



Open Access Indonesia Journal of Social Sciences

Journal Homepage: <https://journalsocialsciences.com/index.php/OAIJSS>

The Role of Social Media Marketing with TikTok in Generation Z: A Study on the Choice of Fitness Centers by Generation Z in Ambon, Indonesia

Jacsy Tubalawony^{1*}

¹Department of Management, Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Pattimura, Ambon, Indonesia

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Brand choice
Generation Z
Media social
TikTok

*Corresponding author:

Jacsy Tubalawony

E-mail address:

jaczytubalawony@gmail.com

The author has reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript.

<https://doi.org/10.37275/oaijss.v6i7.196>

ABSTRACT

TikTok is a very popular platform among generation Z, who is often the main target in the fitness industry. Generation Z is very active on TikTok and uses the platform for inspiration on health, fitness and an active lifestyle. TikTok is a short video-based platform that enables gyms to present engaging visual content. This study aimed to determine the role marketing with social media TikTok in generation Z: a study on the choice of fitness centers by generation Z in Ambon, Indonesia. This study is a quantitative approach and uses primary data obtained from a survey process using a questionnaire, where the survey process is carried out online. The independent variable in this study is the choice of the fitness center brand by the customer (Y). The dependent variables in this study are entertainment (X1), interaction (X2), trendy (X3), customization (X4), and electronic word-of-mouth (WOM) (X5). In conclusion, there is a relationship between the entertainment, interaction, customization, and electronic word-of-mouth social media dimensions of TikTok in influencing brand fitness center choice decisions for generation Z in Ambon, Indonesia.

1. Introduction

In today's rapidly developing digital era, the role of social media in marketing strategy has become very important. One social media platform that has stolen the world's attention is TikTok. TikTok is not just an entertainment platform; it is also an effective tool for reaching younger generations, especially generation Z. This is a demographic group that has grown up in the midst of technological advances, so understanding how to use TikTok as a marketing tool is extremely relevant. Marketing using TikTok is becoming increasingly significant in various industries, one of which is the fitness and fitness center industry. The choice to be healthy and active is an important part of the Gen Z lifestyle, and this is where the role of social

media marketing with TikTok becomes crucial (Kaplan, 2010; Smith, 2012).

TikTok is a very popular platform among generation Z, who are often the main target in the fitness industry. Generation Z is very active on TikTok and uses the platform for inspiration on health, fitness, and an active lifestyle. TikTok is a short video-based platform that enables gyms to present engaging visual content. They can share exercise routines, health tips, healthy food recipes, and motivational videos that can quickly grab users' attention. TikTok allows gyms to hold challenges or competitions that involve users. This can create high engagement and encourage users to actively participate in fitness activities. TikTok has many users who are considered influencers in the field



of fitness and health. Gyms can work with these influencers to expand their reach and create more authentic content. TikTok provides powerful analytical tools that allow gyms to track the performance of their campaigns and understand their audience better. This allows them to optimize their marketing strategy. Using custom hashtags on TikTok can help gyms increase the visibility of their campaigns and make them more discoverable for potentially interested users. TikTok is often a hotbed for new trends that gyms can leverage to create content that is relevant and catches the attention of users. Content that goes viral on TikTok can also provide great exposure (Kim, 2012; Smith, 2012). This study aimed to determine the role of marketing with social media TikTok in generation Z: a study on the choice of fitness centers by generation Z in Ambon, Indonesia.

2. Literature Review

Social media TikTok

TikTok first appeared in 2016 under the name Douyin in China by the technology company ByteDance, founded by Zhang Yiming. This app was originally intended for the Chinese market. In 2017, ByteDance acquired a popular lip-sync platform called Musical.ly, which has a large user base outside of China, mainly in the United States and Europe. Musical.ly was later merged with TikTok to create a global platform known as TikTok. Following the merger with Musical.ly, TikTok was launched internationally in 2017 and soon became very popular worldwide, especially among the younger generation. TikTok achieved record user growth in a very short time. This app became one of the most downloaded social media platforms in the world and beat its tough competitors in no time. TikTok is known for its creative features, such as effects, filters, and the ability to easily create interesting short videos. This allows content creators to experiment with different types of content, including dance, comedy, music, challenges, tutorials, and more.

