(RESEARCH ARTICLE)

Research on the role of influencers in Gen Z's purchasing decisions on TikTok Shop in Hanoi

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Abstract

The article focuses on the important role of factors influencing the purchasing decisions of the Gen Z generation when using the TikTok Shop platform. It deeply analyzes the influence of six main variables are Informativeness, Credibility, Trustworthiness, Likeability, Interaction and the impact of the Entertainment. Studies cited from various sources include analyses of these factors on consumers' online purchasing behavior. The article underscores TikTok Shop's growing significance as a platform where Gen Z explores, discovers, and decides on purchases, driven significantly by influencers and other motivating factors in their decision-making process.

Keywords: Gen Z; Influencer marketing; Online shopping behavior; Purchase decision factors; TikTok Shop

1. Introduction

Influencers play an important role in shaping Gen Z's purchasing decisions on the TikTok Shop platform in Hanoi. With a strong presence and relatable content, influencers can effectively engage with a younger, tech-savvy generation interested in this trend. Gen Z, known for their sophisticated aesthetic and considerable purchasing power, often turns to influencers for recommendations and reviews. The rapid growth of TikTok, especially among Gen Z youth, creates a favorable environment for influencers to influence followers' shopping choices. By leveraging influencers, brands can create more personalized and persuasive marketing strategies, leading to quicker purchase decisions and increased brand loyalty among consumers in Hanoi.

Researching the role of influencers in Gen Z's purchasing decisions on the TikTok Shop platform in Hanoi is essential for several reasons. Firstly, Gen Z represents a consumer generation with significant purchasing power and a strong influence on consumption trends. With TikTok's rapid growth as the most popular social media platform today, understanding how influencers can impact Gen Z's purchasing decisions has become crucial. Secondly, TikTok influencers can create creative and relatable content that attracts young people's attention. Their product reviews and recommendations are often authentic and trustworthy, making Gen Z more easily persuaded compared to traditional advertising methods. Thirdly, this research helps brands develop more effective marketing strategies. By identifying influencers who sway Gen Z's shopping behavior, businesses can optimize their advertising campaigns, enhance engagement, and improve operational efficiency.

Today, online shopping behavior is on the rise and gradually becoming a new consumer trend in Vietnam. Generation Z, born between the mid-1990s and early 2010s, is a key consumer demographic in this market. Among various social networking platforms, TikTok stands out as the fastest-growing platform globally. Of its over 1 billion monthly active users worldwide, up to 60% belong to Gen Z, making them the generation with the greatest purchasing power and influence on purchasing decisions. Utilizing societal influencers as customer references is becoming a growing trend as it expedites the purchasing process and enhances efficiency for brands. This research has established a theoretical

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framework on influencers, Gen Z, the TikTok Shop platform, developed models, and hypotheses to study how influencer factors impact Gen Z's purchasing decisions in Hanoi, providing relevant recommendations.

2. Literature review and hypotheses

Research into online shopping behavior has identified numerous critical factors that sway consumer decisions. Ajzen (1988) established a foundational framework in his work "Attitudes, Personality, and Behavior," highlighting the interplay between attitudes, personality traits, and consumer behavior. His subsequent development, the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991), has become a prominent model in behavioral studies, positing that behavioral intentions are influenced by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Armitage and Conner (2001) corroborated the TPB's efficacy through meta-analysis, affirming its predictive power in behavioral contexts.

In the realm of online shopping, Davis (1989) underscores the pivotal role of perceived usefulness and ease of use of technology in shaping consumer acceptance and adoption of online platforms. Dachyar and Banjarnahor (2017) further identified trustworthiness and convenience as pivotal factors influencing consumer intentions in e-commerce settings. Concurrently, social networks and advertising wield substantial influence; Barreda et al. (2015) demonstrated social media's efficacy in cultivating brand awareness, while Dehghani and Tumer (2015) highlighted Facebook's potential to augment purchase intent. Bronner and de Hoog (2014) emphasized the impact of social media feedback on consumer decision-making, while Cheung and Lee (2012) linked satisfaction and trust on online opinion platforms to electronic word-of-mouth behavior. Coley and Burgess (2003) explored gender differences in impulse buying, noting women's propensity to shop based on emotional triggers. Andrews and Bianchi (2013) underscored the significance of website trust, competitive pricing, and convenience in driving online shopping behaviors in Chile, offering a comprehensive perspective on global online shopping behaviors.

