

**Nadia Rahim**

Riphah International University, *Rawalpindi*

## How Small Brands Could Attract Generation Z Using Tiktok

### Abstract

As TikTok continues to rise in popularity among social media users, brands, particularly small ones, face difficulties in finding ways to connect with customers on the site. The use of social networking sites by brands to interact with their target market has grown crucial for a number of reasons, including finding new audiences, advertising goods, and fostering connections. The purpose of this study was to investigate how small firms are using TikTok to reach Generation Z customers and how the consumers are interacting with the brand-related content in light of the growing academic interest in TikTok. With the help of Survey, in which 20 Gen Z participated, we came to a result that TikTok holds a huge potential as majority of participants had been influenced to purchase product/service they had seen on platform.

**Keywords:** customers, grown crucial, investigate, participants

### Introduction

Today, social media plays a significant role in our lives. Its significance cannot be disputed. Despite the fact that social media sites like Facebook and Instagram are already being used as successful marketing tools. Due to its user-generated content and short-form videos, Tiktok has experienced tremendous growth over the past few years. TikTok offers a place for businesses to produce interesting content and apply cutting-edge marketing strategies. Due to its highly customized algorithm and engaging content structure, the app has had tremendous increase in popularity and is still seeing rapid growth. Particularly for companies looking to attract the newest generation of consumers, TikTok is increasingly becoming a crucial part of the marketing mix. And one of the most effective ways to appeal to and interact with clients' wants and emotions is through video marketing. TikTok became only the fifth non-gaming app to reach the 3-billion level and the first not owned by Facebook (now Meta), and in the first half of 2022, it ranked first in both downloads and profit for non-game apps. (Geyser, 2022)

### Background

TikTok is a platform that flourishes on short-form video content, which provides the brands with a lucrative marketing strategy; the short video marketing. Short video marketing differs from traditional approaches primarily because, despite being quick and easy to make, the content is frequently detailed and in-depth. Thus, even small businesses with limited resources for intensive social media marketing can make use of it..(Battisby, 2020).

## **Literature Review**

For years, Facebook and Instagram were one of the most used social media platforms. Since the emergence of TikTok, it has become one of the fastest-growing platforms. Regardless of this growth, TikTok still needs to be utilized and explored when it comes to marketing (Vaterlaus & Winter, 2021).

### **TikTok**

TikTok is a rapidly expanding social networking site for sharing videos. It was the second-most downloaded app globally in 2019. The number of user videos expressing political viewpoints has recently surged, despite the fact that the website is known for users submitting videos of them dancing, lip-syncing, or showcasing other skills. Tik Tok is a brand-new social media phenomenon that has transformed teenage social media and created a new subculture for the modern era. TikTok has evolved into a brand-new platform for showcasing the talent of young people, providing previously used social media platforms a fresh perspective. It is one of the social media platforms with the quickest growth in India and has drawn the interest and fascination of numerous young people throughout the globe. TikTok is owned and operated by a Chinese company called ByteDance, TikTok was released internationally in September 2017. As of late 2021, TikTok had around 80 million active users located in the United States. Of these 80 million users, 60% are between the ages of 16 and 24 years old (Mohsin, 2022). Every day a huge number of short-form videos are recorded, edited, posted, and viewed on TikTok, mostly by Gen Z. Instagram and Facebook are the platforms in which sharing photos, commenting, and messaging are the highlight of the application. Whereas TikTok allows its users to create short-form videos and express themselves. Users can like, comment, and share the content posted on the platform. Moreover, it has a "For You" page as well, in which the user can see the content according to their interests which attracts a wider range of audience. Now TikTok is a platform that has encouraged creativity, and various types of content can be found such as education, food-related, DIY hacks, challenges, etc. (Hart, 2022) TikTok is a platform that provides brands with product content that is low in cost but will help in connecting with their target audience. Hence to expand further on this, research is required. TikTok stands out as unique in the present environment of social media platforms, particularly because of its highly personalized interface and short video format. (Davis, 2019) TikTok uses its focus on identity management to set itself apart from competing platforms as one strategy. For instance, a large portion of surfing on Instagram is focused on a user's network of friends and followers that they have accumulated over time. Options for content discovery have grown over time, although they still exist only in the background. TikTok invites users to engage with the algorithm that is constantly updated and tailored to their preferences as well as with the production of original content. This is accomplished by using the "for you" page as the landing page, with videos from people you follow dispersed throughout. The button to make a video is in the middle of the screen at the bottom to promote content creation. Additionally, users have the opportunity to use any video's sound by clicking on it and then

