

The Role of TikTok Social Media in Shaping Consumptive Behavior among Generation Z in Denpasar City

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the role of TikTok social media in shaping consumptive behavior among Generation Z in Denpasar City. Along with the rapid development of digital communication, TikTok has transformed from an entertainment platform into a persuasive medium that promotes consumption through lifestyle representation, influencer content, and integrated shopping features. This research employs a qualitative descriptive approach with a case study design. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with Generation Z TikTok users and a local influencer, supported by observations and document analysis.

The analysis is guided by the Uses and Gratifications Theory, the Circular Model of SOME (Share, Optimize, Manage, and Engage), and Consumer Behavior theory. The findings indicate that TikTok encourages consumptive behavior through continuous exposure to promotional content, algorithmic reinforcement, emotional appeal, and social validation. Generation Z actively uses TikTok to fulfill cognitive needs such as product information, affective needs such as entertainment and emotional satisfaction, and social needs related to belonging and identity.

As a result, purchasing decisions are often driven by emotions, trends, and fear of missing out (FoMO), rather than rational evaluation of needs. This study concludes that TikTok plays a significant role not only in stimulating impulsive buying behavior but also in shaping long-term consumptive lifestyles among Generation Z in Denpasar City.

Keywords: TikTok, Generation Z, consumptive behavior, social media, uses and gratifications

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INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of information and communication technology has fundamentally transformed the way individuals communicate, access information, and make consumption-related decisions (Segara et al., 2025). In the contemporary digital era, social media platforms have become central spaces where social interaction, identity construction, and lifestyle representation take place. These platforms are no longer limited to facilitating communication but have evolved into influential tools that shape attitudes, preferences, and behavioral patterns, particularly in the context of consumer culture (Diana & Sari, 2024).

Among the various social media platforms, TikTok has emerged as one of the most dominant applications, especially among Generation Z (Nurhaliza & Aryanto, 2023). TikTok offers short-form video content that combines visual creativity, music, storytelling, and algorithm-driven personalization. This unique combination allows content to be consumed rapidly and repeatedly, increasing user engagement and emotional involvement (Husna et al., 2024). As a result, TikTok has become more than a source of entertainment; it functions as a persuasive digital environment that subtly integrates promotional messages into everyday content.

Generation Z, commonly defined as individuals born between the late 1997s and early 2012s, represents a generation that grew up alongside digital technology (Saragih et al., 2024). As digital natives, they are highly adaptive to online platforms and tend to rely on social media for information, entertainment, social interaction, and self-expression. In urban areas such as Denpasar City, where digital infrastructure and youth culture are well developed, TikTok plays a significant role in shaping daily routines and consumption habits among young people (Sari et al., 2024).

TikTok content frequently features product reviews, lifestyle recommendations, fashion trends, beauty standards, and food experiences presented by influencers and ordinary users (Amal et al., 2025). These contents are often framed as personal experiences rather than explicit advertisements, making promotional messages appear authentic and relatable. This form of soft-selling communication blurs the boundary between entertainment and marketing, which potentially influences users' perceptions and purchasing decisions without them being fully aware of the persuasive intent (Permana et al., 2025).

The growing popularity of influencers on TikTok further strengthens the platform's impact on consumer behavior. Influencers are perceived as credible opinion leaders who provide recommendations based on personal experience. Their ability to build emotional connections with audiences creates trust and identification, which plays a crucial role in shaping attitudes toward products and brands (Yulianda et al., 2024). This condition encourages Generation Z to associate consumption with self-identity, social belonging, and emotional satisfaction rather than functional necessity (Jannah et al., 2025).

From a broader perspective, the rise of TikTok reflects changes in contemporary consumption patterns characterized by speed, visual appeal, and emotional engagement. Consumption is increasingly driven by trends, social validation, and fear of missing out (FoMO) (Ilmi & Prabayanti, 2025). The continuous exposure to viral content and algorithmically curated recommendations reinforces repetitive consumption cues, potentially leading to consumptive behavior. Consumptive behavior in this context refers to purchasing actions motivated by desire, emotion, and social influence rather than rational evaluation of actual needs.

Several previous studies have examined the relationship between social media and consumer behavior, particularly focusing on impulsive buying or digital marketing strategies. However, many of these studies emphasize quantitative outcomes or specific platform features, such as online shopping functions. Limited attention has been given to understanding how consumptive behavior is gradually formed through ongoing interaction, emotional engagement, and cyclical communication processes on TikTok, especially from the perspective of Generation Z in local urban contexts.

Therefore, this study seeks to fill this research gap by analyzing the role of TikTok social media in shaping consumptive behavior among Generation Z in Denpasar City. This research applies the Uses and Gratifications Theory to understand user motivations, the Circular Model of SOME (Share, Optimize, Manage, and Engage) to analyze digital communication processes, and Consumer Behavior theory to explain purchasing decisions. By integrating these theoretical perspectives within a descriptive qualitative approach this study is designed to develop a comprehensive insight into how TikTok influences consumption patterns and contributes to the formation of consumptive lifestyles among Generation Z.

METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative method to explore the role of TikTok in shaping consumptive behavior among Generation Z in Denpasar City. The study participants consisted of five Generation Z individuals who actively use TikTok and have experienced purchasing products influenced by TikTok content. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, with criteria including active TikTok usage, frequent exposure to promotional content, and prior purchasing decisions triggered by TikTok recommendations or trends.

The participants were considered appropriate informants due to their direct experience with the research phenomenon. Their perspectives provided in-depth insights into how TikTok content influences attitudes, emotions, and consumption behavior among Generation Z.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that TikTok plays a significant role in shaping consumptive behavior among Generation Z through a cyclical digital communication process as described in the Circular Model of SOME.

At the Share stage, Generation Z users are continuously exposed to consumptive-oriented content such as product reviews, fashion hauls, beauty recommendations, and lifestyle trends through the For You Page (FYP). This exposure often occurs unintentionally, as users initially access TikTok for entertainment rather than shopping purposes. Influencers embed promotional messages within relatable narratives, making advertisements appear authentic and trustworthy. This condition stimulates the problem recognition stage in consumer behavior, where users begin to perceive new needs or desires.

In the Optimize stage, TikTok's algorithm amplifies consumptive content by repeatedly displaying similar videos based on user interaction. Influencers optimize content using trending audio, hashtags, and visually appealing formats. Repeated exposure strengthens product recall and emotional attachment, increasing the likelihood of impulsive purchasing decisions. This stage fulfills affective and personal integrative needs within the Uses and Gratifications framework.

The Manage stage involves influencers' efforts to maintain consistent personal branding, credibility, and interaction with followers. Findings show that influencers who present honest reviews and relatable lifestyles are perceived as more trustworthy. This trust contributes to the normalization of certain consumption patterns and the formation of attitudes toward products and brands.

Finally, the Engage stage represents the highest level of audience involvement. Generation Z Users actively engage with content by expressing reactions, posting comments, redistributing content, and making direct purchasing decisions via TikTok Shop. Emotional engagement, social validation, and fear of missing out (FoMO) often drive purchasing decisions, resulting in impulsive and emotionally driven consumption behavior.

CONCLUSIONS

This study concludes that TikTok has a significant influence on the formation of consumptive behavior among Generation Z in Denpasar City. Through continuous exposure, algorithmic reinforcement, influencer credibility, and emotional engagement, TikTok encourages impulsive and trend-driven consumption. The platform not only influences short-term purchasing decisions but also contributes to the formation of long-term consumptive lifestyles. Therefore, increasing digital literacy and critical consumption awareness among Generation Z is essential to reduce excessive consumptive behavior.

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