TikTok is best known for its short video format, with a maximum length of 3 minutes. Users can create and share short videos that range from dance challenges to cooking tutorials, comedy, music, to educational content. One of TikTok's most iconic features is its use of music. Users can choose songs or sounds that will be the background or key elements in their videos. This creates a trend of various songs and sounds that go viral on this platform. TikTok uses powerful machine learning algorithms to tailor users' feeds to content they find interesting. This algorithm takes into account user preferences, view duration, engagement, and other factors to serve up relevant content. TikTok often features challenges initiated by users or celebrities. This challenge involves users creating videos that fit a certain theme or song. Users can also use hashtags to make their content more discoverable for others. TikTok provides a variety of creative effects and filters that can be used in videos. This allows users to add interesting and unique visual elements to their content. TikTok has a partner program and earning feature that allows content creators to earn income through their videos. This includes advertising features, virtual coins, and support from fans (Hsu, 2015; Gupta, 2020; Smith, 2012).

Social media TikTok and generation Z

TikTok has become a very popular social media platform among generation Z. Generation Z are the main users of TikTok, and this platform is the main place where they interact, share content, and express themselves. TikTok offers a wide variety of content types to suit generation Z's interests and preferences. From dance challenges to comedy, music, lifestyle, to social issues, TikTok has content that appeals to members of generation Z. Generation Z is known for their creativity, and TikTok gives them a platform to express themselves in a unique way. They can create short videos that reflect their personality and interests. TikTok is often the birthplace of new trends



that quickly spread. Generation Z is often an innovator in creating and following these trends, thus forming a dynamic digital culture. Many of the influencers who are popular on TikTok are from generation Z themselves. They leverage these platforms to build large audiences and influence the lifestyles and preferences of their peers. TikTok not only influences the way Generation Z interacts on social media but also how they consume pop culture, such as music, fashion, and other trends. Songs that go viral on TikTok often become popular off the platform. TikTok has become an important marketing tool for reaching generation Z. Businesses and brands use TikTok to reach this audience with creative campaigns tailored to their tastes. TikTok is also used by Generation Z to spread information and awareness about social issues that are important to them, such as climate change, equality, and LGBTQ+ rights. This reflects how social media platforms can become activism and advocacy tools. The close link between TikTok and Generation Z has created a dynamic digital environment, in which both parties play an important role in shaping digital culture, trends, and ways of communicating in today's digital era (Madden, et al., 2013; Qualman, 2019).

Fitness center and generation Z

Generation Z tends to have a higher awareness of the importance of health and fitness in their lifestyle. They are often looking for ways to keep their bodies healthy, and gyms are one of their top choices for achieving this goal. Generation Z is highly exposed to health and wellness content on social media, including TikTok. They often see influencers who share fitness tips, workout routines, and updates on their fitness journey. This can motivate them to join a fitness center. TikTok and other social media platforms allow generation Z to join fitness challenges and online communities. They can share their accomplishments, find support, and interact with people with similar interests. Generation Z grew up in an age of ever-evolving technology, and they tend to expect

technology in their fitness experiences. Gyms that offer advanced technology, such as performance tracking, fitness apps, and connected equipment, may appeal more to them. Generation Z tends to seek flexibility in their fitness. They value a fitness center that has wide hours of operation, convenient facilities, and an easily accessible location. Gyms that understand generation Z's preferences and values can create more effective marketing campaigns. This might include promotions through social media, participation in TikTok trends, or partnerships with influencers that are popular with Generation Z. Generation Z loves meaningful and interactive experiences. Gyms can increase their engagement by holding special classes or events, sports tournaments, and social activities that allow members to connect with one another. The link between gyms and Generation Z creates a huge opportunity for businesses in the fitness industry to innovate, adapt to changing trends, and offer experiences that match this generation's values and preferences. By understanding how Generation Z is connected to fitness, businesses can develop more effective strategies to reach and meet the needs of this audience (Chen, 2011; Hsu, 2015).

