

The Impact of User-Generated Content and Electronic Word-of-Mouth on Consumer Purchase Intention: Consumer Engagement as a Mediator

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Abstract

Social media links people all over the world through numerous platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. In recent years, TikTok has also gained enormous popularity due to its fascinating short videos of content creation and sharing. While entertainment remains a primary focus on TikTok, many content creators have started utilizing the platform as a promotional platform for various businesses and personal brands, as well as to share their brand experiences. Thus, the purpose of this study was to determine the factors influencing online purchase intentions among TikTok users. 320 data sets were collected through a standardized online survey and analyzed in Smart-PLS, with the conclusion that all the constructs identified in this research have a significantly high correlation and impact on a consumer's decision to buy fashion and apparel products on TikTok. The results of this study indicated that user-generated content and electronic word-of-mouth on TikTok positively influence consumer purchase intention. This study also provided evidence that consumer engagement mediates the relationship between user-generated content, electronic word-of-mouth, and consumer purchase intention. Therefore, TikTok content creators should leverage the power of user-generated content and electronic word-of-mouth in their TikTok strategies to boost consumer engagement and, ultimately, enhance consumer intention to purchase the product.

Keywords: User-Generated Content, Electronic Word-of-Mouth, Consumer Engagement, Purchase Intention.

Introduction

The rise of social media, particularly platforms like TikTok, has opened new avenues for businesses to connect with consumers and influence their purchasing decisions. TikTok, with its short, engaging video format, allows users to share experiences, thoughts, and product recommendations with a vast audience.

Understanding the factors influencing consumer purchase intention on this platform is crucial for businesses to develop effective marketing strategies. Existing research demonstrates the significant impact of social media on purchase behavior, particularly through user-generated content (UGC) and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) (Filiari et al., 2023). Studies have explored the influence of UGC and eWOM on purchase intention for products like smartphones on platforms like Facebook Brabo et al (2021), and the role of source credibility in UGC on eWOM and purchase decisions related to YouTube videos (Muda & Hamzah, 2021). However, there has been a dearth of research focusing on one type of product category, especially on TikTok, despite its popularity. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate how these two components of social media affect consumers' purchase intention for fashion and apparel products on TikTok in Malaysia. The mediating role of consumer engagement is also examined in this study.

Despite the potential benefits of eWOM, and UGC, there is limited research on how these factors influence purchase intention on TikTok. For aforementioned reasons, the objectives of this study were (1) to examine the effects of UGC on consumer purchase intention on TikTok, (2) to examine the effects of eWOM on consumer purchase intention on TikTok, (3) to examine the relationship between consumer engagement and consumer purchase intention on TikTok, and (5) to examine the mediating effect of consumer engagement on the relationship between UGC, eWOM, and consumer purchase intention on TikTok. By analyzing these factors, this study seeks to contribute to the marketing literature by providing a deeper understanding of how consumers on TikTok make purchasing decisions based on UGC, eWOM, and their level of engagement with the platform. These findings can be valuable for businesses, especially in Malaysia, to develop targeted and effective marketing strategies on TikTok to reach their target audience within the fashion and apparel industry.

Literature Review And Hypothesis Development

Purchase Intention

The development of digital marketing has made purchase intention a significant component to be measured as it can help the business to better understand the market and adjust their product or service offerings, which ultimately boosts their sales and profits (Chen et al., 2015). Purchase intention can be described as the feeling or perceived likelihood of purchasing the products that are advertised (Rezvani et al. (2012). Purchase intention also can be described as the possibility that consumers would buy a certain good or service in the future (Martins et al., 2019).

Additionally, purchase intention can be defined as a process associated with attitude and behaviour (Khan et al., 2020; Mirabi, 2015). Consumers who purchase online are unable to touch, see, or smell the products (Chen & Dermawan, 2020), thus they frequently rely on UGC and the reviews before making purchase decisions. For the aforementioned reasons, the

purpose of this study is to examine the effects of UGC and eWOM on the purchase intention for fashion and apparel products on TikTok in Malaysia.

