



Impact of Social Media Advertising among University Students' Purchase Intentions Through the TikTok Platform.

Sabbir Hossain

Siam University, Thailand

sabbir.hos@siam.edu

ABSTRACT

Due to its rapidly expanding market and engagement reach, TikTok, a popular social media platform owned by ByteDance, has been more heavily incorporated into various marketing methods in recent times. Social networks are created by modern people to connect with their near and dear ones. Social media advertising is the practice of placing paid advertisements on social media platforms. These advertisements can appear in a variety of forms, such as sponsored posts, banner ads, or video ads, and can be targeted to specific groups of users based on demographics, interests, or behaviors. Social media advertising is an effective way for businesses to reach their target audience, increase brand awareness, and generate leads or sales. It can also be a cost-effective form of advertising compared to traditional methods, as businesses can set their own budget and target specific audiences. However, TikTok, a popular video-sharing social networking service, has emerged as a powerful tool for advertisers looking to reach young people. University students, in particular, are a prime target for advertisers due to their high level of engagement with social media and their willingness to try new products and services. There are a few reasons why TikTok advertising may be particularly effective at influencing university students' purchase intentions. First, TikTok's format of short, attention-grabbing videos makes it easy for advertisers to capture the attention of their target audience. Additionally, TikTok's algorithm personalizes content for each user, which can make advertisements feel more relevant and targeted to individual viewers. However, the researchers gave careful thought to this feature, which inspired them to investigate the effectiveness of marketing strategies developed for TikTok.

Keywords: Social Media Advertising, TikTok, Short-form videos, Purchase intentions.

INTRODUCTION

Social media, a technological innovation that collects a variety of information and offers nonstop enjoyment and information, is the center of the modern world. Social media has grown in popularity as a marketing strategy because it allows businesses and marketers to interact with both their current and potential customers. According to Nuseir (2016), the Internet and digital media are effective strategic tools that specifically target millennials in order to meet their requirements. These days generation Z or younger generation can learn more than past generations at their age because they are digital natives and can quickly look for anything with



an internet connection (Seemiller & Grace, 2017). TikTok's creative and quick-moving algorithm demonstrates its attractiveness to youthful audiences around the world as it primarily highlights short-form videos to foster joy and inspire creativity among its users (Weimann & Masri, 2021). In comparison to other social media platforms, TikTok developed quickly, gaining a 200% market share in just two years by April 2019 (Wang, 2020). 42% of users of this video-sharing software are between the ages of 18 and 24, and it has become a cultural phenomenon (Sehl, 2020). One of the things that sets TikTok apart from other social media platforms is the focus on creative expression through short videos. The platform features a wide range of editing tools and effects that users can use to create engaging and visually appealing content. Additionally, the platform's algorithm is highly effective at promoting content that resonates with users, allowing creators with a small following to grow quickly. In terms of the use of VDO online media in 2019, consumers are likely to notice more VDO advertisements, including details on audience retention of online VDO media (Kanokwan Kankate, 2019). This suggests that as the period for VDO lengthens, consumer interest will decline. Due to this, each VDO clip is presented on the online social media platform TikTok in under a minute. Observing TikTok's popularity with Generation Z can shed light on how today's youth interpret cultural trends and engage in cross-generational interaction with marketers. However, According to We Are Social's 2020 report, companies have a chance to reach 3.8 billion online users through social media. That's 3.8 billion potential consumers. Over 800 million of those potential consumers can be reached through the social media app, TikTok. (We Are Social 2020; Kemp 2020) As TikTok's active user count continues to grow, so do the marketing opportunities.

In comparison to other platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, TikTok, which is a platform that is constantly expanding, has only a few to no local research performed about its influence on marketing communication, customer behavior, and buy intention. The three aspects of TikTok advertising that this study focuses on are emotional, entertaining, and educational. Through narratives and individualized experiences, whether happy or negative, emotional commercials engage their target audience on an emotional level. Funny and visually appealing video footage makes up entertaining ads. Last but not least, informative commercials offer thorough information on brands and products. TikTok has also become a popular platform for brand marketing. Brands have been using the app to promote their products, engage with their customers, and create an online personality that aligns with the app's audience. Influencer marketing is also booming on TikTok as it's an effective way to promote products and services to a specific demographic.

