

The Role of Product Design in Purchase Intention: Mediating Effects of eWOM Intention and Hedonic Value in Social Commerce

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study examines the effect of product design on purchase intention in social commerce, particularly TikTok Shop, by analyzing the mediating roles of hedonic value and eWOM intention.

Research Method: A quantitative approach using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was employed. Data were collected from TikTok users through purposive sampling. The constructs measured include product design, hedonic value, eWOM intention, and purchase intention, analyzed using SmartPLS.

Results and Discussion: The results show that product design significantly influences both hedonic value and eWOM intention. Both variables significantly affect purchase intention, with eWOM intention showing a stronger effect. The direct effect of product design on purchase intention is not significant when mediators are included but becomes significant when excluded, indicating full mediation. This suggests that product design influences purchase intention indirectly through emotional and social mechanisms, with social influence playing a more dominant role.

Implications: The findings highlight the importance of integrating emotional and social strategies in social commerce. Businesses should focus on encouraging user interaction and content sharing rather than relying solely on visual appeal.

Originality: This study offers a novel integrated model demonstrating that eWOM intention is a more dominant mediator than hedonic value in visual-based social commerce environments.

Keywords: product design; eWOM intention; hedonic value; purchase intention; TikTok Shop.

1. Introduction

The rapid development of social commerce has significantly transformed how consumers interact with products and make purchasing decisions in digital environments. Unlike traditional e-commerce platforms that rely heavily on search-based behavior and functional evaluation, contemporary platforms such as TikTok Shop operate in a visual, content-driven ecosystem where algorithmic recommendations and user engagement largely determine product exposure. In this context, consumers are not necessarily driven by pre-existing purchase intentions, but rather by spontaneous discovery processes



triggered by visually appealing content (Teo et al., 2023). This shift reflects a broader transformation from search-based shopping to discovery-based shopping, where consumption is increasingly influenced by entertainment-oriented interactions rather than purely rational evaluation. Consequently, product design—particularly its visual and aesthetic dimensions—has emerged as a critical factor in capturing consumer attention and influencing decision-making in highly competitive and information-dense digital marketplaces.

Within visually mediated environments, product design functions as more than a representation of functional attributes; it serves as a primary communication tool that conveys meaning, identity, and experiential value. Prior research suggests that visual aesthetics play a pivotal role in facilitating information processing by helping consumers navigate attention distraction and choice overload in digital platforms (Yang et al., 2021). In digital commerce settings, the effective use of technology and innovation has been shown to enhance the delivery and interpretation of product information, thereby strengthening consumer engagement in online environments (Syahnur, 2024). In environments characterized by continuous scrolling and rapid content exposure, consumers allocate attention selectively, often relying on visual cues to determine which products deserve further cognitive processing. As a result, products that are visually distinctive and aesthetically appealing are more likely to be noticed, processed, and evaluated compared to those that rely solely on textual or technical information.

To provide a more structured theoretical explanation of this process, this study adopts the Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) framework as its primary foundation. The SOR framework posits that external environmental stimuli influence individuals' internal psychological states, which subsequently shape their behavioral responses (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). Within the context of social commerce, product design can be conceptualized as a visual stimulus that captures consumer attention and initiates cognitive and affective processing. These internal reactions are reflected in hedonic value as an emotional response and in eWOM intention as a socially driven behavioral tendency, ultimately leading to purchase intention as the final behavioral outcome.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows. Section 2 provides a literature review and hypothesis development. Section 3 presents the research method and design. Section 4 provides a discussion. Section 5 is Concluding Remarks and Recommendations.

2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

Product design has evolved from a purely functional attribute to a strategic element that integrates aesthetic, symbolic, and experiential dimensions to influence consumer behavior. In digital environments, particularly on social commerce platforms, product design serves as a primary visual stimulus that shapes consumers' initial perceptions and subsequent behavioral responses. To establish a stronger theoretical foundation, this study adopts the Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) framework as the primary lens for explaining consumer behavior in social commerce. The SOR framework posits that environmental stimuli influence individuals' internal psychological states, which subsequently shape their behavioral responses (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). In this context, product design is conceptualized as a visual stimulus that initiates both cognitive and affective processing. These internal processes are reflected in hedonic value as an emotional response and in eWOM intention as a socially oriented behavioral tendency, ultimately leading to purchase intention as the final behavioral outcome.



