Impact of TikTok Influencer Characteristics on Generation Z's Purchase Intention in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

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Abstract. Over the past few years, TikTok marketing has experienced a significant surge in popularity, becoming a powerful tool for promoting personal and business brands, products, and services to consumers. Particularly, the trend of influencer marketing on this platform in Vietnam has witnessed a remarkable explosion. This study aimed to examine the impact of TikTok influencer characteristics on purchase intention among Generation Z users in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. An online survey was conducted with 209 TikTok users aged 18-27. Using source credibility and attractiveness constructs, the results showed influencer trustworthiness, expertise, likability, similarity, and familiarity positively affected purchase intention. Trustworthiness exerted the strongest influence. The findings imply developing targeted social media marketing campaigns leveraging credible and relatable TikTok influencers can effectively motivate purchase behavior among Vietnamese youth.

Keywords: TikTok influencers, credibility, attractiveness, purchase intentions, Generation Z.

1. Introduction

In recent times, TikTok has swiftly risen to prominence and gained immense popularity among young people globally. As a user-friendly and easily accessible video application, TikTok has evolved into a formidable social media platform, garnering immense popularity and widespread usage globally. Its extensive reach and impact on users' perceptions and behaviors have positioned it as one of the most favored and influential networks in the digital landscape (Francis & Hoefel, 2018). Thanks to its diverse content, engaging interaction features, and personalized presentation, the platform rapidly attracted a substantial user base, positioning itself as a formidable competitor to established social media such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Currently, TikTok influencers play a crucial role in setting trends, capturing users' attention, and stimulating interest in products through personalized videos with impactful visuals and audio (Li, 2018). With its substantial user base and high engagement rate, TikTok offers various marketing opportunities (Ngo et al., 2022). The collaboration between companies and TikTok influencers holds the potential to exert a significant influence on consumer purchasing behavior, resulting in enhanced sales, as demonstrated by prior research (Lim et al., 2017). Therefore, the purpose of this study is: (1) to examine how TikTok influencer characteristics impact the purchase intention of Gen Z users in Vietnam and (2) to provide implications for social media marketing strategies targeting Vietnamese youth.

In the first quarter of 2022, a survey conducted in Vietnam among internet users revealed that TikTok was utilized by a substantial proportion of 72 percent of Generation Z individuals (Nguyen, 2022). Moreover, a significant majority of approximately 62 percent of Generation Z members expressed a preference for online shopping over traditional in-person shopping methods (The Influencer Marketing Factory, 2021). Based on the survey findings, it has been observed that Gen Z is significantly driven toward online shopping, and their primary motivation stems from social media platforms. This is mainly because they can access a diverse range of reviews and feedback from individuals who have already bought or used the products in question. These statistics highlight the strong appeal of internet shopping to Gen Z consumers, a trend that is rapidly gaining momentum (Ao et al., 2020). Generation Z, encompassing individuals born between 1995 and 2010, is widely regarded as true digital natives due to their upbringing with unfettered access to the internet, mobile devices, and social media. Their exposure to this tech-savvy environment has given rise to a hypercognitive generation, characterized by their exceptional ability to learn from various sources, cross-reference information, and integrate both offline and online experiences (Francis & Hoefel, 2018). This proficiency in navigating a digital landscape shapes their preferences and behaviors as consumers, driving them towards the convenience and possibilities offered by online shopping.

In previous times, enterprises relied upon the popularity and social standing of celebrities as a means to endorse and promote their brands. However, the advent of social media platforms brought forth a significant change, giving rise to the emergence and growing significance of social media influencers (Chetioui et al., 2020). These influencers have garnered considerable attention and influence, proving to be highly effective in capturing media coverage and exerting persuasive power over consumers (Chetioui et al., 2020). Social media influencers engage in regular sharing of their day-to-day activities, personal experiences, viewpoints, and endorsements on an extensive array of subjects, products, and services (Harrigan et al., 2021). Subsequently, their viewers or followers are tasked with the decision of placing trust in and acting upon the information presented, thereby greatly impacting their ultimate purchasing decisions.

