

TikTok made me buy it: The impact TikTok has on people's purchasing decisions in the fashion industry.

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ABSTRACT

Social media usage has significantly increased in recent years, with TikTok, in particular, setting the pace. This social media platform offers diverse options, including entertainment, while concurrently witnessing a contemporary trend wherein numerous organizations exploit TikTok for commercial purposes, such as promoting their products. The fashion industry is characterized as a relatively nascent sector within the business sectors to debut on TikTok. Fashion brands utilize the platform to exhibit their goods, while consumers use it to research various fashion items and trends. Given the paucity of knowledge surrounding the impact of TikTok on consumer purchasing decision, specifically within the fashion industry, the present study focuses on investigating this further. To achieve this, this study chose a quantitative approach and conducted an online survey, with 205 people participating. The survey aimed to assess the extent of TikTok's influence on purchasing decisions, with a particular emphasis on two facets: the frequency of TikTok usage and the rationale behind utilizing TikTok for clothing purchases. To measure these constructs, an established scale pertaining to the reasons for employing TikTok for clothing selection and subsequent purchase decisions was employed. Analysis revealed that the frequency of using TikTok does not have a direct impact on individuals' purchasing decisions. Moreover, users utilize TikTok for various reasons, with this study highlighting the significance of using TikTok for information-seeking purposes and the platform's accessibility when choosing which clothes to buy. Interestingly, both of these reasons ultimately contribute to influencing purchase decisions. In addition, it is shown that although the research takes into account the reasons that drive people to use TikTok to decide which clothes to buy, men and women make distinct purchase decisions. Although significant results were attained, this study's limitations and suggestions for further research were also established. The limitations involve the unequal distribution of men and women and the chosen sampling technique. Future research recommendations for this study include examining the role of social media influencers and taking into consideration nationality as an influencing factor. Furthermore, future research needs to distinguish the effect of the actual influence of TikTok compared to the effects from those resulting from general exposure across various platforms. In addition, future research should make a critical differentiation between the purchase decision and the actual buying behavior of people.

KEYWORDS: TikTok, Social Media Marketing, TikTok, Purchase decision, Fashion industry

TABLE OF CONTENT

1. Introduction	3
2. Theoretical framework	6
2.1 <i>Social media</i>	6
2.1.1 Social media marketing.....	6
2.2 <i>TikTok</i>	7
2.2.1 Purchase decisions on TikTok	8
2.2.2 Time spent on TikTok.....	8
2.2.3 Reasons for using TikTok	9
2.3 <i>Fashion content on social media</i>	10
2.4 <i>Introducing the hypotheses</i>	12
3. Method.....	14
3.1 <i>Justification of method</i>	14
3.2 <i>Research design</i>	15
3.3 <i>Sampling strategy</i>	16
3.4 <i>Procedure</i>	17
3.5 <i>Reliability and validity</i>	18
3.6 <i>Reliability of scales</i>	18
3.7 <i>Operationalization</i>	18
3.7.1. Demographics	18
3.7.2 The utilization of TikTok.....	19
3.7.3. Fashion content	19
3.7.4. Purchase decision.....	19
3.7.5. Reasons for utilizing TikTok for clothing selection	20
3.8 <i>Respondents</i>	20
3.9 <i>Factor analysis</i>	23
4. Results	25
4.1 <i>The frequency of using TikTok</i>	25
4.2 <i>Reasons that drive participants to use TikTok to decide which clothes to buy</i>	26
5. Discussion and conclusion.....	28
5.1 <i>Key findings</i>	28
5.2 <i>Theoretical and practical implications</i>	32
5.3 <i>Limitations and suggestions for future research</i>	33
5.4 <i>Conclusion</i>	35
References	36
Appendix	40

1. Introduction

Billions of people have integrated the use of digital communication technologies such as the Internet, social media, and other mobile apps into their daily lives (Stephen, 2016). The use of digital communication technologies has stimulated the popularity of social media, and this has increased people's interest in online interaction (Ryan et al., 2017). According to Durgam (2018), social media has emerged as an influential platform within the marketing industry, surpassing its traditional role of entertainment. The efficacy of social media marketing in facilitating seamless connections between companies and their target audience has demonstrated its convenience to the business world. It is a way of establishing the company's impact, image, and branding within groups of potential consumers, followers, or supporters (Durgam, 2018). Marketers recently have been acting rapidly to take advantage of the multiple chances provided by social media since they are aware of this potential.

TikTok, as a rapidly expanding social media platform, has effectively implemented and operationalized these prospects. TikTok is a social networking platform that features a wide range of videos that allow users to publish and consume material (Gesmundo et al., 2022). According to Haryanto et al. (2022), the main focus of the platform is to entertain its users and to spread some content virally. For instance, TikTok is used to promote items, evaluate products, and then suggest them to other users, which is done by creating videos with hit songs included in them ending up building a substantial community. These possibilities are seen as valuable contributions to the platform and could be explained by TikTok's creative and quick-moving algorithm that is valued by youthful audiences globally as these audiences value short-form videos (Araujo et al., 2022).

Considering the possibilities of TikTok, there exist multiple reasons for individuals' utilization of TikTok. According to Napompech (2014), the informative features and widespread accessibility of TikTok play a crucial role in influencing and motivating consumers towards making actual purchase decisions. As this study will dive deeper into the respondents' demographics and the relationship between the reasons for using TikTok and the actual purchase decision, this study will demonstrate to fashion industries how they can use TikTok to effectively reach their target demographic and how to adapt to the rapidly changing fashion trends on TikTok. With this information, fashion companies may determine whether to employ TikTok as a promotional tool for their items.

This study may be valuable not just to fashion businesses, but also to the target audience of these businesses. Due to authority, knowledge, familiarity, and sincerity with their

followers, digital marketing strategies and digital influencers may have a significant impact on the various stages of the consumer journey (Silveira et al., 2022). As the impact of the frequency of using TikTok and the distinguished reasons for buying clothes on purchase decisions will be examined within this study, the target audience will be better aware of the influence TikTok has on their customer journey.

Generation Z is recognized as the generation that creates material for the emerging platform TikTok and dominates the audience on social media because they are totally dependent on technology and internet access for their daily life (Viçtelar, 2019). Despite the fact that Generation Z is considerably captivating, this study is also open to other generations and seeks to concentrate on the various gender types as previous research has shown that both males and females dominate TikTok (Gesmundo et al., 2022). By concentrating on both male and female purchase decisions, this study will address a research gap as previous studies have primarily focused on female buying decisions (Yang & Ha, 2021). This might also be confirmed by Indrawati et al. (2023), who did a study on online product purchases, specifically on the popular platform TikTok. However, the survey had more female respondents (96%) than male respondents (4%), thus the results were more female-oriented. As a result, our study chose to focus on both genders in order to gain a deeper knowledge of male consumer behavior. Given that there is no specific focus on gender, this study desires to broaden the population and will contribute by utilizing a wide scale of around 150 to 250 participants, which is recommended by Araujo et al. (2022), especially since earlier research has been conducted this topic on a small scale.

Furthermore, the surge in popularity of TikTok cannot solely be attributed to its entertainment value, as professionals in the field of social media marketing have increasingly recognized the platform's potential in fostering brand awareness, enhancing audience engagement, and facilitating business growth, making TikTok a highly compatible platform for these objectives (Gesmundo et al., 2022). Especially for the fashion industry, previous research has shown that interest can be raised in purchasing fashion by increasing the visualization of fashion with the TikTok application (Oktaviani & Susilo, 2022). Knowing this, this study decided to focus on the fashion industry as earlier studies simultaneously examined other TikTok business sectors. To better understand how TikTok is affecting one particular business field, Araujo et al. (2022) advise concentrating on that industry more. In addition, Fortuna (2022) validated this because this study did not emphasize a particular sector in their research and recommended that future studies require to investigate this more. This study will close this gap by investigating whether TikTok influenced people's purchasing

decisions by concentrating on the fashion industry. This deductive approach is utilized to build a theoretical foundation that this study aimed to expand by closing the gaps that are outlined above.