In order to understand how video advertising content affects students' purchasing intentions and behavior, hence, the research is being conducted. This study helps organizations reach their marketing and advertising objectives of being seen by their target audience and receiving their intended response because short-form adverts, particularly those on TikTok, are becoming more and more popular. The effectiveness of these brief video advertising in influencing university students buying intentions is also covered in the article.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A literature review is carried out to better understand the areas of research that have already been done as well as to identify future research areas that have not yet been investigated. In light of this, an effort has been made to quickly review the work being done in the area of social media advertising among university students' purchase intentions. Online social media refers to a category of internet-based platforms and applications that are designed to enable people to communicate, share information and content, and form virtual communities and networks. These platforms, which include popular sites like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, and LinkedIn, have become an integral part of modern life, connecting people from all over the world and allowing them to share their thoughts, feelings, and experiences with others. Social media has also become an important tool for businesses, organizations, and individuals to promote their products and services, build brand awareness, and engage with their target audiences. However, the use of social media has also raised important concerns about issues such as privacy, cyberbullying, misinformation, and the impact of social media on mental health. Overall, social media has become a powerful tool for communication and connection, but it is important to use it responsibly and be aware of its potential negative effects. Online social media is a digital media connected with the internet system as a medium for sending information among people in a wide scope within the same network (Win Rattanatorn, 2010). Online social media is, therefore, a huge channel of marketing, especially online advertising (Ratnadolsite, 2016). Marketing is about identifying and meeting human and social needs. One of the shortest good definitions of marketing is "meeting needs profitably." (Keller and Kotler, 2016, p.27). Video formats is a powerful approach for companies to stand out from the crowd and this could be from funny to educational, inspiring, or motivational videos. Videos could offer the personal touch, grab attention, and resonate with viewers in a way other mediums cannot (Walter and Gioglio, 2014, p.34). The concept of Online social media is a combination of technology, information, and human interfaces that enable users to create an online community and build a social network of friends (Borrero et al. 2014). Kum Tang and Koh (2017) defined Online social media as "web-based virtual communities where users interact with real-life friends and meet other people with shared interests". Social media has advanced from simply providing a platform for individuals to stay in touch with their family and friends. Now it is a place where consumers can learn more about their favorite companies and the products they sell. Marketers and retailers are utilizing these sites as another way to reach consumers and provide a new way to shop. "Technology related developments such as the rise of powerful search engines, advanced mobile devices and interfaces, peer-to-peer communication vehicles, and online social networks have extended marketers' ability to reach shoppers through new touch points" (Shankar et al. 2011, 30). Providing shopping services on social networks can provide business growth for retailers due to the diversity of consumers who use social media sites. The wide range of consumers utilizing social networks means that most target markets can be reached (Cha 2009). In order to be successful at communicating online, it is important to be aware of how the message is perceived by the person receiving it. This knowledge can be used to choose the right approach when advertising on TikTok, avoiding any type of patronizing attitude towards the user.

Purchase intention refers to the level of desire or commitment that a consumer has to make a specific purchase. It is a key concept in the field of consumer behavior, as it is believed to be a

strong predictor of actual purchasing behavior. Factors that can influence purchase intention include a consumer's attitudes towards a product or brand, their perceived benefits and risks of the product, their perception of the price, and the influence of family, friends, and other sources of social influence. Marketing researchers often use surveys and questionnaires to measure purchase intention, which typically involve asking consumers about their likelihood of buying a particular product or service in the future. The data collected from these surveys can be used to identify patterns and trends in consumer behavior, and to inform strategies for product development, branding, and advertising. Products and services tend to sell well while creating positive impressions when they meet quality standards (Ma and Yang, 2018). There are many variables which can influence and affect purchase intention. There is stress on brands and their influence on consumers to purchase them (Laroche et al, 1996). A willingness expressed by consumers to go either online or be offline, but to buy is discerned through purchase intention. However, there are also numerous reasons why customers do not intend to buy-mostly in case of online. (Kaur and Qureshi, 2015).

On the other hand, TikTok is a social media platform that has gained immense popularity in recent years. It is a mobile app that allows users to create and share short-form videos, often set to music or other audio. The app is known for its lip-syncing and dance challenges, as well as its comedic and educational content. Users can also share their videos on other social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. The app's algorithms use machine learning to recommend videos to users based on their interests, which has helped it to become a powerful tool for creators to grow their audiences and build communities. However, it also raised privacy and security concerns and was banned in some countries. While it has a user-base mainly targeted to younger generation, it has been widely used across all age-groups. According to Johnson (2020), with the people forced into isolation, people now have to have a different way of interacting with others and entertaining themselves. TikTok is a mobile application that has allowed innumerable users to entertain themselves by creating, watching videos, and promoting businesses through short video content. TikTok has become a social media sensation as publications have noticed and written about the TikTok users connecting over the social media platform. Even expert or non-expert content creators can upload different types of videos with filters, songs, stickers, and many other effects to make their videos more attractive (D'souza, 2021)