Social media influencers' communications hold a heightened perception of credibility and appeal among consumers, leading to a greater propensity for consumers to heed the guidance provided by their favored influencers. In comparison to conventional celebrity endorsement approaches, social media influencers are deemed to possess superior credibility and expertise, particularly when targeting younger demographics (Lim et al., 2017). Research conducted by Lim et al. (2017) underscores the notion that social media influencers possess an innate ability to establish affable connections with their

audience, thereby enhancing their perceived credibility. Marketers have increasingly recognized the potential of leveraging social media influencers as a powerful marketing tool. In fact, as reported by Media Kix Marketing, nearly 80 percent of online marketers firmly believe that social media influencers play a pivotal role in driving business growth (Lim et al., 2017). The success of social media influencers in influencing consumer purchasing decisions is evident from the aforementioned examples, illustrating their significant impact on contemporary marketing strategies.

2. Theoretical Framework

Previous research has extensively investigated the impact of social media influencers on consumers' purchase intentions, identifying a diverse array of influencer characteristics that influence consumer behavior. Abdullah et al. (2020) conducted a study based on the source credibility and source attractiveness model, exploring five influencer characteristics, namely expertise, resemblance, likability, trustworthiness, and familiarity. Their findings emphasized that likability, familiarity, and trustworthiness emerged as the key influencer attributes significantly affecting users' purchase intentions (Abdullah et al., 2020). In a similar vein, the research conducted by Lim et al. (2017) centered on the evaluation of source credibility, source attractiveness, product match-up, and meaning transfer. Their findings indicated that while the attractiveness of social media influencers did not wield a significant impact on consumers' purchase intentions, influencer credibility and the alignment between influencers and products emerged as pivotal factors influencing purchase intentions (Lim et al., 2017). Likewise, Chetioui et al. (2020) provided empirical evidence demonstrating a positive correlation between attitudes toward influencers and brand attitudes, as well as consumer purchase intentions. Within this contextual framework, the researchers identified several influential factors shaping viewers' attitudes toward influencers, including perceived expertise, congruence, behavioral control, perceived subjective norms, and credibility (Chetioui et al., 2020). Moreover, Pham et al. (2021) provided evidence supporting the positive influence of influencer attractiveness and credibility on Gen Z's purchase patterns. However, it is noteworthy that some studies, such as those by Hermanda et al. (2019) and Nurhandayani et al. (2019), did not observe significant effects of influencers on consumers' purchase intentions. Notwithstanding the considerable magnitude of the platform, TikTok influencers have received insufficient scholarly scrutiny, thereby contributing to significant gaps in the existing body of influencer marketing literature (Jamil et al., 2023; Wright & Cherry, 2023).

According to the source credibility theory (Corina, 2006), the credibility of an information source hinges on factors such as competence, reliability, resemblance, and attractiveness. In the context of influencer marketing, the term "source credibility" pertains to positive influencer attributes that influence the acceptance of their messages (Ohanian, 1990). Information originating from a credible source possesses the capacity to shape recipients' beliefs and behaviors (Corina, 2006). Within the realm of business markets, the trustworthiness and expertise exhibited by individuals and organizations assume pivotal roles in facilitating successful exchanges, thereby making them critical considerations in the process of selecting communicators for endorsement purposes in business advertising messages. Credibility, as a paramount component of reputation, is contingent upon individuals' perceptions of an individual's behavior and potential for the future, formulated through the amalgamation of various opinions about that particular person (Ohanian, 1990).

Prior research has predominantly focused on two primary dimensions of source credibility: source attractiveness and source expertise. For instance, Desarbo and Harshmann (1985) identified attractiveness, expertise, likeability, and trustworthiness as contributing factors to source credibility. Similarly, Ohanian (1990) proposed a comprehensive tripartite model encompassing three fundamental elements that influence source credibility: attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness (Ohanian, 1990). As the selection of appropriate communicators gains increasing importance in the context of business advertising and its potential impact on successful exchanges, a comprehensive understanding of credibility, attractiveness, and expertise becomes imperative. The investigations conducted by

Desarbo and Harshmann (1985) and Ohanian (1990) provide valuable insights into the multifaceted nature of source credibility within the domain of business marketing. By illuminating the diverse dimensions that contribute to the perception of credibility, these studies offer valuable guidance to practitioners seeking to optimize their communicator selection strategies for endorsement purposes in business advertising messages.

