

The influence of short video marketing on TikTok on Gen Z's intention to buy cosmetics online

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ABSTRACT

The growth of social media platforms like TikTok has compelled businesses to adjust their market strategies. Using the technology acceptance model (TAM), signaling theory, flow theory, and planned behavior theory (TPB), the study established an analytical framework. Conducted in Vietnam with a sample of 1,200 Gen Z consumers, the data was analyzed with AMOS 24. The findings indicate that video quality, influencer attractiveness, interactivity, and trust in marketing content positively influence attitudes, which then increase online purchase intent. This research enhances understanding of consumer behavior in the short social media era and offers strategic insights for cosmetics companies aiming to optimize TikTok content.

Keywords: TikTok, video marketing, purchase intention, cosmetics, generation Z.

INTRODUCTION:

The rise of short-form video platforms, especially TikTok, has marked a turning point in how consumers access information and make purchasing decisions. Its powerful viral features, ability to personalize content through algorithms, and the ease of creating and sharing videos have made TikTok one of the fastest-growing marketing channels worldwide (Montag et al., 2021). For the cosmetics industry, which relies heavily on visual experiences and personal reviews, TikTok has become an effective communication tool for sharing images, user guides, and building trust through review videos, swatches, or transformations.

Generation Z, the group born between 1997 and 2012, is the most active consumer generation on digital platforms. They prioritize short, authentic, and user-generated (UGC) content and are heavily influenced by social media influencers (Djafarova & Bowes, 2021). In Vietnam, TikTok is one of the top three platforms used by Gen Z for product discovery, especially in cosmetics. However, despite the rise of TikTok marketing in practice, academic research on how TikTok videos impact this group's intention to buy cosmetics remains limited.

Much of the previous research on social media marketing has focused on Facebook, Instagram, or YouTube, which tend to have long-form and less viral content (Dehghani & Tumer, 2015; Yang et al., 2017; Hughes et al., 2019; Bui et al., 2021; Lee & Lee, 2022). TikTok, with its short video format and interest-based content recommendation algorithm, creates distinct consumer behavior but is less integrated into traditional academic models.

Furthermore, theoretical models like TAM or TPB often focus on usefulness, ease of use, or attitude, but they do not incorporate the typical factors of the TikTok environment such as influencer attractiveness, entertainment, interactivity, or the level of trust in

user-generated content (Abidin, 2016; Lou & Yuan, 2019). Meanwhile, many cosmetics businesses in Vietnam are heavily investing in TikTok through hashtag challenge campaigns, KOL/KOC reviews, sales livestreams, and TikTok Shop. However, these investments are mainly driven by market trends rather than scientific evidence of their impact on Gen Z's attitudes and purchasing intentions.

More importantly, much of the research on TikTok marketing has focused on fashion, travel, or education (Omar & Dequan, 2020; Bhandari & Bimo, 2022; Hoang & Tran, 2024). Surprisingly, the cosmetics industry is one of the fastest-growing sectors on TikTok but has received little corresponding attention, especially in emerging markets like Vietnam. Therefore, this study was conducted to answer the following questions:

RQ1: What factors in short video marketing on TikTok influence Gen Z consumers' attitudes toward video marketing?

RQ2: How does attitude toward video marketing affect the intention to buy cosmetics online?

2. Literature review

2.1. Underlying theories

This study builds on the theory of planned behavior (TPB) developed by Ajzen (1991). The Theory of Planned Behavior is one of the most widely used theories in studying the behavior of individuals and organizations. According to TPB, an individual's intention to perform a behavior is determined by three main factors: attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Attitudes refer to the level of positive or negative evaluation during behavioral development. Subjective norms are an individual's perception of social pressure regarding whether or not an act should be performed. Perceived behavioral

control describes how easy or difficult it is to perform behaviors.

