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LEVERAGING TIKTOK ADVERTISING AND EWOM: EXPLORING THE MODERATING ROLE OF EXPERIENTIAL VALUE ON CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOR

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Abstract

The rising popularity of TikTok among young audiences has drawn marketers' attention to its potential as a platform for clothing product advertising. However, capturing consumer focus on a single product amidst the vast content on TikTok remains challenging. Additionally, negative perceptions of clothing product value may deter consumers from engaging in buying behavior. This study aims to examine the influence of TikTok social media advertising and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) on consumer buying behavior, with experiential value serving as a moderating variable. Employing the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT2) framework, this research adopts a quantitative approach with a survey method. Data were collected from 406 respondents via questionnaires and analyzed using the path analysis method in SmartPLS 3. The findings reveal that TikTok advertising significantly impacts consumer buying behavior, whereas eWOM about clothing products does not directly affect buying behavior. Experiential value moderates and strengthens the relationship between TikTok advertising and eWOM on consumer buying behavior.

Keywords: *TikTok Advertising, eWOM, Consumer Buying Behavior, Experiential Value, Social Media Marketing*

Abstrak

Popularitas TikTok yang terus meningkat di kalangan anak muda telah menarik perhatian pemasar untuk memanfaatkan platform ini sebagai media periklanan produk pakaian. Namun, menarik perhatian konsumen terhadap satu produk di tengah banyaknya konten di TikTok menjadi tantangan tersendiri. Selain itu, persepsi negatif terhadap nilai produk pakaian dapat menghambat perilaku pembelian konsumen. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pengaruh iklan di media sosial TikTok dan electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) terhadap perilaku pembelian konsumen, dengan nilai pengalaman (experiential value) sebagai variabel moderasi. Menggunakan kerangka teori Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT2), penelitian ini mengadopsi pendekatan kuantitatif dengan metode survei. Data dikumpulkan dari 406 responden melalui kuesioner dan dianalisis menggunakan metode analisis jalur dengan SmartPLS 3. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa iklan di TikTok secara signifikan memengaruhi perilaku pembelian konsumen, sementara eWOM terkait produk pakaian tidak secara langsung memengaruhi perilaku pembelian. Nilai pengalaman memperkuat hubungan antara iklan TikTok dan eWOM terhadap perilaku pembelian konsumen.

Kata Kunci: Iklan TikTok, eWOM, Perilaku Pembelian Konsumen, Nilai Pengalaman, Pemasaran Media Sosial.

1. Introduction

Internet technology and social media have profoundly impacted business operations, offering opportunities to replace physical interactions with virtual engagements, as seen on platforms like Facebook and LinkedIn (Barcelona et al., 2022). Social media enables businesses to communicate, engage, and learn from customers in ways traditional marketing cannot (Hoàng et al., 2022). The cultural environment and evolving consumer trends have amplified the significance of social media. Consumers today are more discerning and informed about their needs. Understanding consumer behavior on social media provides insights essential for businesses to meet consumer expectations and understand purchase drivers. Recognizing various buying behaviors and influencing factors is critical to deciphering how social media affects purchase decisions (Darmatama & Erdiansyah, 2021).

TikTok has emerged as a significant platform for promoting products and services. According to Annur (2023), Indonesia ranks second globally in TikTok usage, with 23% of its population as active users. TikTok's innovative features—short-form videos that encourage user creativity and interactivity—have made it the preferred platform for many, driving its popularity among 18–24-year-olds, who constitute 37.3% of its user base. The surge in social commerce during the COVID-19 pandemic highlights the growing preference for online shopping through platforms like TikTok. Reports indicate that 86% of Indonesians have made purchases through social media, with TikTok Shop leading as the most frequently used platform (Rizal, 2022). Clothing products dominate these transactions, accounting for 61% of purchases (Ramadhan & Kurnianto, 2022). Despite extensive research on online consumer behavior, the influence of TikTok advertisements and eWOM remains underexplored, particularly post-pandemic. This study aims to identify factors shaping young consumers' attitudes toward TikTok advertisements and their impact on buying behavior. Additionally, it investigates the role of eWOM in influencing consumer decisions and the moderating effect of experiential value.