Research specific to Generation Z's online shopping behavior in Vietnam has pinpointed key determinants influencing their purchasing decisions. La Thi Tuyet (2021) identified convenience and service quality as paramount factors for Gen Z consumers in Hanoi. Nguyen Thi Minh Hien and Nguyen Thi Thuy Hoa (2021) emphasized website reliability, promotional activities, and social media influence in shaping Gen Z's online purchasing behaviors. Ta Van Thanh and Dang Xuan On (2021) affirmed the significance of shopping experience and information security in guiding these young consumers' online shopping intentions. Though Tu Thi Hai Yen's (2015) study did not focus on Generation Z, insights on seller reputation, product quality, and return policies remain pertinent to understanding factors impacting online shopping behavior.

Moreover, the introduction of TikTok Shop in Vietnam in 2022 has provided a new interactive shopping avenue, particularly appealing to tech-savvy Gen Z consumers who are avid social media users (TikTok, 2022). Additionally, Tran Nhu Dai (2021) underscored the substantial influence of Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs) and influencers on contemporary Vietnamese consumers' purchasing decisions, particularly among Generation Z, through their endorsements and product reviews. In summary, factors such as convenience, service quality, reliability, promotions, shopping experience, information security, and the influence of KOLs/influencers play pivotal roles in shaping Generation Z's online shopping behaviors in Vietnam.

The significance of influencers in shaping Generation Z's shopping decisions is noteworthy. Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs) play a crucial role by providing detailed and reliable product information, aiding consumers in making informed choices (Belch & Belch, 2009). On the TikTok platform, KOLs' information dissemination swiftly influences consumer behavior (Dehghani & Tumer, 2015), encompassing not only product endorsements but also comprehensive reviews and user feedback, fostering a robust informational milieu (Cheung & Lee, 2012). According to Dachyar and Banjarnahor (2017), the information factor prominently influences online shopping intentions, particularly among Generation Z on TikTok Shop in Hanoi.

Hypothesis H1 posits that influencer-provided Informativeness positively impacts Generation Z's purchasing decisions on TikTok Shop in Hanoi.

Influencer credibility is pivotal in contemporary consumer decision-making. Defined by O'Keefe (1990) as "a perceiver's judgment regarding the trustworthiness of a communicator," credibility dictates the extent of consumer trust in the source of information. Ohanian (1990) underscores that favorable communicator traits enhance marketing message acceptance. Consumers are inclined to embrace shopping recommendations from trustworthy KOLs on platforms like TikTok when they perceive reliability and alignment with their needs. Hence, influencer credibility not only serves as a critical factor but also constitutes a central element in modern marketing strategies aimed at optimizing outreach and driving sales.

Hypothesis H2 posits that influencer Credibility positively impacts Generation Z's purchasing decisions on TikTok Shop in Hanoi.

Influencer Trustworthiness significantly influences Gen Z consumers' purchasing decisions. According to Giffin (1967), source Trustworthiness hinges on the recipient's perception of honesty, sincerity, or trustworthiness. Trustworthiness equates to the level of trust consumers place in individuals or brands, underscoring its pivotal role in consumer perception and acceptance of influencer-driven information. When influencers are perceived as credible, Generation Z consumers are more likely to trust their recommendations, thereby influencing their purchasing decisions. This underscores the imperative of fostering and preserving influencer trustworthiness for effective engagement with Gen Z consumers in today's digital marketplace.

Hypothesis H3 posits that influencer Trustworthiness positively impacts Generation Z's purchasing decisions on TikTok Shop in Hanoi.

Gen Z's preference for influencers (KOLs) significantly influences their purchasing decisions. Influencer likability enhances brand reputation and consumer attitudes toward promoted products. Kumar's (2011) research affirms that popular KOLs not only attract attention but also foster greater trust and engagement among consumers. Wang et al. (2017) indicate that consumer affinity toward KOLs can heighten purchase intention by forging emotional connections. Xiao et al. (2018) underscore that consumer sympathy toward KOLs facilitates the acceptance and persuasion of marketing messages, thereby augmenting purchase intention. Particularly within the online shopping context of Generation Z, affinity toward KOLs on platforms such as TikTok exerts a substantial and direct influence on purchasing decisions, thereby enhancing the efficacy of digital marketing strategies.

