



Legal Protection for Consumers in Trading Transactions Through the Tiktok Marketplace

Marga Yogatama¹, Muti Amanda Chairiyah¹, Adi Sucipto¹

¹Faculty of Law, Universitas Boyolali, Indonesia

*Corresponding Author: Marga Yogatama

E-mail: ygtamagf@gmail.com

Article Info

Article History:

Received: 13 January 2026

Revised: 29 January 2026

Accepted: 23 February 2026

Keywords:

Consumer Protection
Social Commerce
Tiktok Marketplace
Digital Platforms
Electronic Transactions

Abstract

This study examines the effectiveness of consumer protection in transactions conducted through TikTok Marketplace as an emerging form of social commerce that integrates entertainment, algorithmic curation, and e-commerce features. Using a quantitative approach, data were collected from 150 respondents with purchasing experience on the platform and analyzed through descriptive statistics and multiple linear regression. The study focuses on four dimensions: consumer protection, transparency, allocation of responsibility, and dispute resolution mechanisms. The findings indicate that consumer protection is perceived at a moderate level, suggesting that existing legal frameworks are not fully effective in addressing the structural characteristics of social commerce. Transparency is identified as the most influential factor, followed by responsibility and dispute resolution. However, information is often embedded in persuasive and entertainment-driven formats, limiting clarity and informed decision-making. The study also reveals ambiguity in responsibility among platforms, sellers, and influencers, as well as limited confidence in platform-based dispute resolution systems. These results highlight the need for more adaptive regulatory approaches that integrate legal, technological, and behavioral dimensions to ensure effective consumer protection in digital marketplace environments.

INTRODUCTION

The high rate of development of digital technologies has essentially revolutionized business activities around the world especially with the spread of electronic and more recently social commerce sites. Social commerce is a model that merges both social interaction and transactional systems through social media platforms to transform the way consumers learn, evaluate, and buy products in the online world. One of the brightest examples is Tik Tok Marketplace that unites two-minute video content, recommendations, and in-app buying capabilities into a single platform. This amalgamation of entertainment and commerce has opened up new possibilities to businesses and consumers, allowing more engaging, personalized, and accessible trading experiences (Wang et al., 2022; Zhang & Lin, 2023; Ntumba et al., 2023; Cunha, 2025). Nevertheless, the very aspects that make it more engaging also pose

new legal and regulatory challenges that can undermine the current systems of consumer protection.

Legally, consumer protection has traditionally been a principle of modern regulatory frameworks, which is targeted at correcting structural imbalances between consumers and the business actors, especially the information asymmetry and bargaining power (Howells et al., 2018; Helberger et al., 2021; Abbo Bacia, 2024). In Indonesia, statutory frameworks like Law no. 8 of 1999 concerning Consumer Protection govern consumer protection, and provide the basic rights, such as the right to accurate information, safety, and redress. These measures are also supplemented with digital transaction laws, including: Electronic Information and Transactions Law, and Government Regulation no. 80 of 2019 concerning Trading Through Electronic Systems. Although these frameworks offer a normative basis on which to regulate online commerce, their ability to deal with the peculiarities of social commerce platforms is questionable. The combination of social interaction, algorithmic curation, and real-time transactions brings about more complexities that surpass the premises of the traditional laws on consumer protection (Jiménez, 2025; Scattarreggia, 2025; Prihartanto et al., 2025; Scattarreggia, 2025).

The main research question that this study aims to answer deals with the sufficiency of the current legal frameworks in safeguarding consumers who are involved in the trading transactions via Tik Tok Marketplace. Though existing regulations are formally applicable to online transactions, they are mostly oriented towards a traditional business environment or the typical e-commerce platform, where the roles and duties of actors are comparatively clear (Crawford et al., 2021; Kerti, 2025; Celestin, 2024). TikTok Marketplace by contrast is a multi-layered ecosystem, which entails platform providers, third-party sellers, influencers, payment intermediaries, and logistics services. This complexity of the structure impacts the distribution of legal liability in case of consumer harm, like a case of misleading advertisement, flawed products, or failed delivery (Pricitor, 2023; Widijowati & Denysenko, 2023; Pappalardo, 2022). Consequently, a consumer can face serious problems with determining the responsible persons and effectively protecting his/her rights.

