Journal of Business, Social and Technology
Volume 7, Issue 2, 656-667
e_ISSN: 2807-6362
https://bustechno.polteksci.ac.id/index.php/jbt/index
DOI: doi.org/10.59261/jbt.v7i2.627

The Influence of Live Streaming, Brand Image, and Perceived Usefulness of Online Review on Purchase Intention on TikTok Shop

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Article Info:

Article history:
Received: April 04, 2026
Revised: May 15, 2026
Accepted: May 18, 2026

Keywords:
Brand Image; Consumer Trust; Live Straming; Perceived Usefulness of Onlive Review; Purchase Intention

Abstract

Background: The rise of social media-based commerce—especially through TikTok Shop—has opened new avenues for brands to engage consumers through live streaming and peer-generated online reviews. Despite growing interest, the conditions under which these mechanisms drive purchase intention, and whether consumer trust mediates their effects for established FMCG brands, remain empirically underexplored.
Objective: This study examines how live streaming, brand image, and perceived usefulness of online reviews influence purchase intentions on TikTok Shop, and assesses consumer trust as a mediating variable within these relationships.
Methods: Survey data from 360 consumers who had watched Unilever's live streaming sessions and made purchases on TikTok Shop were analyzed using Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) via SmartPLS 4.0, enabling simultaneous evaluation of direct and mediated pathways.
Results: Live streaming exhibited a significant and direct effect on purchase intention. By contrast, brand image and perceived usefulness of online reviews produced no statistically significant direct effects. Consumer trust failed to mediate any of the three antecedent–outcome pathways, indicating that stimulus-driven direct routes dominate over sequential trust-based processes in this environment.
Conclusion: Within live streaming–based social commerce, experiential immediacy and informational interactivity outweigh both brand image and consumer trust as purchase drivers. Practitioners should reposition live streaming as a primary conversion mechanism, and future researchers should interrogate the boundary conditions of trust's motivational role in social commerce contexts.

To cite this article: Hapipah, Yasri. (2026). The Influence of Live Streaming, Brand Image, and Perceived Usefulness of Online Review on Purchase Intention on TikTok Shop. *Journal of Business, Social and Technology*, 7 (2), 656-667. https://doi.org/10.59261/jbt.v7i2.627

INTRODUCTION

Scholars widely treat purchase intention as a proxy for actual buying behavior, given its capacity to capture the cognitive predisposition that precedes a transaction (Tran, 2020; Nidal & Albaity, 2024). For organizations, tracking this metric is strategically valuable: fluctuations in consumer intent directly ripple through revenue forecasting, inventory management, and competitive positioning (Jain, 2020). Yet the contemporary marketplace — particularly the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) segment — presents a formidable challenge to stable purchase intention. Elevated brand-switching rates, heightened responsiveness to short-term incentives, and an erosion of traditional loyalty dynamics collectively complicate marketers' ability to anticipate consumer choices (Morku & Grišmanauskaite, 2023).

FMCG consumption is inherently volatile, and the emergence of social commerce platforms such as TikTok Shop has amplified this instability by compressing the decision-making cycle. Continuous exposure to interactive content, flash promotions, and real-time product showcases nudges consumers toward immediate, impulse-driven responses rather than deliberative evaluation. Indonesia exemplifies this shift: ranked among Southeast Asia's fastest-expanding digital economies, the country has witnessed accelerating adoption of TikTok Shop, especially within urban demographics.

Against this backdrop, Unilever Indonesia's official TikTok Shop presence offers a compelling research setting. As an established FMCG multinational, Unilever confronts the challenge of converting its substantial brand recognition into purchase intention within an environment defined by price sensitivity, impulsive consumption tendencies, and intensifying competition from domestic and regional rivals. Whether long-standing brand equity alone is sufficient to motivate purchasing behavior, or whether interactive mechanisms — notably live streaming and social proof embedded in online reviews — carry greater decisional weight, constitutes an empirically open and practically urgent question.

A growing body of evidence documents the transformation of live streaming from an entertainment format into a commercially consequential marketing instrument capable of shaping consumer attitudes and accelerating purchase decisions (Lu & Chen, 2021; Ma et al., 2022). The co-presence and immersive quality embedded in live streaming attenuate the information asymmetry that traditionally separates buyers from sellers, while simultaneously stimulating active engagement. These properties have rendered live streaming a strategically significant asset within the broader social commerce ecosystem (Chandraa et al., 2024; Nguyen & Phuong, 2024).