Hypothesis H4 posits that influencer Likeability positively impacts Generation Z's purchasing decisions on TikTok Shop in Hanoi.

Interactivity between influencers and consumers on the TikTok Shop platform emerges as a pivotal factor in influencing Gen Z consumers' purchasing decisions. This engagement fosters a sense of closeness and camaraderie between consumers and influencers, injecting excitement and enjoyment into the online shopping experience (Wang et al., 2017; Xiao et al., 2018). Additionally, it strengthens brand-consumer relationships through unique and memorable interactive encounters (Chen & Lin, 2018). Such interactions are instrumental in cultivating trust and bolstering Gen Z's shopping decisions on the TikTok Shop platform.
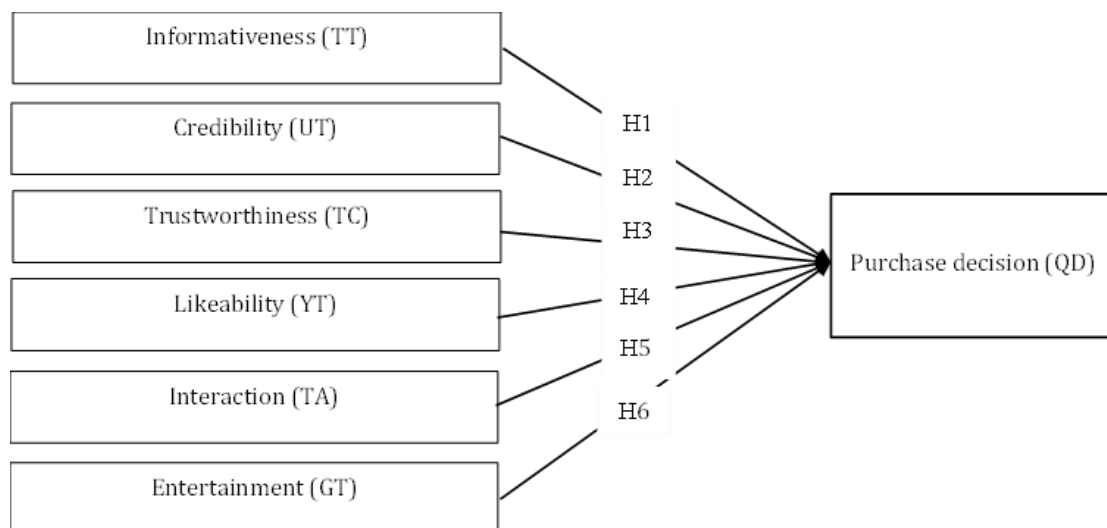

Figure 1 Proposed research model

Hypothesis H5 posits that influencer Interaction positively impacts Generation Z's purchasing decisions on TikTok Shop in Hanoi.

Entertainment serves as a potent mechanism through which influencers sway consumer purchasing decisions. Influencers leverage TikTok's platform to create engaging videos and advertisements that captivate and entice buyers.

Entertainment emerges as a primary driver behind social media platform use (Chen & Lin, 2018; De Vries et al., 2012; Leung, 2013).

Hypothesis H6 posits that influencer-provided entertainment positively impacts Generation Z's purchasing decisions on TikTok Shop in Hanoi.

3. Data and Research methods

3.1. Research data

According to Hoang Trong and Chu Nguyen Mong Ngoc (2008), for ensuring research reliability, the rule of multiplying by 5 is applied, meaning the minimum number of samples required is obtained by multiplying the number of observed variables by 5. The survey model for this project comprises 5 independent factors and 24 observed variables. Therefore, to ensure sample representativeness, a minimum of 24 x 5 = 120 samples or more is required. In their study, the authors selected 250 survey questionnaires targeting Gen Z subjects in Hanoi and received 219 valid responses, surpassing the necessary threshold to ensure the representativeness and reliability of the survey findings.

