

“Factors affecting users’ brand awareness through social media marketing on TikTok”

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FACTORS AFFECTING USERS' BRAND AWARENESS THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING ON TIKTOK

Abstract

TikTok is increasingly influential in promoting brand awareness and boosting purchase intention. From a social media marketing perspective, brand awareness significantly influences consumers' purchasing decisions. The primary objective of this study is to investigate and measure the factors influencing the brand awareness of TikTok users through social media marketing communications. The paper employs exploratory factor analysis, Cronbach's Alpha test, and regression analysis to test the hypotheses. 24 observed variables were divided into six groups. Each variable was assessed using a 5-point Likert scale. The sample size includes 240 valid responses from TikTok users collected via convenience sampling. The questionnaire was distributed to TikTok users from Vietnam via the link on Google Forms. The collected data were processed by SPSS 20 software. The results suggest that six independent variables positively affect brand recognition via social media marketing on TikTok, with a 95% confidence interval at Sig. = 0.000 (0.05). Each of the six variables positively impacts initial expectations and is statistically significant at 1%. The results show that trends (Beta = 0.299) are the most decisive factors impacting brand awareness of TikTok users. Besides, electronic word of mouth (Beta = 0.242), influencer (Beta = 0.220), entertainment (Beta = 0.206), interaction (Beta = 0.200), and storytelling (Beta = 0.179) also positively affect the brand awareness of TikTok users. Limitations and further research suggest that marketers should investigate the role of artificial intelligence (AI) in the consumer's brand awareness-constructing process.

Keywords

brand, trends, e-WOM, influencer, entertainment, interactivity, storytelling, marketing communications

JEL Classification

M31, M37, C20

INTRODUCTION

In the age of the Internet, which develops firmly and constantly like today, social networks have become one of the most essential communication channels for any business, whether large or small. Sigala (2012) insists that "social networks create new opportunities for business creation." A brand's presence on social networks has dramatically determined the ability to reach, remember, and form that brand's identity with customers. According to Johansson (2010), social media positively assists companies in increasing their brand awareness. Every business wants to reach a higher level of brand awareness in the market. When introducing a new product, businesses must achieve product awareness and brand association with the consumer market (Kumar & Moller, 2018). Aaker (2014) discussed many factors that can help a brand achieve maximum brand awareness. The essential factor in achieving better brand awareness is to have a distinct and unique slogan that represents the brand and its image to the customers, as it helps them to immediately get a clear image of the brand and identification whenever they find or read it somewhere (Till et al., 2011). To build a successful brand, creating brand awareness among consumers is crucial. Brand awareness significantly influences consum-

ers' purchasing decisions (Supiyandi et al., 2022). Building a brand requires businesses to find ways to influence consumers' feelings so that they can recognize the brand and then experience using it. Browne and Kaldenberg (1997) state that "when consumers know that brand, it will stimulate them to use products of that brand, which means that consumers tend to choose familiar brands." Hence, creating brand awareness is crucial for any business or marketer. According to Fadillah and Kusumawati (2021), TikTok is increasingly influential in increasing brand awareness and boosting purchase intention. However, many marketers remain skeptical of this platform because they think it is merely an entertainment content platform.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES

Social media marketing refers to using social media platforms to communicate with customers to establish brands, increase sales, and drive website traffic. Marketers use strategies and tactics to interact with users by creating helpful content to attract potential customers. Social media marketing creates specialized content for each network. The right platform to find information to develop a brand's product preferences is social media marketing (Naylor et al., 2012). Richter and Koch (2007) define social media as "an online application, platform, or media that facilitate interaction, collaboration, or content sharing." Social media plays a role when a firm's marketing operations develop a personal interaction with customers and allow the company to reach customers (Kelly et al., 2010). Social media has provided marketers with a handy tool to reach the target audience brands target (Kelly et al., 2010).

TikTok is an application based on AI technology. It is originated in China and is now famous on a global scale. ByteDance, the powerful media company of the billion-people nation, owns this application. According to Ma and Hu (2021), TikTok became the most downloaded app (738 million downloads in 2019), surpassing Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram. TikTok is built on the video format. The viral audio makes young people feel free to create content based on those platforms, and the dry text is omitted. The format is designed to be as short as 15 seconds, which is also a wise move to solve entertainment video viewers' "craving and boredom" concerns. In addition, young people want to see entertainment and other strange and different things immediately. Today, TikTok is a social network for young people to entertain and share their interests in video editing.

However, it is also a platform for effective marketing to catch up with modern viral trends.

