

The Influence of TikTok Marketing on Consumer Purchase Intention among Students

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ABSTRACT

TikTok marketing has an enormous and broad effect on the purchasing intentions of students. TikTok has become an extremely effective medium for marketers to connect with consumers due to its interesting and simple-to-read content structure. TikTok's algorithmic content distribution system is designed to draw in

users and market a range of goods and services. This study looks into how TikTok marketing affects students' intentions to buy at selected Malaysian higher education institutions. The growing popularity of TikTok as a social media platform, especially among young people, emphasises the need to comprehend its influence on consumer behaviour. In this study, a quantitative methodology was applied, and analytical approaches employed, including reliability analysis and multiple regression analysis. The study concentrated on three important variables that affect consumers' intentions to buy: brand awareness, product quality, and price. A total of 115 respondents from the chosen universities took part in responding to the sent questionnaire. The research aims to offer insights into how businesses may effectively exploit the platform to engage with students as consumers by looking at these aspects in the context of TikTok marketing. The findings show that TikTok marketing has a major impact on student purchase behaviour, with product quality and price having a major influence on intentions to buy. All things considered, this study deepens our knowledge of how TikTok affects consumer behaviour, especially among students. It demonstrates the platform's potential as an ideal instrument for engaging students as customers and provides important insights for businesses trying to maximise their TikTok marketing efforts. Future studies on the evolving landscape of social media marketing and its effects on customer behaviour under various conditions can build on this research.

Keywords: *TikTok marketing, Purchase intention, Consumer behaviour*

INTRODUCTION

The public's concern with the decisions made by consumers, as seen on social media platforms like TikTok, is drawing more and more attention. The reason behind this trend is TikTok's enormous popularity as a social media platform. TikTok is a social media platform that offers a variety of creative sharing avenues, including video challenges, lip syncing, music, dance, singing, and more. These features are what make the platform appealing (Siregar et al., 2023; Dewa & Safitri, 2021). The quick development of information and communication technology, which has greatly advanced and almost completely taken over many facets of human life, is what led to the rise of TikTok as a social media platform. The widespread use of the internet is one noticeable outcome of this technological advancement.

TikTok has grown into one of the most widely used social media platforms among students, which makes it a desirable channel among businesses aiming to reach this demographic of consumers. Nevertheless, not enough research has been done on the influence and efficacy of TikTok marketing on the purchasing patterns of students. Thus, the purpose of this study is to address this knowledge gap and offer a thorough grasp of the ways in which companies can interact and connect with students on TikTok. This study will shed light on the various ways that businesses can use TikTok to draw in and keep students as customers by examining the impact of the platform's marketing on student purchasing behaviour. With this insight, companies can create more specialised and successful marketing plans that are targeted at the student community.

Additionally, this study will reveal the possible results and implications of TikTok marketing for students in higher education. It will explore how much TikTok marketing affects students' purchase intentions, brand awareness, and product quality and price. By examining these topics, the study can offer insights into how companies can use TikTok as a marketing tool to increase consumer engagement among students and, eventually, generate sales.

Last but not least, this research attempts to provide a thorough understanding of how businesses can effectively reach and engage with the student consumer population on TikTok and identify the potential

outcomes and consequences of such marketing strategies by examining the influence of TikTok marketing on student consumer behaviour. Finally, by focusing on the student demographic on TikTok, this research will help advance the field of marketing knowledge and offer useful insights for companies in this sector.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Purchase Intention