The technology acceptance model developed by Davis (1989). TAM is commonly used to explain technology acceptance behavior. The two main factors of the model are perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use, which in turn influence attitudes and behavioral intentions. In the context of video marketing on TikTok, video quality, ability to convey information, and clarity of content can boost viewers' perceived usefulness, leading to a positive attitude toward marketing content (Zhao & Wagner, 2024). Therefore, TAM offers a basis for understanding how video quality affects attitudes.

Signaling theory (Spence, 1973) is widely used to analyze market behavior in situations of asymmetric information, especially relevant to the cosmetics industry, which faces high perceived risks like quality, safety, and efficacy. TikTok videos, particularly those from influencers or KOCs, act as quality signals by providing visual evidence such as texture, color, grip, or reactions to use. The credibility of the influencer, the authenticity of the content, and how the product is presented all contribute to building trust in the brand, which then increases purchase intent. Studies on influencer marketing (Lou & Yuan, 2019) also reveal that credibility and message value are fundamental in establishing consumer trust, making them highly relevant when included in the research model on TikTok. Finally, flow theory by Csikszentmihalyi (1990) explains how TikTok videos create an engaging experience, which in turn affects user perception and behavior. The features of short videos, catchy sounds, visual effects, and two-way interaction make it easy for viewers to enter a "flow" state, leading to high concentration and increased receptivity to the message. For Gen Z, a group that prefers fast, creative, and continuous experiences, the flow state is easier to trigger and helps improve attitudes toward marketing content. The study by Zhang et al. (2024) also shows that engagement on short-form video platforms directly impacts online engagement and consumer behavior.

The proposed study model is illustrated in Figure 1 below:

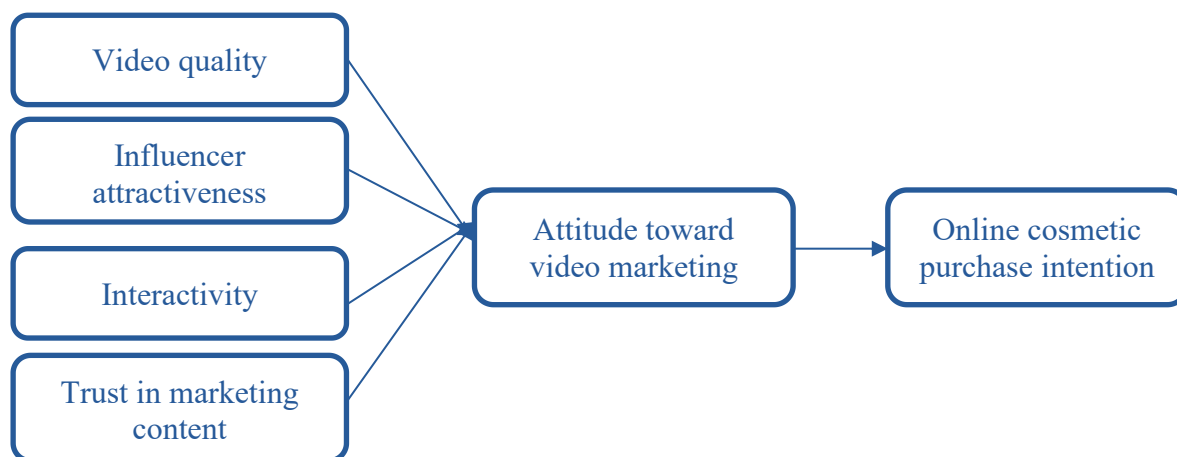


Figure 1: Research model

Source: Proposed by the authors

2.2. Hypothesis development

Video quality plays a crucial role in shaping users' perceptions and attitudes toward marketing content on short-form video platforms like TikTok. According to TAM (Davis, 1989), the quality of presentation and the ability to clearly convey information enhance perceived usefulness and decrease perceived effort, leading to a more positive attitude toward the content. In the case of cosmetics, videos with good lighting, clear camera angles, and detailed visuals help viewers make more accurate assessments of the product, fostering trust and sympathy for the marketing message (Liu & Wang, 2023). Therefore, video quality is likely to have a positive impact on Gen Z's attitude toward video marketing. Based on the above arguments, the research hypothesis is proposed as follows:

H1: Video quality has a positive effect on attitude toward video marketing.

