The Influence Of Discount Framing And Peer Influence On Cosmetic Purchase Decisions In Tiktok Commerce: The Moderating Role Of AI-Based Recommendations

Anggraeni Pratama Indrianto
Management Study Program, Faculty of Technology and Business, Yarsi Pratama University, Banten, Indonesia
E-Mail: anggraeni@yarsipratama.ac.id

Ikhsan Nurahman
Management Study Program, Faculty of Technology and Business, Yarsi Pratama University, Banten, Indonesia
E-Mail: ikhsan@yarsipratama.ac.id

Dani Taupan Ramdani
Management Study Program, Faculty of Technology and Business, Yarsi Pratama University, Banten, Indonesia
E-Mail: dani@yarsipratama.ac.id

Muhammad Artova Al-Kindi
Management Study Program, Faculty of Technology and Business, Yarsi Pratama University, Banten, Indonesia
E-Mail: muhammadartova@yarsipratama.ac.id

Submitted:
MARCH 2025

Accepted:
JUNE 2025

ABSTRACT

This study explores how discount framing and peer influence affect consumers' purchase decisions for cosmetic products on TikTok, and whether AI-based recommendations strengthen these effects. As TikTok Shop continues to grow as a popular social commerce platform in Indonesia, understanding the role of marketing strategies and user interactions becomes increasingly important. The research uses a quantitative approach, involving 200 female TikTok users aged 26–35 in the Greater Jakarta area who have purchased cosmetics through the platform. Data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The results show that both discount framing and peer influence have a significant positive impact on purchase decisions. Additionally, AI recommendations were found to play a moderating role, increasing the effectiveness of both factors when product suggestions matched user preferences. These findings suggest that combining clear discount offers, social influence, and personalized product recommendations can improve consumer buying behavior in the online beauty market.

Keywords*: TikTok Shop, discount framing; peer influence, AI recommendations, purchase decisions, cosmetic products, social commerce.*

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengkaji bagaimana cara penyajian diskon (discount framing) dan pengaruh teman sebaya memengaruhi keputusan pembelian konsumen terhadap produk kosmetik di TikTok, serta apakah rekomendasi berbasis kecerdasan buatan (AI) memperkuat pengaruh tersebut. Seiring dengan pertumbuhan TikTok Shop sebagai platform social commerce yang semakin populer di Indonesia, pemahaman terhadap peran strategi pemasaran dan interaksi antar pengguna menjadi

JIMKES

Jurnal Ilmiah Manajemen Kesatuan
Vol. 13 No. 4, 2025
pp. 2047 - 2056
IBI Kesatuan
ISSN 2337 – 7860
E-ISSN 2721 – 169X
DOI: 10.37641/jimkes.v13i4.3566

semakin penting. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan melibatkan 200 pengguna perempuan TikTok berusia 26–35 tahun di wilayah Jabodetabek yang pernah membeli produk kosmetik melalui platform tersebut. Data dianalisis menggunakan metode Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa baik penyajian diskon maupun pengaruh teman sebaya memiliki dampak positif yang signifikan terhadap keputusan pembelian. Selain itu, rekomendasi berbasis AI terbukti memainkan peran sebagai variabel moderator, yang meningkatkan efektivitas kedua faktor tersebut ketika rekomendasi produk sesuai dengan preferensi pengguna. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa kombinasi antara penawaran diskon yang menarik, pengaruh sosial, dan rekomendasi produk yang dipersonalisasi dapat meningkatkan perilaku pembelian konsumen dalam pasar produk kecantikan secara online.

