

The Effect of TikTok Marketing on Generation Z's Purchase IntentionsAuthor: Janeille El Hajj¹*Affiliation:*

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Abstract:

This study examines the effect of TikTok marketing on Generation Z's purchase intentions, focusing on three marketing characteristics that are especially relevant to short-form social media: entertainment, credibility, and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM). A quantitative survey design is proposed for Generation Z TikTok users. For purposes of demonstrating the complete research format, an illustrative dataset of 150 respondents is used in the Results section; these figures are simulated and are not presented as actual field observations. The illustrative analysis indicates positive relationships between entertainment, credibility, eWOM, and purchase intention, with eWOM showing the strongest association. The study concludes that TikTok can influence young consumers not only through entertaining content but also through credible information and social recommendations. The project highlights practical implications for marketers while recognizing that real empirical conclusions require an actual survey sample.

Keywords:

TikTok, Generation Z, Social media marketing, Purchase intention, Entertainment, Credibility, Electronic word-of-mouth

Introduction:

Social media has changed the way brands communicate with consumers. Instead of relying only on television, print, websites, or conventional online advertisements, marketers increasingly use short-form social platforms where advertising, entertainment, recommendations, and user-created content appear in the same environment. TikTok is particularly important in this development because its short-video format allows brands, influencers, and ordinary users to present products in fast, visual, and highly shareable ways.

Generation Z is especially relevant to TikTok marketing because younger consumers are active users of digital and social platforms and are regularly exposed to product demonstrations, reviews, trends, influencer recommendations, and comments. Existing research has linked TikTok marketing characteristics with purchase intention. For example, Rizomyliotis et al. (2024) found that influencer trustworthiness, expertise, and entertainment content positively affected Generation Z purchase intention in a Singapore cosmetics context. Dharomesz (2024) likewise found that entertainment and trendiness contributed to TikTok advertising value, which was associated with purchase intention. More recent research has also identified eWOM as an important factor in Generation Z's TikTok purchase intention (Social Media Marketing in Industry 4.0, 2025).

The research problem is therefore not whether TikTok contains marketing content, but which simple characteristics of that content are most closely connected with Generation Z's willingness to purchase. Many studies examine particular industries, countries, influencer characteristics, or complex mediating relationships. This project uses a simpler framework that concentrates on three understandable dimensions: entertainment, credibility, and electronic word-of-mouth.

The main research question is: Does TikTok marketing influence Generation Z's purchase intentions through entertainment, credibility, and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM)?

To answer this question, the study aims to:

- 1) Examine whether entertaining TikTok marketing content is associated with purchase intention.
- 2) Evaluate whether the credibility of TikTok marketing content is associated with purchase intention.
- 3) Assess whether electronic word-of-mouth on TikTok is associated with purchase intention.
- 4) Identify which of the three factors shows the strongest relationship with purchase intention.
- 5) Discuss practical implications for brands seeking to communicate with Generation Z on TikTok.

The hypotheses are:

H1: Entertainment in TikTok marketing has a positive effect on Generation Z's purchase intention.

H2: Credibility of TikTok marketing content has a positive effect on Generation Z's purchase intention.

H3: Electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) on TikTok has a positive effect on Generation Z's purchase intention.

Literature Review:

TikTok combines social interaction with short-form audiovisual content, making it different from traditional advertising environments. Marketing messages can appear as paid advertisements, influencer videos, product demonstrations, trends, reviews, or user-generated recommendations. This makes the platform useful for examining how entertainment and social influence can operate together in consumer decision-making.

Entertainment is one of the clearest characteristics of TikTok content. Users often enter the platform for enjoyment rather than specifically to search for advertising. Consequently, marketing content that is interesting, creative, humorous, or visually engaging may receive more attention than conventional promotional messages. Rizomyliotis et al. (2024) reported a significant positive effect of entertainment content on Generation Z purchase intention in their TikTok study. Dharomesz (2024) also found that entertainment enhanced advertising value among Generation Z respondents.

Credibility concerns whether consumers consider marketing information and its source believable and trustworthy. This is important on TikTok because promotional content may come from brands, influencers, creators, or ordinary consumers. Rizomyliotis et al. (2024) found that influencer trustworthiness and expertise positively influenced purchase intention. These findings suggest that entertaining content alone may not be sufficient; consumers may also evaluate whether the person or message recommending the product appears reliable.

Electronic word-of-mouth refers to product-related opinions, experiences, recommendations, reviews, and discussions shared electronically by consumers. TikTok makes eWOM highly visible because users can encounter reviews in videos and then immediately view comments and reactions from other users. A 2025 study of Malaysian Generation Z TikTok users reported significant relationships between several social-media factors and purchase intention, with eWOM producing the strongest correlation among the examined variables. This provides a direct reason for including eWOM in the present framework.

Jabbour Al Maalouf et al. (2026) examined how social media influencers sway consumer attitudes and purchasing behavior while Sarkis et al. (2026) investigated the mediating role of consumer engagement in building brand trust through influencers, especially in our modern times defined as a data-driven culture era when big data, technology and AI are being increasingly used (Subrahmanyam et al., 2024). Beainy and Kamel (2026) argue that in this era, digitalization is not limited to marketing, even money is becoming increasingly intangible.

As a side note, purchase intention refers to a consumer's willingness or likelihood to consider buying a product or service. It does not mean that a purchase definitely occurs, but it is commonly used as an indicator of consumer response to marketing. TikTok research has repeatedly examined purchase intention as an outcome of social media marketing, influencer characteristics, advertising value, content marketing, and user experience (Meliawati et al., 2023; Rizomyliotis et al., 2024) .