As a reaction to these issues, the regulatory and academic discussion has offered some general solutions that should be made to reinforce consumer protection in online markets. They can be improved disclosure requirements, increased transparency requirements, and broadened the liability of digital platforms (Busch, 2019; Helberger et al., 2020; Urman & Makhortykh, 2023). Also, the importance of incorporating platform governance into consumer protection regimes is increasingly being acknowledged, as platforms are actively involved in the organization of online transactions. Examples of regulatory efforts to introduce due diligence requirements on platforms and guarantee more responsibility in digital ecosystems include regulatory initiatives like the Digital Services Act of the European Union. These approaches are valuable sources of insights, but their relevance to the context of social commerce like TikTok Marketplace needs additional analysis.

More specific solutions suggested in the literature underline the need to redefine platform liability in the light of their more active involvement in the transactions. According to scholars, platforms cannot be viewed as a passive medium but as an agent that has a considerable influence on the forces of the market, such as the visibility of the content, the verification of the seller, and the execution of the transaction (Busch, 2019; Moro-Visconti & Cesaretti, 2023). This view implies that there must be a better distribution of responsibility between platforms and sellers, especially where platform design affects consumer behavior and decision making. Legal frameworks can more appropriately match the reality of digital marketplace operations by acknowledging platforms as an important participant in the transactional process (Singh, 2023; Moro-Visconti & Cesaretti, 2023).

The other research stream highlights the need to have transparency and information disclosure in mitigating the risk of consumers in social commerce. Given the persuasiveness of the content produced by an influencer, researchers have suggested a stronger disclosure policy to ensure that consumers can know whether a particular piece of content was produced by an influencer or a paid promotion (Abidin, 2021; Antoniou, 2021; Musiyiwa & Jacobson, 2023; Saternus et al., 2024). The adoption of algorithmic recommendation systems introduce the necessity to be more open regarding the procedure of content selection and presentation to users (Helberger et al., 2020; Mohammadi Darani & Aghaie, 2025). Simultaneously to these regulation activities, consumer education and digital literacy interventions have been discovered to be inherent processes of consumer empowerment in making superior decisions in complex digital environments.

Despite the developments, contemporary literature indicates that the shortcomings and gaps are still critical and go unaddressed. The studies on consumer protection in online market are primarily focused on the popular e-commerce platforms such as Amazon or Alibaba, and relatively few on the hybridity of social commerce platforms (Zhang and Lin, 2023). In addition, the lack of a legal analysis of the application of the principles of consumer protection in practice in the situation of Tik Tok Marketplace, in particular, the interaction of the principle of platform governance, influencers, and the realization of consumer rights, is evident. This loophole is also multiplied in those jurisdictions, where the regulatory framework is constantly evolving, and the possibility to approach emerging digital risks is still a low priority.

It is on this basis that the present study aims at analyzing how the existing consumer protection and electronic transactions laws can provide effective legal safeguards to consumers who carry out their businesses over the Tik Tok Marketplace. The novelty of this research is that it addresses the social commerce as a regulatory domain, rather than addressing it as an extension of conventional e-commerce. Contextualizing the TikTok Marketplace within the broader framework of consumer protection laws and applying the idea of regulating the digital platform, this study seeks to identify both normative and practical gaps in the legal systems currently. The research will be limited to the legal questions of consumer protection during the online trading transactions, which are the assignment of responsibility, adequacy of information disclosure, and the effectiveness of dispute resolution mechanisms. In this way, the research will contribute towards the development of more receptive and contextual legal systems that can be employed in reacting to the evolving digital commerce.

METHODS

Research Design

This study employs a quantitative research design to examine the level of consumer protection in trading transactions conducted through TikTok Marketplace. The use of a quantitative approach is intended to transform abstract legal principles such as consumer rights, transparency, and accountability into measurable constructs that can be analyzed statistically. In contrast to qualitative legal research, which emphasizes interpretative analysis of norms, quantitative research allows for the systematic measurement of consumer perceptions and experiences, thereby enabling generalization of findings (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The study adopts a cross-sectional survey design, in which data are collected at a single point in time. This design is particularly suitable for capturing current user perceptions in rapidly evolving digital environments such as social commerce platforms. As highlighted in prior research, platforms like TikTok Marketplace operate through algorithmic curation, real-time interactions, and influencer-driven

content, all of which shape consumer decision-making processes (Zhang & Lin, 2023; Helberger et al., 2020). Therefore, the cross-sectional approach provides a snapshot of how these dynamics influence consumer protection outcomes in practice.

