An Exploratory Study of the Effects of Personalization and Authenticity in Tiktok

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ABSTRACT

TikTok represents a new form of marketing communication technology due to its features and attributes. However, despite its ability to share brands' viral content, scant research has examined TikTok as an advertising vehicle and its implications for viral advertising campaigns. Drawing on the Elaboration Likelihood Model and the concept of self-relevance, the present study explores the impact of perceived personalization and auhenticity of TikTok content on perceived convenience, viral behavioral intentions and purchase intention. The results show that the personalization of TikTok content is negatively related to perceived convenience and authenticity of TikTok content is positively related to perceived convenience. Overall, the results of this study provide new insights and practical implications for both content creator and advertiser sides.

Keywords: Personalization, Authenticity, Elaboration Likelihood Model, Tiktok, Viral Behavior Intentions

1. Introduction

Social media has long been a key channel for companies to promote products and services, launch marketing campaigns, achieve consumer communication, and fostering corporate relationships with consumers (Zhuang, 2022). In recent years, as a new type of media, short videos in the social media. Social media is increasing attention from marketers and advertisers in marketing practices current social media. With the arrival of the 5G era and the improvement of mobile technology (Zhou et al., 2021), browsing short-form videos on mobile devices being one most common online activity worldwide (Ceci, 2022). In 2021, more than 66% of global data volume comes from video applications (Ceci, 2022). Popularity of short video format platforms like TikTok/Douyin have skyrocketed, where TikTok has become the most downloaded and highest earning app in 2020 and 2021, with over 3 billion total downloads in Q1 2022. (Curry, 2022). TikTok enables consumers to create, share and interact with short videos of up to 15 seconds featuring lip-syncing, dancing, lifestyle content, and funny moments (Wong 2019).

According to data obtained from Statista (2023), as of January 2023, The United States is the country with the largest TikTok audience with around 113 million users engage with the popular social video platform. Then Indonesia is in second place, with around 110 million TikTok users followed by Brazil. This achievement obtained by TikTok is due to the application indeed differs from other social media platforms in terms of its content, algorithm and audience where TikTok uses an algorithm to identify more consumers tend to engage with video (Chu et al., 2022). Based on behavior and interaction previous consumer, TikTok determined the videos to be displayed on the page for you (For You Page) for each user. Even though the development of the TikTok application is very rapid in terms of popularity, research from an academic perspective on social media is still quite limited (Schellewald 2021) and there is no research that specifically addresses influence personalization of the purchase intention of consumers.Another study conducted by Wang (2020) regarding the human-computer interaction approach to examine TikTok consumer experience in adopting new technology and Lim (2020) using the PESTEL model (political, economic, social, technological, environmental, and law) to explore how the macro-

environmental factors of more generation parents influence their use of TikTok.

However, empirical studies that examine influence of TikTok on viral behavioral intention in sharing and its impact on purchase intention still very limited (Chu et al., 2022) Several factors can be the cause in influencing consumer purchase intentions such as the authenticity of video content displayed as well as the comfort and convenience of users in accessing video content in Tiktok has also not been studied further. This is related to research past, where product recommendations are considered more authentic and credible when communicated by influencers compared to advertisers (Jin and Phua, 2014). Previous research also stated that consumers still prioritizes authenticity to strengthen their purchase decision. The thing that can be said to be quite contradictory in this modern consumerism behavior reflects the nature of authenticity that is truly embedded and impact that is not unshakable in society in general (Gault, 2022). The status of authenticity that app users crave in relation with the concept of seeking attention and will have long-lasting implications for the younger generation, especially the younger generation of social media users (Gault, 2022).

