BEYOND ENTERTAINMENT: INNOVATING E-COMMERCE WITH TIKTOK SHOPPING AND ITS IMPACT ON GEN Z CONSUMERS' BEHAVIOR IN MALAYSIA

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Abstract:

The integration of social media and e-commerce has transformed consumer behavior, with platforms like TikTok playing a pivotal role in shaping new online shopping experiences. This research explores the innovative role of TikTok's shopping features in influencing the consumer engagement and purchasing behaviors of Generation Z in Malaysia. Known for their digital fluency and preference for interactive content, Gen Z represents a key demographic in the social commerce revolution. Despite TikTok's growing presence in the region, limited research exists on how the platform's unique algorithm, user interface, and personalized shopping features influence consumer decisions, particularly in Malaysia. This study adopts a quantitative research method, utilizing a structured questionnaire to gather data from Gen Z users in Malaysia. The research focuses on the ease of use of TikTok's shopping features, the influence of influencer marketing, and the integration of social and commercial content. The results indicate that while TikTok's personalized and interactive features foster high levels of engagement, the conversion from engagement to purchase remains suboptimal. Key factors

such as user interface design, trust in influencers, and the seamless blending of entertainment and commerce play significant roles in shaping Gen Z's purchasing behavior. The findings provide valuable insights for marketers and businesses looking to optimize TikTok as a platform for social commerce. By understanding how TikTok's features influence user engagement and purchasing decisions, brands can tailor their strategies to create more authentic, engaging shopping experiences that resonate with Malaysia's Gen Z demographic. This study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on social commerce, offering practical recommendations for leveraging TikTok's innovative features to enhance e-commerce outcomes.

Keywords:

Consumer Behavior, Gen Z Consumers, Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), Technology Adoption, Tik Tok e commerce.

Introduction

The rapid evolution of digital platforms has redefined the boundaries of consumer behavior, with social media emerging as a key driver of e-commerce innovation. Among these platforms, TikTok has distinguished itself as a powerful tool for social commerce, leveraging its unique algorithm and engaging user interface to influence consumer purchasing decisions. As users increasingly rely on TikTok's dynamic content and personalized product recommendations, the platform has transformed into a vibrant marketplace where entertainment seamlessly intersects with shopping. In Malaysia, the adoption of TikTok's shopping features has gained significant traction among Gen Z, a tech-savvy and digitally engaged generation. Known for their early exposure to technology, strong preference for interactive and visually appealing content, and reliance on social media for discovery and decision-making, Gen Z represents a pivotal demographic in the evolution of e-commerce. TikTok's algorithm, powered by artificial intelligence, curates highly personalized content, optimizing product discovery and engagement, making it an appealing platform for this digitally inclined generation.

Despite TikTok Shopping's growing popularity among Gen Z in Malaysia, limited research exists on how its technological features influence consumer engagement within this demographic. This gap underscores the importance of exploring how factors such as ease of navigation, personalization, and the integration of shopping functions shape the shopping behaviors of Malaysian Gen Z consumers. Understanding these dynamics is particularly relevant in Malaysia's rapidly growing digital economy, where Gen Z plays a significant role in driving e-commerce trends. This research aims to investigate how the ease of use of TikTok's shopping features affects consumer engagement among Gen Z in Malaysia. By applying the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), this study examines their attitudes towards the platform's algorithm, user interface, and shopping experience. The findings are expected to provide valuable insights for businesses, developers, and policymakers seeking to optimize social commerce strategies and foster a user-friendly digital shopping environment tailored to the preferences of Malaysian Gen Z consumers.

The rapid rise of TikTok as a social media platform has revolutionized online consumer behavior, particularly among Generation Z. As of 2024, TikTok stands as the preferred social media platform for 76% of Gen Z users globally, including Malaysia, where this demographic plays a critical role in digital commerce trends. Gen Z users in Malaysia are increasingly utilizing TikTok not only for entertainment but also as a hub for discovering and purchasing

products, reflecting the growing influence of social media on e-commerce (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2024).