***Kata kunci**: TikTok Shop, penyajian diskon, pengaruh teman sebaya, rekomendasi AI, keputusan pembelian, produk kosmetik, social commerce.*

INTRODUCTION

Social commerce has grown rapidly in Indonesia, driven by increased internet penetration and changing digital consumption behavior. As of January 2023, the number of internet users in Indonesia reached 212.9 million, accounting for 77% of the population (Riyanto, 2023). TikTok, as one of the most popular platforms, has evolved beyond entertainment into a prominent social commerce channel through TikTok Shop. This feature allows users to directly purchase products within the app, combining short-form video content, user interaction, and algorithmic recommendation systems (Populix, 2022; Wijaya, 2023). In this new commerce landscape, the beauty and cosmetics sector play a key role, with 43% of users purchasing cosmetic products through TikTok Shop, making it the second most purchased category after fashion (Kumparan, 2022).

The digital marketing strategies applied in TikTok Shop include a variety of promotional tools, such as discount framing and peer influence, that leverage user engagement and platform algorithms. Discount framing refers to how price reductions are presented to consumers, including percentage-based discounts, nominal values, bonus products, or time-limited offers. Prior research has demonstrated that these techniques can influence consumer perceptions and stimulate immediate purchases, particularly in live shopping settings (Fauzi & Sijabat, 2023; Hamonangan & Sutejo, 2023). However, the effectiveness of discount strategies depends heavily on their execution. Less attractive discounts or unclear pricing can lead to consumer distrust (Febriah & Febriyantoro, 2023; Tempo.co, 2021).

In parallel, peer influence in the form of user reviews and video testimonials plays a critical role in shaping purchase decisions on TikTok. The use of video content provides visual proof of product effectiveness, which is perceived as more trustworthy than text-based reviews (Arsyalan & Ariyanti, 2019; Kamila et al., 2019). Peer recommendations influence purchase decisions by enhancing perceived authenticity and reducing risk. However, issues such as fake reviews and manipulated product ratings have raised concerns about credibility and fairness in consumer evaluations (Liu et al., 2020; Mccluskey, 2022).

Adding to the complexity is the role of AI-based recommendation systems. TikTok uses AI algorithms to deliver personalized product suggestions based on users' browsing history and interaction behavior. These systems can increase the exposure of products with high discounts or strong social proof, potentially reinforcing the effects of discount framing and peer influence (Logg et al., 2019). Nevertheless, concerns about algorithmic bias, fairness, and transparency have emerged, particularly when the system favors aggressive promotions or misleading content (Cheng, 2023; Wasko et al., 2011). Thus, the role of AI as a moderating variable in shaping purchase decisions remains insufficiently explored.

While previous studies have examined discount strategies, social influence, and AI recommendations in isolation (Budiasih et al., 2024; Putri et al., 2023), there is a lack of

research addressing how these three variables interact—particularly in the context of cosmetic purchases through TikTok Shop in Indonesia. Given the platform's rising influence and the rapid growth of the local beauty industry, this gap presents an opportunity to investigate a more integrated consumer decision-making model.

This study aims to examine the effects of discount framing and peer influence on purchase decisions for cosmetic products on TikTok Shop, while also testing the moderating role of AI recommendation systems. The research focuses on female TikTok users aged 26–35 in the Jabodetabek region, who are active buyers of cosmetic products. By applying Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), this study contributes both theoretically and practically: it enhances the understanding of algorithm-influenced consumer behavior and provides insights for marketers in optimizing their promotional strategies in the social commerce environment..

LITERATURE REVIEW

Purchase Decision

The concept of purchase decision refers to the cognitive and affective process consumers undergo when evaluating, selecting, and ultimately buying a product or service. In digital commerce, this decision is influenced by both individual factors (e.g., needs, preferences, motivation) and environmental stimuli such as advertising, peer reviews, pricing, and personalization features (Putri et al., 2023). The emergence of social commerce platforms like TikTok has reshaped the nature of online purchasing. Unlike conventional e-commerce, TikTok Shop integrates short video content with user interaction and algorithmic recommendations, enabling purchase decisions to be shaped not only by rational evaluation, but also by emotional appeal and real-time social engagement (Wijaya, 2023).