In addition to reliability and knowledge, the attractiveness of a communication source can heighten the impact of the conveyed content. As delineated by Ohanian (1990), attractiveness is characterized by attributes such as being "classy", "pretty", "elegant", "sexy", and "attractive." Nevertheless, it is essential to comprehend attractiveness in terms of "similarity", "familiarity", and "likeability" (Canning & West, 2006) rather than merely focusing on physical appearance-related traits.

Numerous studies have delved into the relationship between social media influencers and consumers' purchase intentions, utilizing frameworks such as the planned behavior theory, source attractiveness, and trustworthiness models, along with various variables. However, it is noteworthy that the majority of these investigations have been conducted in countries other than Vietnam, encompassing regions such as Malaysia, Indonesia, Germany, and so on. As a result, there exists a notable research gap concerning the influence of TikTok influencers on Generation Z's purchase intentions specifically in Vietnam and other countries. While considerable attention has been devoted to examining the impact of social media influencers in general on consumers' intentions, a discernible dearth of research exists pertaining to the extent of TikTok influencers' effect on consumer purchase intentions and the underlying factors contributing to this phenomenon.

In the context of evaluating the persuasiveness of social media influencers on a platform, the source credibility model and the source attractiveness model are intricately intertwined. This study underscores the significance of considering influencers as pivotal components of an effective online communication strategy. Such an approach assumes a crucial role in cultivating message credibility among the target audience, hinging on the distinct characteristics exhibited by the influencer as the information source (Corina, 2006).

3. Hypothesis Development

3.1. Expertise

Expertise encompasses the perceived capacity of an individual or entity to furnish accurate and dependable information, denoting a considerable level of knowledge or proficiency within a specific domain. In the realm of social media influencers, expertise pertains to the extent to which they are perceived to possess the requisite knowledge, training, or competencies to efficaciously endorse products or brands (Alba & Hutchinson, 2007). Social media influencers leverage their expertise to carry out promotional activities related to various products, successfully delivering compelling messages that capture the attention of customers. Silvera and Austad (2004) suggest that customers are more likely to make purchases when influencers exhibit greater credibility through their knowledge, attractiveness, and dependability. In the context of TikTok, when influencers leverage their expertise to craft content that resonates with their followers, the messages concerning businesses and products tend to be regarded as more trustworthy and credible compared to conventional advertising commercials (Kassoway & Anthony, 2014). Furthermore, through the dissemination of accurate information and the facilitation of expertise-based communication with customers on TikTok, social media influencers have the capacity to cultivate more profound connections and stronger relationships with their audience (Chun et al., 2018). Through such interactions, influencers can establish themselves as reliable sources of information and build trust among their followers. In summary, expertise is a crucial factor that empowers social media influencers to effectively endorse products and brands, as their knowledgeable and reliable approach resonates with customers, increasing the likelihood of purchase decisions. Utilizing their expertise on TikTok, influencers can create authentic and credible messages, ultimately

strengthening their connection with their audience and impacting consumer behavior positively.

H1: TikTok influencers' expertise positively impacts GenZ 's purchase intention

3.2. Trustworthiness

An essential dimension of source credibility that significantly influences the capacity of influencers to sway their followers is trustworthiness. Trustworthiness pertains to the extent to which a source is perceived as genuinely reflecting their own feelings or opinions (Abdullah et al., 2020). It encompasses the endorser's plausibility, sincerity, and authenticity. The credibility of a source is also influenced by how objectively receivers perceive it. When customers believe in social media influencers and trust their recommendations, they are more likely to be influenced and inclined to purchase the products they endorse. This was evidenced by Rebelo's (2017) study, which revealed that a reliable influencer held more persuasive power. In summary, trustworthiness plays a crucial role in source credibility, enabling influencers to wield greater influence over their followers. When influencers are perceived as trustworthy, genuine, and authentic, their recommendations carry more weight, leading to increased purchase intent among their audience.

H2: TikTok influencers' trustworthiness positively impacts GenZ 's purchase intention.