Alongside live streaming, brand image retains its significance as an evaluative heuristic in digital consumption contexts. Functioning as a cognitive shorthand that encapsulates perceived quality, dependability, and organizational credibility Aditya (2020), brand image is subject to continuous recalibration in social commerce — amplified or eroded through peer interactions, influencer advocacy, and consumer-generated content. A well-regarded brand can attenuate perceived uncertainty and reinforce consumer conviction, while a tarnished image accelerates defection to competitors.

Equally salient is the perceived usefulness of online reviews, which function as vicarious product experience in the absence of physical inspection. Reviews that provide relevant, accurate, and actionable information enable consumers to evaluate offerings and assess vendor credibility more confidently (Ventre & Kolbe, 2020). When reviews are judged to be genuinely informative and trustworthy, they exert upward pressure on purchase intention by reducing residual uncertainty (Hanaysha et al., 2025; Qiu & Zhang, 2024). Empirical work across varied product categories consistently documents this positive relationship, with the effect particularly pronounced for experiential or high-involvement goods (Zhu et al., 2020).

A complete account of how live streaming, brand image, and online reviews affect purchase intention must accommodate the mediating function of consumer trust. Trust — defined as consumers' conviction in the reliability, integrity, and capability of a seller and platform — governs how marketing stimuli are converted into behavioral intentions (Duong et al., 2024). Situated within the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), trust operates as a belief system that conditions evaluative attitudes and, in turn, purchase-related behavioral intentions.

Despite sustained scholarly attention to purchase intention in social commerce, several substantive gaps persist. First, earlier inquiries typically examined live streaming, brand image, and perceived usefulness of online reviews as independent predictors in separate models, rarely capturing their integrated, simultaneous effects within a unified analytical framework (Kim et al., 2017; Li et al., 2020; Nguyen & Phuong, 2024; Tran, 2020; Yang et al., 2024). Second, the theoretical literature reveals notable contradictions: while Aditya (2020) and Napitupulu (2023) document a positive direct brand image–purchase intention relationship, other studies conducted in high-velocity social commerce contexts report no significant direct link, suggesting that brand image may channel its effects through trust rather than operating directly on purchase intention (Zhao et al., 2023).

Parallel inconsistencies characterize the online reviews literature, with some contexts yielding direct effects and others revealing trust-mediated pathways. Third, the conjoint mediating role of consumer trust — bridging live streaming, brand image, and online reviews to purchase intention simultaneously — has not been rigorously examined in the specific setting of established FMCG brands operating through live streaming-based social commerce. Given that online transactions carry inherent risks of product misrepresentation and service failure, live streaming and brand image should theoretically build consumer trust as a prerequisite for purchase intention. This study is therefore designed to empirically reexamine these linkages in an integrated model, with consumer trust as a mediator, specifically within the context of Unilever's official TikTok Shop store.

Building on the gaps identified, this investigation advances three distinct theoretical contributions. First, the study moves beyond additive variable combination to pose a theoretically grounded question: under conditions of social commerce immersion, does consumer trust lose its mediating potency because real-time interactive stimuli generate impulse-driven purchase pathways that circumvent deliberative trust appraisal — a possibility not addressed by classical TAM or TRA frameworks? Second, by centering the Unilever FMCG context, the study introduces brand equity as a potential boundary condition: for a high-familiarity multinational, pre-existing trust may substitute for trust formation occurring within live sessions, fundamentally altering the trust–purchase nexus. Third, the study deploys a fully integrated model that evaluates all three antecedents and their trust-mediated paths concurrently, enabling a more methodologically rigorous and complete test of mediation than piecemeal prior efforts.

