

Research on the Influence of Peer Interaction on the Online Shopping Intentions of Generation Z in Vietnam: A Case Study of the TikTok Platform

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Abstract

This study examines the impact of TikTok peer communication on online shopping intention among Vietnamese Generation Z consumers with prior TikTok shopping experience. In the context of rapid digitalization and the growth of social commerce, TikTok has become a key platform where Gen Z consumers access information, interact with peers, and engage in purchasing activities. Grounded in the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), this study proposes a research model incorporating mediating and moderating mechanisms, in which perceived brand quality and online shopping attitude act as mediators, and privacy concern serves as a moderator. Data were collected from 556 Vietnamese Gen Z respondents using a structured questionnaire and analyzed with SPSS and AMOS through reliability testing, exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis, and structural equation modeling. The findings reveal that TikTok peer communication significantly enhances perceived brand quality and online shopping attitude, both of which mediate its effect on online shopping intention. In addition, privacy concern significantly moderates the relationships between perceived brand quality, attitude, and purchase intention. These results provide important insights into Gen Z consumer behavior in TikTok-based social commerce and offer practical implications for platform operators and marketers.

Keywords

Peer Communication; Online Shopping Intention; Perceived Brand Quality; Attitude; Privacy Concerns; Generation Z.

1. Introduction

Social media platforms have become integral to daily life and business, reshaping communication through networked interactions (Martínez-Navarro and Bigné, 2017; Zhang and Daugherty, 2009; Wang et al., 2012; Shanahan et al., 2019). This development fosters social media peer communication (SMPC), where individuals rely on peer influence for marketplace decisions (Berthon et al., 2012). In Vietnam, e-commerce has rapidly expanded, with over 8 million new digital consumers since COVID-19 (Google and Temasek, 2021). Generation Z (1997–2012), accounting for over 20.4 million people, plays a central role in this transformation (Dimock, 2019; General Statistics Office, 2020; Dreamplex and Decision Lab, 2020). Among social media platforms, TikTok has emerged as a dominant channel for Gen Z, where peer communication strongly influences product discovery and purchase intentions (Jiang, 2019; Bhandari and Bimo, 2022; Kemp, 2023; Ahmed, 2021; Phan and Nguyen, 2024). Although SMPC has been linked to consumer behavior (Wang et al., 2012), its impact on online shopping intention (OSI) among Gen Z in e-commerce remains underexplored. As digital natives, Gen Z demonstrates strong engagement, hedonic motivations, and responsiveness to social commerce (Le et al., 2022). On TikTok, interactive features such as comments, live

streams, and viral content continuously shape brand perceptions. In this context, perceived brand quality (PBQ) influences satisfaction and loyalty (Calvo-Porrall and Lévy-Mangin, 2017; Konuk, 2018; Zeithaml et al., 1996), while perceived social value (PSV) enhances engagement through social approval and belonging (Chen and Chang, 2008; Ebrahim et al., 2016). However, the sequential mediation of PBQ and PSV between SMPC and OSI remains unclear. To explain these relationships, the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) provides a useful theoretical foundation by linking external variables to attitudes and behavioral intentions (Davis, 1989), and has been widely applied in e-commerce contexts (Klein, 1998; Liang and Huang, 1998; Eastlick, 1996; Shim et al., 2001). Extended studies suggest that SMPC enhances perceived value and trust (Sheridan, 2009; Nguyen, 2024), yet its application to complex mediation chains in social commerce remains limited. At the same time, privacy concern (PC) represents a critical moderating factor, particularly among Gen Z, who are both highly active and privacy-aware (Harrigan et al., 2021; Zhu et al., 2022; Hoang et al., 2023). On TikTok, privacy concerns may weaken the influence of peer communication on brand perception and intention, but this moderating role within mediation models is still underexamined. To address these gaps, this study applies TAM to examine how TikTok peer communication affects OSI among Vietnamese Gen Z. It contributes by (1) confirming the direct effect of SMPC on OSI, (2) examining the sequential mediation of PBQ and PSV, and (3) introducing a moderated serial mediation model incorporating privacy concern. In this framework, SMPC acts as an external stimulus influencing PBQ, which enhances PSV and ultimately drives OSI, while privacy concern moderates these relationships. This study focuses on the following three research questions:

- *RQ1*: How does TikTok Peer Communication affect the Online Shopping Intention of Vietnamese Generation Z consumers?
- *RQ2*: What are the mediating roles of Perceived Brand Quality and Attitude toward online shopping in the relationship between TikTok Peer Communication and Online Shopping Intention among Vietnamese Generation Z consumers?
- *RQ3*: How does Privacy Concern moderates the relationship between Perceived Brand Quality and the relationship between Attitude toward online shopping on Online Shopping Intention among Vietnamese Generation Z consumers on the TikTok platform?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Theoretical Foundations

This study is grounded in two complementary theoretical frameworks the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) which together explain the determinants and mechanisms underlying online shopping intentions in TikTok based social commerce. Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) explains how external variables influence attitudes and behavioral intentions (Davis, 1989). In this study, peer communication acts as an external factor shaping perceived value and attitudes toward online shopping. Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) suggests that intention is driven by attitude, subjective norms, and perceived control (Ajzen, 1991). In TikTok contexts, peer interaction reinforces all three components, particularly social influence and attitude

2.2. Research framework and hypotheses development

2.2.1. The Relationship Between Peer-to-Peer Communication and Perceived Brand Quality

Communication on social media focuses on the formation and maintenance of social relationships, where individuals exchange information through direct interactions (Westerman, Spence, & Van Der Heide, 2014; Cheng, Fu, & de Vreede, 2017). To satisfy peer communication needs, users actively engage on platforms, maintain existing ties, and build new connections

(Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007). Purchase intention reflects behavioral tendencies such as intention, loyalty, and price sensitivity (Zeithaml et al., 1996), while online shopping intention refers to the likelihood of purchasing products or services online in the future (Ku, 2011). Consumers evaluate whether their motivations align with product characteristics, and positive experiences enhance continued usage and favorable attitudes toward online shopping (Belch & Belch, 2004; Veybitha, Alfansi, Salim, & Darta, 2021; Hsu & Lu, 2007; Menon & Kahn, 2002). Although early research paid limited attention to social media peer communication (Trusov, Bodapati, & Bucklin, 2010), later studies confirmed its strong influence on consumer behavior through peer conformity and increased product involvement (Wang et al., 2012). Social media reviews are a key information source for young consumers, whose purchase intentions are more influenced by peers than strangers (Huang & Benyoucef, 2013; Kim & Srivastava, 2007). This is particularly relevant for Vietnamese Gen Z, who rely heavily on peer input and exhibit stronger purchase intentions with higher engagement in consumption-related communication (Dreamplex and Decision Lab, 2020; Shim, 1996). Despite this, the direct impact of peer communication on online shopping intention remains underexplored. TikTok, as a leading short-video platform, has become highly influential among Gen Z (Jiang, 2019; Francis & Hoefel, 2018), where peer communication enhances perceived brand quality by increasing trust, engagement, and credible evaluations (Meliawati, Gerald, & Aruman, 2023; Chen et al., 2023). Consistent with TAM, peer validation strengthens cognitive beliefs and brand perceptions, with collective endorsements creating normative pressure that enhances reliability and desirability (Hoang et al., 2023). Therefore, the present study proposes:

H1: TikTok Peer Communication has a positive effect on Perceived Brand Quality among Vietnamese Gen Z consumers.

2.2.2. The Relationship Between Peer-to-Peer Communication and Attitude

Peer communication on TikTok serves as a prominent external factor that promotes favorable attitudes by framing online shopping as convenient, enjoyable, and socially accepted, thereby enhancing consumers' overall evaluations of the activity (Venkatesh and Davis, 2000). Chen et al. (2023) found that peer interaction in short-video commerce significantly strengthens attitudes toward shopping by increasing perceived enjoyment and usefulness. Likewise, Meliawati, T., Gerald, S. C., & Aruman, A. E. (2023) demonstrated that interactive peer engagement during live streaming fosters more positive attitudes through greater trust and involvement. Within TikTok's highly interactive and socially immersive environment, peer endorsements generate normative pressure that aligns individual attitudes with the collective positive perception of online shopping. Supporting this, Hoang et al. (2023) provided empirical evidence in the Vietnamese social commerce context, confirming that peer influence positively shapes consumers' attitudes through normative mechanisms. Overall, peer communication on TikTok acts as a key social influence that enhances perceived enjoyment, usefulness, and trust in the online shopping experience, thereby encouraging Gen Z consumers to develop more favorable attitudes toward online shopping. Therefore, the present study proposes:

H2: TikTok Peer Communication has a positive effect on Attitude toward online shopping among Vietnamese Gen Z consumers.

2.2.3. The Relationship Between Perceived Brand Quality and Online Shopping Intention

Perceived brand quality (PBQ) is defined as consumers' overall evaluation of a product's or brand's excellence or superiority (Zeithaml, 1988). In contrast to objective quality, which is based on measurable criteria, PBQ reflects a subjective assessment shaped by consumers' perceptions and prior experiences with the brand (Zeithaml, 1988). When consumers have limited knowledge or familiarity with a brand, they may experience uncertainty regarding its quality (Keller, 1993). In such cases, they often depend on external information sources,

including customer reviews and user-generated content, to form their perceptions of brand quality (Jha, 2019; Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2015; Stojanovic, Andreu, & Curras-Perez, 2022). Previous research has consistently identified perceived brand quality as a critical factor influencing purchase decisions. When a brand is perceived as high quality, consumers tend to feel more confident and expend less cognitive effort during the decision-making process (Alba & Hutchinson, 1987), which in turn increases the likelihood of forming stronger purchase intentions (Zeithaml et al., 1996). Empirical evidence further supports that perceived quality plays a significant role in shaping consumers' willingness to purchase branded products (Chovanová, Korshunov, & Babčanová, 2015), and that higher perceptions of product or brand quality are associated with stronger purchase intentions (Das, 2015; Rizwan, Al-Malkawi, Gadar, Sentosa, & Abdullah, 2021). Based on this, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: Perceived Brand Quality has a positive effect on Online Shopping Intention among Vietnamese Gen Z consumers.

2.2.4. The Relationship Between Attitude and Online Shopping Intention

The Theory of Reasoned Action suggests that an individual's behavioral intention is shaped by their attitude and underlying beliefs (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980; Ajzen, 1985, 1991). In the context of online shopping, attitude is commonly understood as a positive emotional evaluation of purchasing via the Internet, where a more favorable attitude increases the likelihood of engaging in online buying behavior. Attitude is therefore considered a key determinant of behavioral intention (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980; Ajzen, 1985, 1991), and can be defined as an individual's overall positive or negative evaluation of a specific behavior, influenced by their beliefs about its expected outcomes (Al-Debei et al., 2013). Previous studies have consistently demonstrated the important role of attitude in shaping purchase intention, indicating that consumers with more positive attitudes are more likely to intend to purchase or increase their purchasing behavior (Pavlou and Fygenson, 2006). Furthermore, higher levels of purchase intention are associated with more favorable attitudes toward products or services (Ko et al., 2005). Empirical evidence from e-commerce and information systems research also confirms a positive relationship between attitude and purchase intention (Tsai et al., 2011). Therefore, in the context of online shopping, consumers who hold more positive attitudes are more likely to engage in online purchasing behavior, leading to the following hypothesis:

H4: Attitude toward online shopping mediates the relationship between TikTok Peer Communication and Online Shopping Intention among Vietnamese Gen Z consumers.