3.2. Research Methods

Qualitative research was conducted using interviews with 15 people of the Gen Z generation in Hanoi, all of whom have experience shopping online through the TikTok Shop platform. The purpose of this stage is to complete the survey before conducting official research.

The quantitative phase of the research included a survey sample of 250 questionnaires, of which 219 valid questionnaires were obtained. Next, the study conducts the following analysis:

Assess reliability using Cronbach Alpha index: This method is used to evaluate the reliability of each scale. Variables with correlation coefficients between items lower than 0.3 will be eliminated, ensuring that only scales with high reliability (Cronbach Alpha >= 0.60) are retained for further analysis.

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA): Used to identify and eliminate inappropriate observed variables (junk variables). Variables are retained if they have a KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin) coefficient of 0.5 or higher and a Sig value. (significance) <= 0.05.

Regression analysis: Conducted to understand the relationship between independent variables (Informativeness, Credibility, Trustworthiness, Likeability, Interaction and Entertainment) and dependent variables (purchase decision).

4. Result

4.1. Descriptive statistics for the study sample

The study data provides a clear insight into the characteristics of the survey sample. Regarding gender, the data reveals a relatively balanced distribution between men (40.2%) and women (56.6%), with a small proportion (3.2%) identifying as other genders. In terms of age, the majority of participants (66.7%) were in the 20-23 age group, followed by the 17-20 age group (13.2%), while a smaller segment belonged to the over 23 age group (16.4%). Among the respondents, the majority were students (79.0%), followed by individuals with stable jobs or graduates (13.7%), and a few were unemployed (7.3%).

Table 1 Descriptive statistical results

Criteria	Spend details	Frequency	Rate(%)
Gender	Male	88	40.20
	Female	124	56.60
	Other	7	3.20
Age	14-17	8	3.70

	17-20	29	13.20
	20-23	146	66.70
	≥ 23	36	16.40
Job/Career	Pupil	16	7.30
	Student	173	79.00
	Graduated person	30	13.70
Income per month (million VND)	< 3	121	56.28
	3 - 5	46	21.40
	5 - 7	24	11.16
	> 7	24	11.16

Source: Author's compilation from calculation results

Regarding income levels, the majority of survey participants earn less than 3 million VND per month (55.28%), while those earning between 3 million and less than 5 million VND per month account for 21.40%. Income levels ranging from 5 million to less than 7 million VND per month and over 7 million VND per month both represent 11.16% of the respondents.

These data not only facilitate the analysis of relationships between survey variables but also provide a foundation for better understanding how these factors influence purchasing decisions among Gen Z consumers on the TikTok Shop platform.

4.2. Test the reliability of the scale

All scales have Cronbach's Alpha values > 0.6. If the variables are all smaller or increase insignificantly, Cronbach's Alpha values will also change. Therefore, all six scales meet the reliability requirements. The study's reliability results indicated high reliability and consistency of the measured variables. Scales such as Informativeness (TT), Credibility (UT), Trustworthiness (TC), Likeability (YT), Entertainment (GT), Interaction (TA), and Purchase Decision (QD) all exhibit high Cronbach's Alpha coefficients, ranging from 0.852 to 0.933. This demonstrates that these scales are capable of accurately and reliably measuring and evaluating aspects such as information, credibility, trustworthiness, likeability, entertainment, interaction, and purchase decisions in the study.

Table 2 Test the reliability of the scale

Variable	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Informativeness (TT) - Cronbach's Alpha = 0.856				
TT1	12.070	5.624	0.644	0.839
TT2	12.100	5.522	0.659	0.833
TT3	12.030	5.260	0.760	0.790
TT4	12.090	5.456	0.736	0.801
Credibility (UT) - Cronbach's Alpha = 0.933				
UT1	12.020	6.073	0.795	0.927
UT2	12.070	5.734	0.889	0.897
UT3	12.030	5.761	0.861	0.906
UT4	12.000	5.876	0.824	0.918
Trustworthiness (TC) - Cronbach's Alpha = 0.897				
TC1	7.330	3.352	0.824	0.831