The rise of e-commerce has increased reliance on social media advertising as a key marketing tool. Social media advertisements are valued for their interactivity and ability to provide timely and personalized information (Alkis & Kose, 2022). Research suggests that factors like informativeness, entertainment, and creativity in social media ads significantly influence consumer attitudes and purchase intentions (Logan, Bright, & Gangadharbatla, 2012; Lee & Hong, 2016). Based on the UTAUT2 framework, this study explores the roles of performance expectancy and hedonic motivation in shaping consumer responses to TikTok advertisements. Habit and interactivity are also considered, reflecting the intrinsic and extrinsic motivations that drive social media usage (Ismagilova et al., 2017). These dimensions collectively inform the following hypothesis:

H1: Social media advertising significantly influences consumer buying behavior.

Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM) refers to online consumer-generated statements about products or brands accessible to a wide audience. Unlike traditional WOM, eWOM leverages the internet's reach and permanence, influencing consumer attitudes and purchase intentions (Cheung & Lee, 2012; Seo, Park, & Choi, 2020). However, the credibility of eWOM remains a critical concern, as consumers often struggle to evaluate the reliability of online reviews (Moran & Muzellec, 2017).

H2: eWOM significantly influences consumer buying behavior.

Experiential value emphasizes the importance of customer interactions and perceptions in determining product or service value (Mathwick, Malhotra, & Rigdon, 2001). In retail and service industries, creating enjoyable and memorable experiences fosters stronger consumer relationships (Keng, Huang, Zheng, & Hsu, 2007). This study examines experiential value as a moderator, hypothesizing its potential to enhance the effects of both TikTok advertising and eWOM on consumer buying behavior:

H3: Experiential value moderates the relationship between social media advertising and consumer buying behavior.

H4: Experiential value moderates the relationship between eWOM and consumer buying behavior.

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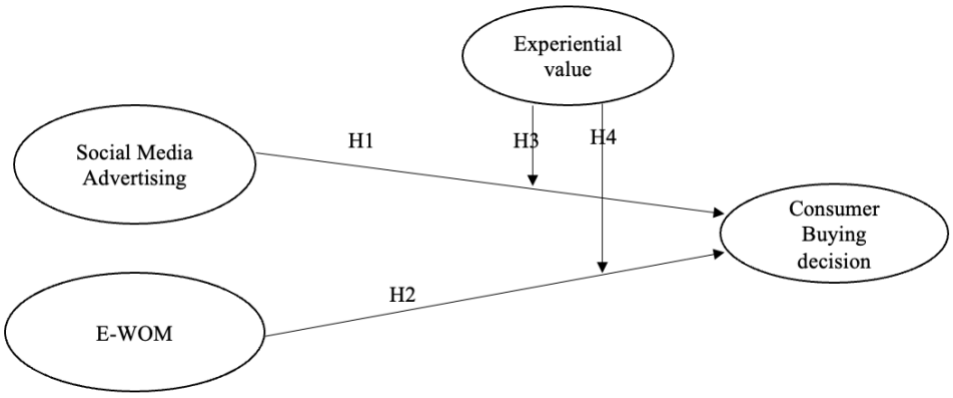

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

2. Research Methods

2.1. Subject, Time and Place of Research

Questionnaire distribution uses English and Indonesian. The back translation starts with the English version. The experts made two rounds of translation. Feedback from the pilot study was carefully scrutinized, and necessary changes were made to the questionnaire. The questionnaire design chose a basic platform that is commonly known in Indonesia the Google form to collect data through a survey questionnaire. During the post-COVID-19 pandemic, to avoid close contact, online survey methods were used to collect data and utilize Instagram stories to hook respondents. For two months, the Google Form online survey was distributed via a link and uploaded to one of Indonesia's most widely used social application platforms, Instagram and Whatsapp (23 February to 30 March 2023). For efficiency, this link is shared via Instagram stories and various WhatsApp groups, and people are encouraged to repost the link. The group's users are mostly based in Java Island. Based on the results of the synthesis, we found that most of the respondents were female and the majority of the ages found it easier. Most of the respondents who participated also had incomes above the average. Therefore, in contrast to the buying patterns of traditional clothing products, this study reflects young consumers with equivalent levels of education who have above-average incomes and are fond of making purchase decisions because of TikTok's social media ads.

2.2. Data Collection Technique

A quantitative approach and a survey questionnaire were used to check assumptions. Inspired by Aghaei & Alarsali (2022) and Alalwan (2018), we assessed twenty-seven indicators of social media advertising variables. Due to the use of the UTAUT2 theory which explains the use of several dimensions in measuring technology acceptance, the dimensions of performance expectancy, hedonic motivation, perceived relevance, habit, interactivity, and informativeness are measured in one social media advertising variable. Then, for the measurement of the Experiential Value variable, we were inspired by Shobeiri, Laroche, & Mazaheri (2013) with ten measurement indicators. For the eWOM construct, we are inspired by Prasad, Garg, & Prasad (2019) and Seo, Park, & Choi (2020) with three measurement indicators. Finally, we are inspired by Aghaei & Alarsali (2022) with seven measurement indicators for the Consumer Buying Behaviour construct.