3.3. Likability

Likability is a construct that pertains to the extent of affection or positive regard that the information recipient possesses towards the appearance and personality of the information source. It is a highly influential factor in shaping a customer's perception of TikTok influencers. When consumers feel a positive impression of an influencer, they are more likely to be influenced by them. This influence is observed to extend to consumers' purchasing behavior, as they are motivated to make purchases of products or items that are endorsed by influencers and are part of their real-life experiences. Particularly noteworthy is the phenomenon wherein consumers are further inclined to engage in such buying behavior when they perceive shared characteristics or traits between themselves and the influencers, thereby fostering a sense of relatability and affinity (Cheung et al., 2014).

H3: TikTok influencers' likability positively impacts GenZ 's purchase intention.

3.4. Similarity

The term "similarity" pertains to the degree of resemblance between a source of information and its intended audience. Within the context of social media influencers, similarity is characterized by the extent to which influencers and TikTok users share common attributes, encompassing backgrounds, passions, viewpoints, social status, and lifestyles (Abdullah et al., 2020). By having such similarities, influencers can effectively persuade their fans to purchase products based on their own judgments, leveraging their expertise as individuals who share a similar status with their followers. Furthermore, TikTok influencers possess the ability to create trends, inspiring people to imitate them and fostering a belief that adopting the same products as the influencers will lead to similar lifestyles (Abdullah et al., 2020).

H4: TikTok influencers' similarity positively impacts GenZ 's purchase intention.

3.5. Familiarity

The connection between the information source and the receiver is commonly referred to as familiarity, and it plays a significant role in influencing brand choice and customer purchase intentions (Abdullah et al., 2020). People tend to have a more favorable view of and seek to connect with individuals they see more frequently (Brockner & Swap, 1976). As a result, the more familiar an influencer's name or appearance becomes to their audience, the more likable they are perceived to be. This preference for familiarity is consistent with Bornstein's (1989) findings, where adults generally favor the familiar over the unfamiliar due to the reduced perceived risk associated with the former. Consequently, greater

purchasing intent is often linked to lower perceived risk.

H5: TikTok influencers' familiarity positively impacts GenZ 's purchase intention.

The proposed research model is inherited from Abdullah et al. (2020) on the five factors of influencers: trustworthiness, expertise, likability, similarity, and familiarity. This model helps to examine the empirical influence of these 5 factors on Vietnamese GenZ TikTok users' purchase intention.
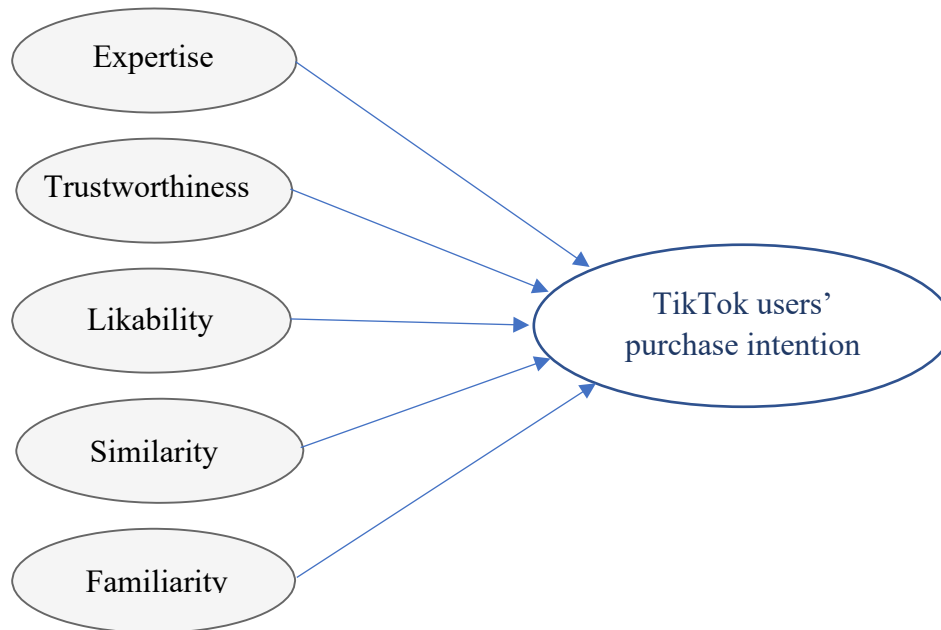

Fig 1. The proposed research model

4. Methodology

The measurement items used in this research were primarily sourced from Magano et al. (2022), Chun et al. (2018), and Halim and Karami (2020), as presented in Table 2. The participants were requested to indicate their level of agreement with each item using a Likert scale, which ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The survey questions were initially presented in English and subsequently translated into Vietnamese to cater to the participants' language, after which they were translated back into English to ensure the accuracy and fidelity of the translations.