In the context of cosmetic products, particularly those sold via social commerce, purchase decisions are often impulsive and emotionally driven. Visual demonstrations, peer testimonials, and promotional cues such as limited time offers can significantly influence consumer behavior. The real-time nature of live shopping, coupled with algorithm-enhanced visibility, makes platforms like TikTok particularly effective in triggering fast decision-making (Kumparan, 2022). Therefore, identifying the specific drivers that impact these decisions becomes essential for marketers seeking to optimize conversion rates.

Discount Framing

Discount framing is a marketing tactic that involves presenting price reductions in specific formats to enhance perceived value. Common framing approaches include percentage discounts (e.g., "20% off"), nominal discounts (e.g., "save Rp10,000"), or bundled offers (e.g., "buy 1 get 1") (Hamonangan & Sutejo, 2023). The effectiveness of these formats depends on how consumers cognitively interprets the deal. Research has shown that percentage-based discounts are often more appealing for higher-priced items, whereas nominal discounts may be more effective for lower-priced products (Fauzi & Sijabat, 2023).

In the context of TikTok Shop, discount framing is frequently used during live sessions and flash sales. These time-sensitive presentations increase perceived urgency and encourage impulse purchases. According to Febriah & Febriyantoro (2023), effective discount framing not only increases sales volume but also strengthens customer trust when the offer is presented clearly and transparently. Conversely, vague or exaggerated discounts—such as inflated original prices or unclear terms—can reduce consumer confidence and increase perceived risk (Tempo.co, 2021).

Empirical evidence supports the positive relationship between discount framing and consumer purchase decisions in digital commerce settings. Promotional strategies that apply effective framing have been found to stimulate attention, enhance perceived savings, and increase the likelihood of purchasing, particularly among young consumers who are highly responsive to visual cues and urgency-driven offers (Putri et al., 2023).

H1: Discount framing has a significant positive effect on purchase decision

Peer Influence

Peer influence is a social phenomenon wherein an individual's attitudes or behaviors are shaped by the opinions and actions of others within their social environment. In the digital era, this influence manifested through user-generated content such as reviews, video testimonials, and comment interactions, especially on platforms like TikTok where social validation is highly visible and rapidly shared (Kamila et al., 2019).

Kamila et al., (2019) classify peer influence into three forms: normative influence (desire to conform to group norms), informational influence (relying on others' knowledge), and value-expressive influence (identification with others). These dimensions are especially salient in the cosmetics market, where appearance-based validation and testimonial content can significantly affect purchase confidence. Arsyalan & Ariyanti (2019) note that users perceive peer video content as more authentic, emotionally engaging, and relatable compared to formal advertisements. This perception enhances trust, especially when content is delivered by real users rather than influencers with overt brand affiliations.

However, peer influence can also be distorted by fake reviews, bots, and paid content. Mccluskey (2022) emphasizes the importance of transparency and content source credibility in maintaining trust within peer-to-peer ecosystems. Despite these risks, the overall impact of peer recommendations on consumer behavior remains strong, particularly among Gen Z and millennial consumers who prioritize experiential and visual content in their decision-making process.

H2: Peer influence has a significant positive effect on purchase decision

AI Recommendation

Artificial Intelligence (AI) recommendation systems analyze user behavior to deliver personalized product suggestions in real-time. These algorithms use data such as browsing history, interaction patterns, and engagement levels to optimize content relevance (Logg et al., 2019). In TikTok Shop, the AI-based "For You" feed integrates both entertainment and commerce by displaying products that align with users' preferences—thus increasing visibility and potential purchase behavior.

The role of AI in influencing consumer decisions lies not in direct persuasion, but in exposure management. By algorithmically amplifying certain promotions or peer content, AI systems indirectly affect what consumers see, engage with, and ultimately decide to purchase (Hoffman et al., 2022). Wasko et al., (2011) highlights the dual impact of personalization: while it increases engagement by aligning content with user needs, it may also reinforce algorithmic bias if not designed transparently. Cheng (2023) raises concerns about fairness and manipulation, particularly when product recommendations are disproportionately driven by promotion rather than consumer interest.