A total of 4 constructs with 47 indicators are presented in split sections in the questionnaire and distributed on a five-point Likert scale. All measurement items were based on existing literature, and some words were moderated to ensure model integrity (see Table 1). Pilot tests are conducted to double-check words, understanding, or other errors if variables cannot be assigned accurately. Before formal data collection, the first version was conducted on 100 consumers who had experience purchasing products through TikTok in the last 6 months. The same tools and methods are used to assess validity during information processing.

Table 1. Measurement of dimensions and references

Constructs	Author(s)	Attributes
Social Media Advertising (SMA)	Aghaei & Alarsali (2022); Alalwan (2018)	(SMA1) I find social media advertising useful in my daily life. (SMA2) Using social media advertising increase my chances of achieving tasks that are important to me. (SMA3) Using social media advertising helps me accomplish tasks more quickly (SMA4) Using social media advertising increases my productivity. (SMA5) Using social media advertising is enjoyable. (SMA6) Using social media advertising is fun. (SMA7) Using social media advertising is entertaining (SMA8) Social media advertising is relevant to me. (SMA9) Social media advertising is important to me. (SMA10) Social media advertising means a lot to me. (SMA11) I think social media advertising fits my interests. (SMA12) I think social media advertising fits my preferences. (SMA13) Overall, I think social media advertising fits me. (SMA14) The use of social media advertising has become a habit for me. (SMA15) I am addicted to using social media advertising. (SMA16) I must use social media advertising. (SMA17) Using social media advertising has become natural to me. (SMA18) Social media advertising is effective in gathering customers' feedback. (SMA19) Social media advertising makes me feel like it wants to listen to its customers. (SMA20) Social media advertising encourages customers to offer feedback. (SMA21) Social media advertising allows customers to talk back. (SMA22) Social media advertising facilitates two-way communication between customers and firms. (SMA23) Social media advertising is a good source of product information and supplies relevant product information. (SMA24) Social media advertising provides timely information. (SMA25) Social media advertising is a good source of up-to-date product information. (SMA26) Social media advertising is a convenient source of product information. (SMA27) Social media advertising supplies complete product information.
Experiential Value (EV)	Shobeiri et al., (2013)	(EV1) The way XYZ's displays its products is attractive. (EV2) XYZ's TikTok site is aesthetically appealing. (EV3) I like the way XYZ's TikTok site looks.

		(EV4) I think XYZ's TikTok site is very entertaining. (EV5) The enthusiasm of XYZ's TikTok site is catching, it picks me up. (EV6)Shopping from XYZ's TikTok site "gets me away from it all". (EV7) Shopping from XYZ makes me feel like I am in another world. (EV8) I get so involved when I shop from XYZ that I forget everything. (EV9) I enjoy shopping from XYZ's TikTok site for its own sake, not just for the items I may have purchased. (EV10) I shop from XYZ's TikTok site for the pure enjoyment of it.
eWOM (EW)	Prasad et al., (2019); Seo et al., (2020)	(EW1) I am proud to say to others online that I use particular product/brand (EW2) I often read online about the product/brand (EW3) I will recommend using this brand to my social media acquaintances.
Consumer Buying Behavior (CBB)	Aghaei & Alarsali (2022)	(CBB1) I would purchase the clothing brand on TikTok shop that would resolve my need and want on what I heard or saw marketed on digital channels. (CBB2) I would purchase a clothing brand on TikTok shop that other people recommended. (CBB3) I would buy a clothing brand on TikTok shop that other people trusts. (CBB4) I would purchase a clothing brand on TikTok Shop that other people suggest. (CBB5) I would purchase the clothing brand on TikTok Shop. that my family prefers to buy. (CBB6) I would purchase the clothing brand on the TikTok shop that my friends suggest buying. (CBB7) I would only buy clothing brands on TikTok shops that I know or that my friend recommends to me.

2.3. Data Analysis Technique

The purposive sampling method was adopted in this study, obtaining representation from individuals in most areas of Indonesia. The criteria for respondents consisted of consumers who had experience buying products on TikTok for the last 6 months. From the two distribution platforms (Instagram and WhatsApp) the questionnaire collected 450 respondents who participated, but 406 respondents who met the criteria were selected for further analysis. According to the '10×' rule of thumb, the outer and inner models Field requires a minimum size of the maximum number of '10×' independent variables (Hair, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2013).