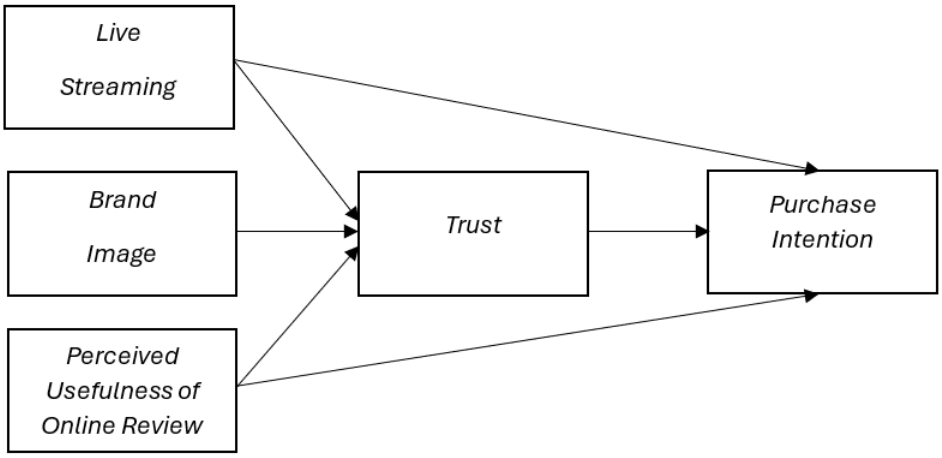

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

H1: Live streaming has a positive influence on purchase intention.
H2: Live streaming has a positive influence on consumer trust.
H3: Brand image has a positive influence on purchase intention.
H4: Brand image has a positive influence on consumer trust.

The pattern whereby perceived usefulness of online reviews shapes trust but not direct purchase intention reflects a consumption hierarchy specific to interactive social commerce contexts. When the sensory richness and real-time responsiveness of live streaming are available, the informational utility of static text reviews becomes less pivotal at the moment of purchase. Consumers appear to subordinate review-based evaluation to experiential, live-stream-anchored decision-making, a dynamic that may represent an emerging norm in social commerce rather than a context-specific anomaly.

H6: Perceived usefulness of online reviews has a positive influence on consumer trust.
H7: Consumer trust has a positive influence on purchase intention.
H8: Consumer trust mediates the influence of live streaming on purchase intention.
H9: Consumer trust mediates the influence of brand image on purchase intention.
H10: Consumer trust mediates the influence of perceived usefulness of online reviews on purchase intention.

METHOD

The research population comprised consumers of Unilever's official TikTok Shop store domiciled in Jakarta. To ensure that the sample reflected genuine platform engagement, a purposive sampling strategy was applied, with eligibility contingent upon four criteria: (1) Indonesian nationality and Jakarta residency; (2) minimum age of 18 years; (3) prior following or visiting Unilever's official TikTok Shop page; and (4) having watched at least one live-streaming session and completed at least one purchase through TikTok Shop in the six months immediately preceding data collection. These eligibility conditions were enforced through screening items embedded at the outset of the questionnaire; non-qualifying respondents were automatically excluded. Following the sample adequacy rule proposed by Hair (2019)—a minimum of 5 to 10 observations per indicator in SEM—the threshold for 34 indicators was 340 usable cases. The final dataset comprised 360 questionnaires satisfying all eligibility requirements.

Each construct was operationalized through validated reflective multi-item scales, rated on a five-point Likert continuum from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Table 2 enumerates the indicators per construct and their source literature. Live streaming (X1) drew on eight items from Chandrruangphen (2022), spanning interactivity, informational richness, visual quality, and real-time engagement. Brand image (X2) was captured through seven items adapted from Lien (2015), addressing cognitive brand associations, quality perceptions, and affective brand connections. Perceived usefulness of online reviews (X3) incorporated six items from Ventre & Kolbe (2020), emphasizing relevance, credibility, and the informational utility of consumer reviews. Consumer trust (M) was measured via seven items from Wongkitrungrueng & Assarut (2020), covering integrity, benevolence, and competence dimensions. Purchase intention (Y) utilized six items from Wang (2023), reflecting willingness to purchase, likelihood of recommending, and future purchase intent. Before the main data collection, a pilot study with 30 respondents confirmed acceptable reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha > 0.70$) and convergent validity across all constructs.