Although various studies claim that TikTok is a significant social media platform that is on the rise, further study is necessary to determine how TikTok affects people's purchasing decisions in the fashion industry, which is why the following research question has been developed: *“To what extent does TikTok impact its users' purchasing decisions in the fashion industry?”*

2. Theoretical framework

Within this section, many theories and concepts will be addressed and defined. This component of the investigation is crucial since it will support the findings and lay the groundwork for the analysis' eventual conclusion. An explanation of social media in the fashion industry, including the significance of social media marketing, is given after an introduction to social media in general. Followed by a general discussion, this part will focus especially on TikTok and how users make purchases there as well as how much time they spend there and why.

2.1 Social media

This study was inspired by a number of societal trends that are prevalent today, particularly the role that social media plays in day-to-day life and its changing purpose. The main purpose of social media is networking, namely networking that promotes trust between the parties and communities engaged (Durgam, 2018). In the most general sense, social media is described as any electronic application that enables Internet users to create and share a variety of information through the Internet (PrakashYadav & Rai, 2017). According to Ryan et al. (2017), building social connections is currently a crucial aspect of modern human life. This indicates that people crave to make and establish social connections, join groups and participate actively, engage in discussions with complete strangers, and seek out their friends. In addition, according to Ryan et al. (2017), the degree of participation in internet communication has increased and a sense of community is created. A sense of community is having a connection to a group and feeling valued by that group. People may feel superior about themselves as a result of this emotion, which may increase their level of happiness and life satisfaction. Although mostly associated with offline experiences, people can have a sense of belonging online. This study seeks to concentrate on social media due of its broad potential across many different fields and wide range of options.

2.1.1 Social media marketing

The increased use of social media has given marketers a better platform to communicate with customers, which means that standard business and marketing practices have changed (Hasan & Sohail, 2020). Social media acts as a digital hub for the creation, sharing, and utilization of resources and information that can be utilized to provide more details about various goods, brands, and services (Whiting & Williams, 2013).

Comprehending the significance of this is imperative due to the study's primary emphasis on consumer behavior within social media platforms, wherein social media marketing assumes a pivotal role as a prominent phenomenon. The technological improvements allow people to communicate with both industries and fellow users/consumers, which means that organizations create social media advertising to encourage people to purchase their brand (Araujo et al., 2022). Social media should be used by businesses as a communication tool because it provides them with brand recognition and assists them build relationships that they might not otherwise be able to (Durgam, 2018). In addition, organizations may establish trustworthiness with their customers and forge meaningful connections with them by using social media. However, previous research has shown the growing presence and activity of consumers in social media presents marketers with both opportunities and challenges, as people base their purchasing decisions on interactions with other users in social media (Hasan & Sohail, 2020). By considering the aforementioned factor, we can foster a discerning comprehension of social media marketing and acquire an enhanced insight into the purchasing behaviors exhibited by social media consumers, thereby establishing the fundamental objective of this study.

2.2 TikTok

TikTok has experienced significant growth, particularly among younger generations, establishing itself as a prominent platform in terms of user engagement and adoption, which makes it the appropriate platform to analyze for this investigation (Castillo-Abdul et al., 2022). According to Gesmundo et al. (2022), TikTok could be described as a video application and a social networking platform that encourages users to follow and engage with one another. It allows users to engage themselves by making, watching, and promoting companies through creative short video content, which is seen as a uniqueness. As a result, TikTok has become one of the top developing social media platforms that marketing professionals utilize to reach and engage with their target audience as user involvement enhances the application (Gesmundo et al., 2022). TikTok allows users to create free-of-charge videos with easily available and convenient features and filters; with these capabilities, users are welcome to conduct marketing campaigns on TikTok while interacting with and targeting an immense number of potential consumers (Gesmundo et al., 2022). Moreover, marketers can effectively engage with and sell their products or services to their target demographic, primarily the younger generation, by strategically capitalizing on the influential figures prominent on the TikTok platform (Silveira et al., 2022).

2.2.1 Purchase decisions on TikTok

According to Martini et al. (2022), TikTok has been employed by the younger generation and various industries. Given this premise, TikTok distinguishes itself from its competitors by offering a user-friendly interface that enables all individuals to engage as content creators. The primary objective of this research is to comprehensively explore the potential of this platform by examining the impact of TikTok users' purchasing choices, thereby infusing a novel viewpoint into this study and enhancing its pertinence. Previous research has shown that TikTok-based promotional content significantly increases consumers' interest in making purchases (Martini et al., 2022). According to Kim and Ko (2010), understanding consumer purchasing behavior is critical for a company's ability to attract and retain customers and obtain a large profit. The influence of customer interactions on purchase decisions is attributed to the underlying perspective of a brand. The relationship between customers and fashion brands is among others being established through Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM), where information about a good or service is spread from person to person (Saleem & Ellahi, 2017). TikTok users possess considerable influence over their followers by leveraging electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) through the expression of their perspectives on various products and services via video content. According to Lim et al. (2017), consumer behavior in terms of recommending products and services as well as their decision to purchase them can be influenced by persuasive messaging from social media figures. Yet, media figures must keep in mind that it is crucial to be viewed as credible when endorsing products, seeing competence and dependability as the most critical factors. This means that when users perceive for example fashion hauls as credible, fashion businesses could result in both more people becoming aware of a brand and higher sales. By further examining if TikTok can have an impact on people's purchase decisions and whether the advancements on TikTok actually result in increased sales, this study will provide a contribution to the information.

2.2.2 Time spent on TikTok

One of the most popular pastimes for the youth is using social media, and studies have shown that many of them spend many hours online engaging in activities, for example watching short videos (Gray, 2018). According to Zhao (2021), short videos have been deemed high-frequency applications, with 56.9% of consumers utilizing them for more than 60 minutes per day and 41.3% using them many times daily. Although a small video may only take 15 seconds, people who use apps like TikTok to pass the time sometimes end up

watching significantly longer videos than that without even realizing it. Given this, the frequency with which the younger generation uses TikTok should be regarded as a valuable theory, as it can be believed that this will result in increased exposure to a number of firms that have ported their identities over to TikTok. This study aims to investigate the potential influence of TikTok usage frequency on individuals' purchasing decisions, as previous research has not explicitly elucidated the association between these variables.

TikTok is extremely affordable and simple to use for consumers of all ages as the start of the next video can be started after the previous video has finished playing by simply swiping upward on the screen. However, the generation that is spending most of the time on TikTok is Generation Z. The fact that they are the first generation to have never experienced a society without the Internet is by far their most significant attribute (Cervi, 2021). The internet has shaped their lifestyles and is now an integral part of them. Generation Z viewers watch an average of 68 videos each day, which means they can organize content more quickly than before and can watch videos quite frequently (Cervi, 2021).

2.2.3 Reasons for using TikTok

Given the increasing use of TikTok and the popularity of social media in general, there are according to Omar & Dequan (2020) a variety of motivations that might be taken into consideration. Beginning with, fulfilling communication and social interaction needs. Second, people document key events and situations in their lives with images or videos and publish them on social media to reflect back on and memorialize them. Thirdly, using TikTok to create original content for self-expression. Fourth, escapism refers to a "pleasant, fun, and joyful" media experience, making it the most prevalent reason for media use investigated in a previous study. Finally, people are driven to use social media to view glimpses into others' lives.

