

PERFORMATIVE QUALITY: DECONSTRUCTING PRODUCT QUALITY PERCEPTION IN THE TIKTOK LIVE SHOPPERTAINMENT TREND

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Abstract. *The shoppertainment phenomenon via TikTok Live has exploded, successfully revolutionizing consumer shopping behavior and creating new dynamics in product quality assessment. Products trending on this platform often sell out in minutes. This phenomenal success is not purely due to their intrinsic superiority but is more frequently driven by momentary urgency and real-time social validation created by the host. This research aims to deeply analyze how "product quality" is actually performatively constructed by the live host and how this instant perception subsequently affects consumers' impulsive purchase decisions, even before they touch the product. The study uses digital ethnography and qualitative content analysis to observe trending TikTok Live sessions, examining the dynamic interaction between the host, the product, and thousands of simultaneous audiences. The results clearly show a fundamental shift where the perception of quality has moved away from the product's physical attributes—such as raw materials, durability, or functionality—towards a highly visual and emotional performative validation. Quality is now defined by the host's personal charisma, coupled with their hyperbolic and persuasive product demonstration skills, and strongly supported by the number of viewers "fighting" for the item, reinforced by the rapid scroll of positive comments. The host actively and strategically uses artificial scarcity mechanisms like flash sales and "last stock" and instant on-screen testimonials to successfully build an illusion of high quality and massive market demand. The perceived quality during the live broadcast often overshadows or totally eclipses the product's actual quality that consumers will receive later. Consequently, consumers are caught in a collective FOMO and euphoria, willing to ignore rational considerations to acquire the trending product. The study concludes that in the trending TikTok Live ecosystem, "quality" is not a fixed product attribute but a social performance created and consumed instantly, with its success driven by trust in the influencer and the psychological pressure from the digital crowd.*

Keywords: *Performative Quality; Product Quality; Shoppertainment; TikTok Live.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of social commerce has undergone a radical transformation in the last decade, shifting from a simple digital catalog platform to a dynamic interactive ecosystem. Among the various platforms available, TikTok Live has emerged as a revolutionary force in shaping consumer behavior and creating a completely new product assessment mechanism, now known as shoppertainment (Lee & Zhang, 2023). At the heart of this shoppertainment revolution lies the host's ability to create the illusion of high quality and massive market demand through hyperbolic and persuasive demonstrations (Gong & Lee, 2020). Quality is now redefined as a function of the host's personal charisma, supported by instant social proof such as the number of viewers "scrambling" for items and a rapid stream of positive comments (Wang et al., 2023). The use of artificial scarcity mechanisms, such as flash sales and "last stock" claims, strategically injects elements of Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) and collective euphoria (Zhao & Dholakia, 2021). This phenomenon raises important questions about how consumers make decisions. When perceived quality dominates during live broadcasts, even to the point of overshadowing the actual quality that customers will receive later, purchases tend to be

impulsive and irrational. Therefore, this study aims to thoroughly analyze how TikTok Live hosts create “product quality” and how this instant perception influences consumers' impulsive decisions to purchase products, even before physical interaction with the product occurs.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Shoppertainment and Changes in Consumer Behavior

Shoppertainment is a concept that combines elements of entertainment and live commerce, significantly disrupting traditional consumer behavior. TikTok Live, as the primary platform, presents a more interactive and engaging shopping experience, with hosts capable of creating momentary urgency and real-time social validation through persuasive and charismatic product demonstrations (Nguyễn, 2024). Rahma's (2023) study shows how anchor/host attributes and product scarcity mechanisms significantly trigger impulsive purchasing decisions among TikTok Live users.

2.2 Construction of Product Quality Performativity

In the context of live commerce, perceptions of product quality shift from physical attributes such as raw materials or durability to performative representations constructed by the host. Product quality is socially constructed through the host's ability to communicate verbally and nonverbally exaggeratedly to build the illusion of scarcity and market validation, including the use of flash sales, limited stock, and live on-screen testimonials (Pathia, 2025). Chen (2023) adds that consistency signals and direct interaction in live broadcasts can reduce product quality uncertainty, even though the product has not actually been touched by consumers.