Structural relationships were tested using Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) via SmartPLS 4.0. This analytical choice was motivated by the study's prediction-oriented objectives, the presence of reflective measurement structures requiring simultaneous mediation testing, and the absence of strict distributional assumptions inherent to the technique (Hair et al., 2019). A sequential two-stage procedure was implemented: the first stage evaluated the outer (measurement) model through convergent validity indicators (factor loadings ≥ 0.70; AVE ≥ 0.50), discriminant validity via the Heterotrait–Monotrait ratio (HTMT < 0.85), and composite reliability (CR ≥ 0.70); the second stage examined the inner (structural) model using standardized path coefficients, coefficients of determination (R^2), effect sizes (f^2), and bootstrapped indirect effects (5,000 resamples) for mediation assessment, consistent with (Hair et al., 2019).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Respondent Characteristics

The sample was skewed toward female respondents, who accounted for 61.1% of participants, with the 23–27 age group representing the largest segment at 33.3%. Detailed demographic frequencies are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Research Respondents

Category	Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	140	38.9%
	Female	220	61.1%
Age	18-22 Years	60	16.7%
	23-27 Years	120	33.3%
	28-32 Years	105	29.1%
	33-37 Years	47	13.1%
	>37 Years	28	7.8%

Source: Processed Data (2026)

Validity and Reliability

Measurement model adequacy was evaluated against established PLS-SEM criteria (Hair et al., 2019). All item loadings exceeded the 0.70 threshold, and AVE values exceeded 0.50, confirming convergent validity. Internal consistency was also confirmed, with both Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability coefficients exceeding 0.70 for every construct. These results, compiled in Table 2, indicate that the measurement instruments reliably and validly capture their respective latent constructs.

Table 2. Validity and Reliability

Variable	Indicator	Loading Factor	CR	AVE	Cronbach Aplha
Live Streaming	SI	0.934	0.961	0.763	0.992
	SIN	0.931			
	SP	0.959			
	SSG	0.959			
	SPO	0.984			
	SVA	0.952			
	PA	0.985			
	OSS	0.974			
	PQ	0.953			
	P	0.889			
	PT	0.936			
	BA	0.923			
Consumer Trust	TS	0.903	0.941	0.849	0.964
	TP	0.939			
Brand Image	Bl1	0.926	0.958	0.851	0.956
	Bl2	0.937			
	Bl3	0.932			
	Bl4	0.888			
	Bi5	0.929			
Perceived Usefulness of Onlive Review	POR1	0.920	0.939	0.843	0.939
	POR2	0.925			
	POR3	0.912			
	POR4	0.916			
Purchase Intention	Pl1	0.939	0.929	0.872	0.929
	Pl2	0.936			
	Pl3	0.926			

Examining the structural model's explanatory capacity, an R^2 of 0.836 for consumer trust indicates that the three exogenous constructs account for a substantial proportion of the variance in this mediating variable. The R^2 of 0.506 for purchase intention reflects moderate-to-substantial predictive power. Both coefficients are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. R Square

	R-square	R-square adjusted
Consumer Trustt	0.836	0.835
Purchase Intentionn	0.506	0.501

Hypothesis Testing

With measurement and structural model adequacy confirmed, hypothesis testing was conducted using a bootstrapping procedure (5,000 resamples) to derive stable estimates of the significance of path coefficients. This approach yields robust standard errors and p-values for all direct and indirect pathways in the model. Hypothesis outcomes are comprehensively documented in Table 4.

Table 4. Bootstrapping Results

Hypothesis	Path	Original Sample	T-Statistic	P-Value	Conclusion
H1	Live Streaming -> Purchase Intention	0.714	7.138	0.000	Accepted
H2	Live Streaming -> Consumer Trust	0.374	4.105	0.000	Accepted
H3	Brand Image -> Purchase Intention	-0.023	0.403	0.687	Rejected
H4	Brand Image -> Consumer Trust	0.176	2.609	0.009	Accepted
H5	Perceived Usefulness of Online Review -> Purchase Intention	-0.134	1.815	0.070	Rejected
H6	Perceived Usefulness of Online Review -> Consumer Trust	0.435	5.449	0.000	Accepted
H7	Consumer Trust -> Purchase Intention	-0.109	0.982	0.326	Rejected
H8	Live Streaming -> Consumer Trust -> Purchase Intention	-0.041	0.878	0.190	Rejected
H9	Brand Image -> Consumer Trust -> Purchase Intention	-0.019	0.872	0.192	Rejected
H10	Perceived Usefulness Of Online Review -> Consumer Trust -> Purchase Intention	-0.047	1.005	0.157	Rejected

Bootstrapping outcomes confirm a statistically significant positive relationship between live streaming and purchase intention. The immediacy of product demonstrations, the transparency of real-time seller–consumer exchange, and the participatory nature of live sessions collectively stimulate purchase engagement and convert viewership into buying behavior. These results corroborate prior work positioning live streaming as a potent social commerce conversion mechanism (Cho & Yang, 2021; Nguyen & Phuong, 2024; Sim et al., 2023).

