

The Role Of Tiktok Promotion And Influencer Marketing In Consumer Purchase Decisions

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Abstract—The rapid development of digital technology has transformed marketing from traditional channels to dynamic, algorithm-driven social media platforms (Islam & Sheikh, 2024). While preliminary research acknowledges the separate impacts of TikTok and influencer marketing, a significant gap remains regarding their integrated synthesis within the consumer decision-making process (Leung et al., 2022). This study aims to analyze the collaborative roles of TikTok promotions and influencer marketing using an advanced qualitative narrative literature review framework (Snyder, 2019). Analyzing peer-reviewed literature published between 2020 and 2026, the study moves beyond generic definitions (Gui et al., 2025). The findings indicate that TikTok's interest-graph algorithm acts as a visibility engine that builds immediate brand awareness, while influencer credibility functions as a crucial risk-mitigation tool that establishes trust (Wang & Gu, 2024; Prasetyo & Sobari, 2024). The integration of these two mechanisms systematically compresses the consumer journey from information search to native transaction conversion (Liu, 2025). This research provides a new conceptual framework for social commerce literature and actionable strategies for contemporary digital businesses (Chen et al., 2024).

Keywords: TikTok, Influencer Marketing; Purchasing Decisions; Digital Framework; Social Commerce Synthesis

1. INTRODUCTION

The modern digital landscape has driven a significant paradigm shift in marketing communication (Islam & Sheikh, 2024). Traditional one-way communication models using conventional media like television and print are increasingly ineffective in hyper-connected consumer environments (Smith, 2021). Contemporary market spaces require interactive, agile communication patterns where brand messaging is delivered directly through internet infrastructure and social networks (Leung et al., 2022). This change aligns with the pervasive growth of social commerce platforms that serve as key spaces for commercial validation and consumer interaction (Wang & Gu, 2024). Within this digital ecosystem, short-form video applications particularly TikTok have emerged as major drivers of changing consumer behaviors (Kapoor et al., 2023). Unlike legacy platforms that rely on established follower graphs, TikTok uses an interest-graph distribution system known as the For You Page (FYP) algorithm (Wang & Gu, 2024).

This engine distributes content based on immediate video engagement metrics, such as watch-time completion and interaction loops, rather than historical profile authority (Syafriani & Hidayah, 2025). This algorithmic approach offers unique opportunities for both large brands and Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) to generate immediate brand awareness at scale (Afriansyah et al., 2024). Concurrently, corporate product pitches have increasingly given way to peer-to-peer recommendations via influencer marketing (Campbell & Farrell, 2020). Influencers content creators who command niche authority and perceived authenticity serve as vital mediators between brands and consumers (Haenlein et al., 2020). In modern markets characterized by choice overload and information asymmetry, consumers often face heightened purchase anxiety (Chen et al., 2024). Influencer endorsement helps mitigate these psychological barriers by turning commercial messages into personalized peer advice, effectively transferring creator trust to the brand ecosystem (Prasetyo & Sobari, 2024).

While empirical studies have separately correlated TikTok promotions and influencer credibility with positive consumer purchase intentions, a critical research gap persists (Khoirunnisa et al., 2024). Most current literature treats these strategies as isolated variables, missing the compounding interactions that occur when influencer campaigns run through TikTok's non-linear algorithm (Syafriani & Hidayah, 2025). Furthermore, many studies still focus on older platforms like Instagram or rely on rigid textbooks, leaving TikTok's specific dynamics under-theorized (Yuandira & Nawawi, 2025).

Based on a comprehensive synthesis of contemporary literature spanning 2020 to 2026, three critical research gaps have been identified. The first gap is the structural isolation gap, where most existing empirical studies investigate the promotional impact of TikTok content formats and the persuasive dynamics of influencer credibility as isolated, independent variables (Khoirunnisa et al., 2024; Mien et al., 2025). Consequently, there is a severe shortage of academic literature that synthesizes how these two distinct mechanisms dynamically interact and compound when deployed simultaneously within a single social commerce ecosystem (Syafriani & Hidayah, 2025).