User-Generated Content

User-generated content (UGC) is any type of content that is created and shared by users of a certain online platform or website (Khan et al., 2021). UGC, including user reviews, is created by the general public based on personal experiences, as opposed to professionals who are being paid to create such material (Rodgers & Wang, 2011).

UGC is an important factor in determining and influencing purchase intention since it allows consumers to have a thorough understanding of a product or service (Yang & Adomavicius, 2019). According to Norsita and Lestari's (2020), study on YouTube beauty product review videos, they discovered a significant effect of UGC on purchasing intentions. The study shows that the more appealing and attractive the content is, the more people will want to see it and are likely to use it to satisfy their information needs. This finding is in line with the other recent studies that have found a significant relationship between UGC and purchase intention (Muda & Hamzah, 2021; Panopoulos et al., 2022; Costa, & Abd Aziz, 2021; Zhu & Zhang, 2022). Thus, drawing on the findings mentioned above, this study hypothesized that:

H1: User-generated content has a positive effect on consumer purchase intention.

Electronic Word-of-Mouth

The sharing of experiences, opinions, or recommendations about products or services through online platforms is known as electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) (Leong et al., 2021; Erkan & Evans, 2016; Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). According to Asnawati et al (2022), eWOM is an unofficial person-to-person discussion about a product or service in social media content. With the rise of social media as an online marketplace, eWOM significantly influences society's behaviour and decision-making (Wu & Wang, 2011; Leong et al., 2021; Kazmi & Mehmood, 2016; Choi, 2021).

The relationship between eWOM and purchase intention has been widely studied in the literature. According to several studies Mirnawati & Rustam (2023); Ulan (2022); Rusmayanti & Agustin (2020), eWOM has a significant influence on purchase intention. These studies emphasize the effects of eWOM on how consumers think and behave when making purchasing decisions. Additionally, previous researchers have also found that eWOM, both directly and indirectly, has a significant impact on purchase intention (Al-Halbusi & Tehseen, 2018; Alhidari et al., 2015; Erkan & Evans, 2018). Overall, these past studies provide strong evidence for a significantly positive relationship between eWOM and purchase intention. Thus, drawing on the findings mentioned above, this study hypothesized that:

H2: Electronic word-of-mouth has a positive effect on consumer purchase intention.

Consumer Engagement

The level of emotional connection and interaction between a consumer and a company or brand is known as consumer engagement (Husnain & Toor, 2017). It includes several factors such as active participation, involvement, and commitment of consumers towards a company

or brand (Chen & Dermawan, 2020). According to Cvijikj and Michahelles (2013), the level of customer engagement can be assessed by monitoring various actions on social media platforms, including page views, click-through rates, and other metrics. Common indicators of customer engagement include activities such as "liking," "sharing," and "commenting" on brand pages (De Vries et al., 2012). There is no unified definition of consumer engagement, it generally involves the ability to respond quickly to changes, enhance consumer experience, and make better decisions (Yoong & Lian, 2019; Dieck et al., 2017). Pansari and Kumar (2017), stated that consumer engagement, which is influenced by a variety of factors including the consumer's experience, loyalty, satisfaction, and the company's ability to meet and exceed consumer expectations, has a significant impact on the success of a business. Therefore, in the context of the present study, UGC and eWOM are among the crucial factors influencing consumer engagement.

UGC encourages users to produce and share their own material about a product, which increases consumer engagement with that product on social media (Yang & Adomavicius, 2019). This content, which can include product reviews, photos, and videos, generates authentic and relatable experiences that resonate with other consumers (Ibrahim, 2022). This is following prior research that states leveraging UGC allows brands to take advantage of the social proof and word-of-mouth marketing power, fostering a sense of community, trust, and involvement within their target audience and eventually enhancing consumer engagement and loyalty (Pereira et al., 2022; Husnain & Toor, 2017; Naem & Okafor, 2019). Based on the discussion above, the following hypothesis is presented:

H3: User-generated content has a positive effect on consumer engagement.