In this study, AI recommendation is modeled as a moderating variable, hypothesized to strengthen the effects of both discount framing and peer influence. When personalized suggestions match users' preferences and shopping behavior, the persuasive power of discounts or peer content may increase. Conversely, irrelevant or poorly matched recommendations may reduce attention or even create cognitive dissonance (Logg et al., 2019). This conceptualization is aligned with prior research on personalization, user experience, and adaptive marketing strategies.

H3: AI recommendation positively moderates the effect of discount framing on purchase decision

H4: AI recommendation positively moderates the effect of peer influence on purchase decision

METHODS

Research design

This study adopts a quantitative correlational design using a survey method. The research aims to examine the relationship between discount framing, peer influence, and

purchase decision, with AI recommendation acting as a moderating variable. A correlational approach is suitable for evaluating the strength and direction of association among variables without manipulating any conditions (Agustianti et al., 2022; Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

Population and Sampling

The population comprises female TikTok Shop users aged 26–35 in Jabodetabek who have purchased cosmetic products via the platform. Sampling was conducted using non-probability convenience sampling. Respondents were selected based on accessibility and alignment with predefined criteria: being female, within the specified age range, residing in the region, and having prior experience purchasing cosmetics via TikTok Shop (Sugiyono, 2019). A total of 200 respondents participated in this study, exceeding the minimum requirement for multivariate analysis, which recommends a sample size of at least 10 times the number of observed variables (Kock & Hadaya, 2018).

Measurement and Variables

This study consists of four main variables: discount framing and peer influence as independent variables, AI recommendation as the moderating variable, and purchase decision as the dependent variable. Each variable was measured using multiple indicators drawn from prior validated instruments. All items were presented in Bahasa Indonesia using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The discount framing construct consists of twelve indicators based on Shakti & Zuliarni (2019), while peer influence was measured using eighteen indicators from Gunawan et al., (2023). AI recommendation was assessed using fifteen indicators from Beyari & Garamoun (2022), and purchase decision included twelve indicators adapted from Fatmawati et al., (2023). Each construct was treated as a second-order construct, comprising several dimensions. Prior to full deployment, the instrument underwent a pilot test to ensure content clarity and face validity. The study uses an interval scale via the Likert format, which is suitable for capturing the intensity of agreement across multiple levels. Each statement was constructed to represent one of the conceptual dimensions of the variables, following standard practices in behavioral research (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016; Sugiyono, 2019).

Data Collection and Analysis

Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire distributed via Google Forms. Respondents were reached through online platforms and social media to ensure broad geographical access and cost-effective data gathering (Komariah & Satori, 2011). The use of digital forms was chosen due to its practicality and efficiency for large-scale quantitative surveys (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Data analysis was conducted using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with the SmartPLS 4.0 software. This analytical approach was selected because of its suitability for exploratory models with reflective constructs, and its ability to handle data that does not meet normality assumptions. Additionally, PLS-SEM supports the analysis of complex models with multiple indicators and higher-order constructs, which are relevant in this study. The decision to use PLS-SEM is supported by its advantages in flexibility, predictive accuracy, and robustness for relatively small to moderate sample sizes.

Measurement Model

The outer model in this study was used to assess the reliability and validity of the measurement instruments. Reliability was evaluated through Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability, where a Cronbach's Alpha value greater than 0.60 indicates basic reliability, and a Composite Reliability value greater than 0.70 suggests good internal consistency. In terms of validity, convergent validity was assessed by examining factor loadings and Average Variance Extracted (AVE), where acceptable thresholds are loading values above 0.70 and AVE values above 0.50. Discriminant validity was tested using the Fornell-Larcker Criterion, which compares the square root of AVE with the correlations between constructs to ensure that each construct is distinct and not overlapping conceptually. These tests collectively establish that the measurement items accurately and reliably capture the underlying theoretical constructs they are intended to measure.