choosing to use it in their material. These two features show how TikTok's user interface leans more in favor of the user than others. On other sites, a user's actions frequently involve more exclusive interpersonal engagement inside a hand-selected network, whereas TikTok gives users more freedom to explore. With these significant features and the app's widespread use, TikTok may be meeting a demand unique to its users and unmet by other platforms. In comparison to the other major social media platforms, TikTok has only been operating for a little time, and there are still many questions about its influence, strength, and long-term usage impacts. The app has proven to be immensely popular, especially among younger generations in a time when immediacy and ease are strongly desired. It offers almost unlimited chances for amusement, awareness, and influence. People are less restricted to unchanging narratives and instead receive content tailored to their own algorithm and what they interact with, in addition to the benefits of convenience and rapid pleasure. TikTok promotes a distinct influencer culture in addition to a network of followers. With its aforementioned "For You" and discovery sections, TikTok stands out in the category of discoverability. Additionally, the algorithm will blend new films into the user's feed rather than solely serving videos based on their virality, giving emerging or smaller producers an equal opportunity of getting noticed (Gillespie, 2022). Together with the informal nature of following another TikTok user, this discoverability contributes to the variety of content that is readily available for all users and provides a beneficial ecology for aspiring influencers. Once it has a following, the increased analytics (likes, comments, and shares) on the videos impact how audiences view the postings. It is no longer necessary to create material for a homogeneous audience, as traditional media formerly did, because of improvements in social media, especially after the launch of TikTok. Today, people have the ability to produce, spread, and consume the messages that speak to them. Social media has greatly lowered the hurdles that once stood in the way of people connecting with one another and creating and reaffirming their own opinions, as well as participating in global communities. Although there are possibilities to develop intercultural competency, there is still little research available.

### **Digital Marketing:**

Digital marketing has been used and studied much longer than Tik Tok has existed. The phrase "digital marketing" was first used in the middle of the 1990s, when search engines like Yahoo! and Google allowed the internet to become more than just a place for email. Brands must learn how to sell to Generation Z, which is swiftly overtaking Millennials in terms of purchasing power, if they want to succeed. It's critical to keep up with the most popular content formats and platforms from the standpoint of your brand. The industry's transition from product-centric marketing to consumer-centric marketing is one factor in the quick growth of digital marketing. The emphasis on direct selling has expanded as a result of this transition to consumer-centric marketing. Direct selling works well with digital marketing since it can eliminate middlemen and let customers buy products from brands or producers straight online. In addition to offering flexibility and engagement that conventional media does not, digital platforms let marketers do all that they can do on traditional platforms.(Rezek, 2022)

The world of marketing has changed immensely. Marketing to Gen Z is a whole new task for advertisers. Generation Z uses streaming services instead of Television, they use Spotify, and Apple Music instead of Radio, or Mp3 players. They use Reddit, instead of reading magazines, they listen to podcasts, hence Marketing to Generation Z is a whole new chapter. Generation Z watches streaming services such as Netflix. Instead of listening to the radio, they listen to Spotify. And instead of reading magazines, they rely on Reddit. A huge part of what attracts Generation Z towards social media is an aspect of "going viral", and TikTok has played an important role in this with the help of #Challenges. Generation Z also known as the "digital generation", on average they spend 11 hours on social media, which makes them highly receptive to digital marketing (Djafarova, 2021) . Insider Magazine published an article in 2020 which estimated the spending power of Generation Z to be more than \$140 billion and also mentioned this number will only grow.

### **Research Questions:**

What needs of Generation Z attracts them towards TikTok?

What are the marketing strategies small businesses could use to attract Gen Z on TikTok in Pakistan?

### **How your research can help to resolve or better understand the issue you have raised in your research question?**

From the start of 2022 to April 2022, TikTok has been downloaded more than 175 million times, according to Sensory Tower's "Q1 2022: Store Intelligence Data Digest". In 2021, 40% of the global consumers were Generation Z and their online presence will only increase their influence on digital marketing. Hence it is important to research emerging social media platforms (TikTok in this case). Brands must recognize the importance of such platforms, so they can adapt to the rapidly changing social media scenarios while marketing. They must understand how social media platforms help to satisfy customers' needs and desires (Zhu & Chen, 2015). This research will help the brands in adapting to the changing online atmosphere to reach their target audience effectively. Significance of the research: There are studies available that have researched the motivation of the TikTok users to understand the platform's success and how best to utilize it. For example, there was research by Yang and Ha (2021) focused on the Usage of TikTok in China and social media influencers affect consumer behavior. They came to the conclusion that entertainment gratification was the main factor that made TikTok into the phenomenon it is today, followed by socializing, and information sharing and seeking (Yang Yang & Ha, 2021). As mentioned above even though there are studies available regarding the marketing strategies on TikTok, most of them are limited to a certain country. And research on this topic in terms of Pakistan has not been explored yet. Pakistan is a developing country, which has totally different cultural values, and social media atmosphere. Generation Z of Pakistan has different motivators to use TikTok, they have a different state of mind as compared to China. Hence, the significance of this study is that the research will target the motivators of Pakistan's gen Z for using TikTok and how brands can learn from them to enhance their marketing strategies when it comes to targeting the younger generation.