In terms of eWOM, it facilitates two-way communication between consumers and brands. The sense of being heard and valued leads to stronger consumer engagement (Verhagen et al., 2015; Wang et al., 2017). According to Shen (2021), eWOM may elicit both good and negative emotions, which significantly impact consumer engagement. This is consistent with previous studies indicating that the usage of eWOM increases active participation, dialogues, and the formation of a sense of community around the product, resulting in increased consumer engagement (Chu et al., 2019). Based on the discussion above, the following hypothesis is presented:

H4: Electronic word-of-mouth has a positive effect on consumer engagement.

Consumer engagement has been identified as a key driver of success in online shopping platforms and online brand communities (Chen & Dermawan, 2020). Thus, there is a growing body of research that indicates a significant relationship between consumer engagement and purchase intention (Prentice, 2019; Zheng et al., 2022; La Rosa & Johnson, 2021). According to Yoong and Lian (2019), consumers' willingness to engage in the brand community can be translated into their willingness to purchase the product. Consumers will establish a close relationship with the brand-related community during the engagement process, and this relationship will encourage consumers to purchase the products or services (Yoong & Lian, 2019). Based on the discussion above, the following hypothesis is presented:

H5: Consumer engagement has a positive effect on consumer purchase intention.

Mediating Role of Consumer Engagement on The Relationship Between UGC, eWOM, and Purchase Intention

Previous studies have found that both UGC and eWOM have a direct impact on consumer engagement (Yang & Adomavicius, 2019; Shen, 2021). Attractive and appealing UGC with the widespread eWOM would offer consumers a positive experience. This positive consumer experience affects the consumer's intention to purchase the product. Therefore, appealing UGC and the availability of eWOM is necessary, but it is not sufficient to influence consumer purchase intention unless UGC and eWOM lead to consumer engagement. This statement is supported by a study conducted by Yang et al (2022), who found that the level of consumer engagement varies depending on the nature of the UGC and eWOM.

Baron and Kenny (1986), claim that the mediator effect occurs when there is a significant correlation between an independent variable (UGC and eWOM) and a dependent variable (purchase intention), and this relationship is explained by the inclusion of a third variable, the mediator (consumer engagement). The independent variable's influence on the dependent variable is carried out by the mediator variable. For the aforementioned reasons, the following hypothesis is presented:

H6: Consumer engagement mediates the relationship between user-generated content and consumer purchase intention.

H7: Consumer engagement mediates the relationship between electronic word-of-mouth and consumer purchase intention

According to Bartschat et al (2022), customers tend to seek out details about a product before making a purchase. Therefore, based on the existing literature and hypotheses detailed above, the research framework was developed as in Figure 1.

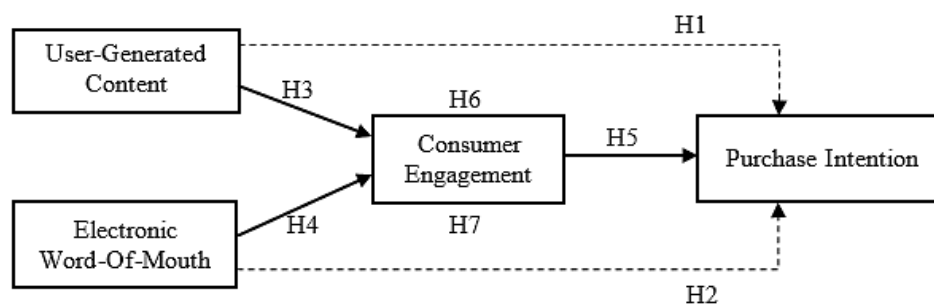


Figure 1: Research Framework

The proposed research model for understanding consumer purchase intention is shown in Figure 1 and is based on the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB). TPB is commonly used to predict behaviour in social psychology and has continuously been shown to be one of the best models for predicting intention in prior research. (Ajzen, 1991; Maichum et al., 2016; Canova et al., 2020).