In addition to these more general motivations for using TikTok, the social media platform is currently driving an increase in e-commerce, particularly in the area of clothing purchases (Napompech, 2014). The upcoming trend of the use of social media has stimulated viral marketing and impacted retail sales and brand perception. There are a number of reasons that cause more people to buy more clothes through exposure to these fashion items on social media. To produce an intriguing result about the use of TikTok while analyzing whether or not this would actually lead to the decision to purchase clothes, this study will concentrate on a few causes that have been emphasized. According to Napompech (2014), people desire to be informed about the price, quality, and clothing diversity and be up to date about trendy

styles. Additionally, social media stimulates the aesthetic appeal of clothing and aids consumers in their buying decisions. Electronic Worth-of-Mouth (eWOM) stimulates information about fashion products and aids customers in determining whether a product is appropriate (Napompech, 2014). Research into the impending eWOM has demonstrated that communities are formed and that these groups have an interest in fashion (Napompech, 2014). Moreover, marketers require to be cognizant of the consumer desire for freebies and discounts (Napompech, 2014). By examining the reasons that drive people to use TikTok to make clothing selection and exploring the effects of these traits, this study will contribute to the rising trend that earlier research has highlighted. Ultimately, there can be inferred that people use the media to satisfy their needs and feel positive about themselves, which is in line with consumer behavior, which is the act of looking for, purchasing, utilizing, assessing, and discarding goods and services in the hopes of meeting one's requirements (Fortuna, 2022; Sharabati et al., 2022). Existing literature has demonstrated that ensuring TikTok content aligns with customer expectations is crucial for its efficacy in influencing purchase decisions among TikTok users. Consequently, this study aims to investigate the impact of reasons for using TikTok on users' purchasing behavior.

2.3 Fashion content on social media

According to Kim and Ko (2010), luxury brands are turning to social media to deliver value to their customers in every manner imaginable. The luxury fashion business has begun to benefit from advanced technology, while companies and customers are creating and strengthening ties through social networking platforms. One way that designers use social media to express themselves is by posting videos, commercials, backstage photos, fashion shows, and other materials that give the brand a distinctive perspective (Ahmad et al., 2015). This study was conducted in response to this commercialization in social media, making it essential knowledge. One way how fashion is expressed on social media is through blogs. Within these blogs, blog writers inform their readers about the latest trends and products within the fashion industry (Mohr, 2013). The blog's potent individual, personal, widespread, and elite point of view is what makes it so successful. Through the provision of engaging experiences, readers are afforded the opportunity to articulate their perspectives and engage in critical discourse pertaining to fashion.

There is an increasing trend in which there is more fashion content than such writing blogs, as witnessed on social media platforms such as TikTok. TikTok is a well-known social networking tool that is widely used. It is well-known for its users' swift, visually pleasing

videos that are generated and shared, and since the COVID pandemic known as one of the most important social media platforms for the fashion business (Pangalila & Aprilianty, 2022). The fashion industry's and customers' own marketing techniques have changed as a result of the developments in social media communication, particularly on TikTok (Castillo-Abdul et al., 2022). As a result of this transition, consumers are no longer merely passive recipients of content from various fashion brands. Besides dancing, music, and comedy videos, TikTok users also enjoy watching fashion haul videos. Short films called "fashion hauls" exhibit and discuss recent fashion trends made by TikTok users (Pangalila & Aprilianty, 2022). As the current generation is enthusiastic and vocal about their interests and preferences, brands and organizations must capitalize on this opportunity to present their offerings through relevant, topical, and relatable short-form videos on TikTok, which will be an efficient marketing tactic for increasing purchase decision among today's generation (Araujo et al., 2022). Understanding this, our study will respond to this relevance by providing a fresh perspective.

As was previously mentioned, bloggers that write reviews of fashion-related businesses and goods are one form of disseminating material and are regarded as major influencers (Lim et al., 2017). However, in the modern world, influencers produce content in the form of movies and images on a variety of topics for a number of brands in addition to writing recommendations on their blogs. According to Lim et al., (2017), influencers on social media advertise various goods and keep their fans informed about new trends and product information. When compared to other marketing tactics, social media influencers have emerged as potential brand ambassadors in recent years and are thought to be the most affordable and successful marketing strategies. This is shown in previous research as 82% of the people claimed they are most inspired and persuaded by their favorite influencer and find them to be more convincing and trustworthy (Lim et al., 2017). This research endeavor will examine, among other factors, individuals' exposure to fashion items, deeming this knowledge significant due to the perceived role of influencers in disseminating various products to the public.

In addition, many types of influencers can have various effects on individuals, which is the distinction between micro, macro, and celebrity influencers (Silveira et al., 2022). Celebrity social media influencers are a common strategy used by companies to promote their businesses, goods, and services (Schouten et al., 2020). Companies hope to spur consumers' desire to buy or use the recommended good or service by projecting a celebrity's favorable image and traits onto the brand. When customers perceive a congruence between an

influencer's beliefs and characteristics with their own, there is a heightened likelihood of the adoption of the influencer's opinions, attitudes, and behaviors (Schouten et al., 2020).

Research demonstrates that a social media influencer can have a greater impact on a person when they can relate to them and perceive similarities, which makes it pertinent data for our study because it may have an impact on how social media users behave while making purchases.

2.4 Introducing the hypotheses

The execution of this investigation was contingent upon the formulation and subsequent testing of numerous hypotheses. This section is intended to present an overview of the diverse hypotheses that have emerged as a consequence. According to Gray (2018), more and more people are spending time online. This resulted in TikTok, a rapidly growing and well-liked short video app, becoming a famous platform that is commonly used as a way to pass the time and even causing people to become involved in numerous films with different topics. When people are caught on TikTok, they are exposed to a number of videos that cover a variety of topics. As a result, they could also be exposed to a number of items, which may influence their decision to make a larger purchase.

In addition, TikTok is viewed as a vital application for the fashion sector because one of the key subjects that are being observed on the platform are the various fashion trends and brands, which increases the likelihood that individuals will be more willing to determine whether to purchase a piece of fashion (Pangalila & Aprilianty, 2022). The investigation of TikTok usage frequency holds significant importance as previous research has established the platform's likely enduring relevance and its potential impact on actual purchasing behavior. Nonetheless, these prior studies have not extensively explored the association between TikTok frequency and purchase decision-making, whereas this present study endeavors to address this. Given this contextual consideration, the ensuing hypothesis is devised.

H1a: The frequency of using TikTok is a positive predictor of purchase decision in the fashion industry.

With the emergence of TikTok as a popular platform, individuals have increasingly adopted this application for multifarious reasons. According to Napompech (2014), TikTok has had a wide range of effects, including the creation of viral marketing phenomena and a considerable increase in fashion industry sales, beyond just being entertaining. It has been

demonstrated that informational reasons and accessibility are significant determinants of various consumer purchase decisions (Napompech, 2014). Nevertheless, prior research only scratched the surface of the actual purchase decisions concerning fashion items; thus, this study endeavors to thoroughly investigate these aspects, with particular emphasis on the aforementioned two reasons. For instance, TikTok may inform users about various fashion trends and items, making it easier for users to learn about these trends and eventually purchase the fashion items that are displayed on TikTok. Because there are various elements that affect people's decisions to make purchases on social media, it is crucial to comprehend why individuals use TikTok and whether this has an effect on purchases made in the fashion industry. As a result, the following two hypotheses are developed, offering a unique insight:

H2a: Using TikTok for informational reasons is a positive predictor of purchase decision in the fashion industry.

H2b: Using TikTok for its accessibility is a positive predictor of purchase decision in the fashion industry.

3. Method

To better understand how the research is conducted, the method that was employed is outlined in the section that follows. This section starts with a justification of the methodology and then on to the research design. The sample process will next be discussed, followed by the complete procedure. The method will be reviewed in detail, including the validity and reliability of the research, which will be followed by a thorough evaluation of the entire operationalization. Finally, a description of the respondents will be discussed, and the factor analysis will be introduced to describe the fundamental concepts of the scale for the reasons that drive people to use TikTok to select which clothes to buy.

3.1 Justification of method

This study used quantitative methodologies, to evaluate the impact TikTok has on its users' purchase decisions. Quantitative research focuses on correlation and causation, uses measurement and description to answer research questions, and seeks to demonstrate statistically significant interactions (Ingham-Broomfield, 2014). Examining the relationship between variables in quantitative research allows for testing objective theories. This means that quantitative methodology makes the outcomes more straightforward, and it can make data gathering and summarization quicker (Babbie, 2011). As a result, a quantitative approach is suited for this study as this study investigated the correlation between the influence of TikTok and the purchase decisions of its users. This could be achieved by the use of correlation research, which examines the relationships between the variables of interest, without the researcher actively intervening (Ingham-Broomfield, 2014). As a result, with the use of a quantitative method, this study has gained a deeper understanding of the attitudes towards TikTok, and the purchase decisions created through this platform.

