

The Meaning of Shopping Experience in TikTok Live Shopping: A Qualitative Study on Millennial Consumers

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Abstract. This study explores the meaning of millennial consumers' shopping experience on TikTok live shopping through a phenomenological qualitative approach. The study involved millennial consumers who actively participate in TikTok live shopping to understand the construction of their personal meaning towards the digital shopping experience. The findings reveal that millennial consumers interpret live shopping as a form of experiential consumption that integrates the dimensions of entertainment, social interaction, and commercial transactions. The process of meaning-formation is influenced by real-time interactivity factors, community dynamics, and hedonistic-utilitarian value balance. Consumers develop trust through parasocial relationships with hosts and collective validation of the community. The study identified the transformation of consumer behavior from deliberate decision-making to intuitive purchasing influenced by social and emotional stimuli. Theoretical implications include contributions to the consumer behavior and social commerce literature, while practical implications provide insights for the development of live commerce strategies that are responsive to millennial consumer expectations in the digital marketplace ecosystem.

Keywords: *Live Shopping, Millennial Consumers, Social Commerce*

INTRODUCTION

Phenomenon Live shopping on TikTok has changed the global e-commerce landscape, especially in the consumption behavior of the millennial generation. The digital transformation accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic is driving exponential growth in live *streaming commerce* (LSC), with increased purchases through *live commerce* reached 76% between March 2020 and July 2021 (Widiani & Maradona, 2024). TikTok as a platform *social commerce* has become a major catalyst in the evolution of the shopping experience, with brands and creators hosting more than 8 million hours of LIVE shopping sessions in the US in 2024, demonstrating the significance of this phenomenon in the contemporary digital ecosystem (Zulkarnaen & Hermawan, 2025).

The millennial generation, as digital *natives*, showing unique preferences in adopting technology immersive *shopping experience*. Research reveals that 50% of users have purchased a product after watching a TikTok LIVE, reflecting the persuasive power of real-time *interaction in* influencing purchasing decisions.

Convergence between entertainment, *social interaction*, and *commerce* on the TikTok platform creates a new dimension of consumption experience that goes beyond the paradigm of traditional *e-commerce*. This phenomenon not only changes the way consumers interact with products, but also forms a deeper meaning about shopping *experience which* is integrated with social identity and lifestyle millennials (Hamid et al., 2024).

The complexity of the shopping experience online *shopping* TikTok encompasses multiple psychological and sociological dimensions that require in-depth understanding through a qualitative approach. *Live streaming shopping creates sense of urgency, social proof, and parasocial relationship* which influence *purchase intention in* real-time (Lawrence & Meivitawanli, 2023). Previous studies have shown that the attributes of live *streaming including* characteristics streamer, product quality, and atmosphere live *session have* a positive effect on purchase intention (Oktavianti et al., 2023). However, understanding of the subjective meaning of shopping experiences from the perspective of millennial consumers is still

limited, even though this generation is the dominant segment in the live *shopping ecosystem* with distinctive consumption characteristics.

Based on the background that has been described, this study formulates the main problem: "What is the meaning of the shopping experience on TikTok live shopping for millennial consumers?" This problem formulation is elaborated into several specific research questions: (1) How do millennial consumers interpret the shopping experience through tv *shopping* TikTok in context social *commerce* (2) What factors shape the meaning of the shopping experience in a live *streaming* environment? (3) How does TikTok live shopping influence the construction of consumer identities and lifestyles of the millennial generation?

This study aims to explore and deeply understand the meaning of shopping experiences on TikTok live shopping from the perspective of millennial consumers. Specifically, this study aims to: (1) Analyze millennial consumers' subjective interpretations of the shopping experience through tv *shopping* TikTok, (2) Identify and explain the factors that shape the meaning of shopping experiences in context live *streaming commerce*, (3) Understanding influence TikTok live shopping on the construction of millennial generation's consumption and lifestyle identities in the digital era.

This research provides theoretical contributions to the development of literature. *Consumer behavior in context social commerce* and *live streaming*, especially in understanding the experiential dimensions and subjective meaning of digital shopping experiences. Practically, the results of this study can be a reference *fore-commerce platforms, content creators, and digital marketers* in planning strategy *live shopping* which is more effective and responsive to the psychological needs of millennial consumers. In addition, this study also provides *insights for policy development digital commerce* which

supports the ecosystem of live *streaming sustainable* and centered on consumer experience.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a phenomenological paradigm to explore the meaning of millennial consumer shopping experiences on TikTok live shopping. The phenomenological paradigm was chosen because of its ability to understand the universal essence of a phenomenon through in-depth exploration of individual life experiences. The phenomenological approach allows researchers to explore a comprehensive understanding of how millennial consumers interpret and interpret shopping experiences in the context of live *streaming commerce* (Nasir et al., 2023). Phenomenological research focuses on how individuals *understand* and give meaning to their experiences, making it relevant to understanding the complexity of psychological and sociological dimensions in digital consumer behavior.