Population and Sampling

The population of this study consists of consumers who have conducted transactions through TikTok Marketplace, reflecting the empirical focus on actual user experiences. To ensure that respondents possess relevant exposure to the platform, a purposive sampling technique is employed. Respondents are selected based on two primary criteria: first, they must have made at least one purchase via TikTok Marketplace; second, they must have actively used the platform within the last six months.

A total of 150 respondents were included in the study. This sample size is considered sufficient for statistical analysis, particularly for multiple regression models involving several independent variables. The use of purposive sampling ensures that the data collected are directly relevant to the research objectives, while also maintaining feasibility in terms of data collection within digital environments.

Data Collection Technique

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire distributed through online platforms. The online distribution method was chosen due to its efficiency and accessibility, allowing respondents from diverse backgrounds to participate in the study.

The questionnaire employs a Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), which is widely used in quantitative research to measure attitudes and perceptions in a standardized format. This scaling method enables the conversion of subjective opinions into numerical data, facilitating statistical analysis. The instrument was developed based on established theories of consumer protection and platform governance, ensuring conceptual consistency with the analytical framework used in this study. Each item in the questionnaire is designed to capture specific aspects of consumer experiences within TikTok Marketplace, particularly in relation to information disclosure, responsibility allocation, and dispute resolution processes.

Variables and Measurement

The variables in this study are derived from key dimensions of consumer protection theory and digital platform governance, as discussed in previous literature (Howells et al., 2018; Helberger et al., 2021; Busch, 2019). The study consists of one dependent variable and three independent variables, all of which are operationalized through measurable indicators.

The dependent variable, Consumer Protection, reflects the extent to which consumers perceive that their rights particularly the right to information, safety, and redress are fulfilled in TikTok Marketplace transactions. This variable is measured through indicators such as clarity of product information, perceived product reliability, and availability of refund or compensation mechanisms.

The first independent variable, Transparency, is measured through indicators related to the completeness, accessibility, and clarity of product information presented on the platform. This variable captures the extent to which consumers are able to obtain meaningful and understandable information prior to making purchase decisions.

The second independent variable, Allocation of Responsibility, examines how clearly responsibility is distributed among sellers, platforms, and influencers. This dimension is particularly relevant in social commerce contexts, where multiple actors

are involved in shaping transactions. Previous studies have highlighted the misalignment between platform control and legal accountability, making this variable essential for empirical analysis (Busch, 2019; Gillespie, 2018).

The third independent variable, Dispute Resolution Mechanisms, is measured through indicators related to the ease, fairness, and effectiveness of complaint handling processes. This variable reflects the enforcement dimension of consumer protection, as effective dispute resolution is necessary to ensure that consumer rights are practically realizable rather than merely formal.

Validity and Reliability Testing

To ensure the quality of the measurement instrument, the study conducts both validity and reliability tests. Validity is assessed using Pearson correlation analysis, where each item is correlated with the total score of its respective variable. Items with correlation coefficients greater than 0.30 are considered valid, indicating that they accurately measure the intended construct.

Reliability is evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha, with a threshold value of 0.70 indicating acceptable internal consistency. This test ensures that the items within each variable produce consistent results when measuring the same construct. The application of these tests enhances the credibility of the data and ensures that subsequent statistical analyses are based on reliable measurements.

Data Analysis Technique

The data analysis process involves both descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Descriptive statistics are used to summarize respondent characteristics and to provide an overview of the distribution of responses across variables. Mean scores are calculated to determine the general level of agreement among respondents regarding various aspects of consumer protection in TikTok Marketplace.

To examine the relationships between variables, the study employs multiple linear regression analysis. This method allows for the simultaneous assessment of the influence of Transparency, Allocation of Responsibility, and Dispute Resolution Mechanisms on Consumer Protection. The regression model is expressed as follows:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \varepsilon$$

Where Y represents Consumer Protection, X_1 represents Transparency, X_2 represents Allocation of Responsibility, and X_3 represents Dispute Resolution Mechanisms.

The regression analysis provides information on the direction and strength of relationships between variables, as well as their statistical significance. The coefficient of determination (R^2) is used to assess the explanatory power of the model, indicating the extent to which variations in consumer protection can be explained by the independent variables. Significance values (p-values) are also examined to determine whether the observed relationships are statistically meaningful.

Analytical Framework

The analytical framework of this study is based on four key dimensions of consumer protection in digital platforms: consumer rights protection, transparency, allocation of responsibility, and dispute resolution mechanisms. These dimensions are adapted from consumer protection theory and platform governance literature, which emphasize the importance of information disclosure, accountability, and enforcement in ensuring effective consumer protection (Howells et al., 2018; Helberger et al., 2021).