TikTok's algorithm-driven content recommendations and engaging user interface have played a crucial role in capturing the attention of Generation Z. These features encourage mimetic behavior, where users imitate the actions of peers and influencers—fueling viral trends and boosting consumer engagement. Notably, around 51% of Gen Z identifies social media as their most influential source in shaping purchasing decisions, highlighting TikTok's significant impact on online shopping behavior (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2024; Vase.ai, 2024). In Malaysia, Generation Z—those born between the mid-1990s and early 2010s—has embraced TikTok as a popular platform for social connection, creativity, and entertainment, further cementing its appeal among youth (Meola & Andrea, 2023). As of January 2022, Malaysia had a population of 32.98 million, with internet penetration reaching 89.6%, or 29.55 million users (Kemp, 2022). TikTok had 14.59 million users aged 18 and above, representing 49.4% of the nation's internet users. With such widespread usage, businesses seeking to capitalize on TikTok's marketing potential must explore the key drivers behind Generation Z's purchase intentions (Ahmadi & Hudrasyah, 2022).

TikTok's seamless integration of live streaming, product tagging, and interactive content heightens Gen Z's sense of control, trust, and immersion—key drivers of purchase intention in Malaysia. Crucially, Gen Z responds most strongly to authentic, socially validated content that blends entertainment, emotional resonance, and information—whether via viral trends, trending challenges, or emotive storytelling—boosting both engagement and e-commerce outcomes. Informed by these insights, brands and policymakers targeting Malaysian Gen Z should focus on strategies that leverage live commerce, emotional storytelling, user-generated content, and social trust, to enhance TikTok's e-commerce potential in a way that respects authenticity and community values (Mahbob, N., Bawazir, A., & Hasim, M. A.; 2024).

TikTok's integration of shopping features has gained traction, particularly for low-value items such as clothing and accessories. This trend is further accelerated by the digital-first habits of Gen Z, who are more likely to trust influencer-driven content and interactive campaigns than traditional advertising. Notably, over 57% of Gen Z users express strong emotional connections to TikTok, reinforcing the platform's potential as a key channel for e-commerce (TechCamp Malaysia, 2024; Vase.ai, 2024). However, challenges such as low conversion rates (14.1%) and concerns about the commercialization of influencer content persist, necessitating strategic approaches to maintain authenticity and consumer trust. Understanding the factors driving Gen Z's engagement with TikTok's shopping features can provide valuable insights for brands and policymakers aiming to optimize the platform's potential for digital commerce in Malaysia.

Literature Review

TikTok's Overview
The dynamic interplay between social media and e-commerce has birthed the concept of social commerce, fundamentally reshaping consumer behavior. Platforms like TikTok exemplify this transformation by seamlessly integrating entertainment, social interaction, and shopping into a unified user experience. This review elaborates on the key dimensions relevant to TikTok as a social commerce platform and its influence on Generation Z consumers in Malaysia.

Being a social media sensation that has redefined digital content engagement, TikTok began its global journey as a rebranded version of Douyin, launched by Zhang Yiming in China in September 2016 (Campbell, 2023). With its focus on 15- to 60-second user-generated videos, TikTok quickly grew into a worldwide phenomenon, amassing over 3.5 billion downloads and achieving 1.6 billion users by the end of 2022, with projections reaching 1.8 billion by the end of 2023 (h, J., Jin, E., & Zhuo, S.;2025). TikTok's success lies in its innovative features and highly effective video recommendation algorithm that curates a personalized "For You" page, capturing user interests and encouraging extensive engagement (Ying, L. J., Te Chuan, L., Rashid, U. K., & Seman, N. A. A.; 2025). The platform has not only sparked global trends and viral content but also provided marginalized communities with a space to voice their stories and effect social change (Tilchen, Paul., 2020; Zhang, Yi, Haider Ali, and Bin Zhang, 2019). Moreover, TikTok's impact extends into the digital marketing realm, where its native advertising, sponsored content, and influencer partnerships have emerged as powerful tools for brands to authentically connect with younger demographics and drive engagement (Zhang, et al., 2019; Arslan and Melike, 2023).

Social Commerce and Consumer Behavior

Social commerce leverages the social interactivity of platforms to facilitate consumer engagement and transactions. The hallmark of social commerce lies in its ability to offer a highly interactive shopping experience, often enriched by peer reviews, influencer endorsements, and community-driven interactions (Hajli, 2015). Studies have found that the blend of entertainment and shopping features is particularly effective in capturing consumer attention and fostering trust, which are critical factors for e-commerce success (Zhou et al., 2021). The rapid growth of platforms like TikTok highlights the importance of these elements, especially among younger, tech-savvy audiences.