From an affective perspective, the influence of product design is primarily manifested through hedonic value, which reflects the emotional and experiential benefits derived from product interaction. Hedonic value represents the degree to which consumers experience pleasure, enjoyment, and excitement when exposed to a product, particularly one that is visually appealing. Empirical evidence indicates that visual appeal significantly enhances hedonic value, as consumers tend to associate aesthetic design with positive emotional experiences (Batara et al., 2024; Teo et al., 2023). In social commerce contexts, where visual presentation dominates product exposure, hedonic value becomes a central mechanism that translates design stimuli into emotional engagement. This emotional engagement, in turn, strengthens consumers' attachment to the product and increases their likelihood of forming favorable purchase intentions.

H1: *Product design positively affects hedonic value.*

Beyond emotional responses, product design also influences consumer behavior through social mechanisms, particularly eWOM intention. eWOM intention refers to consumers' willingness to share, recommend, or discuss product-related information within online platforms. In social commerce, visually attractive products are more likely to be shared because they facilitate self-expression, social recognition, and identity construction (Liu et al., 2022; Wien, 2019). Additionally, consumers are motivated to engage in eWOM due to social support and altruistic considerations, such as helping others make informed purchasing decisions (Al-Omouh & Alqirem, 2023; Çadırcı et al., 2015). The visibility and aesthetic quality of a product significantly increase the likelihood that consumers will create or share content about it, thereby amplifying its reach and influence. Therefore, product design is expected to influence consumers' intention to engage in eWOM positively.

H2: *Product design positively affects eWOM intention.*

Hedonic value also plays a crucial role in shaping purchase intention, particularly in environments where experiential and emotional factors drive consumption. Consumers who derive pleasure from interacting with a product are more likely to develop favorable attitudes and stronger purchase intentions. Previous studies demonstrate that hedonic value is a significant predictor of purchase intention, especially in contexts where aesthetic and experiential attributes are emphasized (Batara et al., 2024; Choi, 2019). On social commerce platforms such as TikTok Shop, where consumer engagement is largely driven by visual and entertainment-based content, hedonic value becomes a dominant factor influencing purchasing decisions. Emotional satisfaction derived from product design not only enhances immediate attraction but also reduces the need for extensive rational evaluation, thereby facilitating quicker decision-making.

H3: *Hedonic value has a positive effect on purchase intention.*

Similarly, eWOM intention serves as a critical social mechanism influencing purchase intention. When consumers actively share or engage with product-related content, they contribute to the formation of social proof, which significantly influences other consumers' decision-making. Research shows that eWOM plays a vital role in shaping purchase intention by increasing product credibility, trust, and perceived value (Luo et al., 2020; Al-Habib & Albari, 2024). In social commerce environments, where user-generated content and peer recommendations are highly influential, eWOM becomes a key driver of consumer behavior. Furthermore, sharing or recommending a product often reinforces an individual's purchase intention by creating cognitive consistency between expressed opinions and behavioral

intentions. Thus, eWOM intention not only affects others but also strengthens the individual's own likelihood of purchasing.

H4: *eWOM intention has a positive effect on purchase intention.*

In addition to indirect effects, product design may also exert a direct influence on purchase intention. Visually appealing products can immediately attract consumers and generate a desire to purchase without necessarily requiring mediation through emotional or social processes. This direct effect is particularly relevant in fast-paced digital environments where consumers make rapid decisions based on visual impressions. Prior research indicates that design aesthetics can directly influence consumer preferences and purchase behavior, especially when time for evaluation is limited (Yang et al., 2021). Therefore, it is important to account for the direct relationship between product design and purchase intention, as well as the mediating mechanisms.

H5: *Product design has a positive effect on purchase intention.*

Given the roles of hedonic value and eWOM intention as internal and external mechanisms, respectively, it is also necessary to examine their mediating effects in the relationship between product design and purchase intention. Hedonic value mediates this relationship by translating visual stimuli into emotional responses that influence purchasing decisions. At the same time, eWOM intention mediates the relationship by extending the influence of product design into the social domain, where shared experiences and recommendations shape consumer perceptions and behaviors. Previous studies support the importance of both emotional and social pathways in influencing consumer decisions, suggesting that these mechanisms operate simultaneously rather than independently (Batara et al., 2024; Liu et al., 2022).

H6: *Hedonic value mediates the relationship between product design and purchase intention.*

H7: *eWOM intention mediates the relationship between product design and purchase intention.*

From a psychological perspective, the impact of product design can be understood through its ability to generate hedonic value, which reflects the pleasure, enjoyment, and emotional satisfaction experienced by consumers during product interaction. The relationship between visual appeal and hedonic value has been consistently supported in the marketing literature, with aesthetically pleasing designs shown to enhance perceived enjoyment significantly (Batara et al., 2024; Teo et al., 2023). Empirical findings indicate that visual appeal has a strong positive effect on hedonic value ($t = 3.980$; $p < 0.001$), which in turn serves as a key driver of purchase intention ($t = 7.672$) (Batara et al., 2024). When consumers encounter visually attractive products, they do not merely evaluate functional attributes; instead, they experience an immediate affective response characterized by pleasure and emotional engagement. This process suggests that product design functions as a stimulus that transforms cognitive evaluation into an affective response, ultimately influencing behavioral outcomes. In this sense, hedonic value serves as an internal mechanism that translates visual stimuli into emotional experiences, shaping consumer decision-making.