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The research is primarily descriptive. This study employed a descriptive research methodology to investigate Impact of social media advertising among university students' purchase intentions through the TikTok platform, as well as to make suggestions for future advancements in the area that can be expanded for better marketing development. It rigorously evaluates the social media platform such as TikTok to know the university students' purchase intention through this platform. It is important to understand that descriptive research relies on published works, peer-reviewed publications, reliable databases (such Euromonitor and the Worldpay Annual Report), news reports, etc. According to the literature reviews, this paper describes the possible effects of social media advertising among University students. The study offers general information about

social media platform such as TikTok and also the university students' purchase intention through this platform.

DISSCUSSION & RESULTS

Social media refers to a variety of online platforms and technologies that allow users to create and share content or to participate in social networking. This can include things like text posts, images, videos, and live-streaming, as well as tools for commenting, liking, and sharing. Some examples of popular social media platforms include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube. Social media has become an important part of everyday life for many people, and it has also become a significant tool for communication and marketing. However, it has also raised concerns about issues such as privacy, misinformation, and cyberbullying. As such, there's ongoing discussion and debate about the impact of social media on individuals, communities, and society as a whole.

There are many different social media platforms available, each with its own unique features and target audience. Here are a few examples:

- Facebook is one of the most popular social media platforms, with over 2.7 billion monthly active users. It allows users to create personal and business profiles, share updates and photos, join groups and pages, and connect with friends and family.
- Twitter is a microblogging platform that allows users to share short messages, called tweets, of up to 280 characters. It's popular for real-time news updates, following celebrities and influencers, and for use by businesses for customer service and marketing.
- Instagram is a photo and video sharing platform that allows users to share visual content with a variety of filters, editing tools, and other features. It's particularly popular among younger users and is used by businesses for influencer marketing, product promotions and brand building
- YouTube is a video sharing platform that allows users to upload, share, and view videos. It's the second largest search engine after Google and is popular for watching music videos, tutorials, vlogs, and other types of videos.
- TikTok is a short-form, video-sharing app that allows users to create and share 15-second videos. It's popular among younger users and is widely used for lip-syncing, dance, and comedy videos.
- LinkedIn is a social networking platform for professionals and businesses, allowing users to connect with people in their industry, apply to jobs, and share articles and updates relevant to their field.
- SnapChat is an instant messaging and multimedia mobile application that allows users to share pictures and videos (referred to as snaps) that are meant to disappear after they are

viewed. It's popular among teenagers and young adults and it's also known for its variety of filters that can be applied on the images and videos.

These are just a few examples of the many social media platforms that exist. Each platform has its own unique features, target audience, and use cases.

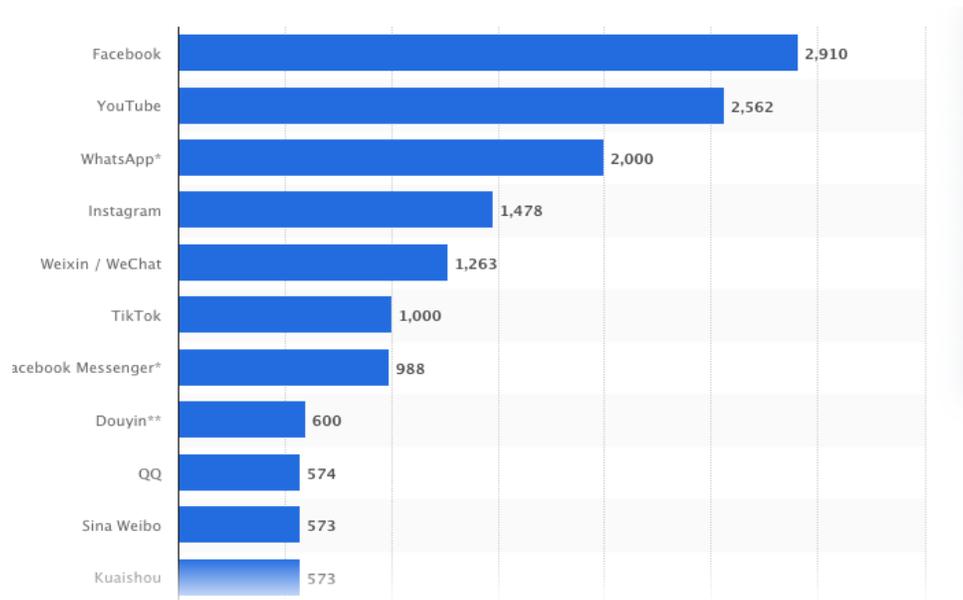


Figure 1: Different Social media platform and their user numbers (in million)