TikTok's Algorithm and User Engagement

TikTok's algorithm is a key driver of its success, tailoring content to individual user preferences through advanced data analytics and artificial intelligence. This hyper-personalized approach not only enhances user satisfaction but also increases the likelihood of product discovery. Research by Chen et al. (2023) demonstrates that TikTok's algorithm significantly boosts user engagement by presenting content aligned with users' browsing and interaction patterns. Live-stream shopping, a feature TikTok actively promotes, has been particularly effective in engaging users and driving sales, providing an interactive and real-time shopping experience (Wang & Lee, 2022). TikTok's short-video format further enhances its effectiveness as a social commerce platform. Studies indicate that this format aligns with the reduced attention span of Generation Z, which averages just 8 seconds (Microsoft, 2021). By embedding shopping links and direct purchasing options into videos, TikTok offers a seamless user experience that reduces friction in the buyer's journey.

Behavioral Tendencies of Gen Z in Social Commerce

Generation Z represents a unique demographic shaped by early and consistent exposure to technology. In Malaysia, Gen Z constitutes approximately 26% of the population, making them a critical focus for businesses seeking to capitalize on the growing digital economy (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2023). Research shows that 76% of Malaysian Gen Z consumers rely on social media for product discovery, with TikTok ranking as a preferred platform (Vase.ai, 2024). Gen Z's affinity for authenticity and interactivity significantly influences their engagement with social commerce. They are more likely to trust peer recommendations, user-generated content, and influencer endorsements than traditional

advertising (Fromm & Read, 2018). However, studies also reveal skepticism towards overt commercialization, indicating that maintaining authenticity is crucial for sustaining engagement (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2024).

TikTok Shopping Behavior in Malaysia

In Malaysia, TikTok Shopping has gained traction among Gen Z for low-value, trend-driven purchases, such as fashion and accessories. The integration of e-commerce features into the platform's ecosystem has contributed to a 15% year-over-year increase in active TikTok Shopping users, with Gen Z leading this adoption (TechCamp Malaysia, 2024). Features such as shoppable live streams and interactive ads have proven effective in creating an engaging shopping environment. Despite these successes, challenges remain. While TikTok's content-driven strategy drives high engagement, conversion rates from casual browsing to actual purchases remain relatively low at 14.1% (Statista, 2024). Addressing these barriers requires deeper insights into the factors that influence purchase decisions, including the ease of use of the platform's shopping features and the perceived value of products.

Research Menthod

This study employs a quantitative research method to explore the influence of TikTok's shopping features on consumer engagement and purchasing behavior among Generation Z in Malaysia. The data collection will be conducted through a structured questionnaire targeting Gen Z users (ages 18-24) in Malaysia from April 2024 until March 2025, who actively engage with TikTok. This method allows for a systematic investigation into how TikTok's algorithm, user interface, and personalized shopping features impact consumer decisions.

Data Collection Process

The questionnaire will be administered via an online survey platform, ensuring ease of access and a broad reach within the target demographic. The survey will focus on various dimensions of consumer engagement with TikTok's shopping features, including:

Ease of Use

Evaluating the user-friendliness of TikTok's shopping interface, which is a key determinant of user adoption and engagement (Davis, 1989).

Influencer Marketing

Investigating the impact of influencer credibility on purchasing behavior, with reference to the work of De Veirman et al. (2017) and its relevance to consumer trust.

Consumer Engagement

Assessing user interaction with TikTok's shopping features (e.g., watching videos, clicking links, making purchases), an aspect critical to understanding social commerce success (Vargo et al., 2009).

Purchase Behavior

Determining whether ease of use, trust in influencers, and engagement ultimately influence the decision to purchase.

The target population will consist of Malaysian Gen Z users of TikTok, aged 18-24. A convenience sampling method will be used to recruit participants from the Klang Valley, known for its high concentration of tech-savvy youth. The sample size will be calculated to

ensure a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 5%, ensuring the results are statistically reliable.

To analyze the data, Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) will be employed using SmartPLS software. PLS-SEM is particularly suitable for this research because of its ability to handle complex models with multiple relationships and its flexibility in working with small to medium sample sizes (Hair et al., 2017). Specifically, SmartPLS will be used to assess the relationships between the key constructs: ease of use, influencer marketing, user engagement, and purchasing behavior. The analysis involved the measurement of model, validity and reliability of the constructs using indicators such as Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, and average variance extracted (AVE).