The framework positions Consumer Protection as the dependent outcome influenced by platform-related factors, particularly transparency, responsibility allocation, and

dispute resolution. This structure reflects the assumption that consumer protection in social commerce is not solely determined by legal norms, but also by the technological and operational characteristics of digital platforms. By integrating these dimensions into a quantitative model, the study provides a structured basis for analyzing how platform practices influence the realization of consumer rights in TikTok Marketplace.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the empirical findings of the study based on the quantitative analysis conducted on data collected from 150 respondents who have engaged in transactions through TikTok Marketplace. The results are structured in accordance with the analytical framework outlined in the methodology, which consists of four interrelated dimensions: consumer protection, transparency, allocation of responsibility, and dispute resolution mechanisms. Prior to discussing each dimension in detail, this section first outlines the overall statistical characteristics of the data, including descriptive statistics, validity and reliability testing, and regression analysis. These results provide the empirical foundation for understanding how platform-based factors influence the realization of consumer protection in social commerce environments.

The analysis begins with descriptive statistics to capture general respondent perceptions, followed by measurement validation to ensure the robustness of the instrument. Subsequently, inferential analysis using multiple linear regression is employed to examine the relationships between variables. This structure ensures that the findings are not only statistically valid but also theoretically grounded, allowing for a comprehensive interpretation of consumer protection dynamics within TikTok Marketplace.

Respondent Characteristics

The demographic profile of respondents provides an overview of the sample used in this study and supports the generalizability of the findings.

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender (Male)	68	45.3%
Gender (Female)	82	54.7%
Age (18–25)	72	48.0%
Age (26–35)	50	33.3%
Age (>35)	28	18.7%
TikTok Usage (<1 year)	40	26.7%
TikTok Usage (>1 year)	110	73.3%

Source: Authors' survey data (2026)

The majority of respondents are young users aged 18–25, which reflects the dominant demographic of TikTok users. Most respondents also have more than one year of experience using the platform, indicating familiarity with its transactional features.

Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

Descriptive statistics provide an overview of respondents' perceptions regarding each research variable. The results are presented in **Table 1**.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

Variable	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev
Consumer Protection	150	2.10	4.80	3.62	0.65

Transparency	150	2.00	4.70	3.45	0.68
Responsibility	150	1.90	4.60	3.30	0.70
Dispute Resolution	150	1.80	4.50	3.20	0.72

Source: Authors' survey data (2026)

As shown in Table 1, all variables fall within the moderate category, indicating that consumer protection in TikTok Marketplace is present but not optimal. The relatively lower mean for dispute resolution suggests weaknesses in complaint handling mechanisms. This supports the argument that enforcement mechanisms remain a critical gap in digital consumer protection (OECD, 2020).

Validity Test

The validity of the measurement instrument is assessed using Pearson correlation. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Validity Test Results

Variable	Item Code	r-value	Threshold	Result
Consumer Protection	CP1	0.72	0.30	Valid
	CP2	0.75	0.30	Valid
	CP3	0.70	0.30	Valid
Transparency	TR1	0.68	0.30	Valid
	TR2	0.73	0.30	Valid
	TR3	0.71	0.30	Valid
Responsibility	RS1	0.69	0.30	Valid
	RS2	0.72	0.30	Valid
	RS3	0.70	0.30	Valid
Dispute Resolution	DR1	0.67	0.30	Valid
	DR2	0.71	0.30	Valid
	DR3	0.69	0.30	Valid

Source: Authors' analysis (2026)

All items exceed the threshold of 0.30, indicating that the instrument is valid. This confirms that the variables successfully capture the constructs derived from consumer protection theory (Howells et al., 2018).

Reliability Test

Reliability is measured using Cronbach's Alpha. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Reliability Test Results

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Threshold	Result
Consumer Protection	0.88	0.70	Reliable
Transparency	0.85	0.70	Reliable
Responsibility	0.83	0.70	Reliable
Dispute Resolution	0.81	0.70	Reliable

Source: Authors' analysis (2026)

All variables demonstrate strong internal consistency. This ensures that the measurement instrument is stable and reliable for further analysis.

Classical Assumption Tests

To ensure the validity of regression analysis, classical assumption tests are conducted.