Structural Model

The structural model was applied to examine the causal relationships between latent variables and to test the proposed hypotheses. The strength of the model was assessed using the coefficient of determination (R^2), which indicates how much variance in the dependent variable can be explained by the independent variables. An R^2 value above 0.75 indicates a strong model, above 0.50 indicates moderate strength, and above 0.25 is considered weak but acceptable. The significance of the relationships among constructs was determined using bootstrapping with 5,000 subsamples, applying a one-tailed test at a 5% significance level. A t-value greater than 1.645 was used as the threshold to determine statistical significance. Additionally, moderation analysis was conducted to examine the interaction effect of AI recommendations on the relationships between discount framing and peer influence with purchase decision. Because the study used second-order constructs, the structural analysis was carried out in two stages: the first stage assessed the relationships among the first-order dimensions, and the second stage analyzed the relationships among the higher-order latent variables. This two-step approach allows a more nuanced understanding of how individual dimensions contribute to broader conceptual constructs.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Measurement Model

The measurement model evaluation confirmed that all constructs met the required validity and reliability thresholds. All outer loadings exceeded the minimum recommended value of 0.70, and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for each construct were above 0.50, confirming convergent validity. Reliability was supported by Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values above 0.70 across all variables, indicating strong internal consistency. Discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell-Larcker criterion, with each construct's AVE square root greater than the inter-construct correlations, confirming satisfactory discriminant validity.

Structural Model

The structural model evaluation showed that the R^2 value for purchase decision was 0.614, indicating that the model explains approximately 61.4% of the variance in the purchase decision construct, which falls in the moderate-to-strong explanatory range (Hair et al., 2018). The Q^2 value was greater than zero, indicating predictive relevance of the model.

Hypothesis Testing

The hypothesis testing was conducted using the bootstrapping procedure in SmartPLS with 5,000 resamples. The statistical threshold for significance was based on a one-tailed test at a 5% significance level, where a t-value above 1.645 indicates a statistically significant result (Ghozali, 2014).

The results indicate that the path coefficient from discount framing to purchase decision was 0.302 with a t-value of 4.212, exceeding the threshold and confirming that discount framing has a significant positive influence on purchase decision. Similarly, the relationship between peer influence and purchase decision produced a path coefficient of 0.388 and a t-value of 5.095, also indicating a significant effect.

Regarding the moderating variable, the interaction between discount framing and AI recommendation on purchase decision showed a path coefficient of 0.148 with a t-value of 2.174, which is statistically significant at the 5% level. The interaction between peer influence and AI recommendation on purchase decision resulted in a path coefficient of 0.127 with a t-value of 2.043, also meeting the significance requirement. These results confirm that all four proposed hypotheses are supported. Discount framing and peer influence both have direct and significant effects on consumer purchase decisions, and these effects are further strengthened by the presence of AI-based recommendations that personalize and reinforce the relevance of both discount offers and social cues.

The results confirm that discount framing has a significant positive influence on consumer purchase decisions for cosmetic products on TikTok. This aligns with prior studies indicating that well-framed discount offers increase perceived value and urgency, especially in time-sensitive platforms like TikTok Shop (Fauzi & Sijabat, 2023; Hamonangan & Sutejo, 2023). The findings reinforce the idea that percentage-based and nominal discounts, as well as bonus offers, can serve as effective psychological cues to prompt impulsive buying.

Peer influence also emerged as a significant driver of purchase decision. This is consistent with studies highlighting the persuasive power of user-generated content, particularly on visual-based platforms like TikTok (Arsyalan & Ariyanti, 2019; Kamila et al., 2019). The fact that peer influence had a higher path coefficient than discount framing suggests that in the context of cosmetic purchases, social validation may be more impactful than price incentives.

Furthermore, the study found that AI recommendations significantly moderate the effects of both discount framing and peer influence on purchase decisions. When product recommendations align with user preferences, the impact of promotional strategies and peer feedback is amplified. This is consistent with previous literature suggesting that personalization increases relevance and user engagement (Logg et al., 2019). In this context, TikTok's algorithmic feed appears to enhance decision-making by reinforcing existing behavioral cues with tailored suggestions.