The second gap is the algorithmic under-theorization gap, because while traditional source credibility models have been heavily mapped across legacy social networks like Instagram and YouTube, the specific operational boundaries of creator trust when accelerated by TikTok's decentralized interest-graph algorithm remain highly under-theorized (Wang & Gu, 2024; Prasetyo & Sobari, 2024). The third gap is the methodological rigor gap, where the majority of existing literature regarding TikTok social commerce relies heavily on narrow, quantitative cross-sectional surveys that capture consumer behavior only at a single point in time (Nguyen, 2024; Romanisti et al., 2024). There is a distinct lack of

qualitative, integrated conceptual frameworks capable of mapping the entire, compressed consumer decision-making journey resolving cross-investigator inconsistencies such as the over-commercialization backlash and the micro-influencer paradox (Snyder, 2019; Gui et al., 2025).

To directly address the conceptual and methodological limitations identified in the existing literature, this study is designed to achieve four specific research objectives. The first objective is to analyze algorithmic discovery mechanisms to systematically evaluate and explain how TikTok's interest-graph algorithm alters traditional consumer exposure and to differentiate between raw platform exposure and meaningful, active organic consumer engagement (Wang & Gu, 2024).

The second objective is to deconstruct digital trust frameworks to break down the core pillars of influencer credibility within high-velocity digital markets and identify how specific factors particularly niche alignment help mitigate perceived financial and transactional risks for consumers (Campbell & Farrell, 2020; Prasetyo & Sobari, 2024). The third objective is to develop an integrated conversion model to formulate the Algorithmic-Credibility Integration Model (ACIM), providing a clear conceptual framework that maps how platform mechanics and human persuasion collaborate to guide consumers through every compressed stage of the social commerce purchase journey (Liu, 2025). The fourth objective is to resolve empirical inconsistencies to critically analyze and resolve conflicting cross-investigator findings regarding creator scale and promotional frequency, offering explicit theoretical updates and practical strategic roadmaps for modern digital enterprises and MSMEs (Gui et al., 2025). The urgency of this research lies in its potential to provide definitive theoretical and strategic clarity in an era of rapid digital disruption.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

2.1 Basic Research Framework

This study uses an advanced qualitative narrative literature review methodology to systematically evaluate, synthesize, and conceptualize empirical data published between 2020 and 2026 (Snyder, 2019). This method focuses on mapping conceptual linkages and resolving analytical conflicts across diverse national and international datasets, rather than simply presenting descriptive summaries (Gui et al., 2025). The literature search was conducted using Google Scholar as the primary database, cross-referencing with open-access scientific repositories (Snyder, 2019).

The literature search was conducted systematically using Google Scholar, Scopus, ScienceDirect, and other reputable scientific databases. The search process employed Boolean operators to combine keywords such as "*TikTok marketing*" OR "*TikTok promotion*", "*influencer marketing*" OR "*creator credibility*", and "*purchase decision*" OR "*consumer buying decision*". Only articles published between 2020 and 2026 in peer-reviewed journals were included in this review.

The collected literature was screened based on relevance to the research objectives, publication year, methodological quality, and accessibility of the full text. Articles that did not specifically discuss TikTok promotion, influencer marketing, or consumer purchase decisions were excluded. The selected studies were then analyzed using a qualitative content analysis approach to identify recurring themes, conceptual relationships, and research findings. This synthesis provides a comprehensive understanding of how TikTok promotional strategies and influencer marketing contribute to consumer purchase decisions.