TC2	7.350	3.229	0.822	0.83
TC3	7.370	3.291	0.747	0.897
Likeability (YT) - Cronbach's Alpha = 0.855				
YT1	7.120	2.377	0.571	0.808
YT2	6.960	2.418	0.621	0.859
YT3	7.180	2.292	0.466	0.875
Entertainment (GT) - Cronbach's Alpha = 0.852				
GT1	7.400	1.892	0.586	0.861
GT2	7.420	1.840	0.618	0.823
GT3	7.450	1.983	0.536	0.818
Interaction (TA) - Cronbach's Alpha = 0.918				
TA1	11.680	7.310	0.827	0.885
TA2	11.750	7.528	0.860	0.876
TA3	11.910	7.245	0.818	0.888
TA4	11.950	7.639	0.735	0.917
Purchase Decision (QD) - Cronbach's Alpha coefficient = 0.888				
QD1	6.283	1.848	0.601	0.866
QD2	5.893	2.203	0.589	0.857
QD3	6.601	2.706	0.439	0.860
QD4	5.792	2.101	0.534	0.887

4.3. EFA exploratory factor analysis

The KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy) analysis result for the independent variables is 0.855, indicating that the sample collected is sufficiently large for factor analysis. This KMO value exceeds the threshold of 0.5, confirming the suitability of our data for conducting exploratory factor analysis (EFA).

Additionally, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity yielded statistically significant results with a chi-square value of 2847.700 and a significance level (Sig) of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). This rejection of the null hypothesis of sphericity indicates that the independent variables are not perfectly correlated and are appropriate for factor analysis.

In conclusion, both the KMO results and Bartlett's test demonstrate that the study's data are adequate for conducting exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to explore relationships among the independent variables in the research model.

Table 3 KMO coefficient & Bartlet's test of independent variable

Kaiser – Meyer – Olkin Mesure of Sampling Adequacy		0.855
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Appro Chi – Square	2847.700
	DF	210
	Sig	0.000

4.4. Linear regression analysis

QD = 0.083+ 0.332TT + 0.286UT + 0.196TC + 0.042YT + 0.091TA + 0.149GT

The results of the regression analysis reveal the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable (QD - Purchase Decision) in this study. Specifically, the regression model incorporates the independent variables: Informativeness (TT), Credibility (UT), Trustworthiness (TC), Likeability (YT), Entertainment (GT), and Interaction (TA).

Table 4 Results of regression analysis

Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
QD							
Cons	0.168	0.228	0.083	0.738	0. 461		
TT	0.327	0.065	0.332	5.033	0.000	0.504	1.983
UT	0.283	0.059	0.286	4.811	0.003	0.624	1.603
TC	0.181	0.065	0.196	2.758	0.007	0.435	2.299
YT	0.040	0.060	0.042	0.660	0.030	0.533	1.875
TA	0.086	0.064	0.091	1.355	0.023	0.491	2.035
GT	0.146	0.071	0.149	2.063	0.040	0.419	2.387

Variables such as Informativeness (TT), Credibility (UT), and Trustworthiness (TC) exhibit significant positive beta coefficients with p-values < 0.01, indicating their substantial and positive impact on consumer purchasing decisions. Particularly noteworthy are TT and UT, which emerge as the most influential factors with beta coefficients of 0.332 and 0.286, respectively. The factor "Informativeness" exerts the strongest influence with a Beta coefficient of 0.332, underscoring the pivotal role of influencer-provided information in guiding Gen Z consumers' purchase decisions on the TikTok Shop platform. Following closely, the factor "Credibility" ranks second to Informativeness, demonstrating a significant positive impact on Gen Z's purchasing decisions on the TikTok Shop platform with a Beta coefficient of 0.286. Influencer credibility, accumulated over time through expertise and objective product reviews, enhances their perceived value among consumers.

Factors such as Likeability (YT) and Entertainment (GT) also positively influence QD, albeit to a lesser extent compared to TT and UT. Notably, GT shows a significant influence with a p-value of 0.040, indicating that entertainment preferences play a crucial role in purchasing decisions. The "Trustworthiness" factor, represented by the trust level of influencers, carries the third-largest impact with a Beta coefficient of 0.196 on Gen Z's purchasing decisions on the TikTok Shop platform. Moreover, GT, representing influencer entertainment, exerts a noteworthy influence on Gen Z's purchasing decisions on the TikTok Shop platform with a Beta coefficient of 0.149. TikTok's popularity among youth has surged due to influencers' creation of short, highly entertaining videos that resonate deeply with viewers, influencing their emotions and purchase decisions. This effective marketing approach has spurred increased investment in entertaining video content on TikTok by individuals and businesses alike to attract and engage a broader customer base.

