

# Hot Wheels And Tiktok Live Strategy: When Interactions Drive Unplanned Purchases

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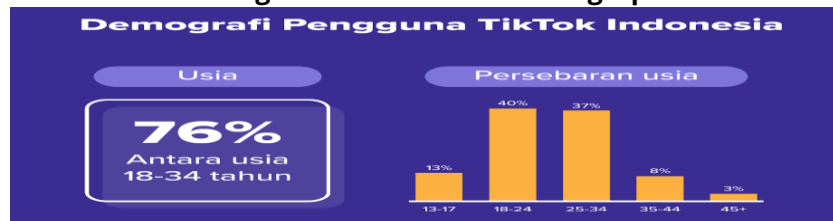
## ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze how social presence in e-commerce live streaming sessions affects consumers' impulse purchase behavior, specifically on Hot Wheels products. The approach used is Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR), focusing on three social stimuli-broadcasters, other viewers, and platforms-and two emotional responses, namely arousal and pleasure. Data were collected through a survey of 202 respondents who have participated in TikTok live streaming and are active buyers of Hot Wheels products. The analysis technique used Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The results showed that social presence significantly influenced consumers' emotional state, which then had a positive impact on impulse purchases. This study contributes to the digital marketing literature and offers practical insights for businesses in designing more effective live streaming strategies.

## INTRODUCTION

In the digital age, consumers are increasingly exposed to vast amounts of information through various social commerce platforms. Their decision-making process is no longer based solely on direct advertising but also on peer reviews, influencer content, and interactive communication. Park and Kim (2008) assert that consumer knowledge plays a crucial role in how individuals interpret and respond to electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), making it essential for marketers to craft messages that resonate with informed audiences. In platforms like TikTok, where messages are delivered rapidly and casually, the consumer's ability to filter and process these messages determines their susceptibility to impulsive buying.

Live streaming e-commerce has emerged as an innovative marketing approach that combines entertainment, social interaction, and transactions in one real-time shopping experience. Platforms like TikTok capitalize on this trend through TikTok Live and TikTok Shop, allowing sellers to interact directly with consumers and drive higher engagement.

**Figure 1 TikTok User Demographics**

As shown in Figure 1, the majority of TikTok users are in the 18–34 age range (76%), consisting of 18–24 year olds (40%) and 25–34 year olds (36%). This segmentation reflects a digitally savvy audience that is highly reactive to visual stimuli and social interaction. This indicates a strong potential to influence impulse purchase decisions through live streaming experiences that are interactive and emotionally engaging.

With the rise of social commerce, trust in the platform has become just as crucial as trust in the individual sellers. Consumers are not only influenced by the appeal of the broadcaster but also by the perceived credibility and security of the platform facilitating the transaction. Pavlou and Gefen (2004) emphasize that institution-based trust—such as the reliability of the platform’s payment system, content moderation, and return policies—plays a pivotal role in shaping online purchase intentions. In the context of TikTok Live, where transactions occur swiftly and impulsively, the underlying trust in the platform ensures that consumers feel secure in their decision-making. The rapid evolution of digital technologies has introduced sophisticated mechanisms to capture user attention and engagement. Features such as real-time notifications, algorithm-driven content exposure, and interactive prompts on platforms like TikTok represent a form of push–pull technology. Xu et al. (2010) note that such mechanisms play a critical role in consumers’ privacy calculus, where perceived benefits from engagement are weighed against potential privacy risks. In impulsive purchase contexts, these technological triggers can reduce deliberation time and increase susceptibility to spontaneous decisions, especially when emotional responses are heightened.

Digital platforms are increasingly simulating the dynamics of traditional customer service through real-time, interactive features. In live commerce settings like TikTok Live, the host often takes on the role of a virtual service agent, directly addressing questions, showcasing products, and responding to viewer comments. Verhagen et al. (2014) explain that the combination of social presence and personalization in such encounters enhances consumer trust and satisfaction, ultimately contributing to purchasing decisions. These service-like interactions blur the lines between entertainment and transaction, creating a fertile ground for impulsive buying.