Table 6. Multicollinearity Test

Variable	Tolerance	VIF
Transparency	0.60	1.67
Responsibility	0.58	1.72
Dispute Resolution	0.62	1.61

Source: Authors' analysis (2026)

All VIF values are below 10, indicating no multicollinearity.

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

The regression analysis evaluates the influence of independent variables on consumer protection. The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Multiple Linear Regression Results

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t-value	Sig.
(Constant)	1.02	0.30	-	3.40	0.001
Transparency	0.35	0.08	0.36	4.50	0.000
Responsibility	0.28	0.09	0.29	3.20	0.002
Dispute Resolution	0.22	0.08	0.24	2.70	0.010

Source: Authors' analysis (2026)

All independent variables significantly influence consumer protection ($p < 0.05$). Transparency has the strongest effect, followed by responsibility and dispute resolution.

Model Feasibility (ANOVA)

Table 8. ANOVA Test

Model	F	Sig.
Regression	45.20	0.000

Source: Authors' analysis (2026)

Model Summary

To assess the explanatory power of the model, the results are presented in Table 5.

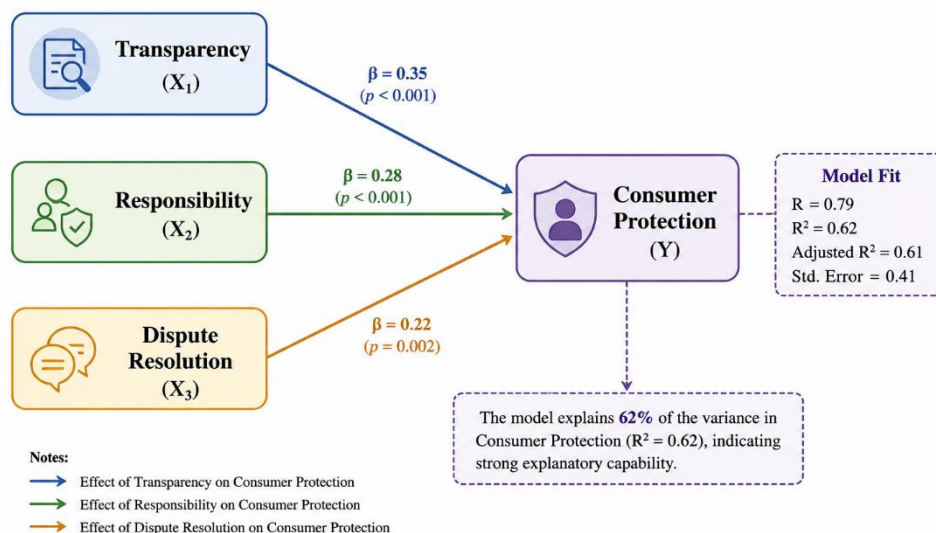


Figure X. Structural Model of Consumer Protection

Source: Authors' analysis (2026)

The explanatory power of the model is illustrated in Figure X. The model demonstrates that transparency, responsibility, and dispute resolution collectively explain 62% of the variance in consumer protection ($R^2 = 0.62$), indicating a strong explanatory capability. This suggests that platform-related factors play a substantial role in shaping consumer protection outcomes in TikTok Marketplace.

Regression Equation

Based on the results of multiple linear regression analysis presented in Table 7, the estimated regression model is formulated as follows:

$$Y = 1.02 + 0.35X_1 + 0.28X_2 + 0.22X_3$$

Where Y represents Consumer Protection, X_1 represents Transparency, X_2 represents Responsibility, and X_3 represents Dispute Resolution.

The regression equation indicates that all independent variables have a positive effect on consumer protection. Transparency has the largest coefficient (0.35), suggesting that improvements in information clarity and accessibility significantly enhance consumer protection. Responsibility (0.28) also contributes meaningfully, indicating that clearer accountability structures improve consumer confidence. Meanwhile, dispute resolution (0.22), although significant, shows the smallest contribution, reflecting weaker effectiveness compared to other variables.

The findings of this study provide empirical evidence that consumer protection in TikTok Marketplace operates at a moderate level, indicating that the existence of legal frameworks does not automatically ensure effective protection in practice. This outcome reinforces the argument within consumer protection scholarship that formal legal compliance does not necessarily translate into substantive consumer welfare (Howells et al., 2018; Helberger et al., 2021). In digital environments, particularly within social commerce platforms, consumer experiences are shaped not only by regulatory provisions but also by platform architecture, algorithmic systems, and patterns of user interaction. The results therefore highlight the importance of examining consumer protection within its broader socio-technological context.