Influencer attractiveness, which includes appearance, style, expertise, and the ability to inspire, is seen as a key factor in influencer marketing. According to

presented all contribute to building trust in the brand, which then increases purchase intent. Studies on influencer marketing (Lou & Yuan, 2019) also reveal that credibility and message value are fundamental in establishing consumer trust, making them highly relevant when included in the research model on TikTok.

Finally, flow theory by Csikszentmihalyi (1990) explains how TikTok videos create an engaging experience, which in turn affects user perception and behavior. The features of short videos, catchy sounds, visual effects, and two-way interaction make it easy for viewers to enter a "flow" state, leading to high concentration and increased receptivity to the message. For Gen Z, a group that prefers fast, creative, and continuous experiences, the flow state is easier to trigger and helps improve attitudes toward marketing content. The study by Zhang et al. (2024) also shows that engagement on short-form video platforms directly impacts online engagement and consumer behavior.

Signaling theory (Spence, 1973), influencers with a positive image act as signals of reliability and quality, boosting the acceptance of their messages. Research indicates that consumers, especially Gen Z, tend to value influencers they find relevant, authentic, and influential (Djafarova & Bowes, 2021). When influencers are perceived as engaging and trustworthy, viewers are more likely to develop a positive attitude toward marketing videos. Based on the above arguments, the research hypothesis is proposed as follows:

H2: Influencer attractiveness has a positive effect on attitude toward video marketing.

Interactivity is a key feature of social networking platforms in general, and TikTok in particular. It allows users to like, comment, share, participate, or interact via livestream. According to flow theory (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990), high levels of engagement foster a sense of inclusion and active participation, which in turn enhances the overall user experience. Previous studies have shown that interactivity in video

marketing increases perceptions of proximity, authenticity, and connection, thereby improving attitudes toward brand content (Zhang et al., 2024). Therefore, interactivity in TikTok videos is expected to promote a positive attitude among Gen Z. Based on the above arguments, the research hypothesis is proposed as follows:

H3: Interactivity has a positive effect on attitude toward video marketing.

Trust influences how messages are accepted positively or negatively and can alter consumer attitudes even online (Yüksel, 2016). More importantly, trust in content marketing is crucial in online cosmetics consumption, where quality and relevance risks are often high. According to signaling theory, credible information from influencers, visual proof through videos, and positive community feedback serve as signals to help reduce information gaps (Lou & Yuan, 2019). When consumers see video marketing as transparent, genuine, and trustworthy, they tend to develop a more positive attitude toward the message. This is especially true for Gen Z, who generally value authentic and natural content. Based on the above arguments, the research hypothesis is proposed as follows:

H4: Trust in marketing content has a positive effect on attitude toward video marketing.

According to Ajzen's TPB (1991), attitude is the strongest predictor of purchase intent. When consumers feel satisfied, enjoy, or appreciate video content, they tend to trust the brand and become willing to make a purchase. In the cosmetics industry, a positive attitude toward video reviews, makeup tutorials, or hands-on experiences can encourage viewers to seek more information and make online purchasing decisions (Li & Wang, 2023). Therefore, attitudes toward video marketing are likely to directly influence Gen Z's intention to buy cosmetics online. Based on the above arguments, the research hypothesis is proposed as follows:

H5: Attitude toward video marketing has a positive effect on online cosmetic purchase intention.

3. Methodology

3.1. Measurement scales and data collection

The measurement scales were chosen and adjusted based on previous studies by Liu and Wang (2023), Zhang et al. (2024), and Lou and Yuan (2019). The 5-point Likert scale is used to measure the level of agreement of respondents.