From a managerial perspective, these findings imply that brands operating in TikTok's social commerce ecosystem should adopt an integrated approach. This includes designing compelling discount structures, leveraging organic peer content, and collaborating with the platform's recommendation algorithms to maximize product visibility and purchase conversion. For researchers, the study provides empirical evidence on how traditional promotional and social influence mechanisms are transformed into algorithm-driven environments.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the influence of discount framing and peer influence on consumer purchase decisions on TikTok Shop, with particular attention to the moderating role of AI-based product recommendations. The research focused on cosmetic products, a sector that is actively marketed and consumed through short-form video content, peer engagement, and algorithmic personalization. In line with the increasing use of social commerce platforms, this study aimed to understand how marketing strategies, social interaction, and technology jointly shape consumer behavior in digital environments.

The results showed that discount framing has a positive and statistically significant effect on purchase decision. Promotional offers presented through various formats—such as percentage discounts, nominal reductions, bonus items, and limited-time deals—were found to influence consumers' perceptions of value and urgency. These findings support earlier research indicating that clearly framed discounts are more effective in triggering immediate purchasing responses, especially in fast-paced online platforms like TikTok.

Peer influence was also found to have a strong and significant effect on purchase decision. Content created or shared by other users, including product reviews, recommendations, or shared experiences, contributes to consumer trust and confidence. In the context of social commerce, where users are constantly exposed to peer-generated content, these social cues act as informal endorsements that help reduce uncertainty and strengthen purchase intentions. This suggests that consumers today are not only influenced by brand-driven communication but also rely heavily on input from others in their digital communities.

The findings also confirm the moderating role of AI recommendation systems. When product suggestions are perceived as relevant and aligned with the user's interests, they enhance the impact of both discount framing and peer influence. In this sense, AI-driven recommendations do not operate independently but work alongside traditional

marketing strategies and social inputs to reinforce the effectiveness of both. The personalization offered by TikTok's algorithm contributes to making each user's shopping experience more targeted and contextually relevant, increasing the likelihood of a purchase.

In conclusion, this study highlights the importance of integrating promotional strategies, peer-based communication, and technological support through AI to effectively influence consumer behavior in social commerce. Each of these elements plays a complementary role, and their combined presence creates a more persuasive environment for online purchasing. By understanding how these factors interact, businesses can design more effective digital marketing strategies, and researchers can better map the evolving patterns of consumer decision-making in algorithm-driven marketplaces.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the development of marketing and consumer behavior literature by integrating three important concepts: price framing, social influence, and artificial intelligence. The use of second-order constructs provides a more detailed view of how various dimensions of each variable work together to influence purchase decisions. Furthermore, the moderating role of AI adds a new element to the discussion about how consumer decisions are shaped not only by traditional psychological and social factors, but also by technology that adapts to individual preferences.

For business practitioners, especially those involved in social commerce and digital marketing, these results provide useful insights. Companies should pay attention to how discount information is presented—whether in the form of percentage, nominal value, or time-limited offers—so that it feels meaningful and urgent to consumers. Peer influence also needs to be managed properly, for example by encouraging real user reviews and organic engagement rather than relying solely on paid endorsements. Most importantly, companies should understand how to optimize content so that it is effectively distributed by the platform's recommendation system. This includes structuring content and campaigns to align with user behavior and interaction patterns, so that recommendations can support rather than compete with marketing messages.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

This research has several limitations. First, the sample was limited to a specific age group, gender, and geographic area, so the results cannot be generalized to all TikTok users or product categories. Second, AI recommendation was analyzed as a single construct, without breaking it down into aspects such as trust in the system or perceived accuracy. Future studies can explore these dimensions in more depth. Additionally, combining quantitative methods with qualitative approaches such as interviews or focus groups may offer richer insights into user perceptions and motivations. Research that includes longitudinal or experimental designs may also help in understanding how the influence of AI evolves over time.

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