One form of consumer behavior that stands out in the context of live streaming is impulse buying, which is a purchase made spontaneously without prior planning. This behavior is often triggered by the social presence of the broadcaster, interactions with other viewers, and the emotional atmosphere created during the broadcast—through body language, expressions, limited-time discounts, and rapid responses. High-collectibility products such as Hot Wheels are ideal for this study because they can quickly spark emotional engagement.

**Figure 2 gross sales of Mattel's Hot Wheels brand**

Figure 2 shows that Hot Wheels has experienced a significant increase in global sales, driven in part by digital strategies such as live streaming. The brand's strong image and active collector community make it highly responsive to emotional and social stimuli, making it a representative object for studying impulse buying behavior in the context of live commerce.'

This study aims to analyze the influence of social presence in live streaming on consumer emotions—namely arousal and pleasure—and how these emotions affect impulse purchases. This research adopts the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) framework as its theoretical foundation, and applies a quantitative approach using Partial Least Squares - Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) for analysis.

The results of this study are expected to contribute to the digital marketing literature and offer practical insights for businesses, particularly MSMEs, to optimize live streaming strategies. By understanding how to trigger consumer emotional engagement, businesses can increase spontaneous sales conversions and enhance the effectiveness of digital selling practices.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

This research is grounded in the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) theoretical framework, first introduced by Mehrabian and Russell (1974). The SOR model explains that an external stimulus (stimulus) can influence an individual's internal condition (organism), which ultimately results in a behavioral response (response). In the context of digital marketing, this model is widely adopted to understand how interactive elements—such as live streaming—impact consumer behavior both emotionally and cognitively.

Several studies have utilized the SOR model to analyze purchasing behavior in live streaming e-commerce. Li, Wang, and Cao (2022) demonstrated that social presence—whether from broadcasters, viewers, or the platform—can evoke emotional responses, particularly arousal and pleasure, which are strongly associated with impulse purchasing behavior. Similarly, Zhang et al. (2022) and Peng and Liang (2021) confirmed that both arousal and pleasure significantly influence impulse buying in digital commerce environments.

The role of the broadcaster is also essential in this interaction. Chen et al. (2021) emphasize that the broadcaster's charisma, communication style, and responsiveness can build trust and deepen emotional engagement with the audience. Supporting this, Lim et al. (2017) found that the persuasive power of influencers, combined with emotional connection, strongly affects consumer attitudes and impulse purchase intentions.

Beyond the individual, Lu, Fan, and Zhou (2016) highlighted the role of social presence in building consumer trust, which in turn positively influences purchase intention in social commerce. The presence of others in the broadcast—such as other viewers—also fosters a collective emotional atmosphere. Wongkitrungrueng and Assarut (2020) found that real-time comment interactions among viewers enhance this atmosphere and significantly impact impulsive decision-making.

From a platform experience perspective, Mollen and Wilson (2010) assert that consumer engagement is shaped by interactivity and telepresence, which create immersive experiences and elevate emotional intensity. In platforms like TikTok Live, this combination of real-time interaction, entertainment, and authenticity enhances consumers' sense of presence and deepens their engagement, potentially leading to unplanned purchases.

Environmental and visual factors also play a major role. According to Eroglu, Machleit, and Davis (2001), the atmospheric qualities of an online retail environment—such as design, visuals, and layout—can shape consumer perceptions and emotional responses, making them critical in triggering impulsive buying. Arousal can be induced by visually engaging presentations and time-limited offers like flash sales, while pleasure arises from comfort, satisfaction, and enjoyment during the live viewing experience.

Underlying these emotional and experiential factors is trust, which serves as a core determinant of sustained consumer behavior. Chen, Zhang, and Xu (2009) suggest that mutual

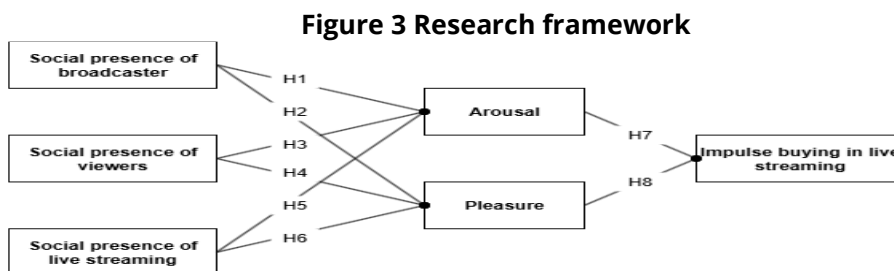
trust between users and the platform fosters stable relationships, promoting repeat transactions and engagement. In virtual communities, Bagozzi and Dholakia (2002) argue that intentional social actions—driven by purposeful interactions—play a pivotal role in shaping consumers’ decisions.