Prior to conducting the official survey, a group of 50 TikTok users was interviewed to address language and question ambiguity, resulting in minor adjustments to the survey. In a non-probability manner, the official survey was distributed on various social platforms and sent directly to TikTok users via email or Messenger. A total of 235 responses were initially obtained from TikTok users aged 18 to 27 in Ho Chi Minh City. Subsequent to the removal of 26 incomplete or inconsistent responses, the final dataset comprised 209 surveys eligible for analysis.

The data analysis process was carried out employing the statistical software SPSS version 26. To assess the reliability of the constructs, Cronbach's alpha and Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) were utilized. Additionally, Pearson correlation analysis was employed to examine the inherent relationship between the independent and dependent variables. Furthermore, regression analysis was conducted to illustrate the extent to which TikTok influencers' characteristics influence users' purchase intentions.

Table 1. The demographics of the respondents

Measure	Value	Frequency (N=209)	Percentages (%)
Gender	Male	86	41.1
	Female	123	58.9
Occupation	Student	140	67.0
	Employee	69	33.0
Income	Less than 5 million VND	102	48.8
	5 to less than 10 million VND	57	27.3
	10 to less than15 million VND	31	14.8
	15 million VND and above	19	9.1

Table 2. Items for Questionnaire

Variable	Code	Measurement Items	References
Trustworthiness	T1	"I believe that the TikTok influencers that I follow are trustworthy."	Magano et al. (2022)
	T2	"I believe that the products or service information given by the TikTok influencers I follow is trustworthy."	
	T3	"I believe that the TikTok influencers I follow use the same products they advertise."	
	T4	"I believe that the recommendations of the TikTok influencers I follow are more trustworthy than company-sponsored advertising."	
Expertise	E1	"The TikTok influencers I follow have experience in using products or services which are advertised."	Magano et al. (2022); Chun et al. (2018)
	E2	"The TikTok influencers I follow have knowledge about products or serviceswhich are advertised."	
	E3	"The TikTok influencers I follow have the ability to demonstrate products orservices which are advertised."	
	E4	"The TikTok influencers I follow are experts in the field of using products orservices which are advertised."	
Likability	L1	"The TikTok influencers I follow are likable."	Magano et al. (2022); Chun et al. (2018); Halim & Karami (2020)
	L2	"The TikTok influencers I follow are friendly."	
	L3	"The TikTok influencers I follow have a physical appearance and pleasing personality."	
Similarity	S1	"I am similar to the TikTok influencers I follow in overall lifestyle."	Magano et al. (2022); Chun et al. (2018)
	S2	"I am similar to the TikTok influencers I follow in personality."	
	S3	"I am similar to the TikTok influencers I follow in interest."	
Familiarity	F1	I am familiar with the TikTok influencers I follow.	Magano et al. (2022); Chun et al. (2018)
	F2	"I have knowledge about the TikTok influencers I follow."	
	F3	"I easily recognize the TikTok influencers I follow."	
	F4	"I know well about the TikTok influencers I follow."	
Purchase Intention	PI1	"I am willing to buy products or services advertised by the TikTok influencers I follow."	Chun et al. (2018)
	PI2	"I intend to recommend products or services advertised by the TikTok influencers I follow to other people."	
	PI3	"I am likely to purchase products or services advertised by the TikTok influencers I follow in the future."	
	PI4	"I am interested in making a purchase of products or services advertised by the TikTok influencers I follow."	

5. Results

5.1. Reliability test

To gauge the reliability of the measures, Cronbach's Alpha, which is expected to exceed 0.70, and the corrected item-total correlation, with a minimum threshold of 0.3, were utilized as criteria (George & Mallery, 2016). As depicted in Table 3, all factors demonstrated Cronbach's Alpha values surpassing 0.7, and all the corrected item-total correlations were greater than 0.3, affirming the reliability of the measures for subsequent analysis.