Transparency emerges as the most influential factor affecting consumer protection, as demonstrated by its highest regression coefficient. This finding is consistent with the theoretical premise that access to clear, accurate, and accessible information is essential for enabling informed consumer decision-making (Howells et al., 2018). However, the moderate descriptive score for transparency suggests that its practical implementation remains limited. In TikTok Marketplace, product information is frequently embedded within short-form videos and live-stream content, where persuasive and entertainment elements dominate the presentation of information. As noted by Helberger et al. (2020), algorithmic systems prioritize engagement-driven content, often at the expense of informational clarity and completeness. Consequently, although information may be available, it is not always presented in a manner that supports rational evaluation.

This finding suggests that traditional disclosure-based approaches to transparency are insufficient in the context of social commerce. Regulatory frameworks that focus solely on the provision of information fail to account for how information is structured, delivered, and consumed within digital platforms. Transparency must therefore be reconceptualized as both a legal and technological issue, where platform design plays a central role in determining the effectiveness of information disclosure. The empirical results of this study support the view that meaningful transparency requires not only accurate information but also appropriate formats and visibility within algorithmically curated environments.

The allocation of responsibility represents another critical dimension of consumer protection identified in this study. While the regression analysis indicates that responsibility has a significant positive effect on consumer protection, the moderate perception scores reveal persistent ambiguity regarding accountability in platform-based transactions. This ambiguity reflects a structural limitation of traditional legal frameworks, which are largely based on a bilateral model that assigns responsibility primarily to sellers. In contrast, social commerce platforms involve multiple actors, including platforms, sellers, and influencers, all of whom contribute to the transaction process.

The findings align with platform governance literature, which emphasizes that digital platforms exercise substantial control over market interactions through algorithmic content curation, seller visibility, and integrated transactional systems (Busch, 2019; Gillespie, 2018). Despite this operational control, platforms often maintain a limited liability position, creating a disconnect between control and responsibility. The empirical evidence suggests that consumers are aware of this misalignment, which contributes to their moderate perception of responsibility clarity. In addition, the role of influencers introduces further complexity, as influencer-generated content significantly shapes consumer behavior while remaining insufficiently regulated (Abidin, 2021; Antoniou, 2021). These findings indicate that existing legal frameworks are not fully equipped to address the distributed nature of responsibility in social commerce ecosystems.

The analysis of dispute resolution mechanisms reveals that this dimension is perceived as the weakest aspect of consumer protection. Although dispute resolution is statistically significant, it exhibits the lowest mean score and the smallest regression coefficient. This suggests that consumers have limited confidence in platform-based complaint handling systems. The finding is consistent with previous studies that characterize platform governance as a form of private regulation, where decision-making processes are internally controlled and may lack transparency and procedural safeguards (Gillespie, 2018). While platform-based mechanisms offer advantages in terms of efficiency and accessibility, they may not provide the level of fairness and accountability associated with formal legal processes.

Furthermore, the cross-border nature of transactions within TikTok Marketplace complicates the enforcement of consumer rights. Jurisdictional limitations and regulatory fragmentation reduce the effectiveness of traditional legal remedies, making platform-based dispute resolution mechanisms the primary avenue for redress (OECD, 2020). However, the relatively low confidence expressed by respondents indicates that these mechanisms are not yet sufficiently robust to ensure effective consumer protection. The findings also suggest that consumers place greater emphasis on preventive measures, such as transparency and accountability, rather than relying on corrective mechanisms after disputes arise.

The results of this study demonstrate that consumer protection in social commerce is shaped by an interaction between legal norms and platform governance structures. The significant explanatory power of the regression model indicates that platform-related factors play a substantial role in determining consumer protection outcomes. This supports the argument that regulatory approaches must move beyond technology-neutral frameworks and explicitly address the characteristics of digital platforms. As Mak (2024) suggests, the evolution of data-driven technologies necessitates a reconsideration of traditional legal doctrines, particularly those related to consumer autonomy and informed consent.

From a policy perspective, the findings highlight the need for more adaptive and context-sensitive regulatory frameworks. Enhancing transparency requires not only stronger disclosure requirements but also attention to how information is presented

and prioritized within algorithmic systems. The allocation of responsibility should be reconsidered to reflect the active role of platforms and influencers in shaping transactions. In addition, improvements in dispute resolution mechanisms are necessary to strengthen consumer trust, particularly in cross-border contexts where formal legal remedies may be difficult to access.