The familiarity and capacity of target customers to remember the product/service the firm wishes to target is brand awareness. Brand awareness is fundamental in consumer behavior research, advertising management, brand management, and strategy development. Brands also split distinct levels of brand awareness to create ads that fit each stage: brand recall, brand recognition, and top of mind. Brand awareness refers to a brand's capacity to distinguish items from which to make an informed decision. Customers will be easily recognized through the featured graphics, booth layout, and unique flavors. Understanding more broadly means that when customers mention a brand, they immediately think of many products of that brand.

Consumer behavior research, advertising management, brand management, and strategy development rely on brand awareness. Foroudi et al. (2018) state, "brand equity includes brand awareness." Brand awareness refers to a consumer's ability to recognize the existence of a brand (Spry et al., 2011). According to Keller's (1993) brand equity model, brand awareness indicates that customers recognize the brand name, boosting the possibility that the brand is on the list of prospective choices. It is relatively more straightforward to build brand awareness and corporate image through the Internet, as it allows one to realize the importance of the online environment (Mason, 2008).

Storytelling is a form where changes connect their identities and reasoning in creating activities and products (Pallas et al., 2014). Story content, production, and distribution are dominated by trademark owners (Brown et al., 2003), but this is changing as the rise of social media allows people to create content for the brand through

short videos, making it easier for users to access and identify the brand. Storytelling is a journey and part of the marketing science. Every business must invite customers to join their product or service journey (Aaker, 2014). In other words, it involves the consumer in the process of using their product. Consumers often talk about the product. Storytelling through media is a method of affecting the emotions of the audience.

The transmitted narrative contains an inspirational event, experience, or tale the TikTok account user shares with followers (Triwidyati & Pangastuti, 2021). With a platform that uses videos, TikTok can take advantage of short videos that can tell the story of any brand appearing in the video. Trends are one of the aspects of marketing that significantly impact consumers' psychology before they make purchasing decisions. As digital technology develops more and more, trends become more widespread. Therefore, when each trend appears, it will quickly capture the attention and tastes of the public. Today, when social networks have become an inevitable and rapidly developing trend, it has become easier to collect information from users. They consider this a more reliable and receptive information source than traditional marketing communication (Mangold & Faulds, 2009; Vollmer & Precourt, 2008). Marketing managers must focus on trends to boost client awareness of their business. More current content should be produced across multiple social media accounts (Masa'deh et al., 2021). Customer contact with a brand combines intellectual and emotional interactions and the customer's state of mind in context and about the brand (Hollebeek, 2011).

Social networks facilitate users to interact and exchange with each other about a specific product or brand or a meeting and make friends with people of the same age (Muntinga et al., 2011). Collecting customer requirements and demands and their real-time comments and suggestions regarding products and brands is feasible using social media as interactive communication between businesses and customers (Vukasovic, 2013). According to Moorthi (2002), the interaction between customers and brands positively impacts service quality and customer satisfaction by collecting customer feedback. Businesses should increase user engagement and participation in particular topics and discussions on social media platforms

to create and develop customer connections to the brand (Masa'deh et al., 2021). Besides, entertainment is "fun and play obtained through social networks" (Agichtein et al., 2008).

Entertainment often refers to the fun aspect embedded in brand marketing content, which has been emphasized by Seo and Park (2018) as an integral part of social media marketing activities. Masa'deh et al. (2021) report that "customer awareness will be increased, and a favorable picture will be formed in the customer's head and heart." On social media, entertainment is an essential component that motivates participant behavior and continuity of follow-up and creates positive emotions/feelings about the company in followers' minds (Kang, 2005). TikTok's entertaining videos come in various forms, from dancing videos to various music, memes, funny videos, or videos for users to duet with each other or through game challenges. Users can also live to talk on the platform.

Using influencers has been around for a long time in promoting products and building relationships with brands. Rashid et al. (2002) showed that celebrities influence customers' purchasing decisions and use of services. According to Hermanda et al. (2019), social media influencers considerably influence brand image. Using famous people will help attract attention and impress customers, achieving more business interactions. TikTok is wise to use public influencers to promote its image, increase brand coverage, and, as a result, succeed with this tactic. Not only that, TikTok also targets influential groups with low to high followers to increase brand awareness through them to a specific audience.

e-WOM is communication between two parties to evaluate products and services without advertising (Anderson, 1988). Such communications are essential for consumers to learn about the quality of items or services (Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006). According to the integrated marketing communication model, e-WOM directly relates to receiving brand awareness (Kotler & Keller, 2006). Severi et al. (2014) confirm that e-WOM has the advantage of increasing brand recognition. Consumers can now share product-related knowledge over the Internet, enhancing the potential influence of WOM (Cheung & Thadani, 2012; Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006).