Social media dimensions of TikTok

TikTok is a premier entertainment platform that delivers a variety of creative content, from dance, comedy, music, and sketches to creative challenges. Users can quickly produce short videos that entertain and captivate viewers. TikTok's videos are often lighthearted, and entertaining, and evoke laughter, which aligns with generation Z's and other users' passion for everyday entertainment. Collaboration with celebrities and influencers on TikTok also ups the entertainment factor of the platform, with them engaging in entertaining challenges and content. TikTok is often the source of new trends in various aspects, including music, dance, fashion, and even language. Users often create and follow trends that are currently popular on this platform. The hashtag (#)



feature in TikTok allows users to easily find and participate in certain trends, creating a domino effect that makes trends go viral. TikTok allows users to interact in various ways. Users can give likes and comments, share videos, and follow other accounts. TikTok challenges, which often require users to take part in certain actions, create active interactions between users and the larger community. Live streaming on TikTok allows users to interact directly with their viewers, creating a more personal experience. TikTok allows users to customize their content with various effects, filters, and music. It provides an opportunity for unique creativity and self-expression. With the ability to edit videos and add creative visual elements, users can create content that matches their personality and interests. TikTok is becoming a powerful platform for electronic word of mouth (EWOM) marketing. Videos that go viral on TikTok can create trending products, songs, or brands in no time. Businesses and brands can leverage the influence of TikTok influencers to promote their products and reach a larger audience through word-of-mouth recommendations. Overall, TikTok has become a platform that integrates entertainment, trends, engagement, customization, and EWOM in one dynamic ecosystem. This creates a unique experience for users and is also an effective tool for businesses and brands to engage with generation Z and other audiences in the digital age (Kaplan, 2011; Lim, 2019; Pew Research Center, 2020).

3. Methods

This study is a quantitative approach and uses primary data obtained from a survey process using a questionnaire, where the survey process is carried out online. The independent variable in this study is the choice of the fitness center brand by the customer (Y). The dependent variables in this study are entertainment (X1), interaction (X2), trendy (X3), customization (X4), and electronic word-of-mouth (WOM) (X5). Each variable was assessed with

questions with a five-point Likert scale adopted to measure the selected items, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Generation Z is the generation born between 1995 and 2010. The current research population consists of TikTok users who use the TikTok application. In order to choose the right sample, the authors targeted universities located in Ambon, Indonesia. The author chose undergraduate students from different faculties. The age group is 18 to 22 years; thus, this sample meets the Generation Z criteria. Because the sample for this study is a user of the TikTok application, the sampling technique combines convenience sampling with non-probability sampling methods. Based on this method, the author asks the targeted respondents whether they use the TikTok platform or not. If the answer is yes, then the author provides surveys to the respondents using different forms of contact, such as WhatsApp, Messenger, or other forms preferred by the sample. Data analysis was carried out using SPSS software version 25. Univariate analysis was performed to present the frequency distribution of the data. Skewness and kurtosis are used to ensure data normality. Cronbach's alpha for checking the reliability and internal consistency of the data. Average variance extracted (AVE) to ensure convergent validity. Multiple regression analysis was used to investigate the causal relationships between the study's variables.

4. Results and Discussion

A total of 300 research subjects participated in this study. The majority of research subjects were 171 (57%) male, while 129 (43%) were female. All research subjects were between 18-22 years old. The acceptable skewness value must be 2 or lower, and the kurtosis value must be 7 or lower. Based on the results mentioned in Table 1, all skewness and kurtosis values correspond to the recommended level. To check the reliability of the data, a reliability test was carried out using Cronbach's alpha. Table 2 shows the scores from this test. Statisticians consider a Cronbach's



alpha of 0.6 or higher to be acceptable. Table 2 lists the scores for this test. Cronbach's alpha (α) values for these variables ranged between 0.682 and 0.924, which means that all variables are statistically

reliable. In addition, to ensure the convergent validity of the data, average variance extraction (AVE) is performed, and the value of this test must be 0.50 or greater.

Table 1. Distribution of data normality.