In the context of social commerce, aesthetic experience extends beyond individual emotional responses to foster deeper engagement with products. Research indicates that aesthetic experience, encompassing both enjoyment and facilitating conditions, significantly influences purchase intention by creating meaningful interactions between consumers and products (Choi, 2019). Products that exhibit strong visual identity and design uniqueness enhance product visibility and stimulate curiosity,

encouraging consumers to explore them beyond their functional attributes (As' ad et al., 2019; Carolin & Kurniawati, 2025). This dynamic illustrates that hedonic value is not merely a passive reaction but an active driver of engagement, strengthening the relationship between consumers and products. Moreover, aesthetic experience increases the likelihood that consumers will spend more time interacting with product-related content, thereby reinforcing both emotional attachment and purchase motivation.

Beyond its emotional impact, product design also plays a critical role in shaping cognitive processes during decision-making. In digital environments characterized by information overload, consumers often struggle to evaluate multiple alternatives simultaneously. Visual aesthetics help reduce cognitive burden by enabling consumers to quickly identify and prioritize products based on visual preference (Yang et al., 2021). Furthermore, emotionally driven responses triggered by design can override rational deliberation, increasing the likelihood of impulsive purchasing behaviors (Teo et al., 2023). This suggests that product design serves not only as a communication tool but also as a decision-making shortcut, simplifying complex evaluation processes. By activating emotional responses, design allows consumers to bypass extensive cognitive effort, thereby accelerating the transition from product exposure to purchase intention.

However, the influence of product design in social commerce extends beyond the individual level. Instead, it extends into the social domain through eWOM, which represents consumers' intention to share, recommend, or discuss products within online communities. Consumers are motivated to engage in eWOM due to a combination of psychological and social factors, including social support, concern for others, self-enhancement, and altruism (Al-Omouh & Alqirem, 2023; Çadırcı Ozansoy & Ayşegül, 2015; Liu et al., 2022; Sheikh et al., 2019; Wien, 2019). Social support plays a dual role by enabling consumers to provide informational assistance and emotional reassurance to others, thereby strengthening relational bonds within digital communities. At the same time, self-enhancement motives encourage individuals to share product experiences to express their identity and gain social recognition. Additionally, altruistic motivations drive consumers to share product-related information to help others make informed decisions voluntarily. These diverse motivations collectively highlight that eWOM is not merely a communication behavior but a socially embedded mechanism that reflects deeper psychological and relational dynamics.

From a relational perspective, factors such as trust, satisfaction, and relationship quality further reinforce consumers' willingness to engage in eWOM. Consumers who perceive higher levels of trust and satisfaction are more likely to share positive experiences and recommend products to others (Al-Habib & Albari, 2024; Luo et al., 2020). Prior research also indicates that electronic word-of-mouth plays a significant role in shaping consumer attitudes and purchase intentions through relational mechanisms such as trust and brand perception (Bundu et al., 2024). Relationship quality, characterized by commitment and emotional attachment, has been identified as a key predictor of social commerce participation and sharing behavior (Said et al., 2020; Sheikh et al., 2019; Syahnur & Bahari, 2023). Moreover, platform-related factors, including ease of sharing and interaction features, facilitate the creation and dissemination of eWOM, thereby amplifying product visibility and influence (Dewi, 2021). Through continuous cycles of content production, sharing, and consumption, eWOM creates a network effect that extends the impact of product design beyond individual perception to collective validation. In this process, product visibility becomes a crucial determinant of consumer behavior, as products that gain higher exposure are more likely to influence broader audiences (Carolin & Kurniawati, 2025).

The interplay between emotional and social mechanisms becomes particularly salient in the context of TikTok Shop, where purchasing decisions are shaped by both hedonic experiences and social

validation. Unlike traditional e-commerce platforms that emphasize rational evaluation and planned purchasing, TikTok Shop operates within a discovery-based model in which consumers encounter products through entertainment-oriented content (Teo et al., 2023). The integration of short-form videos, live streaming, and real-time interaction enables sellers to present products in dynamic, immersive ways, thereby enhancing both emotional engagement and social influence. Additionally, the platform’s algorithmic system determines product visibility based on user interactions, making visual appeal a key determinant of exposure (Carolin & Kurniawati, 2025). If a product fails to capture attention visually, it is unlikely to appear in users’ feeds, effectively preventing the purchasing process from even beginning. This highlights that, within TikTok Shop, product design is not only a factor influencing decision-making but also a prerequisite for market visibility.