According to Lin and Nuangjamnong (2022), purchase intention is defined as a consumer's willingness to pay as well as their attitude towards a particular purchasing behaviour. The results of this study indicate a relationship between the credibility of influencers and certain aspects of consumer trust. When it comes to customer engagement and purchase intention during TikTok live streaming shopping, these are important factors. Additionally, a highly significant positive correlation between purchase intention and customer engagement was found by the study. This study identifies a number of sub-factors associated with trust in products, community members, and the media, with the highest mean value being associated with trust in products. Furthermore, Wijaya (2023) verified this finding by highlighting the substantial impact of brand image and trust on consumers' purchase decisions in the TikTok Shop context. The text highlights the favourable influence of trust on consumer behaviour, such as a simplified purchasing process, decreased stress, increased likelihood of repeat purchases, lower rates of returns, emotional connection, and enduring loyalty. Meanwhile, an article by author Nilsson et al. (2023) has stated the impact of trustworthiness, perceived expertise, and parasocial relationships on Swedish consumers' purchase intentions on TikTok, and the study found a positive relationship between purchase intention and the factors mentioned. The image of beauty products and social media advertising on TikTok are the main determinants of consumer purchasing decisions (Darmatama & Erdiansyah, 2021). These factors have a substantial impact on consumers' purchasing decisions. Social media advertising on TikTok stimulates viewers and shapes their behaviour, influencing them to make purchases. According to Khaleeli's (2020) study, there is a beneficial and significant link between sales promotion on social media and the intention to make online purchases. However, there is no significant relationship between social media advertising and the intention to make online purchases. This indicates that consumers' intentions to make online purchases are not directly impacted by social media advertising. The article by Araujo et al. (2022) explores the impact of emotional, entertaining, and informative aspects of TikTok video advertising on customer behaviour and purchase intention. The informative dimension aims to captivate the audience and alleviate stress, while the emotional dimension aims to elicit either positive or negative emotions in the audience. On the other hand, the informative dimension provides useful and practical information that can assist customers in their daily lives. The study also found that online video advertising, including TikTok video commercials, has a positive impact on consumer purchase intention. Furthermore, the likelihood of the user developing a favourable attitude towards an online platform is positively correlated with their level of engagement. This behaviour has the potential to result in continued favourable intentions to make purchases, active involvement of users, the formation of a brand's perception, and loyalty towards the brand.

Brand Awareness

Brand awareness plays a pivotal role in shaping consumers' purchase intentions, serving as a critical precursor to buying decisions. According to a study conducted by Alhamdina and Hartono (2023), social media marketing is an effective method for connecting with individuals and enhancing their familiarity with a brand. To establish consumer trust in a brand, it is crucial for consumers to grasp that the brand incorporates more than just a name or symbol on a product. Brand recognition plays a crucial role in

increasing consumers' intention to make online purchases, as they are more likely to buy products that they are already familiar with and that have a strong reputation. The study revealed a direct correlation between brand awareness and consumer brand trust, as well as online purchase intentions for products available on TikTok shops. Consumers are more inclined to have confidence in and buy products when they possess knowledge about the brand. Likewise, the reputation of a brand has a favourable impact on the trust that consumers have in the brand's products on TikTok Shop. In addition, Nurjannah and Suriyanto (2022) have asserted that different forms of brand awareness, including brand recognition, brand recall, and top of mind, play a crucial role in influencing a consumer's decision-making process. The study indicates that TikTok social media, brand ambassadors, and brand awareness significantly impact consumers' purchase intentions. The study revealed that brand awareness had the most significant positive influence on the intention to purchase. The study additionally revealed that female participants exhibited greater dominance in their use of TikTok and Shopee. In addition, social media, including TikTok, is a critical communication channel for determining customers' brand awareness (Gesmundo et. al., 2022). Researchers stated that TikTok is an effective platform for marketing campaigns and has a positive impact on brand awareness and recall. Shabbir et al. (2017) state that brand awareness comes before the establishment of brand equity. They also emphasise the significant role of awareness in consumers' decision-making processes. Furthermore, the authors suggest that the higher the level of brand awareness, the greater the likelihood that the product or brand will be considered by consumers when making their final choice among different brands. (as cited in Gesmundo et. al., 2022).

H1: There is a relationship between brand awareness and purchase intention.

Product Quality

According to Meliawati et al. (2023), a study was conducted to analyse the relationship between purchase intention and product quality. Product quality refers to the specific features and qualities of a product that determine its capacity to satisfy the requirements and desires of customers. The factors encompassed in this category include performance, design, packaging, and specifications. Based on the article, the findings show that the quality variable of the product had the highest value, which was 13.34. This suggests a direct correlation between the intention to purchase and the quality of the product, indicating that customers place a high value on the attributes and qualities of the product in relation to meeting their needs and expectations. In the meantime, "word of mouth" refers to the process by which customers or users communicate and exchange information about a product or service. Individuals employ this casual method of communication to exert influence over one another's purchasing choices by exchanging their opinions, recommendations, and personal encounters. Word-of-mouth marketing can come from a wide range of sources, such as social media platforms like TikTok, where users can recommend and share content with their followers. Word of mouth has the potential to act as an intervening variable. Hence, as per a study published in the IDEAS Journal of Management and Technology, the quality of a product has a positive effect on electronic word-of-mouth, which in turn has a positive influence on purchase decisions (Harisandi & Purwanto, 2022). Additionally, the favourable quality of a product has a significant impact on the purchasing decisions made through electronic word-of-mouth within the TikTok application. Consequently, the study suggests that the quality of a product has a substantial impact on customer decisions to purchase TikTok applications.

