as disconnected predictors at the level of purchase intention. Instead, these cues are integrated into an overall evaluative judgment about the livestream itself. This interpretation is consistent with the finding of Mardhiana (2024), who showed that positive attitude and emotional ties formed in live-streaming social commerce can significantly strengthen Gen Z consumers' purchase-related behavior. In the present study, this same pattern is evident in the Vietnamese TikTok context, where attitude emerges as the central internal mechanism linking livestream stimuli to purchase intention. Taken together, these findings reinforce the argument that, in discovery-based livestream commerce, attitude toward livestream is not merely an intervening variable but the core evaluative bridge between external cues and behavioral intention.

Overall, the findings support the view that TikTok livestream shopping among Vietnamese Generation Z is best understood not as a simple extension of traditional e-commerce, but as a distinct social commerce environment in which incentive-based and social-based cues are integrated through attitude before shaping purchase intention. Cross-culturally, the results show both continuity and convergence. Like studies from China and Indonesia, the present research confirms that experiential and social cues matter in livestream shopping. In addition, supported by evidence from Malaysia, the current model indicates that attitude plays a central and robust mediating role in the Vietnamese TikTok context. This suggests that while livestream shopping across Asian markets shares certain common mechanisms, the strength and configuration of those mechanisms remain context-sensitive.

5. Conclusions & recommendations

5.1 Implications of the Study

This study offers both theoretical and practical implications for research on livestream shopping and social commerce. Its main contribution does not lie in merely applying the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework to another empirical setting, but in refining how the framework can be specified in a discovery-based livestream commerce environment such as TikTok. Unlike conventional search-based e-commerce, where consumers typically enter the platform with relatively clear purchase goals and rely on search, comparison, and information efficiency, TikTok livestream shopping is driven by real-time exposure, entertainment, social interaction, visible peer reactions, and streamer-led persuasion. In this environment, consumer responses are shaped by a mixed set of livestream stimuli rather than by isolated transactional cues alone.

From a theoretical perspective, the study refines the S-O-R framework by conceptualizing livestream stimuli as a hybrid stimulus structure that combines incentive-based and social-based cues. Perceived entertainment and price promotion represent the incentive-based side of livestream shopping because they enhance the attractiveness of the shopping episode through enjoyment and economic appeal. Social proof and streamer credibility represent the social-based side because they provide social validation, interpretive reassurance, and source-related confidence. Rather than treating these cues as disconnected predictors, this study theorizes that they converge into a higher-order evaluative organism state, namely attitude toward livestream. In this sense, the study moves beyond simple variable integration and provides evidence that, in discovery-based commerce, purchase intention is formed through the integration of multiple livestream cues into an overall evaluative response.

The empirical findings support this theoretical refinement. Attitude toward livestream exerts the strongest influence on purchase intention, and all four stimuli show significant indirect effects through attitude. These results indicate that attitude functions as the central internal mechanism through which mixed livestream stimuli are translated into behavioral intention. Accordingly, the study contributes to existing knowledge by showing that, in TikTok livestream shopping, consumers do not respond to entertainment, promotions, social proof, or streamer credibility independently; rather, they integrate these cues into an overall judgment about the livestream format before forming purchase intention. Vietnamese Generation Z is therefore not treated merely as a convenient empirical sample, but as a theoretically meaningful boundary condition in which this discovery-commerce mechanism becomes especially salient, given this cohort's strong immersion in TikTok's entertainment-led, socially interactive, and

algorithmically driven environment. The cross-cultural comparison further suggests that although livestream shopping across Asian markets shares common experiential and social mechanisms, the relative role of attitude may vary depending on platform architecture and consumer context. In the Vietnamese TikTok setting, attitude appears to function as a particularly central evaluative mechanism linking mixed livestream stimuli to purchase intention.

Practically, the findings suggest that brands and sellers should not treat TikTok livestream shopping as a purely transactional selling channel. Instead, livestream performance depends on the combined management of entertainment value, promotional attractiveness, social validation, and streamer credibility. First, livestreams should be designed as enjoyable and engaging experiences, because entertainment is not peripheral but central to how viewers evaluate the livestream format. Second, promotional tactics should be presented as real-time and meaningful advantages, as discounts and vouchers strengthen the perception that the livestream is economically worthwhile. Third, brands should actively cultivate visible social proof by encouraging comments, interaction, and audience participation, since these signals reduce uncertainty and make the livestream feel more socially endorsed. Finally, selecting credible streamers is essential because viewers rely on streamers not only as presenters, but also as interpreters of product information and as trust-building agents in fast-paced shopping situations. Taken together, these implications suggest that successful TikTok livestream commerce requires an integrated strategy in which brands manage the livestream as a discovery-driven experience rather than as a simple online sales event.

5.2 Recommendations for future research

In research, limitations are inevitable, as there is always room for improvement. In this study, quantitative methods were executed, and the data were analyzed through the PLS-SEM tool. However, the study only reveals the behavioral tendencies of Gen Z in Vietnam about their purchase intention. Further studies can add qualitative methods to understand the reason behind their behavior. This will enhance the quality of the research.

Another limitation concerns the scale adaptation procedure. Although the study relied on previously validated items and conducted pilot checking with target respondents, it did not include a formal expert-panel-based content validation process. Future studies should incorporate expert review and more systematic cognitive pretesting to further enhance content validity and reduce potential researcher subjectivity during questionnaire adaptation.

In addition, consumers participating in livestream shopping include not only Gen Z but also Millennials, Gen Y, Gen X, and Gen Alpha. The results of this study do not fully account for other generations. Therefore, more studies can be conducted with the investigation scope on other generations to show the variety of consumers.

SCIENTIFIC CONTRIBUTION

The manuscript provides new datasets or empirical evidence; the manuscript presents statistically and practically significant findings; the manuscript offers policy/managerial/technological implications; the manuscript opens new directions for further research.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

CRediT: **Huynh Nhut Khoa**: Conceptualization, Methodology, Software, Validation, Formal Analysis, Investigation, Resources, Data Curation, Writing - Original Draft, Writing - Review & Editing, Visualization, Supervision, Project Administration, Funding Acquisition.

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