Despite the growing body of research on social commerce, prior studies tend to examine the influence of product design, emotional responses, and social interaction mechanisms in a fragmented manner. Existing research often focuses on either hedonic value or eWOM independently, without fully integrating these elements into a unified framework that captures their simultaneous effects. This fragmented approach limits understanding of how product design functions as both an emotional stimulus and a social trigger in highly interactive digital environments. In particular, limited attention has been given to explaining how hedonic value and eWOM intention function as dual mediating mechanisms that collectively shape purchase intention in visual-based platforms. This gap is especially relevant in the context of TikTok Shop, where consumer behavior is shaped by the interplay between emotional experience and social validation rather than by isolated factors.

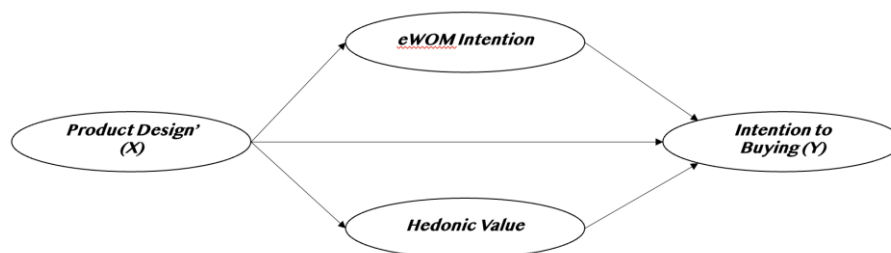


Figure 1. Theoretical Framework

This study proposes a conceptual framework that positions product design as a key antecedent of purchase intention through two mediating mechanisms: hedonic value and eWOM intention. Hedonic value represents the internal emotional pathway through which visual stimuli generate pleasure and engagement. At the same time, eWOM intention reflects the external social pathway through which product experiences are shared and validated within online communities. By integrating these dual mechanisms, this study aims to provide a more comprehensive understanding of consumer decision-making in social commerce environments. The proposed framework not only addresses existing gaps in the literature but also offers a more holistic perspective on how visual aesthetics, emotional response, and social interaction jointly influence purchasing behavior.

3. Research Method

This study employs a quantitative research design to examine the influence of product design on purchase intention, with hedonic value and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) intention as mediating

variables in the context of social commerce. The choice of a quantitative approach is appropriate, as the objective of this study is to test causal relationships among constructs that are theoretically grounded in prior literature. The quantitative approach is used to test causal relationships among theoretically grounded constructs using structural equation modeling (SEM) (Sarstedt et al., 2021).

The population of this study consists of consumers who have experience using TikTok Shop as a social commerce platform. This context is deliberately chosen because TikTok Shop is a discovery-based shopping environment in which consumer decisions are strongly influenced by visual content and social interaction (Teo et al., 2023). The unit of analysis is individual consumers who have at least once viewed, interacted with, or purchased products through TikTok Shop. The sampling technique used in this study is purposive sampling, as respondents are selected based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives. These criteria include: (1) individuals who actively use TikTok, (2) individuals who have been exposed to product-related content on TikTok Shop, and (3) individuals who have considered or made a purchase through the platform. This approach ensures that the collected data are relevant to the research context (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). The target sample size is set at a minimum of 150 respondents to meet SEM requirements (Hair et al., 2021)

Data collection in this study is conducted using a structured questionnaire distributed online through digital platforms such as Google Forms. The use of online questionnaires is suitable given the digital nature of the research context and the target population, which primarily consists of social media users. The questionnaire measures product design, hedonic value, eWOM intention, and purchase intention using multiple indicators adapted from validated studies. Product design is operationalized using indicators of visual appeal, aesthetic quality, and design uniqueness (Yang et al., 2021). Hedonic value is measured through indicators reflecting perceived enjoyment, emotional pleasure, and experiential satisfaction (Batara et al., 2024; Choi, 2019). eWOM intention is assessed using indicators related to willingness to share, recommend, and discuss products in online environments (Liu et al., 2022; Al-Omouh & Alqirem, 2023). Purchase intention is measured using indicators that reflect the likelihood, willingness, and intention to purchase products (Teo et al., 2023). All items are measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), which allows for the capture of the intensity of respondents' perceptions in a consistent and quantifiable manner. To ensure that the instrument is reliable and valid, a pilot test is conducted with a small group of respondents prior to the main data collection. Reliability is evaluated using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (>0.70), while convergent validity is assessed through AVE (>0.50). Discriminant validity is evaluated using the Fornell-Larcker criterion and cross-loading analysis (Hair et al., 2021).