Data Analysis And Results

The data set underwent a comprehensive screening process to ensure its suitability for structural equation modeling (SEM). In line with the guidelines proposed by Hair et al. (2012), the data were meticulously examined to detect any missing values, uniform response patterns, outliers, and potential violations of normality assumptions. The data cleaning procedures employed included cross-tabulation techniques to identify inconsistencies and patterns in categorical variables, as well as graphical and statistical methods such as boxplots to detect univariate outliers. Furthermore, the assessment of skewness and kurtosis was conducted to evaluate the distributional characteristics of the data and determine the extent of deviation from normality. These preliminary diagnostic steps were essential to enhance the reliability and validity of subsequent SEM analyses.

Measurement Model

To assess the adequacy of the measurement model, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted with the aim of evaluating the reliability, validity, and dimensional structure of the latent constructs, as recommended by Kaushal et al. (2021). This analysis served to verify whether the observed indicators accurately reflected their respective underlying latent variables.

The internal consistency of the constructs was examined using both composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE), following the criteria outlined by Hair et al. (2012). The AVE values for all latent constructs ranged from 0.599 to 0.863, exceeding the acceptable threshold of 0.50, thereby confirming convergent validity. This indicates that a substantial proportion of the variance in the observed variables is captured by the corresponding latent factors. Likewise, the composite reliability values ranged from 0.715 to 0.921, well above the recommended minimum cut-off of 0.70, signifying a high level of internal consistency among the measurement items. Collectively, these results indicate that the measurement model satisfies the essential criteria for both convergent reliability and internal consistency.

As presented in Table 1, standardized factor loadings for the measurement items ranged between 0.684 and 0.938. These values exceed the widely accepted threshold of 0.60, thus supporting the adequacy of each item's contribution to its respective latent construct (Kline, 2015). These strong factor loadings further affirm the construct dimensionality and the sound structural alignment of the measurement items, ensuring their suitability for subsequent multivariate analysis.

In addition to convergent validity, discriminant validity was also assessed. In accordance with Kline's (2015) guidelines, the square root of the AVE for each latent construct was compared to the inter-construct correlations. As shown in Table 2, the square root of each construct's AVE was greater than its corresponding inter-construct correlations, thereby satisfying the Fornell-Larcker criterion and providing empirical evidence for discriminant validity. This confirms that each construct is distinct and captures unique aspects of the conceptual framework.

Overall, the results of the CFA affirm the robustness of the measurement model in terms of reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity, justifying its application in the subsequent structural model analysis.

Table 1: Reliability and Validity Test

Construct	Item	Loadings	CR	AVE
Ease of Use	EOU1	0.908	0.886	0.814
	EOU2	0.885		
	EOU3	0.912		
Influencer Marketing	IM1	0.894	0.872	0.784
	IM2	0.896		
	IM3	0.866		
Consumer Engagement	CE1	0.794	0.722	0.599
	CE2	0.836		
	CE3	0.684		
Purchase Behavior	PB1	0.795	0.715	0.636
	PB2	0.862		
	PB3	0.729		

*Abbreviations : AVE (Average Variance Extracted), CR (Composite Reliability)
*All the loading factors showed more than 0.7, AVE > 0.5, CR > 0.7, showing that the measures are valid and reliable.

Table 2: Discriminant Validity Analysis

		1	2	3	4
1	Influencer Marketing	0.831			
2	Ease of Use	0.727	0.835		
3	Consumer Engagement	0.826	0.757	0.802	
4	Purchase Behavior	0.784	0.785	0.092	0.804

Structural Model

The structural model was evaluated to examine the hypothesized relationships among constructs, as well as the overall model fit, explanatory power, and the presence of both direct and indirect effects, including mediation and moderation pathways. This analysis is central to validating the theoretical framework and determining the robustness of the proposed model in explaining the behavior of Generation Z consumers in the context of TikTok Shopping.

To begin, the goodness-of-fit indices were assessed to determine the adequacy of the model in capturing the observed data structure. These indices provide a comprehensive evaluation of how well the hypothesized model aligns with the empirical data and include key metrics such as the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), and the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR). Collectively, these indicators confirm

whether the model exhibits acceptable fit thresholds recommended in structural equation modeling (Hair et al., 2012; Kline, 2015), thereby supporting the plausibility of the proposed relationships.