Research data was gathered using a survey questionnaire with a convenience sampling method. To ensure the sample was representative and diverse, the research team trained and supervised a group of

university students majoring in business administration on data collection techniques. These students then helped distribute surveys to their friends, family, and contacts. The survey participants were confirmed to be Gen Z customers (born between 1995 and 2012) from various regions across Vietnam. Additionally, during data collection, this group of students explained the meaning of the term "TikTok influencer" as used in this study to respondents. Data for the official study was collected from 2,700 Gen Z customers, and after filtering and cleaning, 1,200 valid responses were used for analysis. The survey was conducted from December 2024 to October 2025.

3.2. Data analysis

Once collected, the data is encrypted and entered into SPSS 26 software. First, the study calculates the statistical descriptions, averages, and frequencies. Then, Cronbach's Alpha and EFA analysis are performed to check the reliability and discriminant validity of the scale. Next, confirmatory factor analysis and SEM are carried out to explore the relationships between the variables.

4. Results

Among the 1,200 respondents, the proportion of female consumers exceeds that of men, accounting for 70%. They are mainly in the age groups of 20 to 23 (45%) and 24 to 27 (35%), which aligns with characteristics of adult TikTok users who have income or are financially supported by their families to buy cosmetics online. Regarding education and occupation, 45% of participants are students, and 30% are office workers; other occupational groups, such as freelancers and homemakers, make up a smaller share. This indicates that most of the sample has an educational background and broad access to digital technology, especially platforms like TikTok. The geographic distribution is diverse, with 35% from the North, 15% from the Central region, and 50% from the South. Regarding TikTok use, most respondents (90%) use it daily, averaging about 82 minutes per day. This suggests that TikTok is a prominent social media platform in the survey sample and a key environment for cosmetic brands to run video marketing campaigns. Regarding purchasing experience, 70% have bought cosmetics online, with 35% making 1-2 purchases annually, and 10% making more than five purchases. This demonstrates that the sample has real experience with online shopping channels. The most common purchase channels are e-commerce platforms (60%) and TikTok Shop (20%), showing the rise of social commerce models that particularly suit Gen Z's shopping habits.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics and Cronbach's Alpha

Scale	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Cronbach's Apha
Video quality	1.00	5.00	4.55	0.687	0.839
Influencer attractiveness	1.00	5.00	4.74	0.689	0.827
Interactivity	1.00	5.00	3.43	0.694	0.829
Trust in marketing content	1.00	5.00	3.31	0.692	0.802

Attitude toward video marketing	1.00	5.00	4.48	0.690	0.813
Online cosmetic purchase intention	1.00	5.00	3.30	0.688	0.808

Source: Analysis results from SPSS 26

A descriptive analysis in Table 1 shows that influencer attractiveness has the highest average (Mean = 4.74), indicating that Gen Z consumers are particularly interested in the attractiveness and credibility of influencers when viewing cosmetic marketing content on TikTok. Video quality (Mean = 4.55) and attitude toward video marketing (Mean = 4.48) also scored above the median, suggesting that users appreciate the way content is presented and tend to have positive attitudes toward video marketing. Interactivity (Mean = 4.43) and trust in marketing content (Mean = 4.31) received lower scores, showing that trust in marketing content remains limited and that users expect more

Table 2: The results of EFA

Items	Components					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
VQ4	0.893					
VQ1	0.882					
VQ3	0.876					
VQ2	0.867					
TR2		0.895				
TR4		0.890				
TR1		0.882				
TR3		0.877				
AT2			0.894			
AT1			0.888			
AT3			0.870			
AT4			0.865			
IN1				0.896		
IN4				0.892		
IN3				0.881		
IN2				0.873		
IA3					0.885	
IA1					0.872	
IA4					0.866	
IA2					0.857	
PI1						0.898
PI3						0.886
PI2						0.875
PI4						0.866

Source: Analysis results from SPSS 26

The analysis results showed that the KMO was 0.828, indicating the data's suitability. Bartlett's test result is 12738.28 with a significance level below 0.05. Therefore, the variables are correlated and appropriate for factor analysis.