2.2 Data Analysis Technique

This study employed qualitative content analysis to synthesize findings from previous studies. The analysis focused on identifying common themes related to TikTok social media promotion, influencer marketing, consumer trust, purchase intention, and purchase decisions. The findings from each selected article were compared, categorized, and interpreted to develop a comprehensive explanation of the relationships among these variables. Through this analytical process, the study provides an integrated understanding of the role of TikTok promotion and influencer marketing in influencing consumer purchasing behavior.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Algorithmic Exposure vs Organic Engagement on TikTok

The synthesis of recent literature demonstrates that TikTok's interest-graph algorithm radically redefines brand exposure (Wang & Gu, 2024). Traditional marketing models require long-term capital to build an initial follower base before achieving meaningful reach (Leung et al., 2022). In contrast, TikTok's predictive scoring system pushes content to micro-test audiences based on immediate interaction metrics like watch-time and completion rates, making visibility dependent on content quality rather than brand history (Syafriani & Hidayah, 2025). However, the empirical data shows a complex relationship between raw exposure and actual conversion (Kapoor et al., 2023).

High algorithmic distribution on the FYP often induces passive scrolling, where consumers view content momentarily without deep cognitive retention (Islam & Sheikh, 2024). To overcome this barrier, promotional campaigns must shift from basic sales pitches to highly interactive formats, including hashtag challenges and real-time live streams

(Afriansyah et al., 2024). These interactive elements transform passive viewers into active participants, generating higher psychological ownership and translating algorithmic reach into clear purchase intentions (Mien et al., 2025)

3.2 The Deconstructing Influencer Credibility in Social Commerce

Influencer marketing acts as a vital trust-building anchor that bridges the gap between algorithmic visibility and behavioral conversion (Prasetyo & Sobari, 2024). In digital market spaces filled with unstructured promotional messages, consumers face high information fatigue and elevated risk perceptions (Chen et al., 2024). Deconstructing influencer credibility reveals that its persuasive power relies on four core pillars: source trustworthiness, perceived expertise, social attractiveness, and niche alignment (Campbell & Farrell, 2020).

Among these pillars, niche alignment the specific match between a creator's identity and the endorsed product category is essential for preserving authenticity (Haenlein et al., 2020). When there is high niche alignment, the promotion is perceived as a genuine recommendation rather than paid corporate messaging (Nguyen, 2024). This perception lowers consumer defense mechanisms, reduces perceived purchase anxiety, and guides the consumer through the crucial trust-building phases necessary for transaction validation (Liu, 2025).

3.3 Integration The Synthesis Framework: Algorithmic-Credibility Integration model (ACIM)

To fully understand modern social commerce, we must analyze how platform mechanics and creator influence function as an integrated system (Syafriani & Hidayah, 2025). This study introduces the Algorithmic-Credibility Integration Model (ACIM) to map this collaborative process across the complete consumer decision-making journey, which is fully systematically outlined in Table 1 (Liu, 2025).

Table 1. Algorithmic-Credibility Integration Model Framework

Consumer Journey Stage	TikTok Algorithmic Role	Influencer Credibility Role	Integrated Outcome
Need Recognition	Mass FYP distribution based on user profiles (Wang & Gu, 2024).	Relatable storytelling highlighting everyday problems (Campbell & Farrell, 2020).	Triggers latent user needs and builds immediate awareness (Afriansyah et al., 2024).
Information Search	Algorithmic ranking of relevant search terms (Kapoor et al., 2023).	Detailed, authentic product unboxings and demonstrations (Prasetyo & Sobari, 2024).	Reduces search costs and provides trusted initial data (Khoirunnisa et al., 2024)
Alternative Evaluation	Aggregates community feedback in comments (Leung et al., 2022).	Transparent comparisons of product pros and cons (Chen et al., 2024).	Validates quality through social proof and expert backing (Romanisti et al., 2024).
Purchase Decision	Seamless native checkout via built-in shopping tools (Wang & Gu, 2024).	Urgent calls-to-action during interactive live streams (Nguyen, 2024).	Minimizes transaction friction and drives impulse buying (Mien et al., 2025).
Post-Purchase Behavior	Encourages loop sharing and organic content loops (Syafriani & Hidayah, 2025).	Maintains community dialogue and ongoing follower reassurance (Haenlein et al., 2020).	Amplifies positive e-WOM and drives long-term brand loyalty (Yuandira & Nawawi, 2025).