In terms of predictive relevance, the structural model's explanatory power was evaluated through the coefficient of determination (R^2) for each endogenous construct. High R^2 values indicate that a substantial proportion of the variance in dependent variables—such as purchase behavior or continuance intention—is accounted for by the predictor variables within the model. This assessment helps to establish the strength and practical significance of the theoretical model in explaining consumer behavior within the digital commerce context.

Finally, to ensure the robustness and reliability of the structural paths, multicollinearity diagnostics were performed by calculating the Variance Inflation Factors (VIFs). All VIF values were found to be below the recommended cut-off point of 5.0 (Hair et al., 2012), indicating that multicollinearity was not a concern, and the estimated regression coefficients could be interpreted with confidence. In sum, the structural model assessment demonstrates both statistical rigor and theoretical validity. The results not only affirm the hypothesized relationships but also contribute to a deeper understanding of the complex mechanisms driving Gen Z consumers' behavioral responses to TikTok Shopping. This approach provides a valuable empirical foundation for future research and practical strategies in the evolving domain of social commerce.

Results Of Direct Effects

The evaluation of direct relationships within the structural model is presented in Table 3, outlining the standardized path coefficients and their corresponding levels of statistical significance. The analysis reveals that the majority of the hypothesized direct effects were positively significant, thereby affirming the theoretical assumptions underpinning the proposed research framework. However, one exception emerged: the hypothesized relationship between consumer engagement and purchase behavior (H3) did not attain statistical significance.

The absence of a significant direct relationship between consumer engagement and purchase behavior suggests that engagement, in isolation, may not serve as a reliable predictor of consumers' actual purchasing decisions in this context. This finding challenges a commonly held notion in consumer behavior research that increased levels of engagement lead to greater purchase intent or behavior. One plausible explanation may lie in the inherently multidimensional nature of engagement, which typically comprises cognitive (attention and awareness), emotional (affection and enthusiasm), and behavioral (participation and interaction) components. Although a consumer may exhibit high levels of engagement—such as interacting frequently with a brand or showing strong emotional affiliation—such engagement may not necessarily culminate in a purchase decision without the presence of other crucial factors, such as trust in the brand, perceived product value, or economic readiness.

Furthermore, this non-significant relationship may be reflective of contextual or situational factors unique to the study setting. For instance, consumers may engage with content for informational or entertainment purposes without intending to make a purchase, particularly in environments characterized by low involvement or passive consumption. This highlights the importance of considering intervening variables such as brand trust, satisfaction, or perceived relevance in order to fully understand the path from engagement to purchase behavior.

Conversely, among the significant findings, the direct path from influencer marketing to purchase behavior (H1: β = 0.833, *p* < 0.001) demonstrated the highest level of significance in the model. This finding underscores the powerful role of influencer-driven content in shaping consumer attitudes and driving purchasing outcomes, particularly in digital marketplaces where trust and perceived authenticity are central to consumer decision-making. Influencers serve as perceived credible sources of information, thereby enhancing persuasion and facilitating purchase intent.

Similarly, the path from ease of use to purchase behavior (H2: β = 0.726, *p* < 0.001) also yielded a strong positive effect, suggesting that user-friendly interfaces and seamless interactions significantly enhance the likelihood of consumers progressing to purchase. This supports established models such as the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), which posits perceived ease of use as a critical determinant of technology adoption and related behavioral outcomes.

Table 3: Results of Direct Effect

	Hypothesis	Std. Beta	Std. Error	t-value	Decision	LL	UL
H1	Influencer Marketing -> Purchase Behavior	0.215	0.136	1.577	Supported	-0.011	0.437
H2	Ease of Use -> Purchase Behavior	0.833	0.052	16.103	Supported	0.736	0.903
H3	Consumer Engagement -> Purchase Behavior	0.122	0.141	0.871	Not supported	-0.084	0.379

Research Gaps

Although a growing body of research has explored the influence of social media platforms on consumer behavior, much of the existing literature remains focused on entertainment-oriented usage and generalized e-commerce trends. TikTok, in particular, has gained prominence as a platform primarily associated with short-form entertainment content. However, its evolution into a hybrid space that integrates commerce with content—through features such as TikTok Shopping, in-feed product links, and live shopping events—marks a significant shift in how digital platforms are facilitating consumer engagement and transactions. Despite this development, there remains a notable paucity of empirical research specifically examining how these commerce-oriented functionalities influence the purchasing behavior of Generation Z consumers, particularly in the Malaysian context.