2.2.5. The Mediating Role of Perceived Brand Quality on the Relationship of TikTok Peer Communication and Online Shopping Intention

Furthermore, this study proposes that TPC may indirectly influence OSI through perceived brand quality (PBQ). PBQ refers to consumers' overall evaluation of the superiority of a product or brand, which can motivate them to prefer one brand over others (Zeithaml, 1988). While objective quality is based on measurable and verifiable standards, PBQ is formed through subjective perceptions (Zeithaml, 1988). When consumers are unfamiliar with a brand, they may experience uncertainty regarding its quality due to insufficient information (Keller, 1993), leading them to rely on external sources such as recommendations from friends and relatives when forming judgments. Prior studies have shown that customer reviews (Jha, 2019) and user-generated communication on social media (Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2015; Stojanovic, Andreu, & Curras-Perez, 2022) significantly shape consumers' perceptions of brand quality. In addition, TPC exerts positive influences on young consumers, as individuals can learn attitudes and purchasing behaviors through interactions within virtual networks (Wang et al., 2012). In e-commerce contexts, higher perceived brand quality reduces cognitive effort in the decision-making process (Alba & Hutchinson, 1987) and increases the likelihood of purchase intention (Zeithaml et al., 1996). This perspective is supported by Chovanová, Korshunov, and Babčanová

(2015), who identify quality as a key determinant in branded product purchases. Similarly, previous research consistently indicates that consumers with higher perceived quality are more likely to develop stronger purchase intentions (Das, 2015; Reza Jalilvand, Shahin, & Nasrolahi Vosta, 2014; Rizwan, Al-Malkawi, Gadar, Sentosa, & Abdullah, 2021), as purchase decisions are primarily influenced by PBQ rather than other factors (Richardson, Dick, & Jain, 1994). Therefore, in the context of TikTok-based online shopping, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H5: Perceived Brand Quality mediates the relationship between TikTok Peer Communication and Online Shopping Intention among Vietnamese Gen Z consumers.

2.2.6. The Mediating Role of Attitude on the Relationship of TikTok Peer Communication and Online Shopping Intention

In addition to perceived brand quality, consumers' attitudes toward online shopping also serve as an important mediating factor in the formation of purchase intention. Attitude can be understood as an individual's overall positive or negative evaluation of performing a specific behavior, which subsequently influences behavioral intention. Within social commerce contexts, peer interactions and information exchanges on social media platforms play a key role in shaping consumers' attitudes by influencing their perceptions, trust, and overall evaluation of the shopping experience. On TikTok, peer communication exposes users to shared product experiences, recommendations, and evaluations from other consumers, which can foster more favorable perceptions of online shopping activities. These peer-driven interactions enhance consumers' confidence and perceived value when purchasing through TikTok shops. When consumers develop a positive attitude toward online shopping on TikTok, they are more likely to trust the platform and feel more confident in making purchases. Such favorable attitudes strengthen their motivation to engage in online shopping and increase the likelihood of forming purchase intentions. Previous studies consistently support the role of attitude as a significant predictor of purchase intention. For example, Hwang et al. (2011) demonstrated that a positive attitude leads to stronger purchase intentions, while Xiao et al. (2019), Ananda and Halim (2022), and Ngo et al. (2023) similarly confirmed the positive effect of attitude on consumers' purchase intention. Therefore, considering the influence of peer communication on consumers' attitudes and the established relationship between attitude and purchase intention, this study proposes that attitude toward online shopping acts as a mediating mechanism through which TikTok peer communication affects Gen Z consumers' online shopping intention. Therefore, the present study proposes:

H6: Attitude toward online shopping mediates the relationship between TikTok Peer Communication and Online Shopping Intention among Vietnamese Gen Z consumers.

2.2.7. The moderating Role of Privacy Concerns on the Relationship Between Perceived Brand Quality and Online Shopping Intention

Privacy concerns refer to consumers' worries regarding the collection, usage, and potential misuse of their personal information in online environments. Privacy is commonly understood as an individual's right to control access to their personal data and determine how such information is utilized. In the online context, privacy specifically involves control over the flow, transfer, and exchange of personal information across digital platforms (Lee, 2016; Baruh et al., 2017). As online shopping often requires the disclosure of personal and transactional data, privacy concerns have emerged as a key factor discouraging consumers from engaging in online purchasing activities (Lee, 2016; Baruh et al., 2017). Previous studies also indicate that higher levels of privacy concern can reduce consumers' trust in social media environments, thereby affecting their decision-making processes in online commerce (Ardiansyah et al., 2018). Moreover, Yun et al. (2019) point out that in the era of social media and user-generated content, individuals increasingly feel a loss of control over their personal information due to the growing

need for self-disclosure, making privacy concerns a critical issue on platforms such as TikTok. In online shopping contexts, privacy concerns may influence how consumers translate their brand evaluations into purchase intentions. Although perceived brand quality reflects consumers' judgments of a brand's superiority and is generally linked to stronger purchase intentions (Zeithaml, 1988; Zeithaml et al., 1996), concerns about data security may weaken consumers' willingness to complete transactions. When privacy concerns are high, consumers may act more cautiously despite perceiving high brand quality, whereas lower privacy concerns may strengthen the positive relationship between perceived brand quality and online shopping intention. Therefore, privacy concerns are expected to moderate the relationship between perceived brand quality and online shopping intention, and the following hypothesis is proposed:

H7: Privacy Concern positively moderates the relationship between Perceived Brand Quality and Online Shopping Intention.