The data collected in this study consist of quantitative responses reflecting respondents' perceptions and behavioral intentions. Data screening is conducted to remove incomplete or inconsistent responses, followed by descriptive statistics to summarize respondent characteristics such as age, gender, and TikTok usage frequency. The data analysis technique used in this study is Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), implemented using SmartPLS software. PLS-SEM is chosen because it is suitable for exploratory and predictive research, particularly when the model includes multiple constructs and mediating relationships (Hair et al., 2021). Additionally, PLS-SEM does not require strict assumptions of normality and is robust for relatively small sample sizes, making it appropriate for this study. The analysis is conducted in two stages: measurement model evaluation and structural model evaluation (Arifin et al., 2023).

In the structural model evaluation, path coefficients are estimated to determine the strength and direction of relationships between constructs. The significance of these relationships is assessed

using bootstrapping procedures with a recommended number of resamples (e.g., 5,000 subsamples) to generate t-statistics and p-values (Hair et al., 2021). The coefficient of determination (R^2) is used to evaluate the explanatory power of the model, indicating the proportion of variance in the dependent variable explained by the independent variables. The mediating effects of hedonic value and eWOM intention are examined using indirect effect analysis within the PLS-SEM framework. The significance of mediation is assessed using bootstrapped t-statistics and p-values for the indirect paths. This approach allows for identifying whether the influence of product design on purchase intention occurs directly or indirectly through mediating variables.

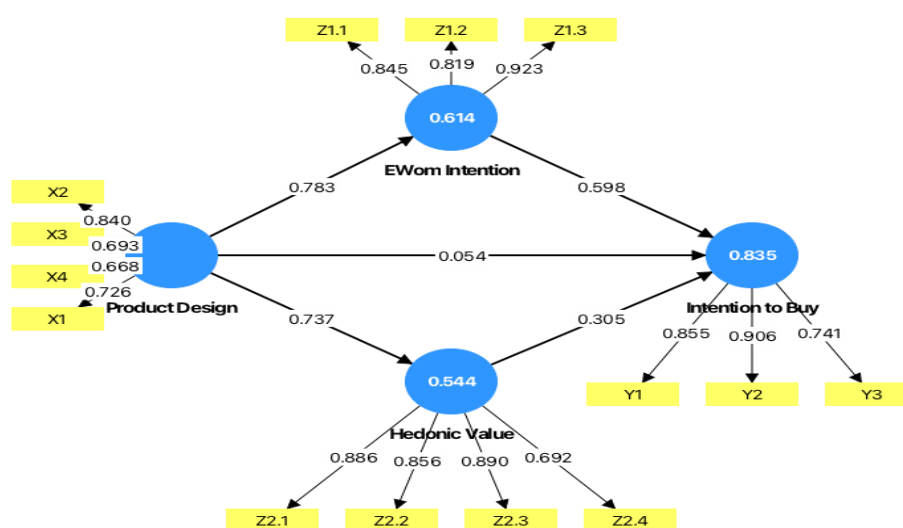
4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Analysis Results

The data analysis in this study was conducted using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), following a two-stage evaluation process comprising assessment of the measurement model (outer model) and the structural model (inner model).

4.1.1 Measurement Model Evaluation

The measurement model was evaluated to assess the reliability and validity of the constructs. The outer loading values for most indicators exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating satisfactory indicator reliability (Hair et al., 2021). Specifically, the product design construct exhibited factor loadings ranging from 0.668 to 0.840, indicating an acceptable level of reliability, despite one indicator being slightly below the ideal threshold. The hedonic value construct demonstrated strong factor loadings ranging from 0.819 to 0.923, indicating high internal consistency. Similarly, the eWOM intention construct showed loading values ranging from 0.692 to 0.890, while purchase intention ranged from 0.741 to 0.906. Overall, these results confirm that the indicators adequately represent their respective latent constructs.



Source: Data Analysis Results (2026)

Figure 1. Results of the PLS-SEM Structural Model Testing

In terms of convergent validity, all constructs demonstrated satisfactory performance, as indicated by their loading values and overall construct consistency. Although a small number of indicators exhibited loadings slightly below 0.70, these were retained due to their theoretical relevance and their contribution to capturing the multidimensional nature of the constructs (Hair et al., 2021). This decision ensures that the conceptual completeness of the constructs is preserved without compromising the model's overall reliability.

Discriminant validity was initially assessed using the Fornell-Larcker criterion. The results indicate that discriminant validity is not fully satisfied, particularly between eWOM intention and purchase intention, where the square root of AVE for purchase intention is lower than its correlation with eWOM intention. This finding suggests a potential overlap between the two constructs.