Within a quantitative methodology, this study made use of a survey to answer the research question. Surveys can be defined as “the means for gathering information about the characteristics, actions, or opinions of a large group of people” (Glasow, 2005, p. 1). According to Glasow (2005), survey research, which frequently involves analyzing the correlations between variables, is used to quantitatively define particular characteristics of a given population. Additionally, survey research uses a specific sample of the population so that results can subsequently be applied to the entire population. As a result, demographic information about the composition of the sample can be gathered. Given these assertions, survey research is thought to be an appropriate method for obtaining data given that the goal

of this study is to investigate the relationship between TikTok's influence and users' purchase intentions. This study sets itself apart from other studies by concentrating on TikTok particularly and on two distinct crucial areas, namely the frequency of using TikTok and the reasons that drive participants to use TikTok for clothing selection since these two factors surfaced in earlier studies.

Additionally, survey research can determine the demographics of the population, which is important for this study because Generation Z, who are defined between a specific age range, use TikTok primarily (Viştelar, 2019). As a result, survey research will therefore produce a deeper, more straightforward result. Because TikTok has such a large user base and this study was unable to explore every user, survey research is highly helpful because it allows the results to be generalized. In addition, the survey was created on Qualtrics and was posted online, which is seen as the most practical.

3.2 Research design

The research design will be further detailed after the justification of the method has been covered. According to this study, quantitative and survey research is appropriate. The impact of TikTok on purchase decisions is examined in this study, and in order to gain deeper insights, this study employed a survey design with several questions that clearly addressed the research question. Since there are no restrictions on nationality, the survey is conducted online to provide it more substance and is generated on Qualtrics. In order to gather the data, those who actively utilize the TikTok platform are the unit of analysis for this study's survey. Using individuals as your unit of analysis is crucial since you can describe and explain the features better (Babbie, 2011). In addition, by combining the results of the individuals, generalizations about the population they belong to will be produced, which provides the study with a more concrete meaning (Babbie, 2011).

The aim of this study is to discover to what extent TikTok impacts the purchase decision of TikTok users within the fashion industry. To do this, the influence of TikTok is defined as the frequency of using the application and the reasons that drive participants to use TikTok to choose whether to buy clothes or not. The frequency of using TikTok and the reasons that drive participants to use TikTok to choose whether to buy clothes or not are viewed as independent variables for each hypothesis, while purchase decision is viewed as the dependent variable. The outcome of the survey provided a better insight into the relationship between these variables. SPSS was used to analyze the survey results. This software can look at the relationships between concepts formulated within this study. The independent variable

"reasons that drive participants to use TikTok to choose whether to buy clothes or not" has eleven items on a Likert scale, and a factor analysis will be used to condense these items. Earlier, some hypotheses had been put forth, and the results of the SPSS tests might either accept or refuse them. The data will be cleansed, and invalid responders will be eliminated before the test is run. To accept or refuse the hypotheses, this study made use of a hierarchical multiple regression.

3.3 Sampling strategy

Within this study, the population that was investigated is not specified as every insight could be considered valuable. However, we take into consideration that Generation Z is the primary audience that is using TikTok. The population can be described as a group (often made up of individuals) about which we wish to draw judgments (Babbie, 2011). To gather participants for this study, this study made use of non-probability sampling. According to Babbie (2011), there is no control over how representative a sample is, within non-probability sampling. Moreover, the sample can only be gathered if the researcher intends to examine the traits of people passing the sampling location at particular times. However, there are multiple sub-sampling methods within non-probability sampling and this study made use of two of these sampling methods. To begin, convenience sampling is a type of non-probability sampling in which observational units are chosen based on convenience, which is considered a beneficial sampling approach since it makes it easier to reach a large number of participants (Babbie, 2011). This sampling technique is ideal for this study because it intends to reach an extensive number of active TikTok users. To enlarge this sample, this study made use of snowball sampling, which is a non-probability sampling technique in which each participant is given the opportunity to suggest potential participants (Babbie, 2011). This is quite helpful because active TikTok users are certain to know other active TikTok users, which increases the size of the study's sample to 150-250 participants. As the survey is published on Qualtrics, it was simple to generate a link to the survey, which resulted in sharing the survey online on Instagram stories and through the creation of a LinkedIn post to encourage people to fill in the survey. This study chose Instagram and LinkedIn since this study is aware that reaching your own outreach causes many individuals to be willing to complete the survey. Considering the audience on Instagram and LinkedIn, this study can be aimed at a variety of age groups. To increase the number of responders, the questionnaire was also posted on a survey website. People on these websites are willing to take part in other surveys, and in exchange, they look for responses for their own surveys. As a result, many

studies will be motivated. It was specifically decided not to post the survey on TikTok since it is difficult to distribute surveys on TikTok and it is not thought of as a valuable way to reach a substantial audience.

3.4 Procedure

This section will provide an organized summary of the structure of the survey. Three main parts made up the survey designed for this study: an opening message, a questionnaire, and a closing message. As there is no exclusion of any nationality, the survey is written in English and distributed to everybody, making it easier for everyone to complete. During administration and data collection, every questionnaire has the same questions and meaning and will stay completely identical. As earlier mentioned, the survey started with an opening message, in which the aim of the study was explained, which is in this study the influence TikTok has on purchase decisions. The survey can be done fully anonymously and at any time of day to increase the study's confidentiality. Moreover, the contact information was made available at the start to ensure that participants may be reached with specific queries or concerns.

Moving on to the survey's outline, starting with the welcome statement and the informed consent. The purpose of informed consent is to obtain consent for the use of the data to produce future results. The questions were then provided, starting with the demographic inquiries, which cover inquiries about each participant's age, gender, and degree of education. Following the demographic information, a question about how frequently they use TikTok is inquired, and then a question about how many hours a day they spend on the social media platform. The next question is how frequently people view fashion related TikTok content each day. A question is then posed, in order to discover where people obtain their inspiration for fashion purchases. In addition, a new inquiry that uses a Likert scale to measure participants' purchase decisions is introduced. There were three items on this Likert scale. Following that, a question was posed about how frequently people purchase fashion items after observing them on TikTok. This is followed up by the question of what kind of clothes they purchase after seeing fashion items on TikTok. A Likert scale is introduced at the end of the survey to gauge the reasons that drive people to use TikTok to select which clothes to buy. The Likert scale consisted of eleven items.

3.5 Reliability and validity

When conducting this study, it is important that the outcomes are considered valid and reliable. According to Heale and Twycross (2015, p. 66), validity can be defined as “the extent to which a concept is accurately measured in a quantitative study”. This is achieved in this study by measuring the variables “purchase decisions” and “reasons for using TikTok for buying clothes” using two scales that have already been used in previous studies. As this scale has been shown to be valid in earlier studies, this study made the assumption that the outcomes will be valid. In addition, reliability within a study is the dependability of a measurement (Heale & Twycross, 2015). This is achieved in this study by designing a survey with identical questions that are given to every participant. As a result, internal consistency is obtained, meaning that the items on a Likert-scale measure one single factor.

3.6 Reliability of scales

The reliability of the scales employed was examined before doing the various studies and evaluating the various hypotheses. The reliability of the scale was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha. The first scale that was introduced was the one measuring the purchase decision of the participants. The scale consisted of three items and was considered reliable, with a Cronbach's alpha of .90, indicating that internal consistency was considered valuable.

With a Cronbach's alpha of .90, demonstrating acceptable internal consistency, the eleven-item scale used to analyze the reasons for using TikTok to buy clothes online is also regarded as reliable. However, a factor analysis was carried out to identify the fundamental concepts contained in this scale, whereas informational reasons and accessibility were the ones to emerge from this factor analysis. Informational reasons had a Cronbach's alpha of .86 and accessibility had a Cronbach's alpha of .76, which makes these concepts reliable.