Methodology

Sampling Design and Data Collection

This study utilized a quantitative approach and purposive sampling technique to select the respondents. An online questionnaire was developed to test the theoretical framework and formulated hypotheses. The unit of analysis consists of active TikTok users in Malaysia who have purchased any fashion and apparel products on TikTok. Thus, to ensure that this study collected data from the appropriate samples, a screening question was employed, inquiring about the average daily time spent on TikTok and the frequency of purchasing fashion and apparel products. The instruments used in this study are the adoption from the previous studies and converted into Google Form to reach more respondents, regardless of their location and time. Google Form questionnaire also saves participation time since it is online and can be accessed at the convenience of the respondents. Supported by Etikan, Musa, and Allkassim (2015), randomisation would be impractical due to the large population of TikTok users. Schonlau et al (2002), also stated that this sampling technique is particularly valuable for hard-to-reach electronically connected populations.

Hair et al (2010), suggested that the size of a sample should be 10 times the number of variables used in the study. Nevertheless, to be able to achieve an appreciable level of response rate and considering the non-response bias that would be encountered during the sampling process, scholars suggested that the size of the population should be added at least 50% of the required sample (Bartlett et al., 2001). Based on these two arguments, with a total of 16 items tested in this study, a total of 320 respondents were purposely selected based on the aforementioned criteria. All the collected data were analysed using Smart-PLS.

Measurements

The instruments used in this study were adopted from existing studies in which the items were well-recognized and validated by numerous scholars. The questionnaire was divided into two sections: demographic information and construct-related questions (UGC, eWOM, CE, and PI). The arrangement of the number of items of each construct and their sources is shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Instruments

Constructs	Items	Sources
User-Generated Content (UGC)	UGC1, UGC2, UGC3, UGC4	Schivinski & Dabrowski (2013)
Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM)	eWOM1, eWOM2, eWOM3	Mirza & Almana (2013)
Consumer Engagement (CE)	CE1, CE2, CE3, CE4, CE5, CE6	Weman (2011); Gummerus, et al. (2012)
Purchase Intention (PI)	PI1, PI2, PI3	Yoo, Donthu, & Lee (2000)

To measure the respondents' responses, all items were measured based on a five-point Likert scale ranging from "1= strongly disagree" to "5= strongly agree."

Findings

Descriptive Analysis

Out of 320 questionnaires distributed, 294 were retrieved, resulting in a 91.9 percent response rate. As can be seen in Table 2, the majority of the respondents were between 40-49 years old (51.4 per cent) while the others were between the age of 20-29 (9.9 per cent), the age 30-39 (26.9 per cent) and the age above 50 years old is 11.9 per cent. The respondents were also distributed between males (32.7 per cent) and females (67.3 per cent) with the majority from Malay ethnicity (42.9 per cent). Of this, 45.6 per cent reported a personal income of between RM2,000 to RM3,999, and 5.8 per cent of the respondents reported an income of below RM2,000. Of these participants, 26.5 per cent spent time less than 1 hour on TikTok, 52.0 per cent spent time between 1 to 3 hours and 21.4 per cent spent time more than 3 hours on TikTok. However, this study found that the majority of participants occasionally purchase fashion and apparel products on TikTok, accounting for 38.1 percent.

Table 2

Demographic Profile of the Participants

Demographic Profile	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	96	32.7
Female	198	67.3
Age		
20 - 29 Years Old	29	9.9
30 - 39 Years Old	79	26.9
40 – 49 Years Old	151	51.4
Above 50 Years Old	35	11.9
Ethnicity		
Malay	126	42.9
Chinese	113	38.4
Indian	42	14.3
Others	13	4.4
Income		
Below RM2000	17	5.8
RM2000 – RM3999	134	45.6
RM4000 - RM6999	109	37.1
Above RM7000	34	11.6
Average time spent on TikTok		
Less than 1 hour	78	26.5
1 – 3 hours	153	52.0
More than 3 hours	63	21.4
How often do you purchase for fashion and apparel products on Tiktok?		
Never	0	0.0
Rarely	85	28.9
Sometimes	112	38.1