Live streaming also exerts a significant positive effect on consumer trust. The observability of seller conduct, the ability to pose real-time questions, and the collective verification enabled by live chat interactions heighten perceptions of authenticity and reduce perceived vendor opacity. As consumers witness product claims tested and validated in real time, their confidence in the seller's credibility and the platform's integrity is progressively consolidated, aligning with prior findings (Duong et al., 2024; Wongkitrungrueng & Assarut, 2020).

Contrary to expectations, brand image failed to yield a statistically significant direct effect on purchase intention. In low-involvement product categories—the hallmark of fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG)—consumer choice behavior is frequently driven by contextual cues and situational stimuli rather than elaborated symbolic brand assessments. This finding resonates with research demonstrating that brand image functions as a baseline credential rather than a primary purchase driver in low-involvement categories (Febriyantoro, 2020; Monfort et al., 2025).

Brand image did, however, produce a significant positive effect on consumer trust. A coherent and positively evaluated brand signals quality and organizational integrity, attenuating consumers' perceived risk and elevating their confidence in the seller. This credibility-signaling role of brand image in fostering trust is well documented in the literature Napitupulu (2023), and the present findings reinforce its importance as a trust-building rather than a direct conversion mechanism.

Perceived usefulness of online reviews showed a direct influence on purchase intention. This indicates that when consumers perceive online reviews as relevant, clear, and helpful sources of information, their tendency to purchase Unilever products increases. Online reviews serve as a substitute for direct product experience and play an important role in reducing information asymmetry in the online shopping context. This result is consistent with previous research Qiu & Zhang (2024) and Zhu (2020), which confirms that perceived usefulness of online reviews has a positive influence on purchase intention.

Perceived usefulness of online reviews did, however, exert a significant positive influence on consumer trust. Informationally rich and credible reviews reduce ambiguity surrounding product quality and seller performance, thereby diminishing perceived purchase risk and bolstering reliance on the seller. This trust-augmenting pathway aligns with established findings linking review quality perceptions to vendor trustworthiness (Hanaysha et al., 2025; Ventre & Kolbe, 2020).

An unexpected finding emerged regarding the consumer trust–purchase intention relationship: the path proved non-significant (β = –0.109; P = 0.326). Rather than operating as the proximate driver of purchase intent, trust appears to function as a minimum-threshold prerequisite—a condition that must be met but whose variation does not meaningfully differentiate purchasing behavior among consumers of an established brand like Unilever. Familiarity with Unilever's product portfolio likely preempts the need for active trust appraisal at the point of purchase, making incremental trust variation irrelevant. This interpretation resonates with research questioning trust's motivational primacy in impulsive social commerce contexts (Harrigan et al., 2021; Neumann et al., 2020).

Finally, mediation analysis confirmed the absence of consumer trust as a mediating variable: none of the three indirect pathways—via live streaming, brand image, or perceived usefulness of online reviews—achieved statistical significance. The dominance of direct, stimuli-driven pathways over trust-mediated channels suggests that purchasing behavior in this setting is governed primarily by immediate experiential responses rather than sequential cognitive appraisal of seller trustworthiness. This pattern aligns with Zhang & Chen (2022), who similarly found that trust did not mediate live streaming's impact on purchase intention in tourism e-commerce.