### Research Method:

A survey was chosen over other methods in order to standardize responses and add to the ease of analysis after data was collected. This survey was created for this study by the primary researcher. The target number of participants was set at 20, with the primary participant target being members of Generation Z.

The survey was distributed electronically through social media posts and Whatsapp. These delivery methods were appropriate for reaching the target participants.

The survey contained a total of 12 questions. The survey focused on participants' individual experiences with content on the TikTok app. Because the focus of the research concerned brand interaction with only a specific generation, demographics such as race, ethnicity, political affiliation, and income was not collected. The survey was organized into three sections. The first section consisted of two preliminary questions that served as the items that would ensure participants met the inclusion criteria. This research required people to be born between the years of 1994 and 2004 to fit the definition of "Generation Z". The following preliminary question in this section asked participants if they had the platforms of interest to this study, TikTok to continue onward in the survey. The second section moved toward the motivations for users to use this platform. A five-point Likert scale was utilized for these questions with options ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree for survey participants to indicate their level of agreement with each statement.

Enjoyment was measured by asking "I enjoy the content I consume when I am on TikTok", Information-seeking was measured with "I use TikTok to provide information," Self-presentation was measured by asking "I use TikTok because I want others to perceive me as competent with social media technologies," Social interaction was measured with "Using TikTok enables me to maintain a connection with others," This section also asked respondents about their TikTok usage "How often do you use TikTok?" and "When you do use TikTok, how much time do you spend on the platform on average?" The third section asked participants about their social media engagement behavior on TikTok in relation to brand-related content. How the users interact with brand content and how influential such content could be towards the buying habits of Gen Z.

### Research Design of the study:

This is a descriptive research conducted via survey research method,

### Population of the study:

This study is based on the Generation Z TikTok users.

### Data Collection

Table 1: Age

<i>Value Label</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
15-18	2	1	5.00
18-20	3	6	30.00
20-25	4	13	65.00

<i>Value Label</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
	<i>Total</i>	20	100.0

Table 2: How often do you use TikTok?

<i>Value Label</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Daily	9	45.00
Once A week	2	10.00
2 to 3 times A week	5	25.00
Occasionally	4	20.00
Total	20	100.0

Table 3: I enjoy the content I consume when I am on TikTok

<i>Value Label</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Strongly Disagree	2	10.00
Disagree	3	15.00
Neutral	2	10.00
Agree	11	55.00
Strongly Agree	2	10.00
<i>Total</i>	20	100.0

Table 4: After I use TikTok, I often find something new

<i>Value Label</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Strongly Disagree	1	5.00
Disagree	3	15.00
Neutral	6	30.00
Agree	7	35.00
Strongly Agree	3	15.00
<i>Total</i>	20	100.0

Table 5: Using TikTok enables me to maintain a connection with others

<i>Value Label</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Strongly Disagree	4	20.00
Disagree	3	15.00
Neutral	2	10.00
Agree	6	30.00
Strongly Agree	5	25.00
<i>Total</i>	20	100.0

Table 6: I see brands that promote their products on TikTok as trustworthy

<i>Value Label</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Strongly Disagree	1	5.00

<i>Value Label</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Disagree	3	15.00
Neutral	2	10.00
Agree	8	40.00
Strongly Agree	6	30.00
<i>Total</i>	20	100.0

Table 7: I find TikTok advertisements informational and effective.

<i>Value Label</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Strongly Disagree	5	25.00
Disagree	3	15.00
Neutral	1	5.00
Agree	4	20.00
Strongly Agree	7	35.00
<i>Total</i>	20	100.0

Table 8: I use TikTok to search authentic product reviews.

<i>Value Label</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Strongly Disagree	5	25.00
Disagree	3	15.00
Agree	5	25.00
Strongly Agree	7	35.00
<i>Total</i>	20	100.0

Table 9: I have discovered new products/brands on TikTok.

<i>Value Label</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Strongly Disagree	3	15.00

Disagree	2	10.00
Neutral	1	5.00
Agree	7	35.00
Strongly Agree	7	35.00
<i>Total</i>	20	100.0

Table 10: I believe product reviews from people who share their experiences on TikTok more than actual advertisements from brands.