3. Results And Discussion

Considering the research model, research objectives, and data characteristics, we adopted path analysis modeling and used Bootstrap for the moderation analysis and assessed the proposed model as it can provide us with complete resources to verify the hypotheses. We use SmartPLS 3 to analyze the data and evaluate the structural and measurement models.

As shown in Table 2, among the 406 valid samples, 53.7% were dominated by women while 46.3% were men who participated in this study. The age range of respondents <25 years was 62.5% and >25 years was 37.5%. These results indicate that the majority of TikTok users in Indonesia are millennials. The monthly income of respondents who participated in this study was >5,000,000 (IDR) by 50.8%, higher than the 49.2% of respondents who had income <5,000,000 (IDR). The last education of the respondents who participated in

this study was the majority of Undergraduates as much as 46.2%. Complete information on demographic characteristics is listed in Table 2.

Table 2. Respondents' demographics.

Profile	Percentage (%)
Gender	
Man	46,3
Woman	53,7
Age	
<25 years	62,5
> 25 years	37,5
Monthly income (IDR)	
<5.000.000	49,2
>5.000.000	50,8
Education	
senior high school	11,6
Diploma	12,5
Undergraduate (S1)	46,2
Master (S2)	28,4
Doctor (S3)	1,3

Validity and Reliability Evaluation

Table 3 below shows the results of the validity test that has been carried out. A validity test is needed to test how well the instrument is used to measure a certain concept that will be measured in research (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Convergent validity can be known using PLS-SEM to test the level of validity. Convergent validity relates to items that measure the same construct that is associated or converged with one another (Neuman, 2014).

Convergent validity is reflected in the average value of the extracted variance (Average Variance Extracted/AVE). The AVE value is at least 0.5. This value describes adequate convergent validity, meaning that one latent variable can explain more than half of the variance of its indicators on average. The results of the validity test of this study indicate that all the constructs built in this study have an AVE (Average Variance Extracted) value above the minimum criterion limit, which is 0.5. From these results, it can be concluded that all research variables have met good convergent validity.

From Table 3 it can also be known the reliability of the instruments used in the study. Reliability tests were carried out to determine the extent to which the measuring instrument (instrument) used in the study was consistent in measuring (Cooper & Schindler, 2014) or how stable and consistent a measuring instrument was in measuring whatever concept it was measuring; Sekaran & Bougie (2016).

The reliability test with PLS-SEM can use the composite reliability method. The value of composite reliability can be used to test the reliability value of each indicator on a variable. Hair et al. (2014) stated that the composite reliability value must be > 0.70 even though a value of 0.60 is still acceptable. A construct can be said to have a high-reliability value if the composite reliability value is > 0.70. Based on the data presented in Table 3, it can be seen that the composite reliability value for all research variables is > 0.70. This shows that all research variables have met composite reliability and have a high-reliability value because the composite reliability value is > 0.7.

Table 3. Construct Validity and Reliability

	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Consumer Buying Decision	0,836	0,881	0,557
Perceived Value	0,925	0,937	0,600
Social Media	0,951	0,956	0,596
eWOM	0,881	0,926	0,808

Structural Model Evaluation

This stage aims to validate the overall structural model. For that purpose, GoF (Goodness of fit) can be used. The GoF index is a single measure to validate the combined performance of measurement models and structural models or descriptive metrics that evaluate how well a particular model creates a covariance matrix for each indicator (Hair et al., 2014). From the results of the structural model fit test using GoF (Goodness of fit) in Table 4, it is known that the structural model has a relative value that meets the suitability criteria so that the research is considered feasible to continue at the next stage.

Table 4. Model Fit

No.	Index	Result	Description
1	SRMR	0,091	*fit*
2	d_ULS	4,926	*fit*
3	d_G	4,459	*fit*
4	Chi-Square	6970,476	*fit*
5	NFI	0,556	*fit*

To assess the reliability of the SEM model estimation, the authors apply the bootstrap test method with 500 bootstrap samples. The test results are shown in the table below, and the bootstrap method is used to calculate the results of the H3 and H4 column moderation analysis. The CR column is calculated using the following formula: CR = Bias/Std Estimates-Bias. The results show that the absolute value of CR is high compared to 2 (*rule of thumb*), and the results of the bootstrap analysis between the two estimates are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level.