Variable	Item	Skewness	Kurtosis
Entertainment (X1)	The content found on TikTok social media seems interesting.	-.121	.014
	Social media with TikTok is a lot of fun.	-.562	1.613
	Collecting information about grocery products via social media like TikTok is fun	-.161	-.662
Interaction (X2)	It is easy to express my opinion via TikTok social media	-.023	-.701
	It is easy to express my opinion with other users (friends) through TikTok social media	-.173	-.142
	I can share information with other (friends) users via TikTok social media	-.125	-.242
Trendiness (X3)	The use of TikTok social media is quite fashionable.	-.013	-.216
	The use of TikTok social media is trendy.	-.121	-.217
	The content on TikTok social media is up to date	-.216	-.744
Customization (X4)	I can browse customized information on TikTok	-.253	-.023
	TikTok provides customized products	-.154	-.487
	I can use TikTok anytime, anywhere interaction will come in.	-.295	-.425
Electronic word of mouth (EWOM) (X5)	Online reviews and comments regarding products influence my choice	-.148	-.951
	I want to share information about different products from TikTok with my friends.	-.211	.547
	Recommendations regarding products on TikTok would increase my interest in finding out more.	-.152	.119
Brand choice (Y)	I would recommend a brand (grocery) to my friends.	-.148	.214
	I am faithful to the brand (grocery).	-.451	.112
	I will not purchase another brand if (brand) is present in the store.	-.124	.518

Table 2. Reliability test.

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha(α)	Convergent validity (AVE)
Entertainment	0.682	0.59
Interaction	0.714	0.62
Trendiness	0.751	0.71
Customization	0.882	0.77
Electronic word of mouth (EWOM)	0.902	0.82
Brand choice	0.924	0.79



Table 3. Regression analysis.

Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	(t) value	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Entertainment	.118	.017	.106	6.548	.000
Interaction	.289	.011	.229	7.632	.000
Trendiness	.054	.033	.018	1.468	.157
Customization	.218	.052	.194	4.728	.000
Electronic word of mouth (EWOM)	.044	.014	.218	5.145	.000

*Dependent variable: brand choice.

The first hypothesis examines the influence of the entertainment construct on brand loyalty to food product brand loyalty. As presented in Table 3, the results shown in the table above reveal that the Entertainment construct significantly influences consumer brand loyalty to fitness center products (p-value is significant at the level <0.001 ***). In addition, the path coefficient (β) is 0.118 with a critical ratio (t-value) of 6.548. So, an increase in one unit of the entertainment construct will lead to an increase in brand loyalty of 0.118. Therefore, this hypothesis is accepted. The second hypothesis is used to test the effect of interaction constructs on brand loyalty to fitness center products. As presented in Table 4, the results are presented in the table above. The results presented in the table above report that the interaction construct significantly influences consumer brand loyalty to food products (p-value is significant at <0.001 *** level). Furthermore, the path coefficient is 0.289, and the critical ratio (t-value) is 7.632. As a result, an increase in one unit of interaction constructs will result in an increase in brand loyalty of 0.289. Thus, this hypothesis is accepted. To test the effect of the trendy construct on fitness center product brand loyalty, the third hypothesis is formulated. As shown in Table 3, the results of the study confirm that the trendy construct does not have a significant effect on consumer brand loyalty. As illustrated, the p-value is not significant. This value is 0.157, which is greater than the significance level at ***p<0.001; **p<0.01; or *p<0.05. Thus, this hypothesis is rejected. With regard to the fourth hypothesis, this study aims to

understand the effect of the customization construct on fitness center brand loyalty. It has been confirmed that customization significantly affects consumer brand loyalty to fitness center products in Ambon, Indonesia. As presented in Table 3, (p-value is significant at <0.001 (***) level). The critical value (t-value) is 4.728, and the path coefficient is 0.218. As a result, a one-unit increase in the customization construct will result in an increase in brand loyalty of 0.218. Thus, this hypothesis is accepted. The final hypothesis is suggested to show the effect of the electronic word-of-mouth (E-WOM) construct on brand loyalty to food products. The multiple regression results illustrate that this construct significantly influences brand loyalty to food products. The p-value was found to be significant at the 0.001 level. The path coefficient was 0.044, and the critical ratio (t-value) was 5.145. As a result, an increase in one unit of customization construct will result in an increase of 0.044 in brand loyalty. Thus, this hypothesis is accepted.