Further supporting this notion, Yoningsih and Mulyana (2025) demonstrated that in the context of green tourism marketing, trust formed through emotionally resonant strategies can significantly influence consumers’ intentions to purchase eco-friendly products. This finding aligns with the present study’s focus on emotional and psychological dimensions—such as trust, pleasure, and arousal—as key drivers of both impulsive and planned purchases in social commerce.

While prior research has explored impulse buying behavior across various digital platforms, few have specifically investigated the role of social presence in live streaming commerce within the context of collectible products such as Hot Wheels. These products carry unique emotional and communal significance, making them ideal subjects for understanding emotionally driven purchase behaviors. Therefore, this study seeks to bridge this gap by integrating theoretical and empirical insights within the local Indonesian context.

**METHODS**

This study uses an explanatory quantitative approach to examine the relationship between social presence in e-commerce live streaming and consumer impulse buying behavior. The theoretical framework used is Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) which explains how social stimulus affects emotional states (organism) and produces behavior (response). The conceptual model in this study examines the influence of three social stimuli - the presence of the broadcaster, other viewers, and the features of the live streaming platform - on two consumer emotional responses, namely arousal and pleasure, which then affect impulse buying.



**Population And Sampling Techniques**

The population in this study are TikTok users in Indonesia who have participated in a live streaming session of Hot Wheels product sales in the last three months. The study used purposive sampling technique, with the following criteria:

- Respondents are at least 17 years old
- Have watched TikTok live and purchased Hot Wheels products
- Actively using TikTok Shop

The total number of respondents collected was 202. This number has met the minimum recommended limit of PLS-SEM analysis for complex models.

**Table 1 Characteristics of the Research Sample**

Characteristics	Category	Percentage (%)
Gender	Men	64
	Women	36
Age	18–24 tahun	40

	25-34 tahun	36
Last Education	High school/equivalent	28
	Diploma/Bachelor's Degree	72
Purchase Platform	TikTok Shop	85

### Operational Definitions And Variable Measurements

All variables are measured using indicators adapted from previous research and measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). The following is a summary of variable operationalization:

- Broadcaster: Quality of communication, trust and interaction of broadcasters
- Viewers: Other audience interaction and participation
- Platform Live Streaming: Ease of use, responsiveness, and social features
- Arousal: A sense of excitement, tension, and passion while watching
- Pleasure: Feeling happy, comfortable, and entertained during broadcasts
- Impulse Buying: The act of buying a product spontaneously without a plan

Each construct is measured by a minimum of three indicators, and has been tested for validity and reliability through outer model testing.

### Data Analysis Techniques

Data were analyzed using SmartPLS 4 software with two main stages. The data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), which is suitable for complex models and predictive analysis. The procedure followed the recommendations by Hair et al. (2017), including measurement model evaluation (validity and reliability) and structural model testing.

#### 1. Outer Model Evaluation

- Validitas Convergen (Outer loading > 0.70, AVE > 0.50)
- Validitas Discriminatory (cross-loading, HTMT)
- Reliabilitas Construct (Cronbach's Alpha & Composite Reliability > 0.70)

#### 2. Inner Model Evaluation (Structural)

- R-Square (R<sup>2</sup>) Test: Measures the predictive power of the independent variable on the dependent.
- Q-Square (Q<sup>2</sup>) Test: Testing the predictive relevance of the model
- Path Coefficient Significance Test through bootstrapping (5000 subsample)
- Mediation Test of arousal and pleasure on impulse buying

### Research Ethics

This research took into account the principles of anonymity, voluntariness, and data confidentiality. Each respondent was given information regarding the purpose of the study and given the freedom not to answer if they felt uncomfortable.