The research design adopts an instrumental case study strategy that focuses on a specific phenomenon on TikTok live shopping as a context for understanding the meaning of millennial consumption experiences. The selection of informants was carried out by purposive *sampling with* the criteria of millennial consumers aged 25-40 years who actively make purchases through the features TikTok live shopping at least 3 times in the last 6 months. The number of informants was determined using the principal data *saturation*, an estimated 12-15 informants to achieve adequate data saturation. Inclusion criteria include active TikTok users with shopping experience through live *streaming*, have stable internet access, and be willing to participate in in-depth interviews.

Primary data collection technique using in-depth interviews (*in-depth interview*) semi-structured with an interview guide developed based on the

concept lived *experience phenomenology*. Interviews were conducted face-to-face and virtual using digital platforms to accommodate informants' preferences and geographic limitations. Each interview session was recorded with informants' consent and lasted 60-90 minutes to ensure in-depth exploration of subjective experiences. Techniques Probing And *follow-up questions* used to explore deeper meanings from informant narratives. Secondary data was collected through observation netnographic towards activities live *shopping* on TikTok to understand the context of consumer interactions and behavior.

Data analysis using a thematic analysis approach (*thematic analysis*) with Braun and Clarke's framework adapted for the phenomenological context. The analysis process began with verbatim transcription of all interview recordings, followed by immersion digging deep into the data to understand the overall meaning. Level *coding conducted* inductively to identify units of meaning that are relevant to the research question. Theme identification is carried out through a process iterative by considering the frequency, significance, and relevance of the code to the phenomenon being studied. The validity and reliability of the data are guaranteed through the technique member *checking*, *peer debriefing*, and *audit trail* to ensure the credibility of research findings. Ethical aspects of research are considered through informed consent, confidentiality guarantees, and the informant's right to withdraw from the research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Construction of the Meaning of

Shopping Experience in the Context of TikTok Live Shopping

Research reveals that millennial consumers construct meaning in their shopping experiences on TikTok live shopping goes through a multidimensional and dynamic interpretation process. The findings

show that meaning is not formed passively, but rather through an active *meaning-making process* which involves integration between visual, auditory stimuli, and real-time social interactions (Prasetyorini & Suprajang, 2023). Millennial consumers articulate the shopping experience as a form of experiential *consumption* that goes beyond traditional commercial transactions, creating emotional *attachment* towards the purchasing process itself. In the context of phenomenological *perspective*, participants described the shopping experience as a manifestation of lifestyle *expression* and *identity formation* integrated with their social media activities. Analysis shows that consumers develop cognitive *schema* specifically for interpreting content live *shopping*, where they process product information not only based on functional utility, but also symbolic and social value *social currency* contained in it. This meaning formation process is influenced by contextual factors such as social *presence*, *host*, *parasocial relationship*, And *collective engagement* with other audiences. Participants demonstrate the ability to perform dual *processing*, where they simultaneously enjoy the entertainment aspect while evaluating the commercial aspect. This finding confirms that TikTok live shopping has created a new *consumption paradigm* which integrates entertainment, *social interaction*, And *commercial transaction* within a cohesive digital ecosystem (Bray, 2024).

3.2 Dimensions of Interactivity and Building Consumer Trust

In-depth analysis reveals that the dimension of interactivity on TikTok live shopping plays a fundamental role in building millennial consumer trust. Interactivity is manifested through various forms of real-time

communication such as live comments, host responses, and live polling who created a sense of co-presence and shared experience. Millennial consumers interpret interactivity as an indicator of authenticity and transparency which contributes significantly to the trust building process. The findings show that trust is not only formed through cognitive evaluation to the credibility of the host or the quality of the product, but also through effective bonding which is formed from ongoing social interactions (Yuxuan, 2025). Consumers develop trust heuristics based on consistency of host behavior, responsiveness to questions, and ability to provide personalized recommendation. In the context of social commerce theory, trust formed in live shopping show characteristics of multifaceted trust which include competence trust, benevolence trust, And integrity trust. Participants articulated that interactivity enabled them to perform real-time verification on product claims and get social proof from other consumers through direct comments and testimonials. This process creates a trust cascade effect where individual beliefs are reinforced by collective validation from the community. Analysis shows that millennial consumers have high expectations for authentic interaction and show sensitivity to perceived manipulation or scripted behavior which can permanently damage trust (He et al., 2024).