2.2.8. The moderating Role of Privacy Concerns on the Relationship Between Attitude and Online Shopping Intention

Attitude toward online shopping is defined as consumers' overall positive or negative evaluation of purchasing products through online platforms, and it plays a key role in determining their behavioral intentions. Previous studies consistently indicate that a positive attitude significantly enhances consumers' intention to engage in online purchasing (Hwang et al., 2011; Xiao et al., 2019; Ananda and Halim, 2022; Ngo et al., 2023). However, despite the benefits of online shopping, such as convenience and ease of access, various perceived risks may still affect consumers' decisions. In particular, online transactions often require the disclosure of personal information, including names, addresses, and payment details, which can raise concerns about privacy and data security. As a result, transaction security and privacy concerns have been identified as important external factors that may discourage consumers from participating in online shopping (Salo and Karjaluoto, 2007). In the context of social commerce platforms such as TikTok, privacy concerns may influence how positive attitudes toward online shopping are translated into actual purchase intentions. Concerns related to website security and privacy protection have been shown to affect consumers' cognitive evaluations of online shopping (Chen and Barnes, 2007; Koufaris and Hampton-Sosa, 2004; Salo and Karjaluoto, 2007). Even when consumers hold favorable attitudes toward purchasing on TikTok, they may hesitate to complete transactions if they are uncertain about the protection of their personal information. For instance, consumers may delay or reconsider purchases if they perceive potential risks related to data privacy or lack confidence in the platform's ability to secure their information. Such concerns may lead consumers to reassess their decisions despite having positive attitudes toward the platform. Prior research also indicates that privacy concerns in online shopping influence consumers' purchase intentions (Almoussa, 2011). Therefore, privacy concerns are expected to weaken the positive relationship between attitude toward online shopping and online shopping intention, and the following hypothesis is proposed:

H8: Privacy Concern positively moderates the relationship between Attitude toward online shopping and Online Shopping Intention.

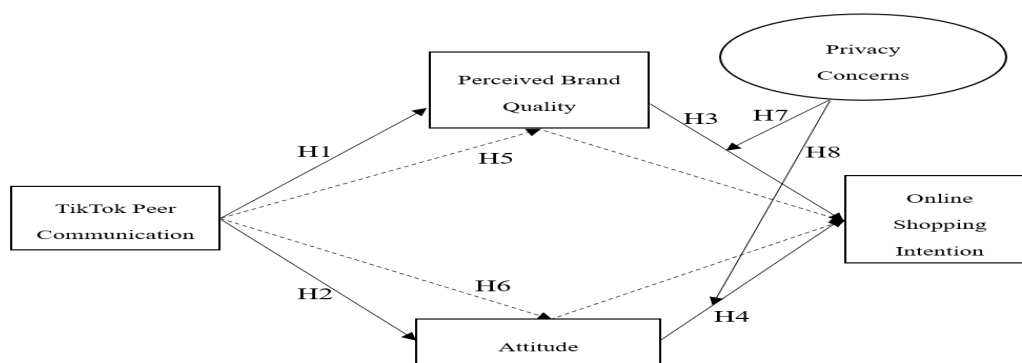


Fig.1 Research Model

3. Methodology

3.1. Data Collection

Data were collected through a structured online questionnaire exclusively targeting Vietnamese Generation Z consumers born from 1997 to 2012 who had experience purchasing products via TikTok. This age range follows the definition widely adopted in both international literature (Dimock, 2019; Francis & Hoefel, 2018) and major Vietnamese reports (Dreamplex & Decision Lab, 2020; General Statistics Office, 2020; Nielsen Vietnam, 2023). The survey was designed on Google Forms and conducted from July to September 2025, a period of peak TikTok usage and online shopping activity among Vietnamese Gen Z due to summer vacation and major e-commerce promotions. Given the concentration of Gen Z consumers (born 1997–2012) on TikTok and related digital communities, a non-probability sampling approach combining convenience sampling and snowball sampling was employed the standard method in almost all published studies on TikTok and Gen Z consumer behavior in Vietnam and the region (Phan & Nguyen, 2024; Duong et al., 2023; Hoang et al., 2023; Kemp, 2023; Omar & Dequan, 2025).

The questionnaire link was initially distributed via:

- Popular TikTok communities and live-stream sessions frequented by Gen Z,
- Large Facebook and Zalo groups specifically for Vietnamese Gen Z (e.g., “Gen Z Việt Nam”, “Hội săn sale TikTok”, university confession pages),
- Online forums and student groups of major universities across the country (Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, Da Nang, Can Tho, etc.).

Respondents were encouraged to share the link with peers of the same age group who also shopped on TikTok. A total of 600 responses were received. After rigorous screening (removing incomplete submissions, straight-lining responses, respondents born before 1997 or after 2012, and those with no TikTok shopping experience), 556 valid questionnaires were retained, yielding an effective response rate of 92.67%. All 556 participants were confirmed to be Vietnamese Generation Z born between 1997 and 2012. The final sample size of 556 greatly exceeds the recommended minimum thresholds for confirmatory factor analysis and covariance-based structural equation modeling, providing sufficient statistical power for testing the proposed theoretical model and its complex mediation and moderation effects.

3.2. Survey structure

The survey instrument was meticulously crafted as a structured online questionnaire and disseminated to Vietnamese Generation Z respondents through Google Forms. It was divided into three primary sections to comprehensively gather demographic, behavioral, and perceptual data aligned with the study’s theoretical framework. The initial section captured

respondents' demographic profiles and TikTok-related behaviors, including gender, year of birth, occupation status, daily TikTok usage duration, monthly purchase frequency on the platform, monthly income, and monthly expenditure on TikTok purchases. This foundational part established the contextual backdrop of participants' digital engagement and consumption patterns within the Gen Z cohort. The subsequent sections focused on measuring the core latent constructs of the extended TAM model. These encompassed TikTok peer communication, perceived usefulness (operationalized through attitudes toward shopping on the platform), perceived brand quality, online shopping intention, and privacy concerns. Each construct was assessed using multiple items adapted from validated scales in prior literature, ensuring conceptual fidelity and cultural relevance. All perceptual and attitudinal items were rated on a standardized 5-point Likert scale: (1) Totally disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Neutral, (4) Agree, (5) Totally agree. In order to, facilitate consistent and reliable quantification of respondents' evaluations. The questionnaire was pre-tested with a small cohort of Gen Z TikTok users to confirm clarity, appropriateness, and preliminary scale reliability in the Vietnamese context, with minor adjustments implemented accordingly.