This result may reflect the nature of social commerce environments, where social interaction and behavioral intention are closely interconnected. In the context of TikTok Shop, consumers' intention to engage in eWOM may coincide with their intention to purchase, resulting in high inter-construct correlations.

To address this issue, discriminant validity was further assessed using the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT), which is considered a more robust criterion (Henseler et al., 2015). The HTMT results show that all values are below the recommended threshold of 0.90, indicating that discriminant validity remains acceptable despite limitations observed in the Fornell-Larcker criterion.

Table 1. Fornell-Larcker criterion

	EWom Intention	Hedonic Value	Purchase Intention	Product Design
EWom Intention	0.864			
Hedonic Value	0.842	0.835		
Purchase Intention	0.897	0.848	0.837	
Product Design	0.783	0.737	0.747	0.735

Source: Data Analysis Results (2026)

However, considering the limitations of the Fornell-Larcker criterion in detecting discriminant validity issues in models with closely related constructs, the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT) was further employed as a more robust assessment method (Henseler et al., 2015). The HTMT results are presented in Table X, where all values are below the recommended threshold of 0.90, indicating that discriminant validity is adequately established despite the high correlations observed in the Fornell-Larcker assessment.

4.2.2 Structural Model Evaluation

After confirming the adequacy of the measurement model, the structural model was evaluated to examine the relationships among constructs and to test the proposed hypotheses. The coefficient of determination (R^2) was used to assess the model's explanatory power.

The R^2 for hedonic value was 0.614, indicating that 61.4% of its variance is explained by product design. The R^2 value for eWOM intention was 0.544, suggesting that product design explains 54.4% of the variance in eWOM intention. Furthermore, the R^2 for purchase intention was 0.835, indicating that 83.5% of its variance is explained by product design, hedonic value, and eWOM intention. These results demonstrate that the model has strong predictive capability.

4.2.3 Hypothesis Testing

The structural relationships were evaluated using bootstrapping procedures, and the results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Path Coefficients and Hypothesis Testing Results

Relationship	Original Sample (β)	Mean (M)	STDEV	T-Statistics	P-Values	Result
eWOM Intention → Purchase Intention	0.598	0.592	0.076	7.856	0.000	Supported
Hedonic Value → Purchase Intention	0.305	0.314	0.077	3.958	0.000	Supported
Product Design → eWOM Intention	0.783	0.784	0.026	29.919	0.000	Supported
Product Design → Hedonic Value	0.737	0.737	0.036	20.223	0.000	Supported
Product Design → Purchase Intention	0.054	0.051	0.044	1.242	0.214	Not Supported

Source: Data Analysis Results (2026)

The results indicate that eWOM intention has a strong, significant positive effect on purchase intention ($\beta = 0.598, p < 0.001$). In contrast, hedonic value also shows a significant positive effect ($\beta = 0.305, p < 0.001$), albeit with a smaller magnitude. Product design significantly influences both eWOM intention ($\beta = 0.783, p < 0.001$) and hedonic value ($\beta = 0.737, p < 0.001$), confirming its role as a key antecedent in both social and emotional pathways. However, the direct effect of product design on purchase intention is not statistically significant ($\beta = 0.054, p = 0.214$), indicating that product design does not directly influence purchase intention. To further investigate this finding, an additional analysis was conducted by excluding the mediating variables, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Direct Effect Without Mediators

Relationship	Original Sample (β)	Mean (M)	STDEV	T-Statistics	P-Values	Result
Product Design → Purchase Intention	0.693	0.696	0.040	17.519	0.000	Supported

Source: Data Analysis Results (2026)

The results show that product design has a strong and significant effect on purchase intention when mediating variables are excluded. This indicates that the influence of product design is absorbed by the mediators when they are included in the model.

To confirm the mediating effects, indirect relationships were tested, and the results are presented in Table 4. The results confirm that both hedonic value and eWOM intention significantly mediate the relationship between product design and purchase intention. The indirect effect through eWOM intention ($\beta = 0.469$) is stronger than that through hedonic value ($\beta = 0.225$), indicating that social mechanisms play a more dominant role in influencing purchase intention.

Overall, these findings demonstrate that the relationship between product design and purchase intention is fully mediated by hedonic value and eWOM intention. Product design influences purchase intention indirectly through emotional and social pathways rather than directly.