Because TikTok platform studies the user's browsing history and automatically pushes new videos as a result of shared interests, important to owners business/enterprise to understand how personalized content can be associated with the intention of viral behavior which will eventually also increase the purchase intention of consumers. (Chu et al. 2022). Accordingly, viral behavioral intentions have been recognized as the main activity on social media because consumers can engage directly with content created by other users through liking, sharing, commenting, and update the status (Alhabash et al. 2019). Viral behavioral intent is considered a proxy for offline behavior, such as product purchases and store protection. Besides that, social media consumers usually share product and brand recommendations and reviews with followers. This becomes important because of the content that is forwarded or shared among friends has been shown to have a more significant effect on memory content, brand awareness and purchase intention compared to paid forms of advertising traditional (Chu and Kim 2018). Previous research has also shown that consumers turn to social media for information to assist the process decision making (Choe et al., 2017; Hutter et al. 2013). These researches problems are about how people rely more on their social media networks when making decisions but somehow the outcomes are still disputed in practice.

2. Literature Review

The Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty and Cacioppo 1986) has been implemented as theoretical framework for studying personalization (Jensen et al. 2012; Li 2019; Tam and Ho 2005). As a popular persuasion model, ELM describes the persuasive process communication and the resulting attitude formation. According to the model, consumers follow two different persuasion routes in the persuasive communication process: central and peripherals (Petty and Cacioppo 1981). On the central route, the overall reaction individual and attitude change is based on their careful consideration of the arguments presented in the message they feel is relevant, and the level of elaboration tall. Instead, individuals rely on processes that are relatively less discreet in route peripherals, and the level of elaboration is generally low. On the peripheral routes, attitudes changed based on peripheral cues, such as background image, expertise, and attractiveness of message source. Using an ELM perspective, past research has shown that the personalization effect is mediated by the perceived relevance of the message (Jensen et al. 2012; Li 2019). Jensen et al. 2012 found that the message was customized in the pamphlet personalized flyers are more effective than generic pamphlets. In line with the ELM concept, individuals tend to

perceive that personalized messages are more relevant than non-personalized messages because the first one speaks their preference

Personalization

Online personalization refers to the offering of content and services personalized to customers based on information obtained through services and user interaction (Adomavicius and Tuzhilin 2005). In the media context social media, personalization means delivery of content based on personal preferences and interests users (Komiak and Benbasat 2006; Wan et al. 2017). Meanwhile in context social trading, personalization can create value by making recommendations for individual consumers to encourage purchases (Ho and Lim 2018; Kalaignanam et al., 2018). Bresnick (2019) argues that the content adjustment changes TikTok is becoming a virtual playground, making it more of a creative tool than one social media platforms.

Authenticity

Authenticity has been recognized as an important element for advertising (Becker et al., 2019), marketing social media (Pronschinske et al., 2012), and social trading (Hsu 2019). According to Carù et al., (2017), 'Authenticity encapsulates what is genuine, real and/or true'. Dekavalla (2020,) states that authenticity is what sets content creators apart from institutional media; 'being yourself in public' is important to influencers. Authenticity are also known as a concept generally used to evaluate originality of objects or individuals. A constructivist perspective admits the social construction of authenticity and investigate how it is assigned, staged, and done (Grazian, 2010).

Need for Uniqueness

The uniqueness theory states that individuals have a desire to be unique and special, although not completely different from others (Snyder & Fromkin, 1980). According to the theory of Tian et. al in 2001, the Need for Uniqueness construct has been conceptualized along three aspects of similarity avoidance, counter-conformity, creative choices, and the counterconformity of unpopular choices. Based on the findings from previous research, the need for uniqueness is conceptualized as a trait personality that will moderate the relationship between personalization and viral sharing TikTok consumer intentions. (Chu et al., 2022).

Perceived Convenience

The concept of convenience apart from the focus on the product have paid attention to service convenience attributes (Jiang et al., 2013). From a theoretical perspective self-determination, the perceived comfort is that the user believes that technology or systems to help them complete their tasks. Liao and Lin (2007) found that convenience value influences shopping motivation, which is determinants of consumer intention to shop on the Internet.

Viral Behavior Intention on Tiktok

Viral sharing is an important factor affecting consumer demand of product and marketing strategy. In mobile viral marketing (Yang and Zhou 2011), viral behavior involves consumers transmitting content through mobile device to other potential consumers in their social circle and encourage these contacts to also distribute and share the content. Although viral advertising has become popular techniques for promoting brands are, to the best of our knowledge, research only limited research that examines the relationship between consumers' online viral sharing intentions and purchase their intention

(eg, Alhabash et al. 2015).