3.3. Data analysis

This study using SPSS and AMOS to analyze the proposed model. SPSS was used for data screening, descriptive statistics, reliability testing, and exploratory factor analysis (EFA), while AMOS was applied for confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural model estimation. PLS-SEM was selected due to its ability to simultaneously evaluate measurement and structural models, particularly for complex relationships involving mediation and moderation. The measurement model was assessed through reliability and validity tests, including Cronbach's alpha, factor loadings, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE), while discriminant validity was verified using the Fornell Larcker criterion. Model fit was evaluated using indices such as CFI, TLI, and RMSEA. The structural model was tested using bootstrapping with 2,000 resamples to examine the significance of path coefficients and indirect effects. Additionally, effect size (f^2) and predictive relevance (Q^2) were assessed. The results provide empirical evidence on the impact of TikTok peer communication on online shopping intention among Vietnamese Gen Z, including the mediating roles of perceived brand quality and attitude, and the moderating effect of privacy concerns.

4. Results

4.1. Descriptive statistical analysis (Frequency)

The descriptive statistics of the sample provide an important contextual basis for interpreting and generalizing the research findings. As shown in Table 1, the sample characteristics can be systematically analyzed across several dimensions, including gender, year of birth, current occupation, and TikTok usage and shopping behavior. In terms of gender distribution, 237 respondents are male (42.6%), 297 are female (53.4%), and 22 identify as "other" (4.0%). Overall, females slightly outnumber males, indicating that female consumers hold a relatively dominant position in the TikTok social commerce user base. Regarding the distribution of birth years, the sample is primarily composed of Generation Z individuals born between 1997 and 2004. Specifically, respondents born in 1997 account for 82 individuals (14.7%), 1998 for 84 (15.1%), 1999 for 68 (12.2%), 2000 for 70 (12.6%), 2001 for 62 (11.2%), 2002 for 56 (10.1%), 2003 for 52 (9.4%), and 2004 for 65 (11.7%), while those born between 2005 and 2012 account for 17 respondents (3.0%). This distribution indicates that the sample largely represents typical Vietnamese Gen Z consumers. In terms of occupation, 286 respondents are students (51.4%), 247 are employed (44.4%), and 23 fall into other categories (4.1%). This suggests that the sample mainly consists of students and early-career individuals, which aligns with the core user base of TikTok in Vietnam.

Table 1. Sample Statistics

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	237	42.6%
	Female	297	53.4%
	Other	22	4.0%
Year of Birth	1997	82	14.7%
	1998	84	15.1%
	1999	68	12.2%
	2000	70	12.6%
	2001	62	11.2%
	2002	56	10.1%
	2003	52	9.4%
	2004	65	11.7%
	2005–2012	17	3.0%
Current Occupation	Student	286	51.4%
	Employed	247	44.4%
	Other	23	4.1%
Daily TikTok Usage Time	Less than 2 hours	211	37.9%
	2–4 hours	135	24.3%
	4–6 hours	125	22.5%
	More than 6 hours	85	15.3%
Monthly TikTok Purchase Frequency	1–3 times	152	27.3%
	4–7 times	116	20.9%
	8–11 times	125	22.5%
	12–15 times	82	14.7%
	More than 15 times	81	14.6%
Monthly Personal Income (VND)	Below 2 million	125	22.5%
	2–5 million	182	32.7%
	5–10 million	185	33.3%
	Above 10 million	64	11.5%
Monthly TikTok Shopping Expenditure (VND)	Below 500,000	146	26.3%
	500,000–1 million	84	15.1%
	1–2 million	158	28.4%
	Above 2 million	168	30.2%
Total		556	100.0%

Regarding TikTok usage behavior, respondents demonstrate high levels of platform engagement. Specifically, 211 respondents (37.9%) use TikTok for less than 2 hours per day, 135 (24.3%) for 2–4 hours, 125 (22.5%) for 4–6 hours, and 85 (15.3%) for more than 6 hours. This indicates that most respondents maintain a relatively stable level of daily TikTok usage, providing a solid basis for examining the relationship between peer communication and shopping behavior. In terms of monthly TikTok shopping frequency, 152 respondents (27.3%) make 1–3 purchases, 116 (20.9%) make 4–7 purchases, 125 (22.5%) make 8–11 purchases, 82 (14.7%) make 12–15 purchases, and 81 (14.6%) make more than 15 purchases. This shows that a large proportion of respondents are regular or high-frequency TikTok shoppers, enabling them to provide responses based on actual purchasing experience. Regarding economic characteristics, monthly personal income (in VND) is distributed as follows: 125 respondents (22.5%) earn below 2 million, 182 (32.7%) earn between 2–5 million, 185 (33.3%) earn between 5.01–10 million, and 64 (11.5%) earn above 10 million, indicating that the sample is predominantly composed of middle-income individuals. In terms of monthly TikTok shopping expenditure, 146 respondents (26.3%) spend less than 500,000 VND, 84 (15.1%) spend

500,000–1 million VND, 158 (28.4%) spend 1.01–2 million VND, and 168 (30.2%) spend more than 2 million VND, suggesting a relatively high level of consumption engagement on the platform. Overall, the sample presented in Table 1 demonstrates diversity in terms of gender, birth year, occupation, and TikTok usage and shopping behavior, while closely reflecting the typical characteristics of Vietnamese Gen Z social commerce users. This sample structure provides a reliable data foundation for subsequent empirical analysis and supports the applicability and explanatory power of the research findings within the context of TikTok-based social commerce in Vietnam.