Table 4. Indirect Effects (Mediation Analysis)

Indirect Path	Original Sample (β)	Mean (M)	STDEV	T-Statistics	P-Values	Result
Product Design → Hedonic Value → Purchase Intention	0.225	0.231	0.055	4.048	0.000	Supported
Product Design → eWOM Intention → Purchase Intention	0.469	0.465	0.067	6.943	0.000	Supported

Source: Data Analysis Results (2026)

4.2 Discussion

The findings of this study provide important insights into how product design influences purchase intention within social commerce environments, particularly in visually driven platforms such as TikTok Shop. The results confirm that product design does not directly influence purchase intention but rather operates through two key mechanisms: hedonic value and eWOM intention. This finding is consistent with the Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) framework, which posits that external stimuli, such as product design, influence internal psychological states and behavioral responses indirectly (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). In this study, product design acts as the stimulus, hedonic value represents the internal emotional response, and eWOM intention reflects the external social behavior that ultimately shapes purchase intention.

One of the most significant findings is the dominant role of eWOM intention in influencing purchase intention. The results show that eWOM intention has a stronger effect compared to hedonic value, indicating that social mechanisms play a more influential role than emotional responses in this context. This finding aligns with prior research suggesting that consumer behavior in social commerce is highly driven by social influence and peer interaction (Luo et al., 2020; Al-Habib & Albari, 2024). On platforms such as TikTok Shop, where user-generated content and interactive features are central, consumers rely heavily on recommendations, reviews, and shared experiences to inform their decision-making. The strong influence of eWOM intention also supports the notion that social proof is a critical determinant of purchase behavior in digital environments (Siregar & Setiawan, 2025). Consumers are more likely to trust and act on information validated by others, especially in environments characterized by high uncertainty and information overload.

However, this finding should not be interpreted solely as evidence of the dominance of social mechanisms. An alternative explanation may lie in the platform-specific characteristics of TikTok Shop, where algorithm-driven exposure and user-generated content amplify the visibility of social interactions. In such environments, consumers may rely more on externally validated information rather than purely intrinsic emotional responses, which may explain the stronger observed role of eWOM intention.

In contrast, hedonic value, although significant, exhibits a relatively weaker effect on purchase intention. This suggests that while emotional responses such as enjoyment and pleasure are important, they are not sufficient to drive purchase decisions on their own. This finding partially supports previous studies highlighting the importance of hedonic value in shaping consumer behavior (Batara et al., 2024; Choi, 2019). However, the lower effect size indicates that emotional engagement alone does not guarantee purchase intention unless it is reinforced by social validation. This is particularly relevant in

social commerce environments, where consumers are not only seeking enjoyable experiences but also confirmation from their social networks before making decisions.

The role of product design as a strong predictor of both hedonic value and eWOM intention further reinforces its importance as an initial stimulus in the consumer decision-making process. The significant effect of product design on hedonic value confirms that visually appealing products enhance consumers' emotional experiences, consistent with prior research on visual aesthetics and perceived enjoyment (Teo et al., 2023; Yang et al., 2021). At the same time, the strong effect of product design on eWOM intention ($\beta = 0.783$) highlights its role in triggering social sharing behavior. This supports the argument that aesthetically appealing products are more likely to be shared because they enable self-expression and enhance social identity (Liu et al., 2022; Wien, 2019). In this context, product design not only fosters emotional engagement but also catalyzes social interaction.

A particularly important finding of this study is the non-significant direct effect of product design on purchase intention. This result indicates that product design alone is insufficient to drive purchasing decisions directly. However, when the mediating variables are excluded, the effect becomes significant, providing strong evidence of full mediation. This finding suggests that the influence of product design is entirely transmitted through hedonic value and eWOM intention. This aligns with the theoretical perspective that in modern digital environments, consumer decisions are rarely driven by isolated stimuli, but rather by complex interactions between emotional and social factors. In other words, consumers do not purchase products simply because they are visually appealing; they purchase them because these products evoke positive emotions and are socially validated. Nevertheless, this full mediation result should be interpreted with caution. The strong indirect relationships may also be influenced by the close association between mediating variables and purchase intention, which could affect the apparent strength of the direct relationship.

The mediation analysis further reveals that the indirect effect through eWOM intention is stronger than that through hedonic value, emphasizing the dominance of social pathways over emotional pathways. This finding provides a nuanced understanding of consumer behavior in social commerce, suggesting that while emotional responses initiate interest, social interactions ultimately determine decision outcomes. This is particularly relevant in platforms such as TikTok Shop, where content is designed to be shared, commented on, and validated by others. The findings imply that the success of product design in such environments depends not only on its ability to attract attention but also on its potential to generate social engagement.