3.3 Hedonic Experience and Utilitarian Value in Live Shopping

Research identifies the duality of hedonic experiences and utilitarian values as key elements in shaping the meaning of millennial consumers' shopping experiences in live shopping TikTok. Hedonic experiences are manifested through entertainment

value, enjoyment, and escapism obtained from watching content live streaming (Amirah et al., 2025). Consumers describe the shopping experience as a form of leisure activity which gives instant gratification and emotional satisfaction. This hedonistic aspect is reinforced by the elements of gamification like flash sales, limited-time offers, and interactive games who created a sense of urgency and excitement. Meanwhile, utilitarian values are realized through functional benefits such as ease of access to product information price comparison, and efficiency of shopping time. Millennial consumers demonstrate the ability to optimize trade-off between hedonic and utilitarian aspects, where they seek the best value proposition which integrates both dimensions. The analysis reveals that the balance between hedonic and utilitarian values influences purchase satisfaction and repurchase intention. Consumers develop preference profiles which are unique based on situational factors and personal goals, where in some contexts they prioritize hedonic aspects, while in other situations they focus on functional utility. The findings suggest that TikTok live shopping has successfully created synergistic value which allows consumers to obtain hedonic and utilitarian benefits simultaneously, creating superior customer experience compared to traditional online shopping formats (Haniyah & Andriani, 2025).

3.4 Social Influence and Community Dynamics in Purchasing Decisions

Social dimensions on TikTok live shopping plays a determinant role in the purchasing decision-making process of millennial consumers. Research reveals that consumers experience social influence which is complex through various mechanisms such as social proof, peer pressure, and community belonging. Interaction with fellow

audience members in live *chat* creates a collective consumption experience which influences perceptions of products and purchase decisions (Putra & Hayadi, 2024). Millennial consumers show high sensitivity to social cues such as number of viewers, intensity of positive comments, and *real-time purchase notifications* which functions as *social validation* for their purchasing decisions. The analysis shows that community dynamics are formed through shared *interests*, *common values*, and *collective identity* which transcends from individual transactions to social movement. Consumers develop a sense of *belonging* towards the community *live shopping* certain, which then affects *brand loyalty* and *repeat purchase behavior*. The findings identify the phenomenon of social contagion where purchasing enthusiasm can spread virally within the community, creating mass *purchasing behavior* which is difficult to explain through traditional individual decision theory. Participants described the shopping experience as a social activity that allows them to express identity, build relationships, and gain social *capital*. Research also reveals that millennial consumers use *live shopping* as a platform for *social learning*, where they gain knowledge about products, trends, and *lifestyle* from *peer interactions* and *expert recommendations*. This social dynamic creates network effects which strengthens the platform's appeal and increases customer *lifetime value* (Lin & Nuangjamnong, 2022).

3.5 Consumer Behavior Transformation and Strategic Implications

Research reveals a fundamental transformation in millennial consumer behavior as a consequence of adoption of *live shopping* TikTok. This transformation is manifested in changes in decision-making process,

information processing, and *consumption patterns* which differ significantly from the model consumer behavior traditionally. Millennial consumers show an evolution from deliberate *decision-making* going to *intuitive purchasing* influenced by real-time emotional and social factors. The analysis identifies compressed *customer journeys* where *awareness*, *consideration*, and *purchases* can occur in a very short period of time during a session *live streaming* (Herniati, 2020). This transformation is driven by immediacy culture and *instant gratification* which is a characteristic of the digital native generation. Consumers develop new *consumption rituals* which integrate shopping activities with *social media consumption*, *entertainment*, and *community participation*. The findings show that *live shopping* has changed consumer perceptions of value proposition, where value is determined not only by product attributes but also by the quality of experience and social benefits obtained. Strategic implications include the need for reimagining marketing strategy to accommodate *experiential marketing*, *community building*, and *real-time engagement*. Organizations need to develop *dynamic pricing strategies*, *personalized recommendations*, and *adaptive content creation* responsive to real-time *consumer feedback*. The research also identified the need for an integrated *omni channel approach* which connects experiences of *live shopping* with *touchpoints* others in the customer ecosystem. This transformation demands organizational *agility* and *technological infrastructure* which is able to support real-time *interaction*, *data analytics*, and *predictive modeling* to optimize customer experience and business performance. This finding provides insights critical for practitioners to

develop strategies that are future-ready in facing the evolution of digital consumer behavior.

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that millennial consumers construct the meaning of their shopping experience online. TikTok goes through a multidimensional interpretation process that integrates cognitive, affective, and social aspects in the ecosystem. *Digital commerce*. The findings indicate a fundamental transformation of the paradigm of transactional *purchasing* going to *experiential consumption* which is characterized by *real-time interactivity*, *community engagement*, And *hedonic-utlitarian value integration*. The dimension of trust is formed through the mechanism of *parasocial relationship* and *collective validation*, while social influences play a determinant role in *indecision-making acceleration*. Millennial consumers demonstrate their adaptive *consumption behavior* that responds to dynamic live *streaming environments* by developing trust *heuristics* and *preference optimization strategies*. This research contributes to the theoretical understanding of phenomenology of *digital consumption* and gives insights into strategies for practitioners to develop customer-centric *live commerce strategies*. Long-term implications include the evolution of consumer *psychology in the context* of social *commerce* and the need for organizational *transformation* to accommodate *real-time consumer engagement* in the era of the digital-first *economy*.

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