

Influence of TikTok on Consumer's Behavior

Raluca-Mihaela SANDU¹

¹ Lecturer Ph.D., "Petre Andrei" University of Iași, Romania, e-mail: ralucamihaelasandu@yahoo.com

Abstract

The emergence of TikTok as a dominant social media platform has revealed the transformative power of algorithm-driven short-form video content in shaping consumer behaviour. Unlike traditional advertising channels, TikTok facilitates rapid dissemination of brand messages through user-generated content, influencer endorsements, and interactive features, which collectively foster brand awareness, purchase intention, and consumer loyalty. The platform's persuasive capacity derives from its emphasis on creativity, authenticity, and entertainment, allowing consumers to perceive products as both accessible and socially validated. Consequently, purchasing decisions are frequently influenced by viral trends, parasocial relationships with influencers, and the dynamics of online communities. The power of hashtags and participatory challenges further extends consumer exposure, positioning TikTok as a unique environment where marketing messages circulate beyond conventional targeting strategies. Empirical evidence suggests that younger demographics, particularly Generation Z, are especially receptive due to their preference for visually engaging and community-oriented content. However, critical concerns persist regarding oversaturation of promotional material, credibility of influencer recommendations, and the ethical implications of persuasive marketing practices. This study underscores the need to interrogate TikTok's dual role as a space of social entertainment and as a powerful mechanism of consumer persuasion within the contemporary digital marketplace.

Keywords: TikTok; digital marketing; consumer behaviour.

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1. Introduction

Informative and educational social media posts strongly boost consumer interest, influencing about 62.4% of potential buyers. TikTok, with its short, engaging videos, is a fast-growing platform that strongly influences consumer behaviour, especially among Gen Z, its core audience¹.

In recent years, TikTok has rapidly emerged as one of the most influential social media platforms, reshaping the way consumers discover, evaluate, and purchase products. Unlike traditional advertising, TikTok thrives on short, engaging, and highly personalized video content that encourages rapid consumption and sharing. Its algorithm-driven feed exposes users to an endless stream of trends, challenges, and product recommendations, many of which gain viral momentum within hours. This dynamic has created a new form of digital word-of-mouth marketing where influencers, creators, and even everyday users play a central role in shaping consumer preferences. For businesses, TikTok has become a powerful tool for building brand awareness and driving sales, as viral content often translates directly into purchasing decisions. As a result, the platform not only influences what people buy but also how they perceive value, authenticity, and trust in brands. Understanding TikTok's impact on consumer behaviour is therefore essential for marketers seeking to remain relevant in today's fast-paced digital marketplace.

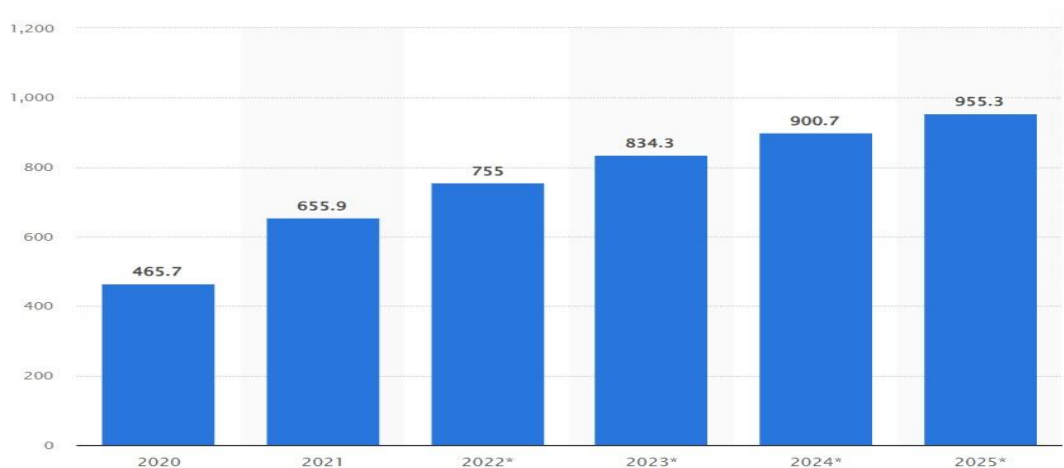


Figure 1. Number of Tik Tok users in the world from 2020 to 2025 (in millions)

Source: www.statista.com²

TikTok was created by the Chinese tech company ByteDance. The application was first launched in September 2016 in China under the name Douyin. In September 2017, ByteDance released the international version called TikTok. In 2018, ByteDance acquired Musical.ly, a popular lip-sync app, and merged it with TikTok, which helped the platform expand rapidly across global markets.