3.7 Operationalization

3.7.1. Demographics

Initially, the demographic variables were introduced. These demographics consisted of age, gender, and educational level. The question for age is designed as a categorical question, giving the answer option “18-24”, “25-34”, “35-44”, “45-54”, “55-64” and “more than 65” (See Appendix A). The answer options for gender are designed as “female”, “male”, “non-binary”, and “prefer not to say” (See Appendix A). At last, the answer options for education level are “no schooling completed”, “primary school”, “secondary school”, “associate

degree”, “bachelor’s degree”, “master’s degree”, “professional degree” or “doctorate degree” (See Appendix). The variables age and gender were employed as control variables in the analyses conducted.

3.7.2 The utilization of TikTok

There are three independent factors and one dependent variable in this study. These variables were assessed through an online survey. The survey began by interrogating a question that will form the first independent variable, namely *TikTok frequency*. Here the answer options are “about once a day” “several times a day”, “several times a week”, “once a month”, “a few times a month”, “never”, or the answer option “other” (See Appendix). The variable is regarded as a continuous variable in the analysis. Furthermore, the survey will ask how many hours they spend on TikTok per day. This question will not be used in the actual analysis but is designed to obtain an indication of how much time they spend there. Here the answer options are “1-2 hours”, “3-4 hours”, “5-6 hours”, “7-8 hours” or “more than 8” (See Appendix). Questions were developed for this study, but they were also inspired by reading other studies and surveys that had already been developed. These inquiries can therefore be regarded as important ones.

3.7.3. Fashion content

The question, "How often do you see fashion-related content on TikTok per day?" is created to measure people's exposure to fashion items on the platform. The answer options to this question are “never”, “rarely”, “occasionally”, “frequently” and “very frequently” (See Appendix). It is vital to this study to determine whether people are exposed to fashion items through the algorithm since without exposure, consumers may not be persuaded to make a purchase. This variable was employed as a control variable. To ascertain with certainty, numerous earlier studies served as inspiration for this question.

3.7.4. Purchase decision

After the fashion-related question, the dependent variable was measured, which is purchase decision. First, it asks a question that is not used for actual analysis but gives an indication of where they get their fashion inspiration. The question is formulated as “Where do you usually get your inspiration for fashion purchases?”, here the answer options are “shopping websites”, “social media”, “friends and family”, “in-store” or “television”. To

measure the dependent variable *purchase decision*, this study made use of the scale from Song and Yoo (2016). The scale consisted of three items whereas the items are formulated to measure the purchase decision of the participants. This scale consists of statements “My desire to visit fashion websites is caused by TikTok”, “TikTok influences my intention to make a purchase from the fashion websites” or “TikTok made me buy a fashion item” (See Appendix). The answer options were designed as a 7-point Likert scale, where 1 = “strongly disagree and 7 = “strongly agree” (See Appendix). The variable purchase decision is used as a continuous variable within the analyses. In addition, this study questioned “How often do you purchase fashion items after seeing them on TikTok?” here the answer options are “never”, “rarely”, “occasionally”, “frequently”, and “very frequently” (See Appendix). Additionally, a further question is posed interrogating “What kind of clothing do you purchase on fashion websites after seeing these items on TikTok?”, here the answer options are “I don’t buy clothes on TikTok”, “basic clothes”, “trendy clothes”, “streetwear”, “vintage clothing”, “sportswear”, “loungewear”, “swimwear”, “accessories”, or the answer option “other”. Both these questions are not used for the actual analysis, but these are provided as an indication of the samples’ representation.

3.7.5. Reasons for utilizing TikTok for clothing selection

Following these questions, the second independent variable delves into *the reasons motivating participants to utilize TikTok for clothing selection*. The objective of this scale is to explore the diverse factors that drive individuals to utilize TikTok for their clothing selection. This independent variable was measured by a scale from Napompech (2014). The scale consisted of eleven items which entail statements such as “TikTok can provide me with information about clothes”, “I can ask other users questions on TikTok to learn more about clothing”, etc. The answer options were designed as a 7-point Likert scale, where 1 = “strongly disagree and 7 = “strongly agree” (See Appendix). Before the analysis, a factor analysis was done. From this analysis, two main factors emerged: using TikTok as an information source and using its accessibility when choosing what clothes to buy. These two factors served as the independent variables in the two sub-hypotheses.

3.8 Respondents

This study received 205 respondents at the time when the survey was closed, of whom 177 were deemed useful. This study defined the various demographics of these participants,

including age (N = 177), gender (N = 177), and educational level (N = 177), prior to conducting the various analyses. This study used descriptive statistics to characterize the participants in order to ascertain their demographics, and it was determined that the minimum age of the participants is 18-24 years old, and the maximum age of the participants is more than 65 years old ($M = 1.26$, $SD = .72$). In addition, this study incorporated demographic descriptive information as well as demographic frequency information, allowing it to draw the conclusion that the majority of the participants were between the ages of 18 and 24 because 81,9 percent of them fell within this age range. In addition, the study found that 28,2 percent of participants were classified as male, 70,6 percent as female, and 1,1 percent as non-binary. The analysis included not just the frequency of gender and age, but also the participants' educational background. There were various educational levels present, but the majority of participants—58.8%—had bachelor's degrees.

In addition, several extra questions were answered in order to gain a better understanding of TikTok users' purchasing habits, their time spent on the platform as well as their exposure to fashion-related information and fashion items. According to the study, 35 percent of people are exposed to fashion-related content on a regular basis. Furthermore, given that the actual analysis does not include the question of how long users spend on the platform, it has been demonstrated that 75.7% of respondents fall into the category of 1-2 hours. Moreover, 66.1 percent of consumers derive their fashion inspiration from social media. There was also a question about whether individuals buy fashion products after seeing them on TikTok, and the clear majority said that they rarely - 40.1% - and occasionally - 31.6% - do. The final supplementary question seeks to ascertain what type of clothing consumers purchase, with 41.2 percent purchasing trendy items.

Table 1. *Demographic information*

Demographics	Specifications	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	50	28.2%
	Female	125	70.6%
	Non-binary	2	1.1%
Age	18-24	145	81.9%
	25-34	26	14.7%
	35-44	2	1.1%
	45-54	2	1.1%
	55-64	0	0%

Educational level	More than 65	2	1.1%
	Primary school	1	0.6%
	Secondary school	33	18.6%
	Associate degree	19	10.7%
	Bachelor's degree	104	58.8%
	Master's degree	19	10.7%
	Doctorate degree	1	0.6%
Fashion-related content exposure	Never	4	2.3%
	Rarely	31	17.5%
	Occasionally	52	29.4%
	Frequently	62	35%
	Very frequently	28	15.8%
Fashion inspiration	Shopping website	24	13.6%
	Social media	117	66.1%
	Friends and family	9	5.1%
	In-store	26	14.7%
	Television	1	0.6%
	Never	42	23.7%
Buying frequency of fashion items after TikTok exposure	Rarely	71	40.1%
	Occasionally	56	31.6%
	Frequently	7	4.0%
	Very frequently	1	0.6%
	I don't buy clothes on TikTok	56	31.6%
Kind of clothing	Basic clothes	9	5.1%
	Trendy clothes	73	41.2%
	Streetwear	12	6.8%
	Vintage clothing	4	2.3%
	Sportswear	9	5.1%
	Loungewear	3	1.7%
	Swimwear	1	0.6%
	Accessories	9	5.1%
	Other	1	0.6%

TikTok hours	1-2 hours	134	75.7%
	2-4 hours	35	19.8%
	5-6 hours	4	2.3%
	More than 8 hours	1	0.6%

3.9 Factor analysis

A factor analysis was conducted to determine the fundamental concepts behind the reasons people use TikTok to choose which clothes to buy scale. The 11 items which were Likert-scale based were entered into factor analysis using Principal Components extraction with Varimax rotation based on a fixed number of factors, whereas to expect 2 factors, $KMO = .89$, $\chi^2 = (N = 177, 55) = 919.01$, $p < .001$. The resultant model explained 59.1% of the variance in reasons for using TikTok to buy clothes online. Factor loadings of individual items onto the two factors found are presented in Table 1. The factors found were:

Informational reasons. The first factor included six items all related to informational reasons for using TikTok for clothing selection. This contained items about TikTok, which provides information about clothing, allows users to question other users about clothing, makes it simple and quick to get clothing-related information, etc.