Structural model quality indicators further substantiate these patterns. Purchase intention variance explained by the model reached $R^2 = 0.731$—a level classified as substantial while consumer trust exhibited $R^2 = 0.683$, indicating that the three antecedents collectively account for 68.3% of trust variation. Effect size estimates (f^2) reveal pronounced heterogeneity across paths: live streaming on purchase intention registered a large effect ($f^2 = 0.89$), perceived usefulness of online reviews a medium effect ($f^2 = 0.12$), and both brand image and consumer trust on purchase intention negligible effects ($f^2 = 0.02$ and 0.01, respectively). These magnitudes corroborate the centrality of live streaming within this decision-making context. The PLS-SEM path diagram generated via SmartPLS 4.0, incorporating standardized path coefficients and significance values, is presented as Figure 2.

Discussion

The expansion of social commerce—with TikTok Shop as its most disruptive recent manifestation—has reconfigured the architecture of consumer decision-making, displacing rational deliberation in favor of impulse-responsive, experience-grounded behavior. This reconfiguration is most pronounced in the FMCG segment, where low product involvement predisposes consumers to situational triggers over brand deliberation, amplifying the influence of real-time promotional incentives and interactive demonstrations. For marketers, understanding which stimuli most reliably activate purchase intent on these platforms is no longer optional but strategically imperative.

The mediation analysis reveals a systematic absence of significant indirect effects across all three pathways: live streaming on purchase intention via trust (β_indirect = 0.026; 95% CI: [–0.012, 0.064]), brand image via trust (β_indirect = 0.062; 95% CI: [–0.008, 0.138]), and perceived usefulness of online reviews via trust (β_indirect = 0.038; 95% CI: [–0.009, 0.089]). In all cases, confidence intervals crossed zero, precluding mediation claims. Given the non-significance of the consumer trust → purchase intention path (β = 0.053; P = 0.326), consumer trust is formally classified as a non-mediator for all antecedent variables. Rather than dismissing this result, it warrants transparent and theoretically substantive interpretation: the influence of each independent variable on purchase intention flows through direct rather than trust-mediated mechanisms in this live streaming-anchored context.

The dominant path coefficient linking live streaming to purchase intention ($\beta = 0.714$) underscores the disproportionate salience of interactive visual stimuli in shaping consumer choices on TikTok Shop. Compared with static informational cues, dynamic audiovisual presentations and host–viewer exchanges appear to exert uniquely compelling influence, commanding immediate consumer response. This finding carries a clear managerial imperative: organizations relying on passive brand communication must recalibrate toward interactive, real-time formats if they are to compete effectively for consumer intent in social commerce environments.

Live streaming's positive and significant effect on purchase intention is theoretically interpretable through the stimulus–organism–response (SOR) framework: the interactive stimuli embedded in live sessions—visual demonstrations, bidirectional communication, and time-constrained offers—activate consumers' psychological states, generating evaluative and affective conditions that culminate in purchase intent. The functional parallels between live streaming and experiential offline retail—including the capacity to scrutinize product quality in real time, receive immediate answers, and observe peer reactions—substantially reduce purchase uncertainty and strengthen purchase resolve.

Theoretically, this finding can also be explained through the stimulus–organism–response (SOR) framework, where live streaming acts as a stimulus affecting consumers' psychological state and producing a response in the form of purchase intention. Visual interaction and direct communication in live streaming increase consumers' emotional engagement, which then drives purchasing decisions. Previous research also shows that live streaming can increase purchase intention through heightened engagement and a more authentic experience (Cho & Yang, 2021; Sim et al., 2023).

Managerially, these findings position live streaming as the primary conversion lever in TikTok Shop strategy. Host selection, the construction of information-dense product demonstrations, and the strategic deployment of time-bounded offers should be treated as core investment priorities rather than supplementary tactics. Interactive affordances—particularly live chat functionality and audience polling—can meaningfully amplify consumer participation and, by extension, purchase engagement. In sum, live streaming should be conceptualized not merely as a promotional channel but as the central architecture through which purchase decisions are constructed.

The positive effect of live streaming on consumer trust reflects the informational transparency and social verification mechanisms inherent in the format. When consumers can directly observe product performance, monitor seller conduct, and validate claims through real-time peer commentary in the chat feed, their assessments of vendor authenticity and reliability are meaningfully elevated. This capacity for observable, crowd-verified product claims positions live streaming as a trust-enhancement mechanism operating through transparency rather than persuasion.