As it can be seen in figure 1, the worldwide users of Tik Tok rose from 465.7 millions in 2020 to 955.3 millions, so it doubled.

¹ J. M. Valeza, M. J. Soriano, "The influence of TikTok short-form videos on gen z consumers' purchase intention", in *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Academic Research*, Vol. 12, No. 1, 2024, pp. 38-53.

² <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1327116/number-of-global-tiktok-users/>.

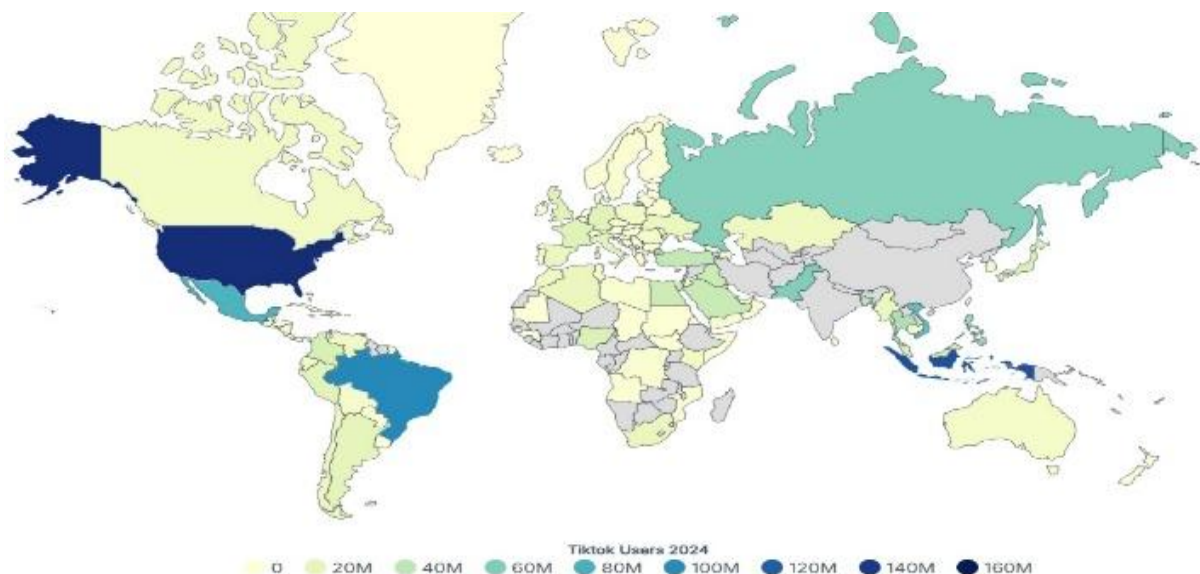


Figure 2. Number of Tik Tok users 2025, by coutry
Source: www.wordpopulationreview.com³

Figure 2 shows the number of Tik Tok users in 2025. Creating a top 5, it can be observed that United States of America holds number 1 having 148 million consumers, Brazil is on second place with 101.8 million users, Russia is on third place with 58.2 million users, South Arabi has 35.1 million users and Argentina has 21.3 million users.

TikTok's audience is largely made up of younger generations, which makes it especially appealing for brands aiming to reach Generation Z and Millennials. By 2023, around 60% of the platform's users fell within the 16-34 age range, with a particularly high share of individuals under 24⁴.

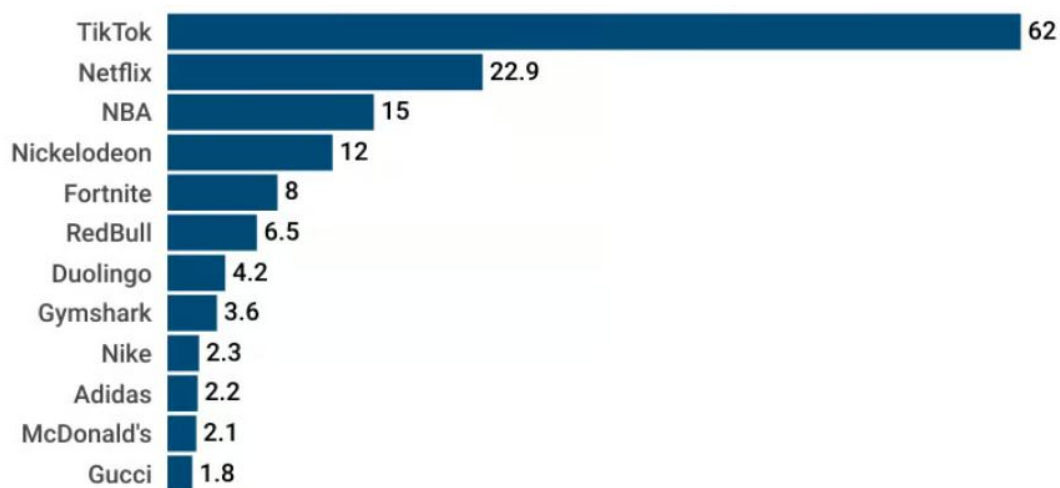


Figure 3. Most popular brands on Tik Tok in United States of America (number of followers in millions)
Source: www.capitaloneshopping.com⁵

³ <https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/tiktok-users-by-country>.