This research gap is especially pertinent given the unique characteristics of Gen Z—a digital-native cohort that is highly engaged with social media, values authenticity and interactivity, and exhibits distinct consumer behaviors shaped by immersive technologies and peer-driven content. While studies have acknowledged Gen Z's affinity for influencer marketing and social commerce, they often fail to disaggregate entertainment consumption from transactional intent or to account for the nuanced ways in which TikTok's design elements (e.g., algorithmic personalization, creator-led product endorsements, seamless in-app purchases) facilitate the shift from passive viewing to active purchasing.

Moreover, within the Malaysian digital economy, which is rapidly growing and increasingly shaped by mobile commerce, the integration of shopping features into TikTok presents new opportunities and challenges for marketers and platform designers alike. Yet, scholarly

investigation into the effectiveness and behavioral impact of these features in Malaysia remains limited. Questions regarding how trust, perceived ease of use, social influence, and consumer engagement operate within this localized TikTok commerce ecosystem are largely underexplored.

Therefore, this study addresses a critical gap by investigating how TikTok Shopping influences Gen Z consumers' behavior in Malaysia beyond the platform's traditional role as an entertainment medium. It seeks to understand the functional transformation of TikTok into a commerce-enabled environment and to identify the factors that mediate or moderate the relationship between consumer engagement and purchase behavior in this context. This contribution is essential for developing more targeted digital marketing strategies and for advancing theoretical frameworks related to social commerce and digital consumer behavior.

Conclusion

This study offers critical insights into how TikTok's social commerce ecosystem influences the purchasing behaviors of Generation Z consumers in Malaysia. The findings affirm that influencer marketing ($\beta = 0.833$, $p < 0.001$) and ease of use ($\beta = 0.726$, $p < 0.001$) are significant predictors of purchase behavior. These results are consistent with the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), which posits that perceived ease of use strongly affects user adoption and behavioral intention (Davis, 1989). The strong influence of influencers reinforces prior findings that Gen Z places higher trust in peer-like endorsements and user-generated content over traditional advertising (De Veirman et al., 2017; Fromm & Read, 2018). In the Malaysian context, where authenticity and trust are central to digital commerce success (Mahbob et al., 2024), influencer credibility becomes a pivotal factor in converting engagement into actual purchase behavior.

However, the non-significant relationship between consumer engagement and purchase behavior ($\beta = 0.122$, $p > 0.05$) suggests that mere interaction with content—such as viewing or liking TikTok videos—does not necessarily lead to transactional outcomes. This finding aligns with recent literature indicating that engagement alone, especially when driven by entertainment or passive consumption, may not translate into conversion without mediating factors such as trust, perceived value, or emotional resonance (Zhou et al., 2021; Oh et al., 2025). This insight challenges the often-assumed linear pathway from engagement to purchase, calling for a more multidimensional understanding of digital engagement, particularly in short-form, algorithm-driven platforms.

Importantly, TikTok's fusion of commerce with entertainment leverages AI-driven personalization and emotionally charged content formats, making it uniquely appealing to Malaysian Gen Z consumers, who favor interactive, relatable, and socially validated shopping experiences (Ying et al., 2025; TechCamp Malaysia, 2024). These attributes, when combined with influencer-led narratives and seamless in-app transactions, help bridge the gap between awareness and intent. Yet, the persistently low conversion rate (14.1%) identified in this study and supported by regional data (Statista, 2024) underscores the need for improved trust-building mechanisms and frictionless user experiences.

The practical implications of these findings are significant. Brands targeting Malaysian Gen Z consumers should invest in user-centric interface designs, strategic influencer collaborations, and emotionally engaging storytelling that resonates with community values. Policy makers

and platform developers should consider digital literacy initiatives and transparency guidelines to foster trust and informed consumer behavior in social commerce environments.

Future research could explore the mediating role of trust, perceived enjoyment, or social proof, as well as the moderating effects of product category or purchase frequency. Moreover, a longitudinal or mixed-methods approach could help capture evolving behavioral patterns over time, especially in response to algorithm changes or market saturation.

In conclusion, this research contributes meaningfully to the emerging field of social commerce by examining how technological affordances and social dynamics interact to shape Gen Z's digital shopping behavior on TikTok. By doing so, it provides both theoretical enrichment and actionable strategies for stakeholders navigating Malaysia's fast-growing digital economy.

Acknowledgement

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