Often	50	17.0
Always	47	16.0

Reflective Measurement Model

The initial data analysis stage was the research instrument's validity and reliability. The following Table 2 shows the results of the reflective measurement model evaluation whereby the indicator loadings, Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE) were assessed. The results of the validity test showed that the items' loadings were above the recommended value of 0.70. The Cronbach's alpha values were 0.765, 0.862, 0.716, and 0.873 for UGC, eWOM, CE, and PI, respectively. Similarly, the composite reliability values were high, with values ranging from 0.835 (CE) to 0.914 (eWOM), indicating good convergent validity. The AVE values for UGC, eWOM, CE, and PI were above the 0.50 threshold, indicating that more than half of the respective indicators' variance was explained by its latent variable. Therefore, this indicated no internal consistency issues in this study and the convergent validity criteria were met.

Table 3

Reflective Measurement Model Results

Construct	Items	Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
User-Generated Content	UGC1	0.914	0.765	0.880	0.698
	UGC2	0.856			
	UGC3	0.755			
	UGC4	0.788			
Electronic Word-of-Mouth	eWOM1	0.857	0.862	0.914	0.782
	eWOM2	0.923			
	eWOM3	0.879			
Consumer Engagement	CE1	0.778	0.716	0.835	0.624
	CE2	0.745			
	CE3	0.863			
	CE4	0.800			
	CE5	0.827			
	CE6	0.753			
Purchase Intention	PI1	0.887	0.873	0.866	0.780
	PI2	0.891			
	PI3	0.884			

Another criterion for a reflective measurement model assessment is discriminant validity by using the Fornell-Larcker criterion. Discriminant validity indicates the relationship between the model's latent construct with other constructs. To indicate discriminant validity, the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE) for each latent variable must be larger than the latent variable's correlations. According to Fornell and Larcker (1981), the AVE should not be lower than 0.5 to demonstrate an acceptable level of convergent validity, meaning that the latent construct explains no less than 50% of the indicator variance. Table 3 reveals that all the values were above the value of 0.5. The discriminant validity exists if the diagonal elements are greater than other off-diagonal elements in the rows and columns.

Thus, based on the results shown in Table 3, it is concluded that this study has adequate discriminant validity.

Table 4

Discriminant Validity Using Fornell-Larcker Criterion

	UGC	eWOM	CE	PI
UGC	0.761			
eWOM	0.435	0.773		
CE	0.287	0.312	0.795	
PI	0.196	0.182	0.249	0.762

Structural Model and Hypothesis Testing

After analyzing the measurement model, the next step in the PLS-SEM analysis was to evaluate the structural model. This study relied on the bootstrapping technique, which is embedded in SmartPLS software, to determine whether the path coefficients are statistically significant or not. Table 5 is a summary of the results of the hypothesis testing for the structural model.

Table 5

Results of Hypothesis Testing (Direct Effect)

Hypothesis	Relationship	Path Coefficient	Standard Error	T-Value	P-Value	Supported
H1	UGC → PI	0.289	0.037	5.243	0.000***	Yes
H2	e-WOM → PI	0.285	0.035	5.134	0.000***	Yes
H3	UGC → CE	0.140	0.034	3.689	0.000***	Yes
H4	e-WOM → CE	0.589	0.036	8.483	0.000***	Yes
H5	CE → PI	0.451	0.064	7.818	0.000***	Yes

Note: t-values > 1.65* ($p < 0.10$); t-values > 1.96** ($p < 0.05$); t-values > 2.58*** ($p < 0.01$)