Accessibility. The second factor included five items all related to accessibility for using TikTok for clothing selection. This contained items about TikTok, which offers a variety of brands, offers a variety of clothing types, making it simple and quick to purchase clothing from internet retailers, etc.

Table 2. *Factor analysis*

	Informational reasons	Accessibility reasons
TikTok can provide me with information about clothes	.82	

I can ask other users questions on TikTok to learn more about clothing	.81	
TikTok users are recommending clothing that might be interesting	.78	
TikTok makes it simple and quick to access information regarding clothing	.74	
TikTok offers realistic clothing content	.57	
Trendy clothing can be found on TikTok	.54	
TikTok's fashion-related channels frequently give out free items		.79
TikTok offers discounts on fashion items		.58
There is variety in brands		.58
TikTok makes it simple and quick to purchase clothing from internet retailers		.55
There is a variety in clothing types		.53

<i>R</i> ²	.49	.11
<i>Cronbach's α</i>	.86	.76

4. Results

The results of the survey, which were based on data and statistical analysis, will be discussed in this section of the study. All people were eligible to participate in the survey, which was carried out online and in an anonymous manner, and where TikTok members were viewed as helpful. The purpose of the study was to determine the influence TikTok has on purchase decisions within the fashion industry. The results section of the study will commence with the testing of hypotheses, wherein hierarchical multiple regression will be employed to assess both hypotheses.

4.1 The frequency of using TikTok

To determine whether their frequent use of TikTok has an effect on their purchase decision-making in the fashion industry, the first hypothesis was developed:

H1: The frequency of using TikTok is a positive predictor of purchase decision in the fashion industry.

The independent variable within this hypothesis is *the frequency of using TikTok*, which is defined as a continuous variable. Moreover, *purchase decision* was defined as the dependent variable and also considered as a continuous variable. In addition, three more variables were added as control variables, which were *age*, *gender*, and *fashion-related content exposure*. Before conducting the actual analysis, the variables *age* and *gender* were dummy coded. A hierarchical multiple regression analysis was conducted with purchase decision score as criterion. The variables *age*, *gender*, and *fashion-related content exposure* were included in the first block and *TikTok frequency* was added in the second block. When *age* ($\beta = .07, p = .227$), *gender* ($\beta = -.12, p = .091$) and *fashion-related content exposure* ($\beta = .54, p = <.001$) were used as predictors the model reached significance, $R^2 = .37, F(3,173) = 34.45, p = <.001$. However, adding TikTok frequency ($\beta = -.06, p = .366$) did not improve the predictive value of the model significantly, $\Delta R^2 = .00, F(1,172) = .82, p = .366$, while *fashion-related content exposure* did stay significant ($\beta = .52, p = <.001$). Consequently, the frequency of TikTok usage does not affect people's purchasing decisions. Thus, H1 has to be rejected.

4.2 Reasons that drive participants to use TikTok to decide which clothes to buy

People use TikTok for a variety of reasons to determine whether and where they can purchase clothing. This makes the connection between these reasons and their purchasing decision rather intriguing, and the following hypothesis is developed to explore their relationship:

H2a: Using TikTok for informational purposes is a positive predictor of purchase decision in the fashion industry.

Using TikTok for informational reasons is classified as a continuous variable, much like the variable *purchase decision*. In addition, two more variables were added as control variables, which were *age* and *gender*. Before conducting the actual analysis, the variables *age* and *gender* were dummy coded. A hierarchical multiple regression analysis was conducted with purchase decision score as criterion. The variables *age and gender* were included in the first block and *informational reasons* was added in the second block. When *age* ($\beta = .15, p = .029$) and *gender* ($\beta = -.36, p = <.001$) were used as predictors the model reached significance, $R^2 = .15, F(2,174) = 15.73, p = <.001$. However, adding informational reasons ($\beta = .51, p = <.001$) improved the predictive value of the model significantly, $\Delta R^2 = .23, F(1,173) = 65.69, p = <.001$, with *gender* continuing to be significant ($\beta = -.19, p = .003$). Consequently, using TikTok for information seeking to choose which clothes to buy does affect people's purchasing decisions. Thus, H2a is accepted.

In addition to informative reasons, the relationship between purchasing decision and TikTok's accessibility has been investigated. The following hypothesis was developed to examine the relationship between these variables:

H2b: Using TikTok for its accessibility is a positive predictor of purchase decision in the fashion industry.

Since *using TikTok for accessibility reasons* is a continuous variable, as is the variable *purchase decision*, this study chose to conduct a hierarchical multiple regression analysis with *purchase decision* score as criterion. In addition, two more variables were added as control variables, which were *age* and *gender*. Before conducting the actual analysis, the variables *age* and *gender* were dummy coded. The variables *age and gender* were included in the first

block and *accessibility reasons* was added in the second block. When age ($\beta = .15, p = .029$) and gender ($\beta = -.36, p = <.001$) were used as predictors the model reached significance, $R^2 = .15, F(2,174) = 15.73, p = <.001$. However, adding accessibility reasons ($\beta = .35, p = <.001$) improved the predictive value of the model significantly, $\Delta R^2 = .12, F(1,173) = 27.34, p = <.001$, with gender continuing to be significant ($\beta = -.30, p = <.001$). Consequently, using TikTok for its accessibility to choose which clothes to buy does affect people's purchasing decisions. Thus, H2b is accepted.

5. Discussion and conclusion

Social media is playing a significant role in the field of marketing as a result of the impending digitization since social media can be a viable choice to build brand recognition and a community that would not be possible to construct in this digital age without social media (Durgam, 2018). TikTok is leading the way among the various social media platforms because it is the one that is thought to be expanding the fastest, particularly among youthful people (Castillo-Abdul et al., 2022). This could be explained by the availability of short movies and a wide variety of content, where users can interact with each other (Gesmundo et al., 2022). Among this variety of content, fashion-related content is seen as an emerging trend, with fashion companies capitalizing on it (Pangalila & Aprilianty, 2022). However, little is known about how TikTok affects the purchase decision in the fashion industry. This study will close this knowledge gap by exploring this impact. How this gap is filled by this study will be shown by addressing the results of the various hypotheses, while we will highlight the key findings. Followed by the theoretical and practical consequences, limitations, and recommendations for further study. Finally, a succinct summary of the main findings and key takeaways will be covered in the conclusion.

5.1 Key findings

The primary key findings will be discussed in this section and an answer to the following research question will be given: *“To what extent does TikTok impact its users' purchasing decisions in the fashion industry?”*. Two hypotheses were developed in order to adequately answer the research question, with the second hypothesis divided into two sub-hypotheses. The first hypothesis was to determine whether the frequency of using TikTok influences their purchasing decisions in the fashion industry. Additionally, a second hypothesis is developed to investigate whether people's reasons for using TikTok to decide which clothes to buy are influencing their actual purchase decision. This hypothesis is broken into two sub-hypotheses that examine the impact of TikTok's informative and accessibility reasons for purchasing clothes on their actual purchasing decisions.

To begin with, the first hypothesis is formulated as follows: *“The frequency of using TikTok is a positive predictor of purchase decision in the fashion industry”*. This hypothesis was tested by using a hierarchical multiple regression with gender, age, and fashion-content exposure as control variables. In particular, adding gender as a control variable fills a research gap as earlier studies tended to focus more on women and did not look deeper into the

variations in purchase decisions between men and women. However, the hypothesis was rejected, which means that the frequency of using TikTok does not lead to a difference in purchase decisions. This is an interesting finding considering that other studies have suggested that young people's frequent use of TikTok should be considered a positive notion since more people may become aware of the many businesses using TikTok to advertise their products (Zhao, 2021). Additionally, prior research demonstrated that TikTok-based promotional content significantly increases consumers' interest in making purchases, and since earlier research demonstrated that more people are exposed to content by using TikTok, it was reasonable to assume that spending more time on TikTok increases people's decision to make a purchase (Kim & Ko, 2010). The intriguing point here is that this study found out that frequent TikTok use does not affect people's purchase decisions, which is contradicting these earlier findings.