However, Thailand has a high number of social media users, with a large percentage of the population being active on various platforms. According to a survey conducted in 2020, around 57 million people in Thailand are active internet users and around 55 million of them use social media. Here are a few key statistics about social media use in Thailand:

- Facebook is the most popular social media platform in Thailand, with over 40 million monthly active users, making up around 73% of the total social media users in the country.
- Instagram is the second most popular social media platform in Thailand, with around 16.5 million users, representing around 30% of the total social media users.
- TikTok is relatively new in Thailand but it's gaining popularity, especially among young people. As of 2021 TikTok had around 8 million monthly active users.
- Twitter and LinkedIn are not as popular as the above-mentioned platforms, but they still have a significant number of users in Thailand.

- Line is another social media platform that's very popular in Thailand, with around 40 million monthly active users. Line is not only a chat and messaging app but it also has many features such as video call, social games, video and music streaming, news and shopping.

In general, the majority of social media users in Thailand are young and educated, and they use social media primarily for communication and entertainment purposes. The rise of internet penetration and smartphone usage in the country has greatly contributed to the high number of social media users.

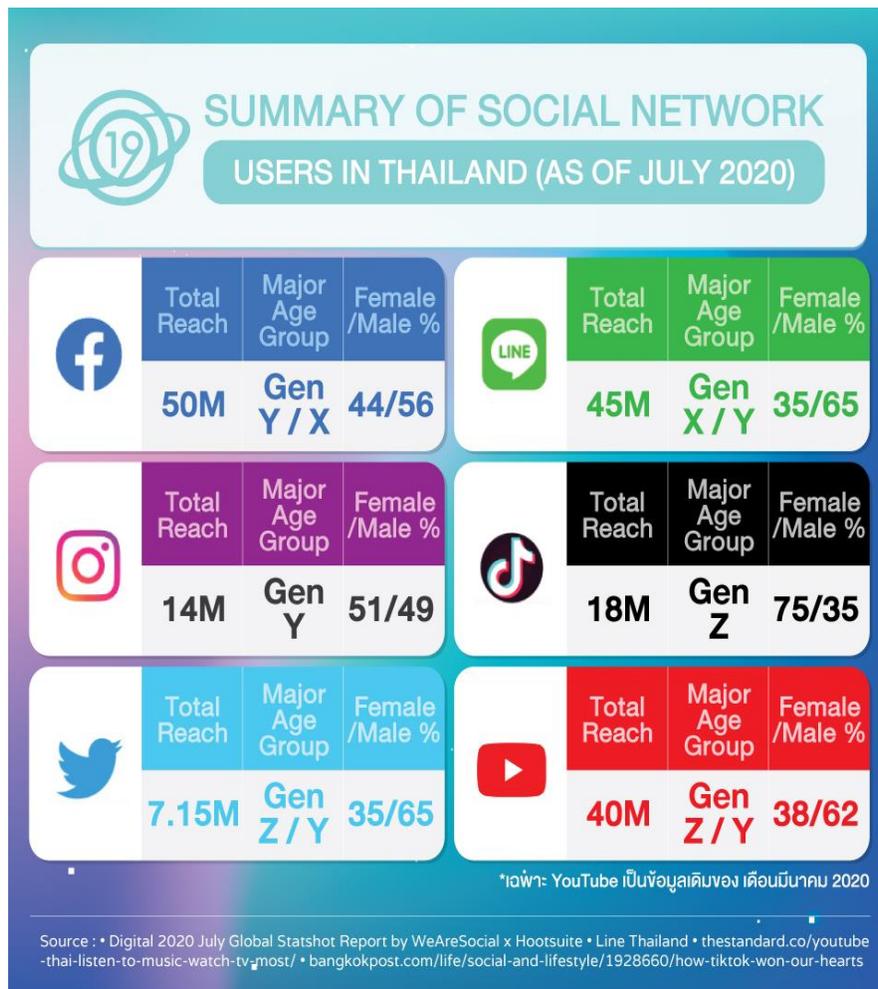


Figure 2: Summary of Social Network users in Thailand

The audience on TikTok is primarily made up of younger users, with the majority of users being between the ages of 16 and 24. According to TikTok's own statistics, around 60% of its users are under the age of 30. TikTok's audience is also quite diverse, with users from all over the world and from a wide range of backgrounds. In terms of gender, the platform has a relatively even split between male and female users, with males slightly outnumbering females. TikTok users

are highly engaged with the platform, spending an average of 52 minutes per day on the app. They use TikTok primarily for entertainment, with the most popular content categories being comedy, music, and creative arts.