Purchase Intention

On social media platforms, it happens exchange of information, ratings, and feedback that people have trust and overcoming insecurities, which produce a desire to buy company products (Bong, 2017). Consumers will usually carry out the process value the product or service in question to purchase, research, and analyze the product before promising to buy it (Lim et al., 2016).

Hypothesis Development & Research Model

To find out the effect of personalization and authenticity on purchase intention in Tiktok, the researchers developed a theoretical framework as follows:
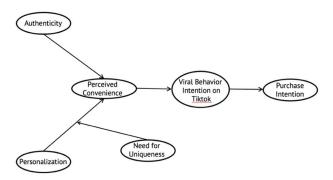
Figure 1. Theoretical Framework

H1: Influence of personalization towards perceived convenience

Previous studies have shown that the personalization effect is mediated by perceived message relevance (Jensen et al. 2012; Li 2019). In his research, Jensen et al. found that personalized messages in flyers were more effective than publicly produced flyers. Because many users use TikTok to find relevant 'for-me' content, and an identifying algorithm relevant content for users based on their browsing activity, relevance TikTok ads should generate more positive consumer reviews. According to previous research, the videos featured on users' For You pages are content that is intended for personal use, where things uploaded tend to involve consumers of TikTok more instinctively because of its personal relevance. Personally relevant videos tends to provide positive consumer responses, affect the perceived convenience and authenticity of video content (Chu et al., 2022).

H2: Influence of authenticiy towards perceived convenience

Authenticity has been recognized as an important element for advertising (Becker et. al, 2019), social media marketing (Pronschinske et. al, 2012), and social commerce (Hsu 2019). According to Carù et al. (2017), 'Authenticity encapsulates what is genuine, real and/or correct'. Given that personalized video content is more likely to come close audience interests and preferences, this research postulates that when TikTok content more personalized, consumers tend to perceive them as genuine, open, and authentic.Therefore, it is hoped that consumers in the future will feel more comfortable in using it applications for their daily needs, interact in them, even up to make transactions in the Tiktok application.

H3: Need for uniqueness as trait for personalization

Based on the findings from previous studies, need for uniqueness conceptualized as a personality trait that will moderate the relationship between personalization. Furthermore, based on the literature discussing the need for uniqueness and short-term videos, this research will take the perspective that the need for uniqueness will be a moderator in the personalization of TikTok content on perceived convenience.

H4: Influence of perceived convenience towards viral behavior intention

Easy to use, user friendly and time saving are consumer's favorite items that supports the convenience dimension (Ranganathan & Ganapathy, 2002). Tiktok users that serve a different purpose, either for informational purposes only or to perform transaction, hoping to get convenient access without needing to be redirected outside from the application. The main thing is that the user does not have to spend a lot of time on studying the use of certain electronic services (Collier & Bienstock, 2006). According to Jiang et al., (2013), behavioral intention can be influenced by the convenience dimension such as access, search, evaluation, transaction, and ownership where access is declared as the strongest dimension representing perceived convenience directly encourage a consumer's positive behavior intention

H5: Influence of viral behavior intention towards purchase intention

Continuing from the concept of shared social experience (Sung 2021), viral behavior intention on TikTok is defined in this study as the consumer's intention to engage in positive word-of-mouth behavior by sharing or recommend viral videos on TikTok to others. This viral video includes created or sponsored by companies as well as those made by TikTok consumers (e.g., hashtag challenges). When consumers obtain product-related information from videos brands shared on TikTok by fellow consumers, earned brand endorsements this tends to influence their intention to buy the advertised product. Because TikTok integrates social commerce into in its application and adopting an in-app shopping system, it is important to check this relationship.