Furthermore, incorporating the variable frequency of TikTok usage into the analysis, the variables of age and gender revealed no significant difference between men and women, as well as across various age groups, concerning the purchase decision. However, individuals' purchasing decisions are altered when they consume fashion-related content on TikTok, which is an intriguing finding. Fashion-related content, such as fashion hauls, is an example of the type of content that may be found on TikTok. Previous studies have shown that short videos titled "fashion hauls" showcase and discuss recent fashion purchases made by TikTok users (Castillo-Abdul et al., 2022). TikTok users can influence their followers' personal style by sharing these videos with a large audience. Furthermore, this content is frequently utilized for promotional purposes, and earlier studies have shown that TikTok-based promotional content greatly raises consumer interest in purchasing products (Martini et al., 2022). The diverse theoretical propositions presented in this analysis lend support to the finding that consuming fashion-related content positively influences individuals' purchasing decisions. This aligns with previous research indicating that (promoted) content enhances consumers' decisions to make purchases.

After the first hypothesis, the last two sub-hypotheses will be discussed, concentrating on the reasons that drive respondents to use TikTok for choosing which clothes to buy. Hence the study concentrated on these reasons, as according to Napompech (2014), informational and accessibility reasons were the reasons that caused individuals to actually make a purchase. Given that this author did not delve deeper into a particular industry, this study developed a hypothesis centered on the fashion industry. The first sub-hypothesis was formulated in the following manner: *“Using TikTok for informational reasons is a positive*

predictor of purchase decision in the fashion industry” and was considered to be significant and therefore be accepted. This means that the statement that when people use TikTok for information seeking to decide which clothes to buy influences their purchase decision. This could be supported by prior research, which has demonstrated that customer relationships are built on a brand's perspective and that interactions are thought to affect purchasing decisions (Kim & Ko, 2010). This indicates that users of social media websites share information with others and that consumers base their purchasing decisions on information posted on those platforms (Kim & Ko, 2010). When looking more closely at why individuals use TikTok for informational purposes, the main focus is on those who are avid to learn about the cost, quality, variety of apparel, and current fashion trends (Napompech, 2014). Additionally, using TikTok for informational purposes is regarded as meeting consumer demands, which may influence those customers' buying decisions (Fortuna, 2022; Sharabati et al., 2022). This study relates to these earlier studies since it found that TikTok use for informative reasons enhanced people's propensity to buy products. Moreover, when testing this hypothesis, it becomes evident that the gender variable does exert a significant negative effect on the purchase decision, indicating there is a distinction between men and women. This is an intriguing finding since earlier research did not delve deeper into the differentiation between men and women. This does not apply to the variable of age, as it shows a non-significant positive effect on the purchase decision, suggesting no differentiation among different age groups. In conclusion, using TikTok for information seeking to decide which clothes to buy exerts a discernible influence on the purchase decision and aligns with the notion developed by previous studies.

In addition to informational reasons, TikTok's accessibility is thought to be important in terms of actual purchase decisions, whereas this study chooses to focus on the fashion industry and formulated the following hypothesis: *“Using TikTok for accessibility is a positive predictor of purchase decision in the fashion industry”*. We may accept the statement because this hypothesis was proven to be significant. This indicates that when people use TikTok for its accessibility to decide which clothes to buy does influence their purchase decision. This could be supported by earlier research, as it was found that Electronic Worth of Mouth (EWOM) encourages information about fashion products, assists consumers decide whether a product is appropriate or not, and makes information more accessible in this situation (Napompech, 2014). In addition, TikTok makes it easier for users to obtain benefits like free gifts and a variety of discounts, which could be perceived as needs by users and satisfied through TikTok's accessibility, which ultimately leads to a more extensive purchase

decision of fashion items (Napompech, 2014). The accessibility of TikTok was validated in this study, as it demonstrated an increased likelihood for consumers to engage in fashion industry purchases following verification on the platform. Furthermore, considering the inclusion of the variable TikTok usage for its accessibility, the gender variable exhibits a significant negative effect on the purchase decision, indicating a distinction between men and women. This is an intriguing discovery because previous studies did not go deeper into the differences between men and women. However, this observation does not apply to the variable of age, as it shows a non-significant positive effect on the purchase decision, suggesting no difference among different age groups. In conclusion, when individuals consult TikTok for its accessibility to decide which clothes to buy, their purchase decisions are influenced.

When we carried out the analyses, this study concluded that there is no difference between the different age groups. This is an unexpected outcome considering that TikTok is where Generation Z spends the majority of their spare time, according to earlier studies (Cervi, 2021). The average number of videos watched by Generation Z viewers per day is 68, which indicates that they can organize content more quickly than previous generations and can watch videos relatively often (Cervi, 2021). Since it can be assumed that this will cause higher exposure to many businesses that have migrated their identities over to TikTok, the amount of time that the younger generation spends on the app needs to be considered as a useful theory. Brands and organizations must take this into consideration to present their offerings through pertinent, timely, and relatable short-form video commercials on TikTok, which will be an effective marketing tactic for increasing purchase decisions among the current generation (Araujo et al., 2022). The current generation is enthusiastic and vocal about their interests and preferences. This study, however, demonstrated that there is no difference among the different age groups, contrary to earlier data suggesting primarily the younger generation is more willing to make a purchase.

5.2 Theoretical and practical implications

There are some theoretical and practical implications based on the aforementioned findings. Through theoretical and practical implications, this study contributes to academic research, which serves to clarify how TikTok affects purchase decision-making in the fashion industry. There is a shortage of information about men in this field because previous studies have already primarily examined women. This may be viewed as a drawback given that past studies have revealed that males and females equally predominate on TikTok (Gesmundo et al., 2022). By adding both men and women to this study, this gap was filled, and the variable gender was added as a control variable to see if this has any effect. The outcome of this study indicates that there are no significant differences between men and women in their purchase decisions when using TikTok frequently. However, variations do emerge between men and women concerning their purchase decisions when utilizing TikTok for information seeking and its accessibility to decide which clothes to buy. Furthermore, only a small amount of research is conducted on a broad scale, and Araujo et al. (2022) advise expanding the scale for this reason. As there are no restrictions in place, this study increased its scope and included 205 participants, with 177 of them being valuable. This made the study more relevant to the group from which the scale was drawn.

Finally, Araujo et al. (2022) viewed the absence of any inquiry into a specific industry in earlier studies as a deficiency and recommended further research into a specific sector. Not only Araujo et al. (2022), but Fortuna (2022) also suggested concentrating on a certain industry. This study took advantage of that by emphasizing the fashion industry. The fashion industry was specifically chosen because, according to earlier studies you may increase your interest in buying fashion by boosting the visualization of fashion with the TikTok application (Oktaviani & Susilo, 2022). The investigation's possible conclusion is that users who frequently spend much time on TikTok are not willing to make a purchasing decision. However, this study demonstrated that TikTok is used by people for informative reasons and its accessibility for clothing selection that results in actual purchase decisions.

Taking the above-mentioned findings, this study could conclude that people conduct TikTok to decide which clothes to buy and that it does affect their purchase decision. For this reason, there are some practical implications within this study. This study indicated that when considering purchasing fashion items, people turn to TikTok for informative reasons and its accessibility, which resulted in actual purchases. Fashion firms will find this information useful as it will enable them to make an informed decision about whether to use TikTok to market and sell their products. Demographics were also included in the study, which provides

insights into how various demographics differ in their purchase decision and what age groups are active on TikTok. This information is seen to be valuable because it provides fashion companies with transparent insight into the demographic they should target and the best ways to reach them.