Additionally, the analysis results showed that the total variance explained was 69.392%, surpassing the 50% threshold, indicating that these factors account for 69.392% of the data's variability. The Eigenvalue for each factor is greater than 1, and the factor loadings of all observed variables exceed 0.5, indicating that all variables have convergent values. The factor rotation matrix of the observed variables is presented in Table 2. Therefore, the EFA results align with the data, showing that the observed variables correlate with each other overall, and this should be used for further analysis.

transparency and authenticity in cosmetic review videos. The average score for online cosmetic purchase intention (Mean = 3.30) is moderate, reflecting that although users are regularly exposed to cosmetic video content, positive attitudes haven't fully translated into strong purchase intentions.

Reliability testing of the scales is conducted using Cronbach's Alpha and EFA. The results in Table 1 show that the scales have a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient above 0.7 and the total variable correlation coefficient of the observed variables exceeds 0.3. Therefore, the measurement scales meet the reliability standards recommended by Hair et al. (2010).

The results of the confirmatory factor analysis indicated that the model fit the survey data well, with $\chi^2/df = 2.682$, CFI = 0.937, TLI = 0.929, GFI = 0.917, RMSEA = 0.038, and SRMR = 0.043, fully meeting the recommended criteria of Hair et al. (2019). Table 3 presents the CFA results.

Table 3: The results of CFA

Indicator	χ^2/df	GF I	TL I	CFI	RMS EA	p-value	Conclusion
CFA	2.682	0.937	0.929	0.937	0.038	0.000	Accepted

Source: Analysis results from AMOS 24

The SEM analysis results showed that the relationships were statistically significant with p less than 0.05. The hypothesis testing results confirm the acceptance of hypotheses from H1 to H5. Therefore, video quality, influencer attractiveness, interactivity, and trust in marketing content positively affect attitude toward video marketing and online cosmetic purchase intention.

Table 4: Hypothesis testing

Hypothesis	β	t-statistic	p-value	Conclusion
H1: Video quality → Attitude toward video marketing	0.422	2.489	0.002	Accepted
H2: Influencer attractiveness → Attitude toward video marketing	0.448	2.573	0.001	Accepted
H3: Interactivity → Attitude toward video marketing	0.415	2.891	0.014	Accepted
H4: Trust in marketing content → Attitude	0.397	2.902	0.003	Accepted

toward video marketing				
H5: Attitude toward video marketing → Online cosmetic purchase intention	0.450	3.001	0.005	Accepted

Source: Analysis results from AMOS 24

5. Discussion and Implications

5.1. Discussions

First of all, video quality has a significant positive impact on attitudes toward video marketing ($\beta = 0.422$; $p = 0.002$), indicating that Gen Z users are especially responsive to visuals, sharpness, presentation, and the illustrative capabilities of videos. This finding aligns with previous research suggesting that content quality is a key factor in creating positive experiences and perceived value when engaging with short-form videos (Liu & Wang, 2023). In the cosmetics industry, where products demand high visual observation, video quality plays a crucial role in reducing perceptual risks.

The influence of influencer attractiveness on attitude was also confirmed ($\beta = 0.448$, $p = 0.001$), showing that influencer attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness are more influential factors than video quality. The findings reflect Gen Z’s consumer trends, which view influencers as “opinion leaders” and are strongly influenced by their empathy, authenticity, and closeness. The results also align with signal theory, which suggests that influencers are perceived as reliable sources of information that help bridge the gap between brands and consumers.