<i>Value Label</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Strongly Disagree	2	10.00
Disagree	4	20.00
Agree	7	35.00
Strongly Agree	7	35.00
<i>Total</i>	20	100.0

Table 11: On a scale of 1 to 4 (one being least liked, four being most liked) How much you like Instream Ads

<i>Value Label</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Strongly Dislike	13	65.00
Dislike	1	5.00
Like	4	20.00
Strongly Like	2	10.00
<i>Total</i>	20	100.0

Table 12: On a scale of 1 to 4 (one being least liked, four being most liked) How much you like TakeOver Ads



<i>Value Label</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Strongly Dislike	10	50.00
Dislike	5	25.00
Like	4	20.00
Strongly Like	1	5.00
<i>Total</i>	20	100.0

Table 13: Have you made any Purchases because of advertisements you've seen on TikTok?

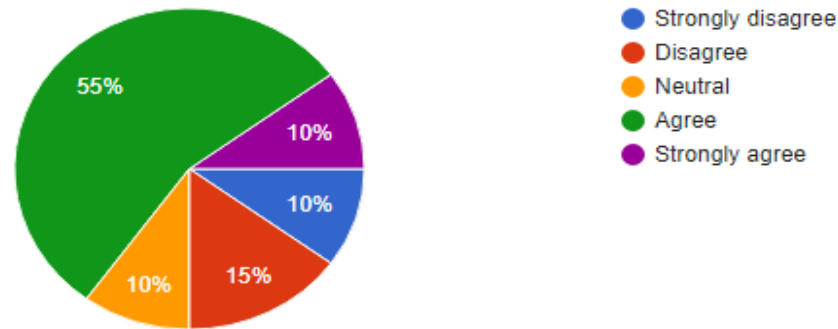
<i>Value Label</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Yes	13	65.00
No	7	35.00
<i>Total</i>	20	100.0

### Data Analysis

To analyze and interpret the data gathered by the survey, Microsoft Excel data sheet was used. Excel Sheets were used to enter all the collected data and Spss to analyze the entered data. Most of the participants (65%) were 20-25 and 85% of the participants were using TikTok. The main Motivation behind the use of this

### I enjoy the content I consume when I am on TikTok

20 responses



platform was entertainment.

The results shows that for the users TikTok is an pleasurable experience can be described as addictive, as most participants can often be found spending hours at a time on TikTok for entertainment sake. Similarly When it came to the brand-related content, majority of the participants found the brands on Tiktok since it is a platform that focuses on Short-form video content. However when it came to the type of content the brands are posting on the platform, as shown above (table.11 and 12) the majority disliked the In-stream Ads (ads you scroll through in your social stream) and Brand takeover ads (ads that pop up when you open the application). This indicates that the users don't like pushy marketing; TikTok leaves more room for more lighthearted and carefree content. This integration gives small businesses the room they need to have more fun and take on a different image on this platform, making them more enjoyable, dependable, and laid-back. Users join TikTok to be entertained, so mass advertising may not be the greatest strategy for a company entering the site. Instead, brands should employ creativity to create content that subtly promotes their goods or services without coming across as intrusive or aggressive. Small businesses can improve their results, such as sales and reach, by adopting a more sincere and enjoyable approach. Business owners can develop a solid plan for their companies on TikTok

with no budget and the help of marketing experts. 65% of the participants have bought products after viewing ads on the platform, which indicates that many brands are utilizing TikTok to attract more buyers' every day.

### **Conclusion:**

At the moment, even major corporations and governments are using the platform TikTok. It becomes obvious that TikTok has distinctive features that can help small businesses grow unlike any other social media site previously. The app's algorithm is the primary factor affecting how social media functions. The audience for small businesses on TikTok is not only their followers. If they create the correct content, it can be sent to a wide number of consumers who may later become brand customers. According to the data, TikTok has enormous potential for marketers. All research participants mentioned occasions in which they had been persuaded to buy a good or service after seeing it on TikTok. Because of this, it's crucial for brand managers who want to engage with people on TikTok to think of the platform as an extension of their target audience and to approach messaging in that way. TikTok offers a unique platform for small businesses to interact with their consumers in ways that aren't available on other social media platforms. It has allowed business owners to create innovative identities and strategies to engage and connect more with the users. This platform encourages a closer connection with the audience, which may increase the audience's trust in and brand loyalty. Small businesses are using TikTok more frequently as they look for creative ways to gently showcase their items. By showcasing the most authentic side of a company, TikTok not only supports business owners in growing their brands in terms of sales and customers, but it also promotes small businesses in developing and enhancing their social media presence.

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