5.2. Exploratory factor analysis

When performing principal axis factoring analysis with Promax rotation to get the EFA results, 22 collected variables were condensed into six components. Bartlett's test has Sig. = 0.000 < 0.05 and the KMO coefficient is 0.885 > 0.7, showing that the observed variables are correlated with the representative factors. The total variance of 56.688% (>50%) is satisfactory and reveals that six groups of factors explain the 56.688% variability of data. Acceptable factor loading factors are bigger than 0.5. As a result, the six factors' measurement items are approved and used for linear regression.

Table 3. Cronbach's Alpha and Factor loadings

Constructs	No of Items	Cronbach's alpha	Factor loadings
Trustworthiness (T)	4	0.782	0.540 - 0.794
Expertise (E)	4	0.816	0.715 – 0.736
Likability (L)	3	0.792	0.631 - 0.800
Similarity (S)	3	0.797	0.665 - 0.830
Familiarity (F)	4	0.849	0.737 - 0.812
Purchase Intention (PI)	4	0.839	0.630 – 0.749

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring Analysis.
Rotation Method: Promax with Kaiser Standardization

5.3. Pearson Correlation Testing

Pearson correlation analysis was utilized to assess the relationship between two factors and to identify any potential multicollinearity issues arising from strong correlations among the independent variables. As presented in Table 4, all Pearson correlation significance values between the independent (T, E, L, S, F) and dependent factor (PI) are less than 0.05, with positive coefficients. The findings indicate a statistically significant and positive relationship between the independent factors and the dependent factor. Furthermore, the absolute value of the Pearson correlation coefficient being less than 0.8 suggests a minimal likelihood of collinearity issues.

Table 4. Pearson's correlation

	T	E	L	S	F	PI
T	1					
E	.327**	1				
L	.404**	.413**	1			
S	.267**	.359**	.384**	1		
F	.412**	.340**	.408**	.331**	1	
PI	.472**	.486**	.507**	.499**	.500**	1

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

5.4. Multiple regression

The study utilized regression analysis to assess the significance of the factors. As presented in Table 5, the adjusted R-squared was computed as 0.496, and the F-test in ANOVA yielded a significance level of 0.000. These outcomes suggest that the regression model was well-suited to the data, and the five independent factors collectively explained 49.6% of the variation in the dependent variable. To evaluate the first-order series autocorrelation, Durbin-Watson values were examined. The Durbin-Watson value obtained was 1.736, which falls within the range of 1.5 to 2.5. This value suggests the absence of autocorrelation (Qiao, 2011).

Table 5. Multiple regression results

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.704	.496	.484	.63585	1.736

ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	80.777	5	16.155	39.958	.000[b]
	Residual	82.074	203	.404		
	Total	162.850	208			

Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	-.078	.249		-.314	.754		
	T	.210	.064	.189	3.272	.001	.746	1.340
	E	.209	.061	.196	3.398	.001	.749	1.336
	L	.168	.059	.173	2.863	.005	.679	1.472
	S	.243	.056	.244	4.333	.000	.780	1.282
	F	.196	.056	.204	3.490	.001	.725	1.379

Dependent Variable: PI

Table 6. Summary of the hypothesis testing results.

Hypotheses	Expected sign	Result
H1: TikTok influencers' expertise → purchase intention	+	Supported
H2: TikTok influencers' trustworthiness → purchase intention	+	Supported
H3: TikTok influencers' likability → purchase intention	+	Supported
H4: TikTok influencers' similarity → purchase intention	+	Supported
H5: TikTok influencers' familiarity → purchase intention	+	Supported

Prior to hypothesis testing, the presence of collinearity between constructs was assessed through the examination of the variance inflation factor (VIF) values, as advocated by Hair et al. (2017). Notably, all VIF values were found to be less than 5, indicating the absence of significant collinearity issues among the constructs. Hence, collinearity among the components was not a significant problem in this investigation, as given in Table 5. Furthermore, it is important to note that the significance values (sig values) of the independent factors were found to be less than 0.05, indicating that all the independent factors exert a statistically significant influence on the dependent factor. As a result, hypotheses H1 to H5 from the theoretical model are accepted.