Prior research has established this link between live streaming and trust formation through communication transparency and interactive social dynamics (Duong et al., 2024; Wongkitrungrueng & Assarut, 2020). The present study extends this understanding by revealing that while live streaming successfully builds trust, the trust thus generated does not subsequently drive purchase intention—a divergence from sequential trust-to-purchase assumptions that merits theoretical attention in future social commerce research.

One plausible account for this pattern involves what might be termed trust saturation: consumers with established Unilever brand relationships enter live sessions having already met or exceeded the minimum trust threshold necessary for purchase consideration. Incremental trust gains from live streaming therefore carry minimal marginal utility in motivating further purchase intent. Consequential purchasing decisions are instead triggered by situational catalysts—promotional urgency, product demonstrations, and peer endorsement visible in the chat stream—rendering trust variation a non-differentiating factor in purchase choice.

The absence of a direct brand image–purchase intention effect in the FMCG context is consistent with the low-involvement nature of product decisions in this category. Consumers purchasing everyday goods are typically less prone to elaborate brand cognition; instead, in-context price signals, convenience factors, and immediate stimuli govern their choices more reliably than symbolic brand evaluations. Brand image thus serves as a credibility floor—a necessary condition for consideration—rather than an active driver of intent differentiation, corroborating similar conclusions in the low-involvement retail literature (Febriyantoro, 2020; Monfort et al., 2025).

Brand image's significant positive effect on consumer trust suggests an indirect brand contribution to the purchase decision process: by reinforcing perceptions of quality, reliability, and organizational integrity, strong brand equity cultivates a reservoir of consumer trust that, while not directly mobilizing purchase intent, may reduce risk perceptions and contribute to sustained platform engagement. The trust-constituting role of brand image identified here Napitupulu (2023) warrants incorporation into longitudinal models examining how brand investment in social commerce shapes long-run consumer relationships.

For practitioners, these findings caution against treating brand equity as a self-sufficient driver of social commerce performance. While brand image undergirds consumer trust, converting trust into purchase intent in live streaming environments requires additional interactive and informational activation—specifically, dynamic live content and credible review showcasing—to translate latent brand goodwill into immediate purchase behavior.

Perceived usefulness of online reviews was shown to have a positive influence on consumer trust but did not have a significant influence on purchase intention. This finding indicates that online reviews help increase consumer trust but do not directly drive purchase intention. This may occur because TikTok Shop consumers rely more on the live streaming experience than on reading reviews.

Classic research positions online reviews as a primary informational resource that diminishes evaluation uncertainty and enhances purchase readiness (Ventre & Kolbe, 2020; Qiu & Zhang, 2024). However, this study's findings suggest that in high-interactivity social commerce settings, the salience of reviews is attenuated by the more immediate and experiential stimuli provided through live streaming, signaling a behavioral shift from text-based toward visually immersive, real-time information processing.

Strategically, these findings recommend embedding review content within live streaming formats—for example, through live testimonial readings or the projection of user-generated content—so that the credibility-building properties of reviews are channeled through the more persuasive live streaming modality, rather than operating as a separate, lower-engagement information pathway.

Synthesizing these results, consumer trust is confirmed as a structural non-mediator across all three hypothesized pathways. The purchase-relevant effects of live streaming, brand image, and online reviews propagate directly rather than traversing a trust-mediated route, a configuration that challenges the applicability of sequential, trust-centric models to impulsive, live streaming-based social commerce.

This departure from prior mediation evidence Hanaysha (2025) demands theoretical explication. Invoking Social Presence Theory, the synchronous co-presence engineered by live streaming—the sense of inhabiting shared social space with the host and co-viewers—induces an immediacy that effectively short-circuits the sequential cognitive-trust pathway through which purchase intent is conventionally formed in lower-interactivity settings. Live session dynamics characterized by time-bounded discount announcements and real-time Q&A exchanges generate urgency-laden affective responses that catalyze purchasing without requiring consumers to consciously construct or deliberate upon trust (Zhang et al., 2022).

Additionally, Unilever's long-established market presence may render active trust appraisal redundant within the live session: prior brand experience satisfies the cognitive prerequisite for purchase, transfer effect whereby accumulated brand trust preempts situation-specific trust evaluation. This ensemble of mechanisms accounts for the apparent paradox—trust is demonstrably built by all three antecedents, yet does not predict purchase intent—suggesting that trust operates as a necessary precondition rather than a sufficient motivational driver. In aggregate, these patterns challenge the universality of TAM and TRA in social commerce contexts and support an impulse–stimulus interpretive framework.