Within this integrated model detailed in Table 1, the TikTok platform serves as an exponential visibility amplifier (Wang & Gu, 2024). When an influencer shares a creative product review, the algorithm pushes that content far beyond their existing follower graph, capturing targeted new demographics (Syafriani & Hidayah, 2025). As reach expands, the influencer's credibility acts as a tool for building trust, converting algorithmic views into verified transactions (Prasetyo & Sobari, 2024). By combining broad digital reach with deep psychological trust, this integration compresses the consumer journey and maximizes marketing performance (Liu, 2025)

3.4 Critical Resolution of Cross-Investigator Contradictions

A key requirement for a literature synthesis is identifying and resolving conflicting findings (Snyder, 2019). While many studies indicate a direct, positive correlation between influencer recommendations and purchase intent, a significant body of conflicting evidence highlights clear boundaries to this effect, centering on the Over-Commercialization Backlash and the Micro-Influencer Paradox (Gui et al., 2025).

The Over-Commercialization Backlash occurs when an influencer promotes too many competing brands, leading to promotional fatigue among followers (Gui et al., 2024). As commercial saturation increases, perceived authenticity drops sharply, causing audiences to view recommendations as profit-driven transactions rather than genuine advice (Chen et al., 2024). The Micro-Influencer Paradox helps resolve this tension (Haenlein et al., 2020). Data reveals that while mega-influencers provide immense top-of-funnel reach, micro-influencers consistently generate higher conversion rates (Kapoor et al., 2023).

This higher performance is driven by their deeper relational proximity, localized authority, and stronger community trust (Prasetyo & Sobari, 2024). This synthesis demonstrates that influencer success is not a linear function

of follower scale, but is highly dependent on preserving content authenticity and selecting the correct creator tier to match campaign goals (Liu, 2025).

3.5 Theoretical and Practical Implications

The ACIM framework advances social commerce literature by demonstrating the dynamic interaction between digital platform mechanics and human persuasion (Liu, 2025). It challenges traditional, linear consumer models by showing how algorithm-driven social spaces compress the time between discovery and purchase (Wang & Gu, 2024). Additionally, it provides a fresh perspective on Source Credibility Theory, proving that content authenticity and precise niche alignment are far more powerful drivers of consumer conversion than traditional, high-status celebrity status (Campbell & Farrell, 2020; Prasetyo & Sobari, 2024).

Practically, brands must look beyond basic follower counts and prioritize creators based on verified audience engagement rates and niche relevance (Haenlein et al., 2020). Campaigns should avoid rigid corporate scripts, empowering influencers to co-create native content that aligns with organic TikTok trends to maximize FYP reach (Syafriani & Hidayah, 2025). Furthermore, management must optimize campaign frequency to prevent audience fatigue, combining macro-influencer reach with micro-influencer trust-building initiatives (Kapoor et al., 2023). Finally, maintaining clear sponsorship disclosures preserves long-term creator credibility and satisfies consumer demands for digital transparency (Gui et al., 2024)

4. CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this study delivers a comprehensive conceptual synthesis explaining how TikTok promotions and influencer marketing interact to drive consumer purchase decisions (Liu, 2025). The analysis proves that TikTok's decentralized interest-graph algorithm acts as a powerful visibility engine, while influencer credibility provides the essential trust-building framework needed to turn digital views into verified commercial transactions (Wang & Gu, 2024; Prasetyo & Sobari, 2024). By integrating these insights into the Algorithmic-Credibility Integration Model (ACIM), this paper maps out how these distinct forces work together across every stage of the compressed modern consumer journey (Liu, 2025). It resolves key conflicts in current research by demonstrating that content authenticity and precise niche alignment are far more important for driving conversion than simple follower scale (Gui et al., 2025). The major limitation of this research stems from its reliance on qualitative secondary synthesis, which leaves the structural links within the framework untested across highly volatile micro-market variations. Future research should use empirical mixed-method designs to test these relationships across varying product categories and global cultural markets, ensuring marketing frameworks continue to evolve alongside rapidly changing digital ecosystems (Chen et al., 2024).

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