3. Method & Research Concept

Given the goal data collection in this study is used to answer research questions, the researchers chose to use the quantitative method as an appropriate research method to measure the effect of personalization and other variables on intention Tiktok in-app purchases. The community of this research is all people who have accessed and have a Tiktok account on the smartphone application at least once before the time of distributing the questionnaires and domiciled throughout Indonesia. This research used the non-probability convenience sampling method, meaning all members population has the same opportunity to be included as the sample in research in accordance with the conditions that have been set. This study also used a snowball sampling technique, this was done because through the use of this method data can be collected quickly.

This study uses a survey method through self-administered questionnaire, where the respondent fills in the questionnaire given to them. Researchers distributed questionnaires through online research and sending the questionnaire to respondents via social media such as Whatsapp, Instagram and Facebook ads. We used a web-based questionnaire in the form of Google for reasons of cost efficiency and time efficiency, where the questionnaire can be spread to hundreds of people at the same time (Gillham, 2000). This study uses a five-point Likert measurement scale. Use of scale the five-point likert is intended to be able to calculate the opinions and responses of a person or a group of people for a phenomenal thing. Where, every variable involved measured through indicator statements and produce

both positive and negative answers (Babakus & Mangold, 1992). In addition, respondents also have flexibility in answering survey questions at any time that suits their conditions. The impact is expected, it can reduce there is a response bias (Bryman and Bell, 2005). The number of samples to test the research model using SEM is 100-200 samples or depending on the number of parameters estimated, by multiplying the number of indicators from 5 to 10 (Ferdinand, 2006). in these models there are 23 indicators or manifest variables, so the minimum sample size should be is 23 x 5 = 115 to 23 x 10 = 230. Referring to the two minimum requirements, the sample in this analysis is 249 respondents where more than 230 it can be concluded that there is no problem with the minimum sample size.

At the pre-test stage, this study used the SPSS program in testing the validity and reliability. Then for the main test, the researcher uses software LISREL version 8.8 in conducting data processing and SEM analysis.

4. Results and Discussions

Respondent's Profile

Researcher in conducting this research has achieved to gather 249 responses from respondents through questionnaire, demographic data of respondents are gender (62,7% female, 37,3% male), age (4% of 10-19 years old, 33,3% of 20-29 years old, 28,5% of 30-39 years old, 28,9% of 40-49 years old and 5,2% above 49 years old) occupation (30,9% employee, 26,9% entrepreneur, 11,2% professional, 10,5% student and 20,5% other occupation), education (39,8% undergraduate , 6% post graduate, and 54,2% high school graduate), duration using Tiktok (43,4% less than a year, 49% one to three years, 4,8% three to five years, and 2,8% more than five years). Based on the demographic data collected, researcher conclude that Tiktok is good for promotional channel in advertising product through social media. Utilizing Tiktok for business also can reduce the budget of promotion in reaching the customers by using authenticness in creating content.

Validity and Reliability

A validity test is necessary to do in every research with the questionnaire method. Validity has the meaning of how far is the accuracy and precision of a questionnaire in performing the function of measuring (Taherdoost, 2016). In this research, validity is used to be a valid measure of a given variable or construct (Kneebon & Dewar, 2016). The content of this research adopts measurement from previous research and adjusted the questionnaire to be matched with the research topic. For the construct validity, convergent and discriminant are sufficient as the measurement without include criterion validity (Marcoulides & Yuan, 2016). Factor analysis shows that a significance of 0.05 and Kaiser Mayer Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's Test and a minimum factor loading value of more than 0.5 stated valid, and samples can be further investigated (Santoso, 2002).

Table 1. KMO and Barlett's Test Results

Variable	Indicator	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO)	Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (nilai Sig.)
Personalization	P1	0.831	0.00
	P2		
	P3		
	P4		
Authenticity	AUT1	0.829	0.00
	AUT2		

	AUT3		
	AUT4		
Perceived Convenience	PC1	0.859	0.00
	PC2		
	PC3		
	PC4		
Need for Uniqueness	NFU1	0.844	0.00
	NFU2		
	NFU3		
	NFU4		
Viral Behavior Intention	VBI1	0.868	0.00
	VBI2		
	VBI3		
	VBI4		
	VBI5		
Purchase Intention	PI1	0.790	0.00
	PI2		
	PI3		
	PI4		