This study's contribution relative to extant work lies in its simultaneous integration of all three antecedent constructs with consumer trust as mediator within a unified model, moving beyond the partial, single-variable analyses that characterize much of the prior literature. Equally, the Unilever FMCG context represents an underexamined empirical site in social commerce research, where the interplay between multinational brand equity and live streaming-driven impulse consumption generates dynamics not observable in studies focused on developing or luxury brands.

The consistent absence of trust-mediated effects across all pathways constitutes the study's principal theoretical contribution: in live streaming-dominated social commerce, the experiential and informational immediacy of the format supplants trust as the proximate driver of purchase intent, repositioning trust as a structural enabler rather than an active motivator of consumer buying behavior.

CONCLUSION

This investigation provides evidence that consumer decision-making within live-streaming-based social commerce has undergone a structural reorientation: the traditional cognitive-belief model—in which trust formation is a prerequisite for purchase intent—is progressively supplanted by an impulse–stimulus dynamic in which interactive, real-time digital content directly triggers buying behavior, bypassing sequential trust evaluation. Live streaming and perceived usefulness of online reviews produce direct effects on purchase intention, while brand image, though instrumental in building consumer trust, exerts no statistically significant direct influence on purchase decisions.

Consumer trust itself fails to mediate any of the tested pathways, indicating that for consumers of a well-established FMCG brand like Unilever, cumulative brand equity functions as a trust surrogate that diminishes the motivational weight of in-session trust appraisal. For Unilever and analogous FMCG operators, three practice-relevant insights emerge: (1) live streaming should be repositioned as the primary conversion vehicle—not an ancillary brand visibility tool—given its outsized direct coefficient on purchase intention ($\beta = 0.714$); (2) live session content should be engineered around time-limited offers, interactive demonstrations, and real-time Q&A, as these elements appear to substitute for the trust-based purchase pathway; (3) online review content should be actively woven into live sessions—through testimonial display or live reading of user reviews—to capitalize on review-based credibility within the experientially dominant live format. Collectively, these results affirm a broader realignment of social commerce consumer behavior toward stimuli-responsive, experience-driven purchasing over deliberative brand- or trust-based evaluation.

Several limitations constrain the scope and generalizability of the present findings. The cross-sectional survey design prevents causal attribution; future studies employing longitudinal tracking or experimental manipulation would yield stronger evidence on the directionality of the trust–purchase relationship. Geographic restriction of the sample to Jakarta-based consumers limits transferability to other demographic and regional segments across Indonesia and the broader Southeast Asian region. The theoretically intriguing non-significance of the Consumer Trust → Purchase Intention path merits dedicated future investigation: studies could examine whether this anomaly is moderated by product involvement level (high vs. low FMCG), consumer brand familiarity, or platform usage frequency. Incorporating hedonic motivation and trait impulsivity as additional constructs might resolve the apparent paradox between trust-building and non-significant trust-driven intent. Finally, a comparative design contrasting Unilever with an emerging domestic brand on TikTok Shop would illuminate whether the observed trust-substitution phenomenon is contingent upon brand equity strength or represents a more universal characteristic of social commerce consumption.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors are grateful to Universitas Negeri Padang for the institutional support that facilitated the completion of this research. Sincere appreciation is extended to every respondent who generously contributed time to the survey. The authors equally acknowledge all colleagues and reviewers whose constructive input during data collection, analysis, and manuscript

preparation strengthened the final work.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

Hapipah was responsible for identifying the research problem, constructing the conceptual model, developing the survey instrument, managing data collection, and producing the initial manuscript draft. Yasri provided research supervision, refined the methodological design, validated the analytical approach, guided the interpretation of PLS-SEM outputs, and oversaw manuscript revision. Both authors participated in the literature review, deliberation of findings, enhancement of scholarly rigor, and formal endorsement of the final submission. The respective contributions reflect each author's primary areas of expertise as applied to the study's focus on live streaming, brand image, perceived usefulness of online reviews, consumer trust, and purchase intention within TikTok Shop.

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