This audience profile is quite diverse, making it an appealing platform for a wide range of advertisers and businesses. However, it's worth noting that the audience profile can vary depending on the region and target market.

Advertisers on TikTok can use various features of the platform such as in-feed video ads, branded effects, brand takeovers, and hashtag challenges to reach the audiences. Additionally, TikTok has been working on expanding its advertising capabilities and also providing more targeting options for advertisers. It's also important to note that advertising on TikTok is still relatively new, so the audience and advertising landscape is constantly changing and evolving.

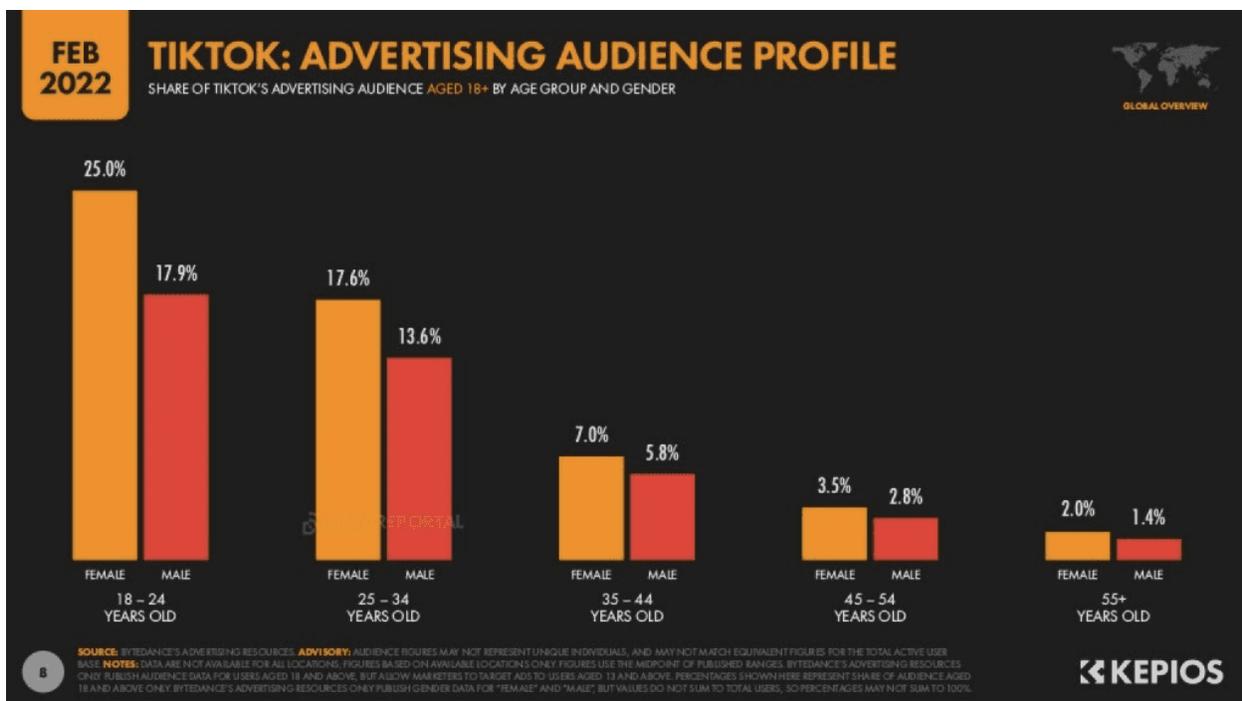


Figure 3: TikTok: Advertising audience profile

With over two billion active users worldwide and an average of 38.6 minutes spent on the app each day, TikTok is driving ecommerce sales across the globe. TikTok's data on "community commerce" points to the transformation of the app into a Bonafede shopping platform:

- 67% say TikTok inspired them to shop even when they weren't looking to do so.
- 73% feel a deeper connection to brands they interact with on TikTok, compared to other social media platforms.
- 78% agree that the best brands on TikTok are ones that share their ideas and work together with users.