H2: There is relationship between product quality and purchase intention.

Price

Consumers heavily depend on price when making a purchase. Individuals often engage in price comparisons for comparable goods, ultimately opting for a more affordable alternative based on their perception of quality relative to price and other economic considerations. As a result, sellers engage in competition by consistently reducing their prices and offering discounts to attract customers during the sales process. Customers establish a minimum and maximum price range, with prices below the minimum indicating products of low quality and prices above the maximum being seen as expensive and not justified based on the value provided. Essentially, as stated by Rochman and Kusumawati (2023), an investigation was conducted to examine the impact of promotions, influencers, convenience, service quality, and prices on purchasing decisions made on the TikTok application's "TikTok Shop." The study confirms that prices have a significant impact on purchasing decisions, as consumers primarily consider the affordability of the price and the perceived quality of the products in relation to the cost when making buying choices. Price is also a measure of the size of the value of satisfaction with a product (Harisandi & Purwanto, 2022). The study highlights the impact of a meticulously designed pricing strategy on consumers' perceptions and decision-making processes in relation to purchasing. The study's literature review emphasises that consumers are willing to allocate a higher budget for a product that has a higher price tag, provided they anticipate a proportionate level of satisfaction. Essentially, the price of a product serves as an indicator of the level of perceived value and satisfaction it provides. Furthermore, prices can be influenced by additional factors, such as the inclusion of free shipping and the availability of discounts. Consequently, consumers frequently evaluate and scrutinise the advantages offered by sellers in order to obtain lower prices. Based on the study conducted by Tursina and Adlina (2024), it can be inferred that discounts exert a favourable and substantial impact on purchasing interest (Y). This is because discounts have the ability to capture the attention of consumers, motivating them to make purchases of desired items. Finally, there is an awareness of prices. Price awareness pertains to a consumer's awareness and comprehension of the prices linked to products or services in the market. It pertains to an individual's capacity to identify, recollect, and assess the expenses associated with items they may wish to buy. The study findings suggest that being aware of prices positively affects the intention to make purchases in TikTok live streaming shopping (Ahmadi & Hudrasyah, 2022).

H3: There is a relationship between product price and purchase intention.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The target population is undergraduate students located at public universities in Malaysia. Based on purposive sampling, 115 respondents were obtained. These respondents were obtained based on their experience and usage of TikTok, at least for the last 6 months, as a common character needed for the purposive sample in this study. These respondents also represent all-level business and management students at their universities. The current study comprises four main variables: brand awareness, product quality, price, and purchase intention. The items were adopted from the previous studies, especially those closely related to organisational contexts, and all the variables were measured using the five-point Likert scale.

In this research, the researchers have designed a structured questionnaire as the primary means of data collection. The questionnaire is organised into five sections labelled A, B, C, D, and E, each addressing specific aspects. Section A focuses on collecting demographic information, Section B on brand awareness, Section C on product quality, Section D on product pricing, and Section E on investigating purchase intentions among consumers (students). The questionnaire incorporates both multiple-choice and

Likert-scale questions. A five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), is utilised to assess the respondents' agreement levels with each statement. Respondents are required to select only one response for each question. The questionnaire is presented in the English language. The data were examined via SPSS, employing analytical approaches including reliability analysis and multiple regression analysis in order to test the relationship between each variable.

FINDINGS

Cronbach's alpha was carried out, and as shown in Table 1, the alpha value (α) for all items was above 0.6. Therefore, it can be concluded that the items applied in this study were valid and reliable. Due to the α value being close to 1, it can be considered that the variables used have a high level of reliability. Next, Table 2 shows the breakdown of the respondents by gender, age group, semester, and time spent on Tiktok by the students. The majority of respondents were male, and mostly they were between 21 and 23 years old, with 86.1%. As for the time spent on Tiktok, most of the students spent around 1-2 hours with 57.4%, followed by 2-3 hours with 27.8%.