⁴ S. A. Ismail, M. Mohamed, "Analyzing the effects of influencer marketing on consumer behavior: Insights from social influence theory in TikTok Campaigns", in *World Journal of Advanced Research and Reviews*, 24(03), 2024, pp. 2116-2131.

⁵ <https://capitaloneshopping.com/research/tiktok-shopping-statistics/#:~:text=Gen%20Z%20TikTok%20Shopping%20Statistics>.

Most popular brands on Tik Tok in United States of America are: Tik Tok, Netflix, NBA, Nickelodeon, Fortnite, RedBull, Duolingo, Gymshark, Nike, Adidas, McDonald's and Gucci.

2. Marketing strategies for brands to grow on TikTok platform

TikTok's popularity and unique video format have given brands and users new ways to boost visibility, changing how companies share and execute their marketing strategies⁶ (Melgarejo-Espinoza& all, 2025).

In order to engage Tik Tok consumers across generations, there are specific strategies to be applied by brands (Tik Tok consumer purchasing behavior Report 2024-2025):

2.1. Optimize Content Strategy & Influencer Collaborations by Generation

Gen Z: Genuineness and enjoyment are essential. Brands should adopt TikTok's natural communication style, which favours casual, relatable, and trend-oriented content. Partnering with micro-influencers and creators who hold trust within Gen Z circles – such as a well-known college student in fashion or a young beauty creator in make-up, can strengthen credibility and engagement. Generation Z places greater trust in their peers' opinions, so influencers should be encouraged to share authentic personal experiences with your product instead of delivering a highly polished promotional message. Brands should connect with Gen Z audiences by responding to their comments and creating duets with their videos, as this generation values brands that are interactive and personable (example: TikTok's Spark Adsto boost natural reach).

Millennials: Combining genuine content with brand's values and key information. Millennials value user-generated content and transparency, but they are also influenced by messaging that highlights a brand's mission or product quality. Brand should collaborate with influencers who share causes that resonate with Millennials or who can provide detailed insights about the product, for instance, a tech reviewer for electronics or a parenting influencer for baby products. Because Millennials represent the largest segment on social media, companies have to make sure their content reflects brand's core values, such as sustainability and inclusivity.

Gen X: Emphasize information, quality, and building trust. To engage this generation on TikTok, content should be more detailed and informative. Gen X tends to be skeptical and research-oriented, so brands should consider creating videos that present clear facts and demonstrations – for example, a one-minute clip highlighting five reasons why their product outperforms competitors or a side-by-side comparison.

Baby Boomers: Focus on relatability, clear messaging, and integration across platforms. To engage Boomers on TikTok, brands should create content that showcases people and scenarios they can easily relate to. For instance, a video showing an older adult using a kitchen gadget to make cooking easier for their family can be very effective, as Boomers appreciate products that enhance daily life and support family activities.

⁶ R. Melgarejo-Espinoza, M. Gonzales-Cruz, J. Chavez-Perez, O. Iparraguirre-Villanueva, "Impact of the TikTok Algorithm on the Effectiveness of Marketing Strategies: A Study of Consumer Behavior and Content Preferences", in *International Journal of Advanced Computer Science and Applications*, Vol. 16, No. 2, 2025.

2.2. Maximize the potential of TikTok's in-app shopping capabilities

Brands should make the most of TikTok's shopping tools, since the platform inspires quick buying decisions, especially among Gen Z and Millennials. It is necessary for sellers to join **TikTok Shop** and create a product catalogue.

Also, **TikTok's Live Shopping** is a helpful tool for launches or special sales aimed at younger shoppers. It is useful to promote the live event on TikTok and other platforms to attract viewers. While streaming, using the shopping pin can make people buy instantly. This interactive setup creates excitement and urgency (for example, saying "Only 100 left – grab yours now!") and can boost conversions.

At the same time, shoppers who prefer more traditional buying methods, often Gen X or Boomers, should have a clear link to the products' website in TikTok's profile so those who don't want to purchase directly in the app can still find and shop easily.