Table 3. Path Analysis

Hypothesis	Path	Std. Estimates	C.R.	P	Description
H1 (+)	SMA -> CBB	0,033	16,144	0,000	Supported
H2 (+)	EW -> CBB	0,039	1,698	0,090	Rejected
H3 (+)	Mod EV -> SMA -> CBB	0,036	4,685	0,000	Supported
H4 (+)	Mod EV -> EW -> CBB	0,033	6,597	0,000	Supported

Social Media Advertising has proven to play a role in influencing consumer buying decisions as

seen in the result of H1. This is understandable because social media is capable of representing advanced levels of marketing communications as well as customer feeds which ultimately influence purchasing decisions. Therefore, social media advertising will act as a trigger whether people continue to buy certain products and services or stop at other alternatives (Thaworn, Wei, & Wiriyawit, 2021). We can observe this customer behavior from negative attitudes towards obnoxious online advertisements, resulting in unfavorable consumer behavioral responses such as avoiding online advertisements (Edwards, Li & Lee, 2002). Conversely, the more consumers like online advertising because of its interactivity or personalization, the more positive attitudes they develop toward it and in turn respond favourably (Zeng et al., 2009; Logan et al., 2012). These results are also in line with Duffett (2017) which shows that social media marketing communications produce the most positive cognitive and affective attitudes when accessed via mobile devices among Generation Z, where 62.5% of respondents in this study were under 25 years old.

The opposite result was obtained in the H2 test, where eWOM did not affect customer buying behavior. Although the development of the internet makes it very easy for individuals to give their opinions about products or services, the fact is that buying behavior is not always influenced by this. In fact, the high volume of eWOM messages from strangers often makes it difficult for customers to evaluate the credibility of online reviews (Tsao & Hsieh, 2015; Moran & Muzellec, 2017; Ismagilova et al., 2020). Therefore, the credibility of eWOM is the extent to which someone sees other people's reviews or recommendations as true and factual (Levy & Gvili, 2015). To assess the credibility of online reviews, recipients often rely on the source's expertise (e.g. perceived knowledge of the source) and trustworthiness (e.g. the source's perceived kindness) (Moran & Muzellec, 2017). This opinion is supported by research by Hoang & Tung (2023) which shows that eWOM credibility positively influences online purchases.

Moderation test results on H3 show that experiential value moderates the relationship between social media advertising and consumer buying behavior. The experience value is formed by customer perceptions of goods and service providers (Keng, Huang, Zheng, & Hsu, 2007). Meanwhile, experiential value theory suggests that consumers construct their experiential value through interactions involving the direct or indirect use of goods and services (Mathwick et al., 2001). Thus, today's consumers tend to look for value, choice, and a good customer experience in the process of their interactions with service providers. Therefore, when a customer has formed a customer buying behavior as a result of social media advertising, the buying behavior will be stronger if the customer has had a good experience with the goods or service provider.

The results of the moderation test on H4 show that experiential value moderates the relationship between eWOM and consumer buying behavior. The results of this test are quite interesting because the second hypothesis test shows that eWOM has no role in consumer buying behavior. This shows that experiential value is one of the valuable factors. Mathwick et al. (2001) proposed that experience itself can be rich in value. He reiterated the value of experience as the value obtained through interactions involving direct use or remote appreciation (indirect observation) of goods or services. These results also suggest that perhaps eWOM does not play a role in shaping customer buying behavior, but for customers who already have experiential value for goods or services, the results will be different.

4. Conclusions

The study aimed to determine the effect of advertising on social media TikTok and the value experience on consumer buying behavior with eWOM as a moderator. Testing the four hypotheses that have been carried out, shows that social media advertising plays a positive role in shaping consumer buying behavior. Meanwhile, eWOM has not been proven to influence customer buying behavior. The experiential value moderation variable test results show that the customer's perceived service experience (experiential value) will strengthen the relationship between social media advertising and customer buying behavior. In line with the results of the first moderation test, the results of the second moderation test also show the same output, namely the customer's perceived service experience (experiential value) also strengthens the eWOM relationship and customer purchasing decisions.

This study covers and tests several things, such as the role of social media advertising and eWOM on customer buying decisions and the role of experience value being tested as a moderating variable. For further research, The variables in this study can be developed further such as testing the credibility of eWOM on customer buying behavior. This test is important because the high volume of eWOM messages from strangers

often creates difficulties for customers in evaluating the credibility of online reviews (Tsao and Hsieh, 2015; Moran and Muzellec, 2017; Ismagilova et al., 2020).

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