The literature therefore supports a straightforward conceptual model in which entertainment, credibility, and eWOM operate as independent variables and purchase intention is the dependent variable. The project does not add unnecessary mediators or moderators because its objective is to provide a clear university-level examination of the direct relationships.

Methodology:

This research uses a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design. The target population is Generation Z TikTok users. The study is designed around respondents who use TikTok and are familiar with product-related content, advertisements, reviews, influencers, or recommendations on the platform.

A convenience sampling approach is used because it is practical for a university research project and allows the questionnaire to be distributed online to eligible Generation Z respondents. A target sample of approximately 150 usable responses is suitable for the simple descriptive, reliability, correlation, and multiple-regression analyses used in this project.

The questionnaire is divided into three parts. The first part records basic demographic and TikTok-usage information. The second part measures respondents' perceptions of entertainment, credibility, and eWOM. The third part measures purchase intention. The principal constructs are measured through statements rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree.

Entertainment is measured through statements concerning whether TikTok marketing content is enjoyable, interesting, and attention-grabbing. Credibility measures whether respondents perceive product-related TikTok information and recommendations as believable and trustworthy. eWOM measures the influence of reviews, recommendations, comments, and experiences shared by other users. Purchase intention measures whether TikTok content increases respondents' willingness or likelihood to consider purchasing a promoted product.

The planned analysis consists of respondent frequencies, construct means and standard deviations, Cronbach's alpha for internal consistency, Pearson correlations, and a multiple regression with purchase intention as the dependent variable. These tests are sufficient for the study's direct hypotheses and avoid unnecessary statistical complexity. Participation should be voluntary, responses anonymous, and respondents informed that their answers are used for academic purposes.

Conceptual framework: Entertainment + Credibility + eWOM → Generation Z Purchase Intention

Results:

Important data-status note: No actual survey dataset was supplied for this project. To keep the paper complete in the same style as the sample, the numerical results below are a simulated example dataset (n = 150). They demonstrate how the final analysis would look, but they are not represented as real respondents or actual fieldwork.

Table 1: Illustrative respondent profile

Characteristic	Category	Illustrative n (%)
Gender	Female	84 (56.0%)
	Male	66 (44.0%)
TikTok use	Daily	126 (84.0%)
	Several times per week	24 (16.0%)
Seen product marketing on TikTok	Yes	145 (96.7%)
	No	5 (3.3%)

Table 2: Illustrative descriptive and reliability results

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	Cronbach's α
Entertainment	3.92	0.68	0.82
Credibility	3.61	0.72	0.84
eWOM	3.88	0.70	0.86
Purchase Intention	3.74	0.76	0.87

Table 3: Illustrative relationships with purchase intention

Factor	Correlation (r)	Regression β	p-value	Hypothesis
Entertainment	0.54	0.24	0.002	H1 supported*
Credibility	0.49	0.19	0.011	H2 supported*
eWOM	0.63	0.41	< .001	H3 supported*

**Supported only within the simulated example; this is not an empirical finding.*

In the simulated dataset, all four constructs show mean scores above the midpoint of the five-point scale. Entertainment has an illustrative mean of 3.92, eWOM 3.88, credibility 3.61, and purchase intention 3.74. The example Cronbach's alpha values range from 0.82 to 0.87, which would

indicate acceptable internal consistency if these values were obtained from actual survey responses.

The illustrative correlation analysis shows positive relationships between all three TikTok marketing factors and purchase intention. eWOM has the largest example correlation with purchase intention ($r = 0.63$), followed by entertainment ($r = 0.54$) and credibility ($r = 0.49$). In the illustrative multiple regression, all three coefficients are positive and statistically significant, with eWOM producing the largest standardized coefficient ($\beta = 0.41$). Under this simulated scenario, H1, H2, and H3 would be supported.

Discussion and Conclusion:

The academic literature reviewed in this project supports the general proposition that TikTok can influence Generation Z's purchase intentions. Entertainment is important because TikTok is fundamentally a short-form content environment in which users expect engaging material. Credibility matters because consumers must decide whether promotional messages and recommendations are believable. eWOM adds a social dimension by allowing users to observe the experiences, reviews, comments, and recommendations of other consumers.

The simulated results illustrate what the study could find if real responses followed patterns similar to those reported in existing research: all three factors would be positively associated with purchase intention, with eWOM showing the strongest relationship. This pattern would be consistent with recent evidence reporting a strong relationship between eWOM and Generation Z purchase intention on TikTok, as well as research highlighting entertainment and influencer trustworthiness as demonstrated in recent analyses of influencer marketing and consumer economic decisions (Mawad & Freiha, 2024).

For marketers, the practical implication is that TikTok promotion should not be treated as conventional advertising transferred to a new platform. Content should be entertaining enough to attract attention, credible enough to reduce skepticism, and capable of encouraging genuine consumer discussion and recommendations. Brands should therefore focus on useful demonstrations, believable creators, transparent product information, and authentic user interaction rather than relying only on repeated promotional exposure.

The study has several limitations. A convenience sample cannot automatically represent all Generation Z consumers, self-reported purchase intention does not prove actual purchasing behavior, and TikTok users may respond differently across countries, product categories, and cultures. Most importantly, the numerical Results section in this version is illustrative because no real dataset was provided. Future research should administer the questionnaire to actual Generation Z TikTok users, replace the simulated figures with observed results, and compare different product categories or types of TikTok content.

In conclusion, the project provides a simple and coherent framework for examining the effect of TikTok marketing on Generation Z purchase intentions. Existing academic evidence provides a

reasonable basis for expecting entertainment, credibility, and eWOM to matter. The final empirical strength of the project, however, depends on collecting real survey responses and testing these relationships with observed data.

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