Another smart tactic is offering TikTok-only promotions. Discounts are a strong motivator. It is useful for brands to share exclusive codes or small freebies for purchases made through TikTok. For example, "Use code TikTok10 for 10% off, only in TikTok Shop!" can appeal to deal-loving Millennials and even budget-conscious Boomers.

Finally, the buying process should be as simple as possible on TikTok, with short, clear product descriptions, high-quality images, and pricing and shipping details being transparent.

2.3. Adapting the Offer and Message for Each Age Group

Gen Z: Brands should show how the product connects to current trends and social values. Gen Z wants to stay ahead of the curve, but they also care deeply about ethics. It is necessary to highlight the brand's purpose, for example, eco-friendly practices as authenticity and transparency matter more to this generation than to others.

Millennials: It is necessary to emphasize the product's quality, ease of use, and the values it represents. It should be presented as a solution that improves daily life or adds meaningful benefits.

Gen X: Brands should focus on reliability, premium quality and standout customer service. Gen X, now in their prime earning years, are selective buyers – ready to spend more if they see real value. It is necessary for the product to be presented as the smart choice for savvy consumers by showcasing awards, superior craftsmanship, or proven results. Since this generation grew up surrounded by advertising, they tend to be skeptical, so credible testimonials or evidence must incorporate in Tik Tok's videos.

Baby Boomers: Brands should present the product as easy to use and genuinely supportive. For instance, if selling tech to Boomers, simple setup (like plug-and-play) should be highlighted and offer guidance if available. If it's a health or lifestyle product, focusing on how it enhances their well-being, keeps them active, or helps them stay connected with family will make them engage and make conversions.

2.4. Create a Cross-Generational Brand Community

Brands should focus on building a TikTok presence that creates community and trust across generations. While creating content for each age group, companies should look for ways to engage everyone together. For example, running a hashtag challenge – like a fun dance that encourages participation from all ages. TikTok content can easily cross generations, so a clever or wholesome video might be shared between kids, parents, and grandparents.

It is necessary to acknowledge multigenerational audience by addressing different needs: answer questions from Boomers with explainer videos or share stories of customers from various age groups to show broad appeal.

Brands can highlight family influence, Gen Z often get parents to buy, and Boomers may get gift ideas from younger family members. Content that sparks intergenerational conversations, like a video showing multiple generations using the product together, entertains while reinforcing that the product is valued across ages.

3. Conclusions

Social media has significantly changed how brands interact with consumers and market their products or services. Platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok have reshaped the global marketing landscape, giving companies new ways to reach audiences more directly and personally⁷.

TikTok has emerged as a pivotal force in the digital media ecosystem, redefining how individuals create, consume, and engage with content. Its distinctive format of short-form, user-generated videos combined with a highly sophisticated recommendation algorithm has positioned the platform as more than just a source of entertainment; it has become a powerful cultural driver and a catalyst for shaping consumer behaviour. By enabling trends to spread rapidly across borders, TikTok fosters a unique environment in which creativity, immediacy, and virality intersect, allowing even ordinary users to become influential voices within global digital communities. This democratization of influence has fundamentally altered traditional marketing strategies, with brands increasingly turning to TikTok as a critical channel for building awareness, authenticity, and consumer trust.

Looking to the future, TikTok's trajectory suggests continued expansion beyond its current role as a social media platform. Its integration of e-commerce features, such as TikTok Shop, signals a shift toward becoming a hybrid space where entertainment and consumption merge seamlessly. This convergence not only reshapes digital retail but also reinforces the platform's potential to influence purchasing decisions on a mass scale. Moreover, TikTok's emphasis on creator-driven content points to the likelihood of more diverse monetization opportunities, empowering individuals to participate in the digital economy in innovative ways. Nevertheless, the platform's growth is not without challenges. Increasing scrutiny from governments regarding data privacy, misinformation, and national security concerns poses potential obstacles to its global dominance. Furthermore, TikTok must continuously adapt to evolving user preferences and the highly competitive nature of the social media industry in order to sustain its influence.

Ultimately, TikTok's future will depend on its ability to balance innovation with responsibility. If it successfully navigates regulatory pressures and maintains user trust, it is poised to remain at the forefront of digital culture and consumer engagement. In academic terms, TikTok represents not only a platform for content sharing but also a significant social phenomenon that illustrates the shifting dynamics of media consumption, consumer decision-making, and global communication in the 21st century. Its enduring impact will likely extend far beyond entertainment, shaping the future of digital interaction, commerce, and culture.

⁷ R. Melgarejo-Espinoza, M. Gonzales-Cruz, J. Chavez-Perez, O. Iparraguirre-Villanueva, *op. cit.*

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