From table 1 above, the result of the KMO and Bartlett's Test already met the minimum requirements. This includes all variables in this research: personalization, authenticity, perceived convenience, need for uniqueness, viral behavior intention and purchase intention. Reliability testing is a questionnaire evaluation instrument that indicates a component or a construct (Taherdoost, 2016). A survey is declared reliable if somebody's response to a statement is consistent or constant over time (Siniscalco & Auriat, 2005). In this study, the reliability coefficient was seen using Cronbach Alpha. If the reliability coefficient value is close to 1, it means the question item meant more reliable. The minimum coefficient value that can show the question is reliable or not is > 0.6. and as we can see from table 2 below that it can be concluded that all variables in this study are declared reliable.
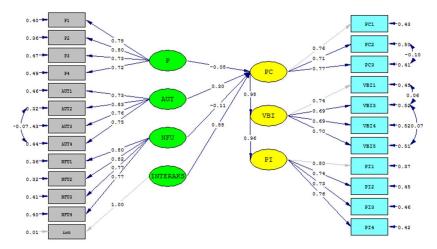
Table 2. Cronbach's Alpha Test Result

Variabel Konstruk	*Cronbach's Alpha*	Hasil
Personalization	0.954	Reliabel
Need for uniqueness	0.973	Reliabel
Authenticity	0.927	Reliabel
Perceived convenience	0.973	Reliabel
Viral behavior intention	0.990	Reliabel
Purchase intention	0.963	Reliabel

Data Analysis

In this research, variables which passed validity and reliability analysis will be proceeded to structural equation modeling (SEM). The use of SEM analysis is to test the correctness of theoretical framework and hypothesis proposed by this research. Several assessments needed to be done before the analysis of hypothesis. There are six variables included in this research that categorized into two types variables. The independent variables consist of personalization, authenticity, need for uniqueness that moderates personalization. Perceived convenience, viral behavior intention and purchase intention serves as dependent variable. Figure 2 will show the path diagram and result of the standardized estimates calculation of SEM.

Figure 2. Standardized Model

Where the researcher wants to assess the moderating effect of the need for uniqueness variable on the relationship between the personalization and the perceived convenience. According to Ping (1995) in Ghazali (2005), the way to test moderation with the interaction method on SEM is by forming a single indicator, which is a multiplication between the exogenous latent variable indicator and the moderator latent variable indicator. Based on the SEM analysis diagram using the GLS estimator, the results of the factor loading and error variance indicator values will be used for calculations to form the interaction variable. After entering the interaction variable into the model where the aim is to assess the moderating effect of the need for uniqueness variable on the relationship between personalization variable and the perceived convenience. Afterwards, this will be used to assess path analysis.

Path Analysis / Hypothesis testing

Based on the analysis result, conclusions can be drawn that the estimated coefficient values are direct effects or direct effects of one latent variable on another latent variable, it can be concluded, as follows:

1. The direct effect of P on PC is negative by 7.52% and not significant or accepts H0 because the p value is 0.307> 0.05.
2. The direct effect of AUT on PC is positive by 29.7% and significant or accepts H1 because the p value is 0.000 <0.05.
3. The direct effect of the interaction between P and NFU on PC is positive by 10.3% and significant or accepts H1 because the p value is 0.000 <0.05.
4. The direct effect of PC on VBI is positive at 98.1% and significant or accepts H1 because the p value is 0.000 <0.05.
5. The direct effect of VBI on PI is positive at 96.2% and significant or accept H1 because the p value bootstrapping 0.000 <0.05.

With this evidence, researcher have concluded that only H1 that is being rejected because it is not supported by the data and also p value is greater than 0.05. While for H2, H3, H4 and H5 is accepted because it is supported by the data and also in line with the logic that AUT have a significant effect towards VBI and PI. Even though P have an insignificant effect to PC, NFU evidently have significant moderation effect to P and therefore also mediating the impact towards VBI and PI.