The critical t-values (T-statistics) for a two-tailed test are 1.65 (at 0.10 level of significance) 1.96 (at 0.05 level of significance), and 2.58 (at 0.01 level of significance). This implies that the absolute and significant value of the t-value must be 1.65 or higher (Hair et al., 2010). Thus, based on this criterion and the results shown in Table 5, it can be concluded that all five direct relationships were found to be positively significant. Specifically, the result revealed that the proposed relationships between user-generated-content and purchase intention ($\beta = 0.289$, $t = 5.243$); electronic word-of-mouth and purchase intention ($\beta = 0.285$, $t = 5.134$); user-generated-content and consumer engagement ($\beta = 0.140$, $t = 3.689$); electronic word-of-mouth and consumer engagement ($\beta = 0.589$, $t = 8.483$); as well as between consumer engagement and purchase intention ($\beta = 0.451$, $t = 7.818$) were positively significant, and hence all the hypotheses of this study were supported.

Testing Mediation

Mediation analysis was conducted on consumer engagement as a mediator in the relationship between user-generated content, electronic word-of-mouth, and purchase intention. The results in Table 6 indicated that the relationship between user-generated content and purchase intention was significantly mediated by consumer engagement (t-value of $a*b = 5.139$, $p < 0.01$). The relationship between electronic word-of-mouth and purchase intention was also seen to be significantly mediated by consumer engagement (t-value of $a*b = 3.889$,

$p < 0.01$). Consequently, as the mediation was statistically significant, both hypotheses 6 and 7 were supported in this study.

Table 6

Results of Mediating Effect

	Relationship	A			B			a*b	Decision
		Path	T	Standard Deviation	Path	T	Standard Deviation	T= a*b/S(a*b)	
H6	UGC → CE → PI	0.380	7.251	0.041	0.291	5.485	0.041	5.139***	Mediation Supported
H7	e-WOM → CE → PI	0.189	4.353	0.037	0.285	5.480	0.039	3.889***	Mediation Supported

Note: t-values > 1.65* ($p < 0.10$); t-values > 1.96** ($p < 0.05$); t-values > 2.58*** ($p < 0.01$)

Discussion And Implications*Discussion*

The main purpose of this study was to examine the impact of user-generated content, electronic word-of-mouth, and consumer engagement on consumer purchase intention for fashion and apparel products on TikTok in Malaysia. The result of the study stated that there is a strong positive association between user-generated content, electronic word-of-mouth, consumer engagement, and purchase intention. This result supports the proposed hypothesis that there is a positive relationship between user-generated content, electronic word-of-mouth, consumer engagement, and purchase intention (Hypothesis 1 - Hypothesis 5). This finding is consistent with the assertions of Poturak and Softic (2019), that consumers were more likely to be inclined to make a purchase when exposed to appealing user-generated content and positive electronic word-of-mouth. This implies that TikTok users, as participants in this study, are more inclined to purchase any fashion and apparel products when they encounter engaging user-generated content and receive informative electronic word-of-mouth.

In terms of the mediating effect, Hypothesis 6 and Hypothesis 7 were developed due to a scarcity of research that examines the mediating role of consumer engagement on the relationship between user-generated content, electronic word-of-mouth, and purchase intention for products on TikTok, particularly in the context of fashion and apparel products. Meanwhile, measuring the mediating effect of consumer engagement is crucial due to its potential influence on consumer behavior. Besides, the crucial role of providing engaging user-generated content and informative electronic word-of-mouth in enhancing consumer purchase intention can be explained by incorporating an intervening variable. Thus, this study fills the aforesaid gap by incorporating and testing consumer engagement as a mediating variable.

This study also found that consumer engagement has a strong mediating effect on the relationship between user-generated content, electronic word-of-mouth, and purchase intention. This result supports the proposed hypothesis that consumer engagement mediates the relationship between user-generated content and consumer purchase intention. The finding is consistent with the Theory of Planned Behaviour and the findings from previous studies e.g. La Rosa & Jorgensen (2021); Shen (2021); Chen & Dermawan (2020); Dieck et al (2017); Yoong & Lian (2019), that reveals the factors influencing customer purchase intentions include consumer attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. Based on

the aforementioned findings, this study concluded that consumer engagement, facilitated by user-generated content and electronic word-of-mouth, serves as a significant mediating factor in this process, indicating that the level of involvement and interaction of TikTok users with fashion-related content on the platform can impact their purchase intentions.

