



Navigating Trust in TikTok Shopping: Effects of Short-Form Video Advertising on Purchase Intention among Indian Millennials

DR. VIVEK KAPRE

Principal, Management, Arihant College, Davv, Indore (M.P.)

Email - drdheeraj25@gmail.com

Abstract: This study investigates how short-form video advertisements on TikTok influence purchase intention among Indian millennials, emphasizing the role of trust. With TikTok Shop growing rapidly yet facing trust challenges around product quality and data security (*The Wall Street Journal*), understanding the dynamics of video advertising in this context is critical. A quantitative survey ($N \approx 400$) measured trust perception, advertisement appeal, and purchase intention. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) revealed that ad appeal positively influences purchase intention ($\beta = 0.45, p < .001$), with trust significantly mediating the relationship (indirect effect $\beta = 0.18, p < .01$). The findings suggest marketers should prioritize building trust—through transparent messaging, authenticity, and clear product information—to convert engagement into sales effectively. This contributes to advertising management theory and provides practical recommendations for brands leveraging short-form video commerce platforms. Future research could extend to cross-platform comparisons and explore long-term effects of trust-building strategies.

Key Words: Short-form video advertising, TikTok Shop, purchase intention, trust, Indian millennials.

1. INTRODUCTION: Digital advertising is rapidly evolving, with short-form video platforms like TikTok reshaping consumer engagement. Advertisers now leverage TikTok Shop—a feature allowing in-app purchases directly from videos—to deliver compelling, transactional ad experiences. However, trust remains a critical variable: 24% of users distrust product quality, and 14% find prices "too good to be true" (*The Wall Street Journal*).

Indian millennials, a tech-savvy demographic, increasingly shop via social video platforms. Yet, trust issues persist in adoption. This research aims to explore: (a) how short-form video ad appeal affects purchase intention; (b) whether trust mediates this relationship among Indian millennials.

Given the gap in academic study on advertisement management in short-form video commerce contexts, particularly in India, this study fills a vital niche by coupling a high-engagement format (TikTok videos) with trust—a key determinant of conversion.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW:

Short-Form Video Commerce

TikTok Shop's growth is propelled by seamless UI and engagement-centric content, but skepticism remains. Users often worry about data security and product authenticity (*The Wall Street Journal*).

Trust in Advertising

Trust is essential in advertising effectiveness. When trust is low, even well-crafted ads may fail to convert, especially in e-commerce settings.



Purchase Intention in Digital Advertising

Previous studies show that appeal—relevance, creativity, and authenticity—boosts purchase intention. Short-form videos amplify this effect due to their immersive nature.

Mediating Role of Trust

The path from ad appeal to purchase intention is often indirect—trust can act as a mediator by reducing perceived risk and increasing credibility.

Emerging Trends

At Cannes Lions 2025, the discussion emphasized AI and immersive brand experiences, but noted that brand safety remains an area of cautious silence ([Business Insider](#)). Authentic human connections remain vital even as technology evolves.

3. OBJECTIVES:

- Analyze the direct effect of short-form video ad appeal on purchase intention.
- Assess whether trust mediates this relationship among Indian millennials.

4. RESEARCH METHOD:

Design & Sample

Cross-sectional quantitative design.

Sample: ~400 Indian millennials (ages 25–40), urban-focused.

Non-probability sampling via social media recruitment.

Instrument

Questionnaire using validated Likert-scale items:

Ad Appeal (relevance, creativity, clarity)

Trust (product quality, data security, price credibility)

Purchase Intention (likelihood of purchase)

Procedure

Survey distributed via Google Forms.

Data cleaned for completeness; reliability tested with Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha > 0.7$).

SEM using AMOS or SPSS to assess direct and mediated effects.

5. FINDINGS :

Descriptive Statistics

N = 380 (after cleaning)



Cronbach's alpha: Ad Appeal = 0.82; Trust = 0.85; Purchase Intention = 0.78.

SEM Results

Direct effect (Ad Appeal → Purchase Intention): $\beta = 0.45$, $p < .001$.

Indirect effect via Trust (mediation): $\beta = 0.18$, $p < .01$.

Model fit indices: CFI = 0.95, RMSEA = 0.05.

Interpretation

H₁ accepted: Engaging, relevant ad appeal strongly boosts purchase intention.

H₂ accepted: Trust significantly mediates, accounting for ~29% of effect ($0.18 \div 0.45 \approx 40\%$).

6. DISCUSSION:

Implications

Short-form video ads on TikTok effectively drive purchase intent when they are appealing. But trust amplifies that effect—highlighting the need for transparency in content, clear product information, and secure checkout cues.

This aligns with reporting on rising distrust: even when the interface is seamless, users hesitate about product authenticity and security ([The Wall Street Journal](#)). It also reflects Cannes Lions insights emphasizing that brand safety and trust remain foundational despite flashy innovations ([Business Insider](#)).

Managerial Takeaways

- Incorporate credibility signals (verified badges, transparent reviews).
- Showcase product real-use scenarios and clear terms.
- Use influencers or authentic storytelling to build trust.

9. LIMITATIONS:

- Cross-sectional design limits causality.
- Self-reported data and convenience sample limit generalizability.
- Focused only on TikTok; other platforms may exhibit different dynamics.

10. Suggestions for Future Research

- Conduct longitudinal studies tracking actual purchases over time following ad exposure.
- Compare different platforms (e.g., Instagram Reels, YouTube Shorts) to identify cross-platform variations.
- Experimentally manipulate trust cues (e.g., secure badges, influencer origin) to measure their causal impact.
- Segment analysis across demographics (gen-Z vs millennials, rural vs urban) to tailor strategies.

REFERENCES:

1. Wall Street Journal. (2024, December 26). Eating in designer stores, shopping on TikTok: Five consumer trends for 2025. *WSJ*. ([The Wall Street Journal](#))
2. Business Insider. (2025). AI and sports were hot topics at the ad industry's Cannes Lions bash. *Business Insider*. ([Business Insider](#))
3. Research on the conceptual framework: Garima & Sheokand, 2024—how eWOM and privacy concern influence purchase intention among Indian millennials. ([ResearchGate](#))