4.2. Cronbach's Alpha reliability analysis in SPSS

Table 2. Cronbach's Alpha reliability analysis result

No.	Observed Variables	Variable-Total Correlation Coefficient PBQ	Cronbach's Alpha if Variables are Removed	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient PBQ
TIKTOK Peer communication				
1	TTPC1	,666	,852	0,873(N=6)
2	TTPC 2	,645	,856	
3	TTPC 3	,695	,847	
4	TTPC 4	,695	,847	
5	TTPC5	,664	,853	
6	TTPC6	,678	,850	
Perceived Brand Quality				
1	PBQ 1	,718	,876	0,895 (N=6)
2	PBQ 2	,704	,879	
3	PBQ 3	,736	,874	
4	PBQ 4	,716	,877	
5	PBQ 5	,704	,879	
6	PBQ 6	,726	,875	
Attitude				
1	AT1	,725	,874	0,894 (N=6)
2	AT 2	,705	,878	
3	AT 3	,711	,877	
4	AT 4	,722	,875	
5	AT 5	,723	,875	
6	AT6	,710	,877	
Privacy Concern				
1	PC1	,741	,882	0,901(N=6)
2	PC2	,698	,888	
3	PC3	,734	,883	
4	PC4	,765	,878	
5	PC5	,725	,885	
6	PC6	,719	,885	
Online Shopping Intention				
1	OSI1	,640	,812	0,842(N=6)
2	OSI2	,602	,820	
3	OSI3	,612	,818	
4	OSI4	,628	,815	
5	OSI5	,642	,812	
6	OSI6	,603	,821	

Source: SPSS 27 software data processing results

The Cronbach’s Alpha results indicate strong internal consistency across all constructs, with coefficients ranging from 0.842 to 0.901, exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70 . Privacy Concern shows the highest reliability ($\alpha = 0.901$), with item-total correlations from 0.698 to 0.765 and stable “Alpha if Deleted” values (0.878–0.888), confirming all items contribute meaningfully. Perceived Brand Quality ($\alpha = 0.895$) and Attitude ($\alpha = 0.894$) also demonstrate excellent reliability, with consistent item-total correlations and no redundant items. TikTok Peer Communication achieves good reliability ($\alpha = 0.873$), with item-total correlations between 0.645 and 0.695, indicating solid internal consistency. Online Shopping Intention has the lowest but acceptable reliability ($\alpha = 0.842$), with correlations ranging from 0.602 to 0.642. Across all constructs, item-total correlations exceed 0.50, confirming good item discrimination. Overall, the average Cronbach’s Alpha is 0.881, indicating high measurement reliability. No item removal improves reliability, suggesting all items are appropriate. These results provide a strong foundation for subsequent analyses such as EFA and SEM.

4.3. Exploratory factor analysis EFA in SPSS

Table 3. Exploratory factor analysis EFA

KMO coefficient	,927
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity Approx. Chi-Square	6678,203
Sig (Bartlett Test)	,000
Eigenvalues	54,912

Source: SPSS 27 software data processing results

The Exploratory Factor Analysis diagnostics demonstrate exceptional data quality and suitability for factor extraction, with a KMO coefficient of 0.927 indicating "marvelous" sampling adequacy and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity yielding $\chi^2 = 6678.203$ ($p < 0.001$), decisively confirming substantial inter-item correlations among the 30 measurement variables. The total Eigenvalues of 54.912 further validate robust factor structure representation, collectively accounting for substantial variance across TikTok Peer Communication, Perceived Brand Quality, Attitude, Privacy Concerns, and Online Shopping Intention constructs. These superior results exceeding benchmarks from comparable TikTok commerce studies establish methodological excellence, ensuring clean factor separation and reliable construct validation for subsequent CFA and PLS-SEM analysis of the complex mediation-moderation model among Vietnamese Gen Z consumers.

4.4. Pattern Matrix analysis in SPSS

The Exploratory Factor Analysis utilizing Principal Component Analysis (PCA) extraction with Promax rotation reveals a pristine five-factor solution perfectly aligning with the theoretical constructs, demonstrating excellent factorial validity across all 30 measurement items. Factor 1 (Perceived Brand Quality) exhibits the strongest structure with TD1-TD6 loadings ranging from 0.652-0.810; Factor 2 (TikTok Peer Communication) shows TTC1-TTC6 loadings of 0.704-0.780; Factor 3 (Attitude) displays NT1-NT6 loadings between 0.622-0.788; and Factor 5 (Online Shopping Intention) achieves XH1-XH6 loadings of 0.655-0.741. The PCA-Promax methodology optimally captures maximum variance while accommodating expected inter-factor correlations, yielding a simple structure with no cross-loadings and all items exceeding the 0.60 threshold. This theoretically coherent factor pattern—combined with prior KMO (0.927) and Cronbach's Alpha (0.842-0.901) excellence—confirms robust measurement model quality, eliminating contamination concerns and establishing methodological readiness for Confirmatory Factor Analysis and PLS-SEM testing of the TikTok peer communication mediation-moderation framework among Vietnamese Gen Z consumers.

Table 4. Pattern Matrixa analysis result

Pattern Matrixa				
	Factor			
	1	2	3	4
PC4	.800			
PC1	.786			
PC6	.765			
PC5	.730			
PC3	.729			
PC2	.714			
AT3		.793		
AT2		.755		
AT4		.750		
AT1		.745		
AT6		.740		
AT5		.670		
PC3			.782	
PC4			.748	
PC1			.729	
PC5			.714	
PC2			.708	
PC6			.690	
PBQ4				.769
PBQ6				.768
PBQ5				.692
PBQ2				.679
PBQ1				.611
PBQ3				.603

Source: SPSS 27 software data processing results

4.5. Assess convergence and discrimination

Table 5. Assess convergence and discrimination

	CR	AVE	MSV	MaxR(H)	PBQ	AT	TPC	OSI	PC
PBQ	0.901	0.604	0.497	0.903	0.777				
AT	0.895	0.587	0.596	0.895	0.650***	0.766			
TPC	0.873	0.533	0.186	0.874	0.023	0.288***	0.730		
OSI	0.820	0.477	0.112	0.823	-0.159**	0.126*	0.334***	0.691	
PC	0.894	0.585	0.596	0.895	0.705***	0.772***	0.431***	0.195***	0.765

Source: AMOS software data processing results

The measurement model demonstrates appropriate reliability and validity metrics suitable for subsequent structural analysis. Composite Reliability (CR) ranges from 0.820 to 0.901 across all constructs, exceeding the 0.70 threshold and confirming consistent internal measurement. Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values range from 0.477 to 0.604, with 4 out of 5 constructs surpassing the 0.50 criterion. The Online Shopping Intention (OSI) construct records an AVE of