## RESULT

### Outer Model Evaluation

The evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) was conducted to ensure that the constructs used in this study meet the criteria of validity and reliability. This process was guided by the standards proposed by Fornell and Larcker (1981), which state that convergent validity is achieved when the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) exceeds 0.50, and composite reliability (CR) is above 0.70. The results of the analysis demonstrate that all indicators have loading factor values greater than 0.70, indicating strong indicator reliability. Furthermore, the AVE values for all constructs exceed 0.50, confirming the presence of convergent validity. In terms of reliability, both Composite Reliability (CR) and Cronbach's Alpha values are above 0.70,

which signifies that the measurement model is internally consistent and the constructs are reliable for further analysis.

### Inner Model Evaluation

After the measurement model is declared valid and reliable, structural model testing (inner model) is carried out to test the relationship between variables in the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) framework.

**Table 2 Summary of Hypothesis Test Results**

No	Relationship between Variables	Path Coefficient	t Value	Decision
1	Broadcaster → Arousal	0.344	6.112	Significant (+)
2	Broadcaster → Pleasure	0.332	5.901	Significant (+)
3	Viewers → Arousal	0.210	3.892	Significant (+)
4	Viewers → Pleasure	0.187	3.421	Significant (+)
5	Platform → Arousal	0.198	3.745	Significant (+)
6	Platform → Pleasure	0.224	4.109	Significant (+)
7	Arousal → Impulse Buying	0.361	7.102	Significant (+)
8	Pleasure → Impulse Buying	0.327	6.554	Significant (+)

This table shows that all paths in the SOR model are statistically Significant ( $p < 0.05$ ).

### R-Square And Q-Square Value

- $R^2$  Arousal = 0.472
- $R^2$  Pleasure = 0.489
- $R^2$  Impulse Buying = 0.523

The R-Square value indicates that the stimulus variables (broadcaster, viewers, and platform) are able to explain 47-52% of the variation in arousal, pleasure, and impulse buying. Meanwhile, the  $Q^2$  value  $> 0$  indicates that the model has good predictive relevance to endogenous variables.

### Interpretation Of Findings

The results showed that the social presence of the broadcaster, other viewers, and the platform significantly increased the emotions of arousal and pleasure. These emotions ultimately encourage consumers to make impulse purchases. This finding corroborates the SOR model, where social factors in live streaming interactions are shown to play a role as a trigger for emotional and spontaneous purchase decisions.

## CONCLUSION

This study aimed to analyze the influence of social presence in e-commerce live streaming on impulse buying behavior, utilizing the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) theoretical framework. The findings reveal that the perceived social presence of broadcasters, fellow viewers, and the platform significantly influences consumers' emotional responses—specifically arousal and pleasure. These emotional responses, in turn, have a positive and significant effect on consumers' impulse buying decisions.

The results affirm the relevance and applicability of the SOR model in explaining how interactive social elements in live streaming environments can evoke emotional engagement and drive spontaneous purchase behavior, particularly for collectible products such as Hot Wheels. This study not only contributes to the theoretical advancement of digital marketing and consumer behavior literature but also offers practical insights for businesses to develop emotionally engaging and interactive live streaming strategies to enhance purchase conversions.

Furthermore, the findings align with the conclusions of Makmun et al. (2025), who assert that the ability to adapt to digital transformation is essential for businesses and institutions to remain competitive in an increasingly digital consumer landscape. As such, adopting strategies that foster emotional connection through live streaming can be a key differentiator in driving consumer loyalty and sales performance in the modern e-commerce environment.

## LIMITATION

This study has several limitations that need to be considered in reading and applying the results. First, the scope of this study is limited to TikTok users who have purchased Hot Wheels products through live streaming sessions. The focus on one type of product and one particular platform makes the generalizability of these findings limited if applied to other product categories or different e-commerce platforms.

Second, the sampling technique used is non-probabilistic, namely purposive sampling. While this technique is effective for capturing respondents with specific criteria, it does not guarantee broad population representation and opens up the possibility of selection bias.

Third, the cross-sectional research design only records data at one specific time. This means that the dynamics of changes in consumer behavior over time cannot be observed, including how impulse buying may change in the long term.

Finally, while the research model has examined the relationship between social and emotional variables, it has not considered other external factors such as price, discounts, time pressure, or other promotional strategies that may also influence impulse behavior during live streaming.

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