Additionally, TA (Interaction) exhibits a positive beta coefficient with a p-value of 0.023, though its impact is relatively lower compared to other variables.

Regarding autocorrelation and multicollinearity, all independent variables possess Tolerance values ranging from 0.419 to 0.624 and VIF values from 1.603 to 2.387. These values indicate no significant signs of severe multicollinearity within the model. However, further verification using indicators such as the Condition Index would strengthen the confirmation of negligible multicollinearity in this study.

In summary, this regression model has provided insights into the critical factors influencing consumer purchasing decisions, while affirming the absence of major multicollinearity issues among the independent variables. These findings serve as a robust foundation for developing more effective marketing and management strategies in business practice.

5. Conclusion

This study examines the impact of influencer factors on Generation Z's purchasing decisions on the TikTok Shop platform in Hanoi. Through analysis using linear regression models, the research evaluates six critical variables: Informativeness (TT), Credibility (UT), Trustworthiness (TC), Likeability (YT), Entertainment (GT), and Interaction (TA) in influencing consumer purchasing decisions.

The findings highlight that Informativeness (TT) and Reputation (UT) are the most influential factors affecting Gen Z's purchasing decisions on the TikTok Shop platform in Hanoi. TT, which measures the capability to provide comprehensive, accurate, and effective information, demonstrates significant impact with beta coefficients of 0.332 and 0.286 respectively. UT, focusing on influencer trustworthiness and reputation, also plays a pivotal role with a beta coefficient of 0.286. Trustworthiness (TC), Likeability (YT), Entertainment (GT), and Interaction (TA) also contribute positively to purchase decisions, albeit with lesser influence compared to TT and UT.

Furthermore, the regression model indicates no significant multicollinearity among the independent variables, with Tolerance and VIF indices within acceptable ranges. This underscores the suitability of the model for understanding and predicting consumer behavior on the TikTok Shop platform.

The study suggests that effective marketing strategies aimed at influencing Gen Z's purchasing decisions on TikTok Shop should prioritize enhancing product information quality, building influencer credibility and trust, and enriching content with entertainment and interactive elements to attract and engage customers.

These insights not only deepen understanding of Gen Z's purchasing behavior on TikTok Shop but also propose specific strategies for businesses and managers to optimize their operations in the rapidly evolving digital landscape:

Enhancing Product Information Quality: In the era of burgeoning online shopping, especially among active Generation Z consumers, providing high-quality, transparent product information and authentic promotional content is crucial. Influencers should ensure clear, honest product reviews that help consumers make informed decisions. Establishing effective communication channels to accurately promote products and promptly addressing consumer feedback can further enhance trust and reliability.

Building Influencer Personal Brand: To cultivate a strong personal brand on social media platforms, influencers should invest in equipment, channel aesthetics, and content creativity. Authenticity, expertise, and community engagement are vital in building credibility and expanding audience reach. Active participation in community activities and consistent delivery of high-quality content aligning with brand values can foster lasting relationships with followers.

Promoting Trust through Honest Product Reviews: Influencers play a pivotal role in influencing purchasing decisions by delivering unbiased, objective product reviews. Ensuring content consistency and accuracy regarding product quality, pricing, and consumer expectations builds trust and boosts consumer confidence. Authentic reviews based on genuine product experiences are essential in maintaining credibility and fostering consumer loyalty.

Enhancing Entertainment in Influencer Content: Integrating entertainment elements into promotional videos enhances consumer engagement and connection with products or services. Creative and personalized content that resonates with Generation Z values and aspirations strengthens brand affinity and encourages repeat purchases. Aligning content with brand messaging and values fosters a sense of security and reliability among consumers, motivating future purchases.

In conclusion, this study provides empirical evidence on the influential factors shaping Generation Z's purchasing decisions on the TikTok Shop platform. The outlined strategies offer actionable insights for businesses aiming to navigate and excel in the dynamic digital marketplace, thereby enhancing customer engagement and driving sustainable growth.

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Statement of informed consent

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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