Managerial Implications

This study empirically confirms the positive impact of authenticity on the perception of

comfort. Marketers need to develop campaigns creative original brands connected to the TikTok experience. To achieve this, brands must create ads that blend with the content organically tailored to the interests of target consumers. order campaign what is done can go viral, brands have to think outside the box them by developing creative messaging that inspires and relevant. With TikTok's visual effects and editing tools, content creators can potentially generate content that increases consumer intent to share viral stuff. Plus, being authentic is important social media content marketing using the video maker on TikTok. This finding is consistent with Shtern et al. (2019) suggest that advertisers must develop strategies to capitalize on voice authentic brands to build relationships with their consumers. Understand consumer personality traits and offer insight essential into the development of a successful viral advertising campaign on TikTok. The findings of this study illustrate that need for uniqueness moderate the relationship between personalization of TikTok content and behavioral intention viral. In other words, for consumers who have a level of need moderate to high in uniqueness,personalization of TikTok content will becomes a more important factor to earn more their engagement with the TikTok app. These results suggest that marketers should target segments specific personality with a campaign that matches the personality consumer.

For example, using a unique and preferred TikTok song for brand campaigns might appeal to consumers with unique tastes participate in challenges. Such videos with music can be recognized are more likely to engage consumers and go viral. Findings related to the need for uniqueness also has practical implications for targeting.The results show that customers prefer videos it helps them express or establish their uniqueness as opposed to a standard comparison group rate. Therefore, rather than relying on traditional segmentation variables, such as age or gender, marketers operating on TikTok must like behavioral targeting. Uses data from TikTok browsing activity consumers, marketers must try to identify TikTok consumers indicating a high degree of need for uniqueness (By identify specific creator content, or follow certain trends), as consumers will see these videos as a reflection of themselves themselves and will be more likely to be interested in sharing videos that personalized with their friends and followers.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

Even though authenticity is proven to have a significant influence on perceived convenience actually found an inverse relationship to the personalization variables in this study. Dugan while researchers on causes the occurrence of these findings is due to the consumer or application users still feel the message or value of the authenticity of a content more determine their purchase intention even though the content is not very relevant with what they want. The findings of this study indicate that consumers rely on new and innovative cues in TikTok videos to developing message evaluations as authentic. That explanation maybe for this is the desire of consumers in viewing content they had never seen before as a result of their awareness of will TikTok's ability to produce authentic content is due TikTok is a recent phenomenon, and a possible saturation effect for trends repetition or creative execution can undermine the perceived level of authenticity. The findings of this study also highlight the important role of personalization in directing viral behavior intention and purchase intention. The TikTok algorithm provide an interesting context for examining the impact of that content personalized on TikTok consumers intention to engage in a positive word from mouth to mouth. When consumers view brand videos that match brand preferences and their viewing behavior, they are more likely to share these videos with contacts in their social environment and at the same time motivating they contact to also send video. These findings contribute to current understanding of viral advertising by providing evidence that that content Customization is key

to encouraging consumers to share across media social.

Research Limitiations

This study is exploratory in nature, so it is important to note its limitations as follows, First, most of the respondents are of the same age productive or only in the gen z and millennial category, so the results of this research has not been able to represent well on older generation (baby boomers) and not yet represented conditions in Indonesia in general. Second, this research focuses on personalization, such as need for uniqueness considered to be an important psychological variable affect the use of TikTok, whereas there are several trait variables another personality. And third, research model results. There are several indicators of the fit of the model research indicating that the model used has not have a good match rate. Research is also carried out cross-sectional with relatively short data collection time.

Recommendations

Future researchers should consider replicating the study with a larger sample that is representative of the general population to produce results that more closely mimic the behavioral intentions of consumers in Indonesia. Therefore, it is expected to replicate this research with the respondents internationally to reach stronger conclusions.

Future research could examine other personality traits, such as need for cognition, self-improvement, and narcissism. It will be interesting to examine whether these play a role in the relationship between the videos personalized TikTok and the viral behavior in question. Further research should be carried out longitudinally and experimental to get a more accurate picture of the relationship between the constructs tested. Improvements to the research model as well. This can be done by adding variables that are more appropriate in answering the stated research objectives.

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