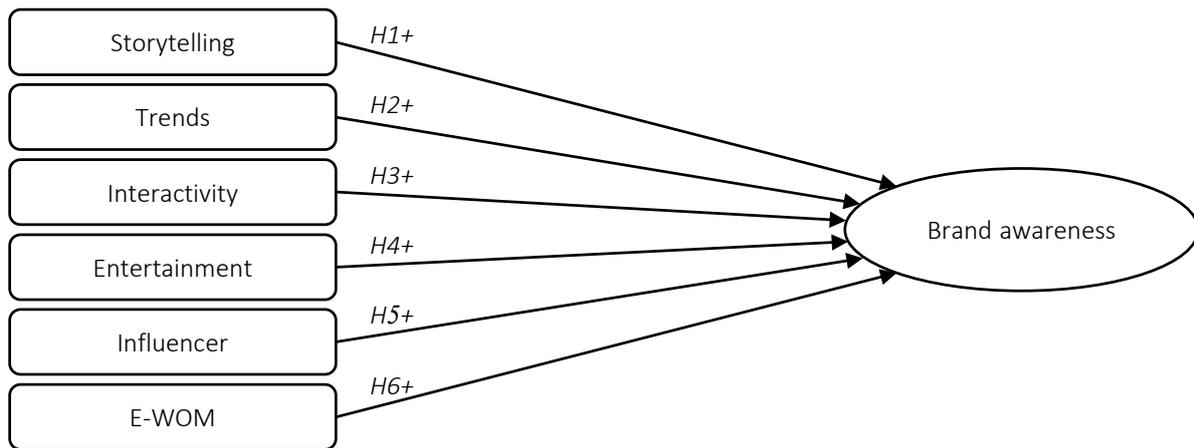


Figure 1. Research framework

This study aims to explore and measure the factors affecting the brand awareness of users through social media marketing communications on TikTok. The following hypotheses have been constructed in light of a literature review (Figure 1):

- H1: Storytelling positively affects brand awareness on TikTok.*
- H2: Trends positively affect brand awareness on TikTok.*
- H3: Interactivity positively affects brand awareness on TikTok.*
- H4: Entertainment positively affects brand awareness on TikTok.*
- H5: Influencers positively affect brand awareness on TikTok.*
- H6: E-WOM positively affects brand awareness on TikTok.*

2. METHOD

A proposed scale is developed, and preliminary quantitative experiments are conducted. In order to assess the dependability, a pilot study of 50 respondents from Ho Chi Minh City was undertaken. Later, to evaluate the scalability and test the suggested approach, the quantitative study is done by polling users who often use TikTok. Next, the study performs data input, processing, and interpreting the collected data. This stage is conducted

by a survey, with descriptive statistical analysis performed using SPSS 20 software, the reliability test, and exploratory factor analysis used to evaluate the factors. Besides, multivariate linear regression analysis examines how each component impacts Gen Z's brand attitudes.

The survey was shared on the social networking community. The surveyed subjects were individuals using TikTok. Data sets with at least five samples of each observed variable are necessary to analyze exploratory factors (EFA) (Hair et al., 1998). With 29 variables observed, the study has the required sample size: $n = 5 * 29 = 145$. The sample size must be at least 145. In order to assure representativeness and contingency for those who did not respond or did not respond fully, the study set a sample size of 262 respondents. After gathering 262 samples, the study screened 22 unacceptable answer sheets before moving on to the remaining 240 valid responses. This study used SPSS 20 for the research framework to provide more acceptable and adequate indicators, leading to better empirical findings. Each variable was assessed using a 5-point Likert scale.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

It is essential to analyze the scale's reliability using a statistical test, namely Cronbach's alpha, to undertake exploratory factor analysis (EFA). According to Table 1, reliable scales for Cronbach's alpha coefficient are greater than 0.6. As a result, all 6 scales are trustworthy and capable of conducting EFA.