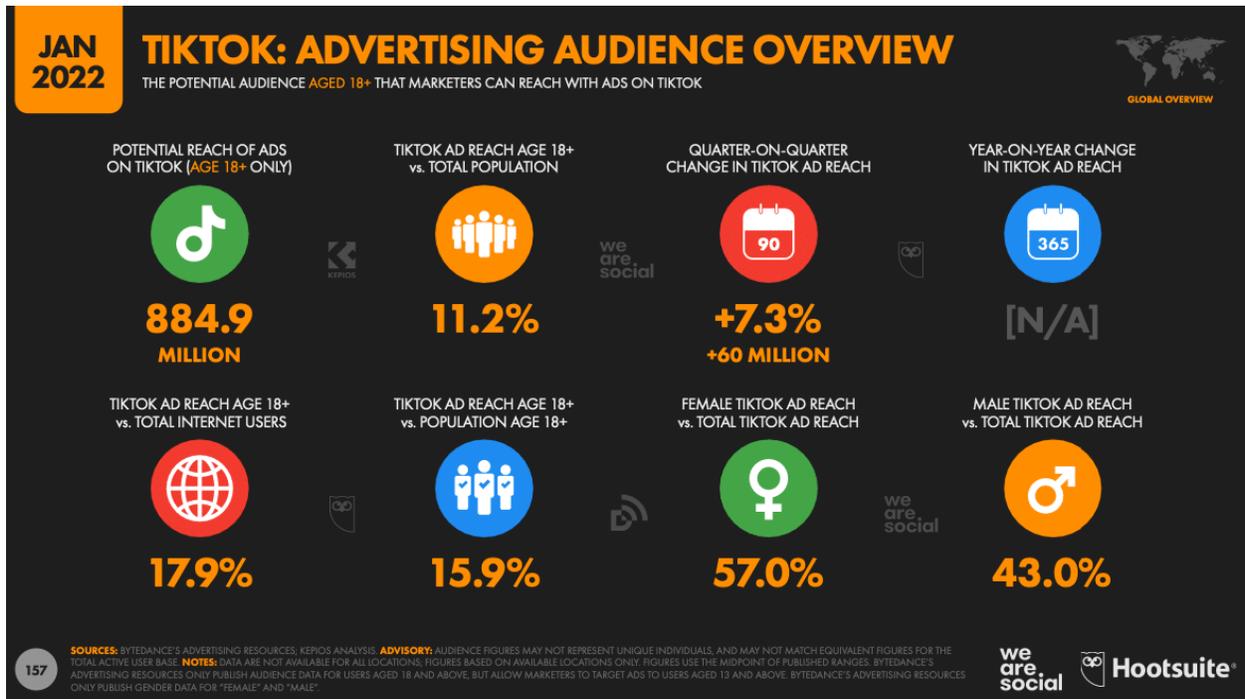


Figure 4: TikTok: Advertising audience overview

On the other A hashtag challenge on TikTok is a trend or campaign that encourages users to create and share videos using a specific hashtag. These challenges can be created by TikTok itself, by popular users on the platform, or by brands and businesses as a form of marketing.

Here are a few key points about hashtag challenges on TikTok:

- Hashtag challenges are a popular way for users to discover and engage with new content on the platform. By searching for a specific hashtag, users can see a feed of videos that have been created in response to a challenge.
- Hashtag challenges often have a specific theme or prompt, such as a dance routine or a comedy skit, that users are encouraged to recreate in their own videos.
- These challenges can be trending for a short period of time and can be started by anyone, including brands, celebrities, and influencers, with a considerable following to reach a large audience.
- Some challenges can become viral and attract millions of views, making them a powerful tool for creators to gain exposure and grow their following.

- Brands can leverage these trending hashtag challenges to create engaging content, increase brand awareness and reach new audiences by sponsoring challenges or creating their own challenges.
- TikTok also provides analytics on hashtag challenges so that brands can measure the performance of their campaigns, track audience engagement and reach.

Overall, hashtag challenges are a popular and effective way for users to discover and engage with new content on TikTok, and for brands and businesses to reach new audiences and promote their products or services. But it's important for brands to understand the trends and the audience before launching a challenge, to make sure it aligns with their target market and the message they want to send.