From a measurement perspective, the results also reveal important insights regarding the indicators used in this study. While most indicators demonstrated strong loadings above the recommended threshold, a few indicators exhibited slightly lower values, particularly within the product design construct. These lower loadings may reflect the multidimensional nature of product design, encompassing aspects such as visual appeal, uniqueness, and aesthetic quality. Unlike more narrowly defined constructs, product design is inherently subjective and context-dependent, which may lead to variability in how respondents perceive and evaluate its attributes. However, these indicators were retained due to their theoretical importance and role in capturing the construct's complexity (Hair et al., 2021).

The discriminant validity results also indicate high correlations among constructs, particularly between eWOM intention and purchase intention. While this finding may reflect the interconnected nature of social commerce behavior, it also raises concerns regarding potential conceptual overlap between eWOM intention and purchase intention. The high correlation suggests that the two constructs

may capture closely related behavioral tendencies, particularly in digital environments where sharing and purchasing behaviors often occur simultaneously. Despite this empirical proximity, the two constructs remain conceptually distinct. eWOM intention represents a socially oriented behavior reflecting consumers' willingness to share or recommend products, whereas purchase intention reflects an individual decision-making outcome. However, the strong relationship between the two indicates that, in practice, these processes may be tightly coupled in social commerce contexts.

This overlap may indicate that certain behavioral aspects captured by the measurement items are closely related, suggesting the need for further refinement of construct operationalization in future research. Although the constructs remain theoretically distinct, their empirical proximity highlights the complexity of distinguishing between social sharing behavior and individual purchase decisions in highly interactive digital environments. In addition, it is important to consider that the strong relationship between eWOM intention and purchase intention may not solely reflect causal influence, but also shared underlying behavioral tendencies. In social commerce contexts, the act of sharing or recommending a product may itself be an expression of purchase readiness, which could contribute to the observed high correlation between the constructs (Sheik et al., 2019; Liu et al., 2022).

Overall, the findings of this study contribute to the literature by providing a more integrated understanding of how product design influences purchase intention through both emotional and social mechanisms. The results highlight that in social commerce environments, the effectiveness of product design lies not in its direct impact on purchasing decisions, but in its ability to generate emotional engagement and stimulate social interaction. This study extends previous research by demonstrating that eWOM intention plays a more dominant role than hedonic value in translating product design into purchase intention, offering new insights into the relative importance of different mediating mechanisms.

From a practical perspective, these findings suggest that marketers should not rely solely on creating visually appealing product designs but should also focus on strategies that encourage social sharing and interaction. Enhancing features that facilitate eWOM, such as user-generated content, reviews, and interactive engagement, may significantly amplify the impact of product design on consumer behavior. In addition, while emotional appeal remains important, it should be integrated with social strategies to maximize its effectiveness.

5. Conclusion

This study examined how product design influences purchase intention in social commerce environments, particularly on TikTok Shop, by incorporating hedonic value and eWOM intention as mediating variables. The research was motivated by the shift from traditional search-based shopping to discovery-based shopping, where visual stimuli and social interaction play a dominant role in shaping consumer behavior. Using a quantitative approach and Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), data were collected from TikTok users who have experience interacting with product content. The findings reveal that product design does not have a significant direct effect on purchase intention, but significantly influences both hedonic value and eWOM intention. Furthermore, both hedonic value and eWOM intention significantly affect purchase intention, with eWOM intention emerging as the stronger predictor. The mediation analysis confirms that these two variables fully mediate the relationship between product design and purchase intention.



The findings of this study contribute to the literature by providing a more integrated understanding of consumer behavior in social commerce environments. Theoretically, this study extends the Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) framework by demonstrating that product design functions not only as a visual stimulus but also as a trigger for both emotional and social mechanisms simultaneously. The identification of eWOM intention as the dominant mediating variable highlights the increasing importance of social validation in digital consumer behavior. Practically, the results suggest that businesses should move beyond focusing solely on aesthetic product design and instead emphasize strategies that encourage consumer interaction, sharing, and engagement. From a policy perspective, this study underscores the importance of digital platform ecosystems in shaping consumer decision-making, suggesting that platform design and interaction features play a critical role in influencing market behavior.

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the research is limited to TikTok Shop users, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other social commerce platforms with different characteristics. Second, the use of cross-sectional data limits the ability to capture changes in consumer behavior over time. Third, the study focuses only on two mediating variables, whereas other factors such as trust, perceived risk, or digital literacy may also influence purchase intention. Future research is encouraged to expand the model by incorporating additional variables, applying longitudinal approaches, and testing the framework across different platforms and demographic groups. These efforts will provide a more comprehensive understanding of consumer behavior in evolving digital commerce environments.

Statement of Use of Generative AI

During the preparation of this work, the author used ChatGPT to assist in improving clarity and readability of the text. The author reviewed and edited the output and takes full responsibility for the content of the publication.

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