The results also showed that interactivity positively influences attitudes toward video marketing ($\beta = 0.415$, $p = 0.014$). These findings emphasize the crucial role of engagement forms on TikTok, such as comments, heart drops, shares, or direct feedback from content creators, in creating immersive experiences and boosting viewer engagement. Gen Z not only passively watches videos but also has a strong need for interaction, which enhances a positive perception of marketing content. This aligns with flow theory, suggesting that engagement triggers a state of “flow” and heightens interest in digital content.

Additionally, trust in marketing content has been shown to significantly influence attitudes ($\beta = 0.397$, $p = 0.003$), highlighting that the transparency, authenticity, and genuineness of videos play a crucial role in shaping positive perceptions of marketing content. Gen Z consists of consumers who are highly skeptical of traditional advertising but strongly trust content created by influencers or KOCs, especially when videos depict real experiences and are not “overly advertising.” This underscores the importance of authenticity as a core element of short-form video marketing.

Finally, attitudes toward video marketing significantly influence the intention to purchase cosmetics online ($\beta = 0.450$, $p = 0.005$). This finding supports TPB’s

importance in predicting Gen Z’s consumer behavior on social media. When users view video marketing as useful, engaging, and credible, they are more likely to develop a stronger purchase intention. This is especially true in the cosmetics industry, where buying choices are heavily affected by visual reviews, social feedback, and visual experiences.

5.2. Implications

5.2.1. Theoretically implications

This research makes significant contributions to the theory of short-form video consumer behavior and enhances academic understanding of TikTok marketing mechanisms. One key new contribution is the development and testing of a theoretical model that incorporates TikTok feature factors, such as video quality, influencer attractiveness, interactivity, and trust in marketing content, to predict Generation Z’s attitudes and intentions to purchase cosmetics online. While most previous studies focused on Facebook, Instagram, or YouTube, this study broadens the analytical framework to include TikTok, a short-form video platform with a unique content delivery algorithm that drives its distinct consumer behavior dynamics.

Next, this study combines the four theoretical foundations of TAM, TPB, signaling theory, and flow theory into a single model. This integrated approach offers a comprehensive view of video marketing reception behavior, demonstrating that consumer behavior on TikTok results from the interaction of video quality, influencer attractiveness, trust, and interactivity. This approach is new compared to previous studies that typically relied on only one or two foundational theories.

Furthermore, the study offers new empirical evidence that influencer attractiveness is the most influential factor on attitudes toward video marketing ($\beta = 0.448$), even more so than video quality. This finding further supports signaling theory by highlighting the role of influencers as key sources of quality signals in the cosmetics industry, which faces high information asymmetry. Lastly, based on survey data from 1,200 Gen Z individuals, the study enhances the reliability and generalizability of the results and provides valuable data for emerging markets like Vietnam, where cosmetics consumption is rapidly shifting toward e-commerce and social commerce.

5.2.2. Practically implications

Besides its theoretical contributions, the study’s findings offer valuable strategic advice for cosmetics companies aiming to improve their marketing on TikTok. First, the results indicate that influencer attractiveness is the most significant factor influencing attitudes. Therefore, businesses should select influencers not only based on their follower count but also considering their image relevance, presentation style, authenticity, and credibility within the beauty community. Micro-influencers and KOCs can be particularly effective because, according to Gen Z, they are often seen as more authentic than larger KOLs.

Second, high-quality video should be a mandatory requirement. Businesses need to invest in lighting, composition, shooting techniques, visual effects, and especially the ability to clearly showcase product features (texture, color, coverage, etc.), because video quality significantly influences viewers' perceptions.

Third, to maximize the effectiveness of video marketing, businesses should boost interactivity through methods like Q&A, review duets, hashtag challenges, livestreams, or by encouraging viewers to comment and share opinions. The more interaction there is, the stronger the positive feeling, which helps improve communication effectiveness.

Fourth, businesses need to focus on building trust by being open about where their products come from, demonstrating effectiveness through genuine videos, and encouraging users to produce independent review content. "Before and after" content, live demonstrations, or unpolished reviews are especially effective in boosting trust in marketing messages.