The entertainment dimension in TikTok has a significant role in influencing the choice of a fitness center brand by generation Z. TikTok with fitness content can motivate generation Z to live a healthier lifestyle. Fitness videos, fitness challenges, and body transformation success stories can inspire them to find a gym that fits their goals. Through TikTok, gyms can share interesting and innovative workout routines in a shorter and more entertaining format. Generation Z tends to seek variety and creativity in their practice, and TikTok provides the perfect platform to present



this content. Many of the popular fitness influencers on TikTok have large followings among generation Z. Gyms can work with these influencers to promote their services and create relevant content about the gym. TikTok enables gyms to visually display the equipment, facilities, and services they offer. Short videos that depict clean facilities, state-of-the-art equipment, or experienced instructors can increase brand appeal. TikTok can be used to share customer testimonials and their success stories after joining certain fitness centers. This can help generation Z feel more confident in choosing the fitness center. Gyms can leverage TikTok videos to provide potential customers with an “inside” gym experience. This could include virtual tours, training trip videos, or fun fitness guides. Gyms may run challenges on TikTok that allow users to participate and win prizes or discounts at gyms. This creates high engagement and encourages Generation Z to try the gym (Chen, 2011; Mangold, 2009).

The interaction dimension in TikTok plays an important role in influencing the choice of fitness center brands by Generation Z. TikTok allows generation Z to connect with the larger fitness community. They can follow fitness accounts, participate in fitness challenges, and interact with people who share their passion for fitness. This creates a sense of solidarity and support in their fitness journey. TikTok provides a platform for users to talk about their experience with a particular gym. They can provide reviews, opinions, or recommendations via their own comments, direct messages, or videos. Opinions from fellow generation Z can influence their choices. Gyms can work with fitness influencers popular on TikTok to leave positive reviews, testimonials, or recommendations about their services. The influence of influencers can influence Generation Z's trust in the fitness center brand. TikTok allows users to provide support and motivation to one another on their fitness journey. Positive comments and likes, and inspirational messages from

the TikTok community can help generation Z stay motivated in achieving their fitness goals. If the gym has instructors who are active on TikTok, Generation Z can engage with them through comments or direct messages. This allows users to get advice, guidance, or additional information about the fitness center's services. TikTok is often the birthplace of fitness challenges that invite users to participate in specific exercise routines. Fitness centers can create special challenges connecting users with their services. Interaction on TikTok allows Generation Z to gain insight from the personal experiences of others. They can ask about experiences at specific gyms, facilities, exercise programs, or membership programs (Chen, 2011; Sheth, 2021).

The customization dimension in TikTok plays an important role in influencing the choice of fitness center brands by generation Z. TikTok allows gyms to create highly customized content according to Generation Z preferences. They can customize promotional videos, exercise tutorials, and messages to suit their needs and their target interests. TikTok users can use various filters, visual effects, and creative tools to create unique content. Gyms can use these elements to create engaging videos and differentiate their brands. TikTok enables gyms to create content that fits Generation Z trends and styles. They can create challenges, memes or videos that follow trends that are currently popular on the platform. TikTok also allows gyms to send private messages to users via comments or direct messages. This allows them to provide more specific information about their services and answer any questions users may have. Gyms may customize special offers, discounts, or promotions by following ongoing trends and events on TikTok. For example, they may provide time-limited offers that are only available to TikTok users. TikTok allows gyms to target users based on their geographic location. This allows them to promote specific branches or facilities that are near potential users. Fitness centers may create customized content



about the services or programs they offer, such as personal training, specific fitness classes, or diet programs that can be tailored to user preferences (Lim, 2019; Solis, 2011).