Firstly, a positive relationship was observed between trustworthiness and purchase intention (β =

0.189, sig = 0.001), signifying that the trustworthiness of TikTok influencers holds considerable sway over their followers' purchase intentions. This finding corroborates earlier research by Abdullah et al. (2020) and Gayathri & Anwar (2021), both emphasizing trustworthiness as a primary influencing factor on purchase intentions.

Secondly, expertise and purchase intention exhibited a positive relationship (β = 0.196, sig = 0.001), indicating that TikTok influencers' expertise significantly influences their followers' purchase intentions. Users are more inclined to trust influencers who possess knowledge and experience concerning the promoted products or services. This result aligns with findings from studies by Chun et al. (2018) and Adnan et al. (2018), further substantiating the notion that an influencer's expertise can strongly impact an individual's buying intention (Filieri et al., 2018).

Thirdly, the impact of likability on purchase intention was found to be positively significant (β = 0.173, sig = 0.005). TikTok users are more likely to make purchases based on their favorable impression of the TikTok influencers they follow. This outcome aligns entirely with prior studies conducted by Abdullah et al. (2020) and Magano et al. (2022), underscoring the significance of likability as a crucial factor in shaping consumers' purchase intentions.

Additionally, a positive relationship was observed between similarity and purchase intention (β = 0.244, sig = 0.000), indicating that the similarity between TikTok influencers and viewers strongly influences buying intent. This finding is consistent with earlier research by Chun et al. (2018) and Li et al. (2014), accentuating the impact of interacting with individuals who share similar interests on a person's purchase intention.

Lastly, familiarity and purchasing intention demonstrated a positive relationship (β = 0.204, sig = 0.001), signifying that TikTok influencers' familiarity with TikTok users significantly affects their purchase intention. This result aligns with earlier investigations by Dursun et al. (2011), Chun et al. (2018), and Adnan et al. (2018), all illustrating how the presence of an easily identifiable TikTok influencer can sway viewers' purchasing intentions toward the promoted products.

6. Conclusion

TikTok is experiencing rapid growth and success, and its influencers hold considerable power in motivating consumers and shaping their perceptions of products and services. Within the marketing industry in Vietnam, social media influencers are at the forefront, playing a pivotal role in marketing strategies. This study contributes to the limited academic research on TikTok influencer marketing effects, demonstrating the significant role of credibility and relatability in driving purchase intentions in Vietnam. The findings suggest marketers should carefully vet and select influencers exhibiting expertise, trustworthiness, and similarity to the target demographic. Increasing exposure and interaction between TikTok influencers and their followers can enhance the sense of familiarity among viewers. Additionally, marketers should consider the factor of similarity when choosing preferred TikTok influencers, opting for those whose image closely aligns with the brand image and suits the marketed products. Influencers are perceived as valuable sources of information capable of reducing ambiguities about a product or service, thereby supporting viewers' purchase intentions and increasing the likelihood of actual purchases. The trustworthiness and product knowledge displayed by influencers further enhance their ability to convince customers to make purchases. Authenticity should be prioritized over attractiveness alone.

In the context of future research, it is advisable to broaden the scope to encompass other prominent social media platforms, such as Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, and Facebook. Each social media site operates in distinctive ways, potentially resulting in varying purchase intentions among its users. Solely relying on TikTok for a marketing campaign could potentially exclude potential customers who do not actively engage with the TikTok platform. Thus, adopting a comprehensive approach that spans multiple social media platforms can ensure a more extensive outreach and engagement with diverse

consumer segments. Such an inclusive strategy can facilitate a deeper understanding of the nuanced effects of social media influencer marketing on consumer behavior across various platforms, thereby enhancing the generalizability and applicability of research findings.

Nevertheless, the scope of this study is limited to the examination and analysis of Gen Z users exclusively within the geographic confines of Ho Chi Minh City. It may be of greater scholarly interest to embark on a cross-national investigation in subsequent research endeavors. Furthermore, forthcoming studies could explore the comparative impacts of social media usage across diverse platforms or delve into the examination of moderating variables, thereby contributing additional layers of insight to the existing body of knowledge.

Acknowledgment

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Appendix

Histogram
Dependent Variable: PI

Mean = -1.40E-15
Std. Dev. = 0.988
N = 209

Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual
Dependent Variable: PI

Scatterplot
Dependent Variable: PI