Finally, businesses should focus on creating a comprehensive positive video experience that includes transparency, engaging content, easy to understand, and real value to viewers. This is a sustainable way to turn TikTok viewers into customers who buy on TikTok Shop and e-commerce platforms.

6. Conclusion

This study aims to explore how video marketing on TikTok influences Generation Z's intention to purchase cosmetics online in Vietnam, an emerging market experiencing rapid growth in e-commerce and social commerce. Using an integrated approach with four theoretical frameworks, TAM, TPB, signaling theory, and flow theory, the study successfully developed and tested a model explaining how video quality, influencer attractiveness, engagement, and trust in marketing content shape attitudes and, subsequently, purchase intentions. The SEM results reveal that all four factors significantly affect attitudes, with influencer attractiveness being the most influential. Additionally, attitudes toward video marketing serve as a crucial mediator, strongly influencing Generation Z's online purchasing intentions for cosmetics. These findings enhance the understanding of consumer behavior in the short-form video context and highlight the key drivers motivating young people to make purchasing decisions as TikTok increasingly dominates as a marketing channel for the cosmetics industry.

Despite the many valuable results achieved, the research still has some limitations that need to be acknowledged. Firstly, the data collected using the convenience sampling method, which primarily focuses on the Gen Z group using TikTok, can lead to sample bias and limit generalizations for other age groups or platforms. Second, the cross-sectional research design does not allow for examining causal relationships over time, as attitudes and purchase intentions may change based on content trends or the TikTok algorithm. Third, the study relies heavily on self-reported data, which may be influenced by social desirability bias. Finally, the research model emphasizes only four key factors of

video marketing, while other factors such as emotion, entertainment, message relevance, or the specifics of the TikTok algorithm have not yet been considered.

Therefore, future studies could explore several directions. First, additional research should use the probabilistic sampling method or broaden the survey to include multiple age groups and various social commerce platforms to improve representation and generalizability. Second, employing a longitudinal design can help monitor changes in consumer perceptions and behaviors over time, especially in the rapidly evolving TikTok environment. Third, studies might consider incorporating other important variables such as emotion during video viewing, entertainment, influencer-brand congruence, or the effects of algorithmic exposure. Lastly, empirical research methods like eye-tracking, behavioral tracking, or AI-based video content analysis can offer deeper insights into how users interact with TikTok and how visual cues influence purchase decisions.

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Appendix

Questions items of measurement scales

Video quality

1. Videos on TikTok are clearly presented and easy to understand.
2. The image and audio quality of the video is very good.
3. The video is quite professionally built.
4. Videos provide accurate and consistent information about the cosmetic product.

Influencer attractiveness

1. Influencers in videos have an attractive appearance.
2. Influencers feel friendly and accessible.
3. Influencers have an attractive presentation style.
4. Influencers make a positive impression on me.

Interactivity

1. Videos allow me to interact easily (comment, like, share).
2. I feel there is a quick response from the influencer or brand.
3. I feel like I am engaged in video content.
4. I feel the video encourages viewer engagement.

Trust in marketing content

1. I believe that the content in the video provides honest information.
2. I feel that the video is transparent in the product description.
3. I believe that influencers do not intentionally exaggerate the effectiveness of the product.
4. I trust the reviews or comments in the videos.

Attitude Toward Video Marketing

1. I feel positive when I watch marketing videos about cosmetics on TikTok.
2. I find TikTok video marketing to be useful.
3. I love short video marketing on TikTok.
4. I have a good impression of cosmetic marketing videos on TikTok.

Online Cosmetic Purchase Intention

1. I plan to buy the cosmetics featured in the TikTok video.
2. I have the ability to buy cosmetics online after watching marketing videos.
3. I am willing to prioritize products recommended by influencers on TikTok.
4. I am willing to recommend that product to others after watching the Tik