Table 1. Reliability test

Factors	Number of measured items	Cronbach's Alpha
Storytelling	3	0.656
Influencer	4	0.772
e-WOM	5	0.754
Trends	3	0.654
Entertainment	5	0.779
Interactivity	5	0.761
Brand awareness	3	0.849

After conducting the first exploratory factor analysis, the observed variable TT1 did not meet the requirements, so it was removed, and the second EFA exploratory factor analysis was conducted. Observed variables are required in factors, and none are deleted when factor loading > 0.5 ensures significance. As a result, five components that meet all of the criteria for the linear regression investigation are produced. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure is 0.764, meeting the 0.5 KMO criterion. As a result, the conclusion of the factor analysis is consistent with the statistical information. Based on the correlation analysis test results, the observed variables are correlated with one another in each factor group, revealing that Bartlett's test has Sig. value = 0.000 (Mong & Hoang, 2018). This demonstrates the suitability of the EFA analysis approach. The total variance explained for the five components extracted by the EFA analysis method (factors 1 through factor 6) is 57.801%, more than 50%. As a result, it is suitable for typical applications. The model's observable variables are concluded to account for 57.801% of the change in factors.

Table 2. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA)

	Rotated Component Matrix ^a					
	Component					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
GT1	.799					
GT4	.736					
GT2	.721					
GT5	.711					
GT3	.628					
EM3		.768				
EM2		.756				
EM1		.726				
EM4		.633				
EM5		.602				
TT3			.811			
TT4			.791			
TT5			.731			
TT2			.695			
AH2				.785		

	Rotated Component Matrix ^a					
	Component					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
AH1				.753		
AH4				.723		
AH3				.688		
ST2					.761	
ST3					.742	
ST1					.730	
XH1						.780
XH2						.771
XH3						.649

Note: Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. a. Rotation converged in 5 iterations: GT means Entertainment, EM means e-WOM, TT means Interactivity, AH means Influencer, ST means Storytelling and XH means Trends.

After the study performed the EFA analysis, the factor analysis revealed that the 24 observed variables were divided into six groups (Table 2). The study determined that the name of the factor should remain the same as all observed variables belong to it. The linear regression analysis is performed on these factor groups. The six observed variables from the exploratory factor analysis measure the dependent variable, brand awareness.

The linear regression analysis yielded an adjusted R² = 0.574, indicating that the model's relevance is 57.4% at a significance level of 5% (Table 3). This means that the independent variables account for 57.4% of the variation in the dependent variable. The statistic Sig = 0.000 (0.05) indicates a linear regression model in the model between the six independent variables and brand awareness. The Durbin-Watson test result 1.845 indicates no autocorrelation between the independent and dependent variables. VIF (variance inflation factor) values for the variables range from 1.082 to 1.256 (all less than 2). This result validates the linear regression model's lack of multicollinearity and the reciprocal exclusion of all variables (Table 3). The ANOVA analysis shows that the regression model is compatible with the obtained data and that the F value is significant at Sig. = 0.000 (0.05), suggesting that the observed variables are statistically significant at the 5% significance level. The regression analysis offers the following equation:

$$Y = 0.2TT + 0.206GT + 0.299XH + 0.242EM + 0.220AH + 0.179ST. \tag{1}$$

Table 3. Linear regression analysis

Model Summary ^b										
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.765 ^a	.585	.574	.473	.585	54.701	6	233	.000	1.845

Note: a. Predictors: (Constant), ST, EM, GT, TT, XH, AH. GT means Entertainment, EM means e-WOM, TT means Interactivity, AH means Influencer, ST means Storytelling and XH means Trends. b. Dependent Variable: NT means Brand Awareness.

Table 4. Multiple regression analysis

Coefficients ^a													
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95,0% Confidence Interval for B		Correlations			Collinearity Statistics		
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF	
1	(Constant)	-1.965	.286		-6.866	.000	-2.528	-1.401					
	TT	.203	.045	.200	4.499	.000	.114	.293	.391	.283	.190	.900	1.110
	GT	.217	.046	.206	4.695	.000	.126	.309	.388	.294	.198	.924	1.082
	XH	.338	.051	.299	6.589	.000	.237	.439	.482	.396	.278	.865	1.156
	EM	.233	.043	.242	5.446	.000	.148	.317	.410	.336	.230	.899	1.112
	AH	.205	.044	.220	4.643	.000	.118	.292	.502	.291	.196	.796	1.256
	ST	.168	.043	.179	3.918	.000	.084	.252	.408	.249	.165	.858	1.166

Note: a. Dependent Variable: GT means Entertainment, EM means e-WOM, TT means Interactivity, AH means Influencer, ST means Storytelling and XH means Trends.

The results suggest that six independent variables positively affect brand recognition via social media marketing on TikTok, with a 95% confidence interval at Sig. = 0.000 (0.05). Each of the six variables positively impacts initial expectations and is statistically significant at 1%. The results of the linear regression analysis (Table 5) demonstrate six elements that influence brand awareness via TikTok marketing. Six things positively impact brand awareness. Trends are the most essential element, with Beta = 0.299, followed by e-WOM (Beta = 0.242). The third component is influencer (Beta = 0.220), followed by entertainment (Beta = 0.206), interactivity (Beta = 0.200), and storytelling (Beta = 0.179).