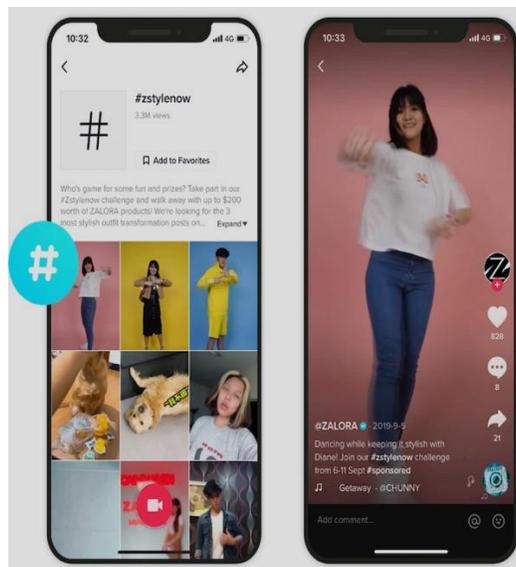


Figure 5: TikTok Hashtag Challenges

University students are an important target demographic for brands on TikTok, as they are a highly engaged and active user base on the platform. Brands can reach this demographic through a variety of methods, including:

- **Hashtag challenges:** As I mentioned earlier, TikTok hashtag challenges are a popular way for users to discover and engage with new content on the platform, and they can also be a powerful tool for brands to reach university students. Brands can sponsor popular challenges or create their own challenges, which will be visible to a large number of users who are searching for that specific hashtag.
- **Sponsored promotions:** Brands can also reach university students on TikTok through sponsored promotions, such as influencer campaigns or branded content. This can be an

effective way for brands to build trust and credibility with university students, as they can see their peers using and recommending the brand's products or services.

- Paid advertisements: TikTok also provides a wide range of paid advertising options, such as in-feed video ads, branded effects, and brand takeovers. These advertisements can be targeted towards university students, and will be visible in the TikTok feeds of the users who match the target demographic.

By using these methods, brands can expose university students to their products and services and build awareness, trust and loyalty among this demographic. It's worth noting that, as with any demographic, it's important for brands to understand the interests and behaviors of university students on TikTok before developing a strategy, this will help them create more effective content and campaigns that will resonate with the target audience.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The research study examined the influence of brand awareness and recall on the purchasing intentions of students who viewed marketing campaigns on TikTok. The study found that while marketing campaigns on the social media platform had a notable impact on the brand awareness of university students, it did not have a significant effect on their brand recall. This study is important in filling the gap of knowledge on TikTok, and will be useful for future research, marketing professionals, and other related individuals in planning their campaigns.

Consumer purchase intention on TikTok can be influenced by a variety of factors, including brand awareness, recall, and emotional engagement.

Brand awareness refers to how familiar a consumer is with a particular brand or product, and it can influence a consumer's decision to purchase. On TikTok, brands can increase their visibility and awareness by creating visually-appealing videos that align with popular trends and challenges, leveraging influencers and micro-influencers, and using the platform's targeting and ad-serving capabilities to reach specific audiences.

Brand recall, on the other hand, refers to a consumer's ability to remember a brand or product after they have been exposed to it. Research has shown that brand recall can be influenced by brand awareness, but it's also important for brands to create memorable and distinctive marketing campaigns that can stand out in consumers' minds. On TikTok, brands can use creative and unique branded hashtag challenges, and e-commerce features such as the "shop now" button to drive recall and conversion.

Emotional engagement refers to how well a brand or product is able to connect with a consumer's emotions. Research has shown that emotional engagement can be a powerful driver of purchase intention. On TikTok, brands can create relatable and emotive advertisements that align with the interests and preferences of Generation Z, using storytelling, humor, and relatable scenarios to evoke emotions.

It's worth noting that these are not the only factors that can influence consumer purchase intention on TikTok, and businesses should also stay informed about the latest trends and features on the platform to make the most of their marketing efforts.

However, Marketing campaigns on TikTok can be an effective way for brands to reach and engage with a younger, highly mobile, and visually-oriented audience. Some of the ways that brands have been using TikTok for marketing include:

- Creating short, visually-appealing videos that align with popular TikTok trends and challenges. This can help brands to quickly gain visibility and engagement from TikTok's users.
- Leveraging influencers and micro-influencers on TikTok to create sponsored content, which can increase brand awareness and credibility among users.
- Creating branded hashtag challenges that encourage users to create their own videos using the brand's products or services.
- Utilizing TikTok's e-commerce features such as the "shop now" button, to drive sales and conversions.
- Using TikTok's AI-powered targeting and ad-serving capabilities to reach specific audiences based on demographics, interests, and behaviors.