Table 1. Reliability Analysis

Variable	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Brand awareness	5	0.798
Product quality	5	0.740
Price	5	0.814
Purchase intention	5	0.809

Table 2. Respondents Profile

Criteria	Category	Number	Percentage
Gender	Male	58	50.4
	Female	57	49.6
Age Group	18-20	8	7
	21-23	99	86.1
	24 & above	8	7
Semester	Semester 1	3	2.6
	Semester 2	9	7.8
	Semester 3	10	8.7
	Semester 4	7	6.1
	Final Semester	86	74.8
Time spent on Tiktok	Less than 15 minutes	3	2.6
	Less than 30 minutes	10	8.7
	1-2 hours	66	57.4
	2-3 hours	32	27.8
	More than 3 hours	4	3.5

Table 3. Result of Multiple Regression

Dependent variable: Purchase intention among students		
Independent variables	Standardised Coefficient (BETA)	Sig.
(Constant)		
Brand awareness	-0.058	0.433
Product quality	0.176	0.012
Price	0.759	0.001
F value	87.455	
R square	0.703	

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Based on Table 3 above, the only variable with an insignificant relationship is brand awareness, whose significant value is 0.433 as it is greater than 0.05. This finding is consistent with Yaseen and Mazahir (2019), whose findings found that brand awareness is among the insignificant determinants that influence students' purchase intentions via TikTok marketing. There are several factors that might lead to this finding. For instance, it might be due to competitive factors. Despite brand awareness, consumers may opt for competitors' products if they perceive them to have superior quality, better value for money, or more in accordance with their preferences. Furthermore, the suitability of the product is an additional factor that could potentially contribute to the lack of significance in this relationship. Occasionally, consumers may possess familiarity with a brand but may not perceive its products as compatible with their requirements or preferences. In such instances, mere consciousness does not result in the intention to make a purchase. The reason for this is the wide range of content available on TikTok. TikTok is distinguished by its heterogeneous and swiftly evolving content. During their browsing sessions, users are exposed to a varied selection of videos that cover a wide range of topics, trends, and interests. In this dynamic setting, users may not consistently focus on brand messaging or form robust brand associations, thereby reducing the direct impact of brands on their intention to make a purchase.

Moreover, the result specifies the positive relationship between product quality and price on students' purchase intention, with significant values of 0.012 and 0.001, respectively. In addition, comparing the two predictors that were significant, price is the main dominating factor that influences the students' purchase intention, as this predictor has a higher beta value (0.759) compared to other predictors. This is due to the main concern of students' limitations on their spending patterns, in which saving on expenses is a vital choice. TikTok boasts a substantial user base primarily comprised of younger demographics, specifically Generation Z and Millennials. These demographic cohorts frequently possess restricted discretionary funds and exhibit greater sensitivity to prices when compared to older generations. Consequently, they are more inclined to give priority to affordability when making purchasing decisions. However, the TikTok platform accommodates a diverse array of brands and products, resulting in a fiercely competitive market setting. Given the wide range of choices available to consumers, the price of a product or service becomes a vital element for brands attempting to attract and retain customers. Products with lower prices or promotional offers are more likely to attract the attention of TikTok users who are sensitive to prices.

In addition to price, the quality of a product also has a substantial impact on the purchase intention of students who use TikTok. TikTok users prioritise authenticity and reliability when it comes to the content they engage with. When a product is featured in a TikTok video and is perceived as being of superior quality, users are more inclined to trust the endorsement and contemplate buying the product.

Positive comments and testimonials regarding the product's performance from both influential individuals and fellow consumers can further strengthen trust and credibility. This is one aspect to consider; the other is the potential impact on user engagement and reviews of this link. Users can interact with content on TikTok by liking, commenting, and sharing it. Comments on TikTok videos often include users' thoughts and experiences with the featured products. Users' propensity to buy a product is strongly correlated to the number of positive comments posted about it in the comments section. Finally, product quality extends beyond first impressions and includes factors such as durability and longevity. Users highly appreciate products that demonstrate durability and maintain their quality even with frequent use over an extended period of time. TikTok users may prioritise buying products renowned for their durability, as they perceive them to provide superior long-term value for their money.

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