On social media networks, trends are significant. The fact that trends significantly influence brand awareness is not surprising. Due to the nature of this social media platform, it is updated often and captures the most recent trends. Marketing communication activities were mainly about providing information. They translated products, but now brands cleverly and subtly integrate to convey messages impressively so that customers can easily understand them and make them more accessible to remember. Trends can originate with a song, a dance, a good, unique saying, a strange product, or any story that users are interested in. Therefore, updating Trends through marketing communications on TikTok is essential. Brands must use

Table 5. Hypotheses testing results

Hypothesis statements	Results
H1: Storytelling positively affects brand awareness on TikTok.	Supported
H2: Trends positively affect brand awareness on TikTok.	Supported
H3: Interactivity positively affects brand awareness on TikTok.	Supported
H4: Entertainment positively affects brand awareness on TikTok.	Supported
H5: Influencers positively affect brand awareness on TikTok.	Supported
H6: E-WOM positively affects brand awareness on TikTok.	Supported

this factor to raise brand awareness through marketing communications. To use e-WOM effectively, brands need to spread information that hits customers' concerns about products, convincing them of the quality and experience of customers who have used the product. Storytelling is a beneficial marketing tactic in developing brand awareness, offering something real for customers to pursue. Creating a story around a brand will humanize and bring depth to that brand, and of course, customers and users will easily remember and perceive the brand. It is essential that throughout the entire process, TikTok users have sent the most necessary messages into the story.

Furthermore, establishing a priority, characteristic, difference of brands, products/services in the market that customers remember is like referring to social networks; images are referring to Instagram or Facebook, and short videos are TikTok. Anything that touches the heart often motivates users to spread and press the share button more, so focusing on sharing emotions instead of just emphasizing product features will help brands get closer to customers. Interactivity is vital as the close connection between the customer and the brand. Therefore,

increasing interaction with users on TikTok is necessary by interacting directly with customers when they comment on videos, creating unique and creative video content, and posting videos with regular products.

In the past, influencers were considered singers, actors, or experts in a particular field; now, influencers also include key opinion consumers (KOCs), and accounts with low to high numbers of followers are also influencers who contribute to brands' marketing campaigns. TikTok is also a platform that uses this strategy to increase brand coverage. The combination of influential creators on TikTok has also proven to bring much value to the brand. Therefore, combining with influencers on TikTok is necessary because they have many followers, helping the brand become prominent and easily accessible to many users, creating brand awareness. Besides, brands should consider the suitability of their brand and need to discuss carefully with them the communication plan to be most effective, like identifying whether the brand's target audience uses TikTok or not, and at what age, whether the audience is young; it is necessary to focus on creating creative, highly entertaining and engaging video content.

CONCLUSION

The primary objective of this study is to investigate and measure the factors influencing the brand awareness of TikTok users through social media marketing communications. In order to assess the dependability, a pilot study of 50 respondents from Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam was undertaken. Later, to evaluate the scalability and test the suggested approach, the quantitative study is done by polling users who often use TikTok. After gathering 262 samples, the study screened 22 unacceptable answer sheets before moving on to the remaining 240 valid responses.

Six things positively impact brand awareness. From the findings, trends are the most significant factors impacting brand awareness of TikTok users. Other factors such as electronic word of mouth (e-WOM), influencers, entertainment, interaction, and storytelling are positively associated with the brand awareness of TikTok users. Many favor TikTok, a trendy social media platform, because of its easy interaction between users, consumers, and brands.

However, TikTok also has risks when negative interactions occur, so brands are careful and focused when interacting with users on social networks, particularly TikTok. The originality of this paper is to enhance the literature review with fresh empirical findings in social media marketing. Managerial implications are provided to help businesses use TikTok to increase their brand awareness.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Conceptualization: Cuong Nguyen.
 Data curation: Thao Tran, Tien Nguyen.
 Formal analysis: Thao Tran.
 Funding acquisition: Cuong Nguyen.
 Investigation: Cuong Nguyen, Thao Tran.
 Methodology: Cuong Nguyen.
 Resources: Tien Nguyen.
 Software: Cuong Nguyen, Thao Tran.
 Supervision: Cuong Nguyen.
 Validation: Thao Tran, Tien Nguyen.
 Visualization: Thao Tran, Tien Nguyen.
 Writing – original draft: Thao Tran, Tien Nguyen.
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