Implications

This study has both theoretical and practical implications. From the theoretical perspective, this study used the Theory of Planned Behaviour to support and explain the theoretical concept. The Theory of Planned Behaviour states that attitudes are an individual's overall assessment of a particular behaviour, subjective norms reflect the perceived social pressure and influence of others on the behaviour, and perceived behavioural control is an individual's perception of how easy or difficult it is to carry out the behaviour. This implies that TikTok users in this study are likely to be influenced by their attitudes towards fashion and apparel products, the perceived social pressure from other users, and their perceived behavioral control when making such purchases. Thus, this study contributes to the research field by offering valuable information on the theoretical relationships between user-generated content, electronic word-of-mouth, consumer engagement, and purchase intention. This study also goes a step further by including the mediating effect of consumer engagement on the relationships between user-generated content, electronic word-of-mouth, and purchase intention among TikTok users in Malaysia.

As for practical implications, this study gave a significant contribution to TikTok content creators and marketers. Given the favourable impact of user-generated content and electronic word-of-mouth on consumer purchase intention, marketers can consider collaborating with content creators on TikTok to promote fashion and apparel products. Marketers also can encourage consumers to create and share content related to fashion and apparel products, fostering a sense of community and encouraging electronic word-of-mouth recommendations. Briefly, by implementing these practical implications, fashion and apparel brands in Malaysia can harness the power of user-generated content, electronic word-of-mouth, and consumer engagement in TikTok to drive consumer purchase intentions and ultimately boost their sales and brand success.

Conclusion And Recommendations

This study has several notable limitations that need to be acknowledged, although the findings of this study presented promising results. These limitations present possibilities for future studies to build on the results and broaden our understanding of the subject. The first limitation of this study is that it is only limited to Malaysia. Thus, future studies may consider the applicability of similar studies in other Southeast Asia countries or beyond and conduct a comparative analysis to provide the basis for generalization.

Second, the study focused specifically on fashion and apparel products in Malaysia. As a result, the findings may not be applicable to other product categories. Whereas different results might be obtained if this study aims at other product or service categories such as cosmetics, tourism, food and beverages, etc. Furthermore, this study only focuses on fashion and apparel products and does not specifically target a particular brand or TikTok account. Therefore, the results may vary for different types of brands or TikTok accounts. As a result, the findings of this study cannot be generalized to other types of products or services, particularly to all brands and TikTok accounts, as they may yield different results.

Third, this study only managed to conduct a cross-sectional study, which prevented it from discerning changes in behaviors, attitudes, trends, and consumer preferences. Thus, longitudinal studies may be carried out in the future as an effort in analyzing individual changes. Fourth, the researcher only managed to collect data from 320 respondents, and the sample size may not be sufficient to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing online purchase intentions among TikTok users. Biases may exist due to self-selection or limited access to certain demographics, which could impact the validity and generalizability of the findings. Hence, future researchers could collect more samples to cover a larger portion of the population and yield more reliable results. Besides, this study utilised purposive sampling which comes with several limitations. Future researchers should consider including other data collection methods for more objective outcomes to enhance the explanatory power of the variables of this study.

Lastly, this study only focuses on user-generated content, electronic word-of-mouth, and consumer engagement in predicting consumer intention to purchase. Future studies may consider brand reputation, consumer satisfaction, etc. to predict consumer engagement and intention to purchase. Future studies may also consider other mediating (e.g., perceived trust, perceived value, brand loyalty, brand image, etc.) or even moderating variables (e.g., demographic factors, cultural differences, etc.). Overall, addressing these limitations and further investigating the factors influencing online purchase intentions among TikTok users will enhance our understanding of consumer behavior in the context of social media platforms and contribute to the development of more effective marketing strategies.

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