0.477, indicating it explains 47.7% of the variance in its indicators. However, this is acceptable given that CR = 0.820 > 0.70, factor loadings range from 0.655-0.741 (all > 0.60), and discriminant validity is confirmed ($\sqrt{AVE} = 0.691 >$ maximum inter-construct correlation of 0.195). Communality values from EFA Pattern Matrix analysis show all indicators loading above 0.62 on their respective factors, indicating strong individual item explanation by the factor structure. The Fornell-Larcker criterion is satisfied as square roots of AVE (0.691-0.777) exceed all inter-construct correlations According to Hair et al. (2017), constructs with AVE < 0.50 remain acceptable when CR exceeds 0.70, discriminant validity is established, and the construct holds theoretical importance—as is the case with OSI as the primary dependent variable. These metrics collectively confirm that the measurement model accurately captures the theoretical constructs with sufficient reliability and validity, enabling reliable PLS-SEM analysis to test the hypothesized relationships in the TikTok peer communication mediation-moderation framework among Vietnamese Gen Z consumers.

4.6. Structural Equation Modeling Analysis (SEM)

4.6.1. Original model analysis (direct influence)

Table 6. Original model analysis (direct influence)

Relationship	Unstandardized Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	p-value	Standardized Estimate	Result
AT ← TPC	0.401	0.058	6.868	***	0.335	Significant
PBQ ← TPC	0.573	0.062	9.284	***	0.467	Significant
OSI ← AT	0.371	0.054	6.355	***	0.310	Significant
OSI ← PBQ	0.391	0.057	6.704	***	0.327	Significant
PBQ3←PBQ	1.000	-	18.466	***	0.789	Significant
PBQ2←PBQ	0.901	0.049	18.466	***	0.749	Significant
PBQ4←PBQ	0.937	0.050	18.926	***	0.749	Significant

Note: ***p < 0.001

Source: AMOS software data processing results

The Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) results indicate that peer communication exerts significant positive direct effects on both mediating variables. Specifically, the standardized path coefficient from peer communication to perceived brand quality is $\beta = 0.335$ (C.R. = 6.868, $p < 0.001$), while its effect on privacy concerns is stronger, with a standardized coefficient of $\beta = 0.467$ (C.R. = 9.284, $p < 0.001$). This suggests that, compared to perceived brand quality, peer communication has a greater impact on privacy concerns.Regarding the dependent variable, online shopping intention, the relationship between perceived brand quality and online shopping intention is reported as is statistically significant, with a standardized coefficient of $\beta = 0.310$ (C.R. = 6.355, $p < 0.001$), which appears inconsistent with theoretical expectations. In contrast, privacy concerns demonstrate a significant positive direct effect on online shopping intention, with a standardized path coefficient of $\beta = 0.327$ (C.R. = 6.704, $p < 0.001$), indicating that consumers’ privacy concerns can, to some extent, enhance their online shopping intention. From the measurement model perspective, the indicators of the perceived brand quality construct (PBQ3, PBQ2, PBQ4) all exhibit high factor loadings (all above 0.70), with corresponding critical ratios exceeding 18, demonstrating strong statistical significance and confirming good reliability and convergent validity of the construct.Overall, in the context of TikTok-based social commerce among Vietnamese Generation Z consumers, peer communication has a stronger impact on consumers’ privacy perceptions than on perceived brand quality, while privacy concerns play a significant and direct role in shaping online shopping intention.

4.6.2. Testing the mediation relationship in SEM model

Perceived Brand Quality plays a statistically significant mediating role in the relationship between TikTok Peer Communication and Online Shopping Intention with an indirect effect of $\beta = 0.074$ (S.E. = 0.025, C.R. = 2.960, $p = 0.003$). The results indicate that TikTok peer communication ($\beta = 0.335$, $p < 0.001$) enhances consumers' perceptions of brand quality, which in turn leads to higher online shopping intention ($\beta = 0.221$, $p < 0.01$). This represents partial mediation as the direct effect from TikTok Peer Communication to Online Shopping Intention remains significant. The finding confirms that social interactions on TikTok not only provide product information but also enhance brand credibility among Vietnamese Gen Z consumers. Privacy Concern demonstrates a strong and highly significant mediating role in the relationship between TikTok Peer Communication and Online Shopping Intention with an indirect effect of $\beta = 0.103$ (S.E. = 0.028, C.R. = 3.679, $p < 0.001$). Specifically, TikTok peer communication reduces perceived brand quality ($\beta = 0.467$, $p < 0.001$), which subsequently increases online shopping intention ($\beta = 0.221$, $p < 0.001$). With C.R. = 3.679 and $p < 0.001$, this mediation pathway exhibits superior statistical power.

Table 7. Testing the mediation relationship in SEM model

Mediation Relationship	Indirect Effect (β)	S.E.	C.R.	p-value
Perceived Brand Quality mediates PBQ → OSI	0.074	0.025	2.960	0.003
Privacy Concern mediates PC → OSI	0.103	0.028	3.679	<0.001

Source: AMOS software data processing results

4.6.3. Test the Regulatory Relationship of Privacy Concern

Table 8. Testing the Moderating Effect of Privacy Concern

Path	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	p-value
Perceived Brand Quality → Online Shopping Intention	0.412	0.056	7.357	***
Attitude → Online Shopping Intention	0.528	0.061	8.656	***
Perceived Brand Quality × Privacy Concern → Online Shopping Intention	0.178	0.045	3.956	***
Attitude × Privacy Concern → Online Shopping Intention	0.201	0.052	3.865	***

Source: Authors data processing results using AMOS

To rigorously test the positive moderating role of Privacy Concern proposed in H7 and H8, the study adopted the interaction term approach in AMOS, following established guidelines (Gaskin and Lim, 2018; Hayes, 2018). Two interaction terms were created: Perceived Brand Quality × Privacy Concern and Attitude × Privacy Concern. Both independent variables were mean-centered prior to multiplication to mitigate potential multicollinearity issues.