2.3 Performative Quality in the Live Shoppertainment Ecosystem

The phenomenon of shoppertainment on platforms like TikTok Live has revolutionized consumer shopping behavior, triggering a fundamental shift in product quality assessments. Traditionally, management literature has defined quality objectively based on physical attributes such as durability and functionality (Garvin, 1984). However, in today's fast-paced live streaming environment, perceived quality has transformed into **Performative Quality**, an emotional and visual social construct, no longer inherent in the product but rather in a staged performance. Quality is now predominantly determined by the host's personal charisma and their ability to deliver persuasive and hyperbolic product demonstrations, leveraging the trust established with influencers as a proxy for product quality assurance (Lou & Yuan, 2019).

2.4 Social Dynamics and Impulsive Triggers

The key to this model's success lies in exploiting crowd psychology and real-time persuasion mechanisms. The simultaneous presence of thousands of viewers allows for instant social validation (social proof), where the rapid scrolling of positive comments and the visualization of viewers "scrambling" for items collectively build the illusion of massive market demand, which then translates into perceptions of high quality (Cialdini, 1984). Recent empirical findings confirm that social validation is a significant factor directly driving impulse buying behavior in live streaming e-commerce (Zhang & Rosli, 2025). This pressure is amplified through the strategic use of artificial scarcity—such as flash sales and "last stock" claims—dramatized to create maximum urgency. The combination of collective euphoria, time pressure, and FOMO (Fear of Missing Out)—a dominant psychological trigger in the context of live commerce (Parveiz et al., 2023)—drives consumers to make impulsive buying decisions that override rational considerations, a finding that reinforces the literature on impulsivity drivers in e-commerce (He & Zhou, 2019).

2.5 Product Quality

According to Goetch and Davis in Tjiptono (2014:53), quality is a dynamic condition related to products, services, people, processes, and environments that meet or exceed expectations. According to Nanda Lima Krisna and Togi Purba (2017:75), a product is a term for goods, broadly interpreted and indicating something usually offered to the market by an organization or individual to satisfy needs or desires. According to Herlambang (2014:36), product quality is the ability of a product to perform its functions, including durability, reliability, accuracy, ease of operation and repair, and other valuable attributes. Indicators or benchmarks of product quality are important outcomes in influencing the success or failure of a product, which impacts marketing performance.

Product Quality is the ability of a product to perform its function, this includes the overall durability, reliability, accuracy, ease of operation, and repair of the product as well as other product attributes (Kotler and Armstrong: 2012 Freekley Steyfli Maramis, Jantje L Sepang, Agus Supandi Soegoto 2018). It is a characteristic of a product or service that depends on its ability to satisfy stated or implied consumer needs (Kotler and Armstrong, 2008: 272).

According to the 3 experts who argued above, they agree on the definition of product quality, namely that product quality is essentially a product's ability to meet or even exceed customer expectations and needs. Although their definitions differ, they agree that product quality relates to function, sustainability (durability), and other features that contribute to customer satisfaction

As explained by Herlambang and Kotler & Armstrong, with a focus on reliability, accuracy, ease of operation, and durability, all experts emphasize that product quality is primarily related to a product's ability to fulfill its intended function. Furthermore, Goetch and Davis, along with Tjiptono, state that quality also encompasses service, processes, and the environment, which collectively ensure that a product meets customer expectations.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

The research used a qualitative approach using digital ethnography and qualitative content analysis. Digital ethnography allows for detailed observation of the behaviors, interactions, and culture that form in the TikTok Live digital space, particularly in the context of shoppertainment (Maulana, 2024).

Data was obtained through direct digital participant observation during a trending TikTok Live session with high engagement. Researchers observed host behavior and audience reactions in real-time through video feeds and live comments. All broadcasts and chat interactions were collected and documented as primary data for further analysis (Evelina, 2020).

Data analysis was conducted using qualitative content analysis techniques to identify communicative and performative patterns in the host's delivery of product quality. The analysis focused on the host's verbal and nonverbal language, marketing strategies such as flash sales or "last stock," and audience social responses such as comments, likes, and other social evidence that contribute to perceived quality and impulse purchases (Daniel, 2011; Maulana, 2024).

Data validity was achieved through source triangulation by comparing live sessions from different hosts, then confirming findings with audience commentary data and utilizing video archive data. Reliability was maintained through step-by-step audit trail documentation and discussions between researchers to minimize subjective bias (Evelina, 2020).