The electronic word-of-mouth (EWOM) dimension on TikTok plays an important role in influencing the choice of fitness center brands by Generation Z. EWOM refers to the influence that comes from recommendations, reviews, and online talk about a brand or service. When TikTok users, especially popular influencers or individuals, give positive recommendations about a gym, it can create a positive perception of the brand among Generation Z. These positive reviews can influence their decision to join. Video testimonials of satisfied gym members or users who have experienced positive body changes can be a powerful source of EWOM. TikTok users who share their success stories can inspire and convince Generation Z to try the gym. Gyms can create challenges or competitions on TikTok that encourage users to participate with attractive prizes. This not only creates brand awareness but also encourages users to talk about their experiences and recommend the gym. Videos or content about gyms that gain virality on TikTok can be a powerful source of EWOM. When these videos are shared and commented on by many users, the brand will gain significant exposure. Fitness influencers who are active on TikTok can have a huge influence on the choice of a fitness center brand. When these influencers share their positive experiences with certain gyms, their Generation Z followers can be motivated to try them, too. Comments under TikTok videos about gyms can become forums for discussion where users talk about their experiences, exchange information, or provide recommendations. This allows Generation Z to get multiple points of view before making a decision. Fitness centers may run special promotional campaigns that are only available to TikTok users. This creates an added impetus for Generation Z to try out the gym and talk about the promotion (Mangold,

2009; Tuten, 2017).

5. Conclusion

There is a relationship between the entertainment, interaction, customization, and electronic word-of-mouth social media dimensions of TikTok in influencing brand fitness center choice decisions for generation Z in Ambon, Indonesia.

6. References

- Chen Y, Fay S, Wang Q. 2011. The role of marketing in social media: How online consumer reviews evolve. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*. 25(2): 85-94.
- Goel L, Shankar V. 2016. Social comparison and brand competition in online brand communities: An integration of social identity theory and social comparison theory. *European Journal of Marketing*. 50(1/2): 44-70.
- Gupta S, Kim HW. 2020. Investigating the impact of social media advertising on consumer-based brand equity: An empirical study. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*. 57: 102203.
- Hsu CL, Lin JCC. 2015. What drives purchase intention for paid mobile apps? An expectation confirmation model with perceived value. *Electronic Commerce Research and Applications*. 14(1): 46-57.
- Kaplan AM, Haenlein M. 2011. Two hearts in three-quarter time: How to waltz the social media/viral marketing dance. *Business Horizons*. 54(3): 253-63.
- Kaplan AM, Haenlein M. 2010. Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of social media. *Business Horizons*. 53(1): 59-68.
- Kim AJ, Ko E. 2012. Do social media marketing activities enhance customer equity? An empirical study of luxury fashion brands. *Journal of Business Research*. 65(10): 1480-6.
- Lim YJ, Osman A, Salahuddin SN. 2019. The influence of social media marketing activities on customer



- loyalty among millennials: The mediating role of customer engagement. *Journal of Open Innovation: Technology, Market, and Complexity*. 5(1): 9.
- Madden M, Lenhart A, Cortesi S, Gasser U, Duggan M, Smith A, et al. 2013. Teens, social media, and privacy. Pew Research Center.
- Mangold WG, Faulds DJ. 2009. Social media: The new hybrid element of the promotion mix. *Business Horizons*. 52(4): 357-65.
- Pew Research Center. 2020. Social media use in 2020. Pew Research Center.
- Qualman E. 2019. *Socialnomics: How social media transforms the way we live and do business*. Wiley.
- Sheth JN, Sharma A. 2021. Digital marketing: The rise of a new paradigm. *Journal of Business Research*. 122: 135-48.
- Smith AN, Fischer E, Yongjian C. 2012. How does brand-related user-generated content differ across YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter? *Journal of Interactive Marketing*. 26(2): 102-13.
- Solis B. 2011. *Engage! Revised and Updated: The Complete Guide for Brands and Businesses to Build, Cultivate, and Measure Success in the New Web*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Statista Research Department. 2021. Number of monthly active Facebook users worldwide as of 3rd quarter 2021. Statista.
- Statista Research Department. 2021. Number of monthly active Instagram users in the United States from January 2018 to July 2021. Statista.
- Tuten TL, Solomon MR. 2017. *Social media marketing*. Sage.