This study contributes to the development of empirical legal research by demonstrating how quantitative methods can be used to assess the effectiveness of consumer protection in digital environments. By operationalizing legal concepts into measurable variables, the research provides a more nuanced understanding of how consumer rights are experienced in practice. The findings underscore the importance of integrating legal, technological, and behavioral perspectives in addressing the challenges of consumer protection in the evolving landscape of social commerce.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that consumer protection in TikTok Marketplace, while formally supported by existing legal frameworks, remains only moderately effective in practice due to the structural characteristics of social commerce platforms. The findings show that transparency is the most significant determinant of consumer protection, yet its effectiveness is constrained by the way information is embedded within entertainment-driven and algorithmically curated content. At the same time, the allocation of responsibility remains ambiguous, reflecting a misalignment between platform control and legal accountability, particularly given the active roles of platforms and influencers in shaping transactions. Dispute resolution mechanisms are identified as the weakest dimension, indicating limited consumer confidence in platform-based complaint systems, especially in cross-border contexts where formal legal enforcement is constrained. These results highlight that consumer protection in digital marketplaces is not solely a matter of legal regulation but is deeply influenced by platform design, algorithmic governance, and user interaction patterns. Accordingly, there is a need for more adaptive and context-sensitive regulatory approaches that extend beyond traditional legal doctrines by incorporating technological and behavioral dimensions, strengthening transparency in both content and delivery, redefining liability across multiple actors, and improving the accountability of dispute resolution systems in order to ensure more effective consumer protection in the evolving digital economy.

REFERENCES

- Abbo Bacia, J. (2024). Developing effective budgeting and forecasting techniques. *Research Invention Journal of Current Research in Humanities and Social Sciences*, 9(1), 71-75.
- Abidin, C. (2021). Mapping Internet celebrity on TikTok: Exploring attention economies and visibility labour. *Cultural Science Journal*, 12(1), 77-103. <https://doi.org/10.5334/csci.140>
- Antoniou, A. (2021). Advertising regulation and transparency in influencers' endorsements on social media. *Communications Law-Journal of Computer, Media and Telecommunications Law*, 26(4), 190-207.
- Busch, C. (2019). Self-regulation and regulatory intermediation in the platform economy. *Journal of Consumer Policy*, 42(1), 59-75. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10603-018-9397-9>
- Celestin, P. (2024). How E-Commerce Law Is Evolving to Address Consumer Protection and Digital Marketplace Regulations. *Brainae Journal of Business, Sciences and Technology*. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15063347>
- Crawford, G. S., Crémer, J., Dinielli, D., Fletcher, A., Heidhues, P., Luca, M., ... &

- Sinkinson, M. (2021). Consumer protection for online markets and large digital platforms. *Policy discussion paper*, (1). <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3923588>
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). Sage Publications.
- Cunha, M. N. (2025). Transforming Online Retail: the impact of augmented and virtual reality on consumer engagement and experience in e-commerce in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). *Journal of Lifestyle and SDGs Review*, 5(3), e4816-e4816. <https://doi.org/10.47172/2965-730X.SDGsReview.v5.n03.pe04816>
- Fletcher, A., Crawford, G. S., Crémer, J., Dinielli, D., Heidhues, P., Luca, M., ... & Sinkinson, M. (2023). Consumer protection for online markets and large digital platforms. *Yale J. on Reg.*, 40, 875. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3923588>
- Gillespie, T. (2018). *Custodians of the internet: Platforms, content moderation, and the hidden decisions that shape social media*. Yale University Press.
- Helberger, N., Lynskey, O., Micklitz, H. W., Rott, P., Sax, M., & Strycharz, J. (2021). EU consumer protection 2.0. *Structural asymmetries in digital consumer markets. Joint Report from EUCP2. 0 Project BEUC*.
- Helberger, N., Pierson, J., & Poell, T. (2020). Governing online platforms. *Information, Communication & Society*, 23(1), 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2019.1573914>
- Howells, G., Ramsay, I., & Wilhelmsson, T. (2018). *Consumer law and policy: Text and materials on regulating consumer markets* (3rd ed.). Hart Publishing.
- Jiménez, D. L. (2025). Commercial Transactions in the Digital Era: Navigating the Legal Complexities of Algorithmic Decision-Making. In *Transforming Corporate Social Responsibility and Business Ethics With AI* (pp. 139-174). IGI Global Scientific Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1201/9781779643346>
- Kerti, R. M. (2025). Consumer protection in the digital economy: A legal analysis of e-commerce practices and regulatory challenges. *Lex Localis*, 23(10), 776-786. <https://doi.org/10.52152/801041>
- Lim, X. J., Cheah, J. H., Waller, D. S., Ting, H., & Ng, S. I. (2022). What s-commerce implies? *Journal of Business Research*, 141, 33–45. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2021.11.047>
- Mak, V. (2024). Consumer contract law and data-driven technologies. In *Research Handbook in Data Science and Law* (pp. 17-39). Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Mohammadi Darani, M., & Aghaie, S. (2025). Recommender systems impact on Platform's content and outcomes: the role of providers and algorithm designs. *Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing*, 19(6), 917-935. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JRIM-04-2024-0198>
- Moro-Visconti, R., & Cesaretti, A. (2023). Networking digital platforms and virtual marketplaces. In *Digital Token Valuation: Cryptocurrencies, NFTs, Decentralized Finance, and Blockchains* (pp. 241-286). Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-42971-2>
- Musiyiwa, R., & Jacobson, J. (2023). Sponsorship disclosure in social media influencer marketing: The algorithmic and non-algorithmic barriers. *Social Media+ Society*, 9(3), 20563051231196870. <https://doi.org/10.1177/20563051231196870>