However, TikTok's popularity among university students are due to its ability to connect users with others and provide a platform for them to express themselves emotionally. Brands and businesses should take advantage of this by creating relevant, timely, and relatable short-form video advertisements on TikTok. university students are also known for being vocal about their interests and preferences, so appealing to their emotions through advertising can be an effective way for businesses to connect with them. It's important for businesses that plan to use TikTok as a new platform for advertising to focus on the emotional engagement they can provide to consumers.

However, the study showed that TikTok might be a venue to promote to younger consumers, but they want discreet and engaging promotions or commercials. Due to the abundance of diverse videos in the "For You" area that are not from the individuals' users follow, users consume a variety of information. As previously stated, brands need to be careful about the kind of content they create in order to gain traction. Branded content needs to be able to capture consumers attention within the first five seconds. If brands want to advertise through this program, it is advised that they do so by hosting challenges in which a variety of people can take part and interact with the company, increasing brand recognition.

REFERENCES

- Borrero, D. J., Yousafzai, Y. S., Javed, U., & Page, L. K. (2014). Perceived value of social networking sites (SNS) in students' expressive participation in social movements. *Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing*, 8(1), 56–78. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JRIM-03-2013-0015>.

- Cha, Jiyoung. 2009. "Shopping on Social Networking Websites: Attitudes towards real versus virtual items." *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, 10: 77-93.
- D'Souza, D. (2021). What is TikTok? <https://www.investopedia.com/what-is-tiktok-4588933>
- Johnson, T. (2020, April 27). The Rise of TikTok During COVID-19. Retrieved from <https://tinuiti.com/blog/marketing-news-covid-19/tiktok-covid-19>
- Kanokwan Kankate. (2019). Conclusion!! Ways of Creating VDO for Popularity through Channel TikTok. Retrieved August 17, 2020, from
- Kaur, G., & Quareshi, T. K. (2015). Factors obstructing intentions to trust and purchase products online. *Asia pacific journal of marketing and logistics*.
- Kemp, S. 2020. Digital 2020: 3.8 Billion People Use Social Media. We Are Social. Accessed 9 Jan. 2021. <https://wearesocial.com/blog/2020/01/digital-2020-3-8-billion-people-use-social-media>
- Kuo, T., & Tang, H. L. (2014). Relationships among personality traits, Facebook usages, and leisure activities—A case of Taiwanese college students. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 31(1), 13–19. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2013.10.019>.
- Laroche, M., Kim, C., & Zhou, L. (1996). Brand familiarity and confidence as determinants of purchase intention: An empirical test in a multiple brand context. *Journal of business Research*, 37(2), 115-120.
- Ma, Y., & Yang, S. (2018). An empirical study of female e-shopper's satisfaction with cosmetic products in China. *International Journal of Business and Management*, 13(3), 211-219.
- Nuseir, M. T. (2016). Exploring the use of Online Marketing Strategies and Digital Media to Improve Brand Loyalty and Customer Retention. *International Journal of Business and Management*, 11(4), 228. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ijbm.v11n4p228>
- Ratnadolsite. (2016). Meanings of Online Society. Retrieved August 18, 2020, from <https://ratnadolsite.wordpress.com/blog/>
- Seemiller, C. & Grace, M. (2017). Generation Z: Educating and engaging the next generation of students. *About Campus*, 22(3), 21-26. <https://doi.org/10.1002/abc.21293>
- Sehl, K. (2020) '20 Important TikTok Stats Marketers Need to Know in 2020'. Available at: <https://blog.hootsuite.com/tiktok-stats/> (Accessed: 19 July 2020)
- Shankar, Venkatesh, Jeffery Inman, Murali Mantrala, Eileen Kelley, and Ross Rizley. 2011. "Innovations in Shopper Marketing: Current Insights and Future Research Issues." *Journal of Retailing* 1:s29-s42, doi:10.1016/j.jretai.2011.04.007.
- Wang, Y. (2020). Humor and camera view on mobile short-form video apps influence user experience and technology-adoption intent, an example of TikTok (DouYin). *Computers in Human Behavior*, 110, 106373. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2020.106373>
- Weimann, G., & Masri, N. (2020). Research note: spreading hate on TikTok. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2020.1780027>
- Win Rattanatorn. (2010). Attitude toward Communication on Marketing in the form of Viral Video and Factors Affecting Sharing Intention on Online VDO of Facebook Users. Bangkok: Thammasat University.