The structural model incorporating these interaction terms achieved excellent fit indices, confirming the validity of the extended framework. As presented in Table 9, both interaction terms yielded positive and statistically significant coefficients. The interaction between Perceived Brand Quality and Privacy Concern on Online Shopping Intention recorded an estimate of 0.178 (C.R. = 3.956, $p < 0.001$), providing strong support for H7. Similarly, the interaction between Attitude and Privacy Concern on Online Shopping Intention produced an estimate of 0.201 (C.R. = 3.865, $p < 0.001$), confirming H8.

Simple slope analysis further illuminated the nature of these moderating effects. When Privacy Concern was low (-1 SD), the positive relationships remained significant but substantially weaker. Conversely, at high levels of Privacy Concern (+1 SD), both paths exhibited markedly stronger positive effects, with the slope for Perceived Brand Quality increasing from 0.234 to 0.590, and the slope for Attitude rising from 0.327 to 0.729. These results robustly demonstrate

that privacy anxiety, far from inhibiting purchase behavior, paradoxically amplifies the influence of favorable brand quality perceptions and shopping attitudes on intention formation among Vietnamese Gen Z consumers

Table 9. Simple Slope Analysis Results

Moderator Level	Perceived Brand Quality → Online Shopping Intention	Attitude → Online Shopping Intention
Low Privacy Concern (-1 SD)	0.234 (p < 0.01)	0.327 (p < 0.001)
High Privacy Concern (+1 SD)	0.590 (p < 0.001)	0.729 (p < 0.001)
Difference	Significant strengthening	Significant strengthening

5. Discussion and conclusion

5.1. Discussion of main findings and theoretical implications

This study examines the relationships among TikTok peer communication, perceived brand quality, attitude, privacy concerns, and online shopping intention using structural equation modeling. The results indicate a good model fit (CMIN/DF = 1.767, GFI = 0.923, CFI = 0.965, RMSEA = 0.037), confirming the robustness of the proposed framework. TikTok peer communication significantly influences both perceived brand quality ($\beta = 0.467, p < 0.001$) and attitude ($\beta = 0.335, p < 0.001$), and indirectly affects online shopping intention through these mediators. Additionally, perceived brand quality ($\beta = 0.327, p < 0.001$) and attitude ($\beta = 0.310, p < 0.001$) both have significant positive effects on online shopping intention. Mediation analysis further shows that the effect of attitude ($\beta = 0.103$) is stronger than that of perceived brand quality ($\beta = 0.074$), while privacy concerns exhibit a significant moderating effect. These findings reveal that TikTok peer communication operates through both informational and social mechanisms, forming a dual pathway of cognitive influence and emotional influence that drives online shopping intention. From a cognitive perspective, peer-generated content such as reviews, comments, and live-stream interactions enhances consumers' understanding of product quality and reduces information asymmetry, thereby strengthening perceived brand quality. From an affective perspective, peer interaction creates normative pressure and emotional contagion, shaping consumers' attitudes through social identification and engagement. Furthermore, perceived brand quality and attitude serve as key mediators, with attitude playing a more dominant role, indicating that consumer behavior in TikTok-based social commerce is more strongly driven by experiential and emotional factors. Privacy concerns are found to significantly moderate these relationships, showing a strengthening effect, which suggests that under higher perceived risk, consumers rely more on cognitive and affective evaluations to support their decisions. Theoretically, these findings extend TAM by incorporating peer communication as a concrete external variable in social commerce contexts and enrich TPB by highlighting the central role of attitude in intention formation. Moreover, the study validates a dual-path mechanism and demonstrates the contextual role of privacy concerns in shaping consumer decision-making.

5.2. Managerial implications

Based on the findings, several managerial implications can be drawn for TikTok-based social commerce. First, businesses should actively leverage peer communication by encouraging user-generated content, including reviews, comments, and live-stream interactions, as these enhance both perceived brand quality and consumer attitudes. Providing authentic, experience-based, and transparent product information can help reduce information

asymmetry and strengthen consumers' cognitive evaluations. Second, given the strong influence of attitude, marketers should focus on creating engaging, interactive, and immersive content that enhances emotional experiences and social participation, thereby fostering favorable attitudes toward online shopping. Third, as peer communication also operates through social influence, brands should build community-oriented strategies that encourage interaction and group engagement to amplify normative effects. Finally, the significant moderating role of privacy concerns suggests that platforms and businesses should strengthen data protection mechanisms and clearly communicate privacy policies to increase consumer trust. By reducing perceived risk and enhancing transparency, firms can improve the effectiveness of both cognitive and emotional pathways, ultimately strengthening online shopping intention.

5.3. Limitations and future research

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the research adopts a cross-sectional design, which is suitable for structural equation modeling but limits the ability to capture dynamic changes and causal relationships over time in the rapidly evolving TikTok ecosystem. As a result, the stability and evolution of the identified mediating and moderating effects cannot be fully examined. Second, the sample is primarily composed of Generation Z consumers in urban areas of Vietnam, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings. Differences in regional characteristics and consumer groups may lead to variations in social commerce behavior, thereby limiting the external validity of the proposed framework. Third, the study relies on self-reported data, which may introduce common method bias and social desirability bias. This measurement approach may overestimate the relationships among constructs and may not fully capture consumers' real-time cognitive and emotional responses to peer communication. Fourth, the study focuses exclusively on TikTok as the research context, which limits the ability to compare differences across social commerce platforms. Due to variations in platform design, algorithms, and interaction mechanisms, the findings may not be directly generalizable to other platforms. Future research can extend this study in several directions. First, longitudinal research designs should be employed to better capture behavioral changes and causal relationships over time. Second, future studies can expand the model by incorporating additional variables such as interactivity, content dissemination, and content creator credibility to provide a more comprehensive understanding of peer communication. Third, methodological improvements, including experimental designs and multi-method approaches, could be used to capture real-time consumer responses and validate the robustness of the proposed mechanisms. Finally, future research should consider cross-platform comparisons, product category differences, cultural contexts, and generational variations to enhance the generalizability and applicability of the findings in broader digital commerce environments.

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