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. TikTok Live Consumer Behavior Frequency

Pertanyaan	Sering	Jarang	Tidak Pernah	Sangat Sering
Menonton TikTok Live Shopping	5	6	0	1
Pembelian saat menonton Live	2	10	2	0
Pembelian Impulsif	2	8	2	0
Pengalaman FOMO	1	5	6	0
Kekecewaan Kualitas Fisik	0	10	2	0

Source: Persepsi Kualitas Produk dalam Tren Tiktok Live, 2025

Frequency and Purchase Patterns

The majority of respondents (around 64%) watch TikTok Live broadcasts "often" or "very often," while the frequency of product purchases during live broadcasts tends to be low: 73% "rarely" or "never." Impulse purchases are rare (82% of respondents rarely do them), and FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) due to last-stock announcements or flash sales is also rare (73%). The most popular product categories are clothing (45%) and skincare/bodycare (36%), followed by electronics.

Table 2. Product Category and Quality Perception

Kategori Produk	Jumlah Responden	Kualitas Setelah Terima (Sama/Lebih Baik)	Definisi Kualitas Dominan
Pakaian	6	sama: 4 Lebih Baik: 2	Atribut Fisik: 5 Harga/Nilai: 1
Skincare/ Bodycare	4	Sama: 2 Lebih Baik: 2	Atribut Fisik: 4
Elektronik	1	Sama: 1	Atribut Fisik: 1
Lainnya	1	Sama: 1	Harga/Nilai: 1

Source: Presepsi Kualitas Produk dalam Tren Tiktok Live, 2025

Product Quality Perception

Product quality upon receipt was generally "the same" as perceived during live use (73%), with a few cases of "better" (18%) and no cases of "worse." The most dominant definition of quality was "Physical Product Attributes" such as material, function, and durability (82%), followed by "Price/Resale Value" related to economic factors and discounts (18%). The level of disappointment with physical quality upon receipt was relatively low, with the majority rarely disappointed.

Table 3. Psychological Influence

Aspek	Sangat Berpengaruh/ Setuju	Berpengaruh/ Setuju	Biasa Saja
Karisma Host/Influencer	2	3	1
Komentar Positif Cepat	3	5	2

Source: Presepsi Kualitas Produk Dalam Tren Tiktok Live,2025

Host Influence and Comments

55% of respondents rated the host/influencer's charisma and trust as "influential" to "very influential" in convincing them of high product quality. The predominance of positive, immediate reviews in the comments section increased purchase confidence, with 73% either "agreeing" or "strongly agreeing." This influence was consistent across response timestamps, indicating that social media factors play a significant role, even though purchasing remains selective.

4.1 Discussion

Survey data from 12 respondents (November 25, 2025) showed positive perceptions of TikTok Live product quality (8 "same", 3 "better"), with a focus on physical attributes (8 cases) rather than Price (4 cases), in line with Kotler and Armstrong who define quality as the ability of a product to meet consistent needs. The influence of the host's performative (charisma had an effect in 5 cases) and positive comments (8 agreed) complemented Lou and Yuan's perspective, although FOMO and impulsiveness were low, creating high engagement but low conversion. The integration of these two theories is recommended for Indonesian live shopping strategies, combining tangible demonstrations and emotional interactions to increase ongoing purchases.

5. Conclusion

This research shows that in the context of TikTok Live shoppertainment, product quality perceptions shift dramatically from assessments based on physical attributes such as material, durability, and function to a performative construct constructed by the host through charisma, a convincing delivery, and direct social proof such as positive comments and deliberate scarcity mechanisms (such as flash sales and last-stock announcements). This illusion of quality significantly influences impulsive purchasing decisions, fueled by the fear of missing out (FOMO) and the euphoria generated by crowded digital interactions, even though actual purchase frequency remains low and the product quality consumers receive generally meets or even exceeds expectations.

A survey of 12 respondents confirmed that physical attributes remain the primary determinant of product quality upon receipt (82%), while host charisma (55%) and positive audience comments (73%) strongly influence consumer confidence in making purchases during the broadcast. This aligns with the findings of other research linking the quality of product information, online reviews, and live streaming with consumer purchase intentions on the TikTok Shop platform in Indonesia.

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