- Ntumba, C., Aguayo, S., & Maina, K. (2023). Revolutionizing retail: a mini review of e-commerce evolution. *Journal of Digital Marketing and Communication*, 3(2), 100-110. <https://doi.org/10.53623/jdmc.v3i2.365>
- Pappalardo, J. K. (2022). Economics of Consumer Protection: Contributions and Challenges in Estimating Consumer Injury and Evaluating Consumer Protection Policy: JK Pappalardo. *Journal of Consumer Policy*, 45(2), 201-238. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10603-021-09482-4>
- Prictor, M. (2023). Where does responsibility lie? Analysing legal and regulatory responses to flawed clinical decision support systems when patients suffer harm. *Medical Law Review*, 31(1), 1-24. <https://doi.org/10.1093/medlaw/fwac022>
- Prihartanto, Y., Arifin, F., Maarif, I., & Kwarteng, A. H. (2025). From legal formalism to algorithmic justice: Rethinking consumer protection in the digital economy. *Supremasi Hukum: Jurnal Kajian Ilmu Hukum*, 14(1). <https://doi.org/10.14421/gqmmwr98>
- Saternus, Z., Mihale-Wilson, C., & Hinz, O. (2024). Influencer marketing on Instagram—The optimal disclosure strategy from influencers' and marketers' perspectives. *Electronic markets*, 34(1), 60. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12525-024-00743-x>
- Scattarreggia, E. (2025). AI-Driven Smart Contracts: Enhancing Consumer Protection or Exacerbating Consumer Protection Challenges. *JL, Mkt. & Innovation*, 607. <https://doi.org/10.13135/2785-7867/12837>
- Singh, B. (2023). Unleashing alternative dispute resolution (ADR) in resolving complex legal-technical issues arising in cyberspace lensing e-commerce and intellectual property: Proliferation of e-commerce digital economy. *Revista Brasileira de Alternative Dispute Resolution-Brazilian Journal of Alternative Dispute Resolution-RBADR*, 5(10), 81-105. <https://doi.org/10.52028/rbadr.v5i10.ART04.Ind>
- Urman, A., & Makhortykh, M. (2023). How transparent are transparency reports? Comparative analysis of transparency reporting across online platforms. *Telecommunications policy*, 47(3), 102477. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.telpol.2022.102477>
- Wang, Y., Wang, S., & Lee, S. H. (2022). The rise of social commerce. *Electronic Commerce Research and Applications*, 54, 101164. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.elerap.2022.101164>
- Widijowati, D. (2023). Enhancing consumer protection in electronic commerce transactions. *Research Horizon*, 3(4), 283-290. <https://doi.org/10.54518/rh.3.4.2023.137>
- Widijowati, D., & Denysenko, S. (2023). Securing Consumer Rights: Ethical and Legal Measures against Advertisements that Violate Advertising Procedures. *Lex Publica*, 10(1), 28-42. <https://doi.org/10.58829/lp.10.1.2023.28-42>
- Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case study research and applications: Design and methods* (6th ed.). Sage Publications.
- Zhang, M., & Lin, X. (2023). Social commerce and consumer protection challenges. *Journal of Consumer Affairs*, 57(2), 742-765. <https://doi.org/10.1111/joca.12490>