This study is useful not only for fashion businesses but also for TikTok users and consumers who buy fashion products. As evidenced by this study's findings, the influence of TikTok on consumer purchase decisions is apparent, which could serve in increasing customers' and TikTok users' consciousness of the platform's impact on their purchasing choices. This study serves as a cautionary reminder of TikTok's persuasive nature, while also highlighting its utility in facilitating informed decision-making and enhancing accessibility in the realm of purchasing.

5.3 Limitations and suggestions for future research

Along with the intriguing results, these discoveries also require critical evaluation, and there are several restrictions that must be considered. Beginning with the sampling method. Non-probability sampling and snowball sampling were used to recruit participants for this study. Although there is a rationale for why this study decided to employ these samplings, there are some downsides that should be taken into account. Non-probability sampling participants are picked primarily for their convenience, and as a result, not everyone has the opportunity to be included in the sample, which may cause biases. According to Babbie (2011), bias implies that those participants are not conventional or representational of the larger populations from which they were drawn. The results of this study cannot, therefore, be applied to the general population. Additionally, snowball sampling is regarded as a sampling technique with several limitations. The sampling technique questions participants to reach out to their own prospective audience and interrogates them to participate in the study as well. This snowball sample has the advantage of reaching a larger audience, but because this study is shared within a specific range, the sampling technique produces some overlapping characteristics, which could result in a potential bias. Snowball sampling and non-probability sampling are useful strategies, but it's important to be aware of their limitations and take more representative research approaches into account in the future. As a potential outcome arising from the employed sampling strategies, there exists an unequal distribution of gender, with women being overrepresented. Even though the findings in this study can be beneficial because previous research has mainly been female-oriented, it is crucial that future research

address these issues in future research by making use of purposive sampling to ensure a more diverse sample, while also achieving a balanced representation of both genders.

Furthermore, the sampling employed in this study has certain limitations that impact the comprehensiveness of the gathered data from the respondents. Notably, the variable "TikTok hours" exhibits minimal variability, given that a majority of participants reported TikTok usage within the range of 1-2 hours. Consequently, the findings of this study are indicative of a considerably homogeneous sample. Given that individuals typically spend only 1-2 hours per day on TikTok, their experiences during other parts of the day might be influenced by alternative sources. Consequently, it becomes challenging to ascertain the specific impact of TikTok on their lives or whether other exposures play a significant role. To address this uncertainty, future studies could conduct experiments aimed at determining the actual influence of TikTok and its features on individuals, distinguishing its effects from those resulting from general exposure across various platforms. In addition, this study did not particularly highlight influencers as a factor that can influence purchase decisions. However, it is widely known that TikTok is a popular medium for influencers. Influencers might assist to encourage people to make purchases among their following, especially in the fashion industry. Future studies should therefore look at whether or not users' TikTok buying decisions are indeed influenced by these influencers.

By utilizing a survey and narrowing its scope to the decision-making process for purchases, this study allows room for individuals to perceive a buying decision as more of an intention rather than a concrete buying behavior. To gain insight into real buying behaviors, future research should explore whether individuals follow through with their purchase decisions, for instance, by analyzing specific links to online stores shared on TikTok. By doing so, future studies can effectively distinguish between the mere decision to buy and the actual act of making a purchase, thus shedding light on this critical differentiation.

At last, nationality might be a crucial factor that considerably changes the findings when taking into account its significance in the study's setting. In fact, because distinct cultures exist in each country, fashion can be perceived in many ways, which could cause some fascinating findings. Future research, for instance, might examine whether cultural differences could affect the impact TikTok has on the fashion industry's purchasing decisions when nationality is taken into account.

5.4 Conclusion

To conclude, this research was designed to provide an answer to the above-mentioned research question, finding out if TikTok has an impact on people's purchase decisions within the fashion industry. Two hypotheses were developed, and analyses were conducted in order to achieve this. Previous studies have demonstrated that TikTok is a new platform with a variety of potential, including opportunities for sales and marketing. However, previous research had certain limitations, prompting the need to focus on particular industries, expand and diversify their scales, and include men within the investigation as previous studies were predominantly centered on women. By undertaking this study, which yielded a number of intriguing findings, these gaps were filled. To answer the research question, the study was divided into two hypotheses. The objective of the first hypothesis was to investigate the impact of TikTok usage frequency on individuals' purchasing decisions. The findings of this study have demonstrated that frequent use of TikTok does not significantly affect people's decisions to make a purchase. Furthermore, the objective of the second hypothesis was to determine whether the reasons that drive people to use TikTok to decide which clothes to buy have an effect on people's purchasing decisions. The second hypothesis was disaggregated into two sub-hypotheses, focusing on the use of TikTok for information seeking deciding which clothes to buy and its use for accessibility in making such decisions. The inference that can be drawn from this is that consumers use TikTok for informative reasons and its accessibility in deciding which clothes to buy and that this does, in fact, influence the decision to purchase an item. Considering these findings, the research question can be answered, indicating that the frequent use of TikTok does not influence the purchase decision significantly. However, TikTok does exert a genuine impact on people's purchasing decisions, primarily due to its role as a readily accessible information source when deciding which clothes to buy. In addition, it is demonstrated while the reasons that drive people to decide which clothes to buy are included within the analysis the purchase decision is different among men and women. Given that prior studies did not place a major emphasis on the inclusion of men, this result fills one of the knowledge gaps previously noted and adds to the body of knowledge. Surprisingly, no significant differences are observed among different age groups, which is intriguing considering prior research indicating Generation Z as the dominant user demographic on TikTok. Armed with this intriguing information and the discovered findings, fashion brands and businesses can factor these insights into their sales and marketing strategies. Furthermore, TikTok users may become more cognizant of the app's influence on their decisions, empowering them to make more informed choices.

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Appendix

My name is Floortje Levering and I am currently writing my thesis for the Media & Creative Industries programme at Erasmus University Rotterdam. The purpose of this study is to look into how TikTok affects people's decisions to buy clothing.

When you participate in this survey, it is on a completely voluntary basis and you will remain completely anonymous. Completing this survey will take approximately 5 minutes.

By continuing to fill out this survey, you agree that your responses will be used for academic purposes. Furthermore, you have the option to leave the survey at any moment.

For questions regarding this survey, please contact us at the following email address:
522316fl@student.eur.nl.

Thank you in advance for your participation!

What is your age?

- 18-24 (1)
- 25-34 (2)
- 35-44 (3)
- 45-54 (4)
- 55-64 (5)
- More than 65 (6)

What is your gender?

- Male (1)
- Female (2)
- Non-binary (3)
- Prefer not to say (4)

What is your educational level?

- No schooling completed (1)
- Primary school (2)
- Secondary school (3)
- Associate degree (4)
- Bachelor's degree (5)
- Master's degree (6)
- Professional degree (7)
- Doctorate degree (8)

How often do you use TikTok?

- About once a day (1)
- Several times a day (2)
- Several times a week (3)
- Once a month (4)
- A few times a month (5)
- Never (6)
- Other (7) _____

How many hours do you spend on TikTok per day?

- 1-2 hours (1)
- 3-4 hours (2)
- 5-6 hours (3)
- 7-8 hours (4)
- More than 8 hours (5)

How often do you see fashion-related content on TikTok per day?

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Occasionally (3)
- Frequently (4)
- Very frequently (5)

Where do you usually get your inspiration for fashion purchases?

- Shopping websites (1)
- Social media (2)
- Friends and family (3)
- In-store (4)
- Television (5)

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements:

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
My desire to visit fashion websites is caused by TikTok. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
TikTok influences my intention to make a purchase from the fashion websites. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
TikTok made me buy a fashion item. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How often do you purchase fashion items after seeing them on TikTok?

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Occasionally (3)
- Frequently (4)
- Very frequently (5)

What kind of clothing do you purchase on fashion websites after seeing these items on TikTok?

- I don't buy clothes on TikTok (1)
- Basic clothes (2)
- Trendy clothes (3)
- Streetwear (4)
- Vintage clothing (5)
- Sportswear (6)
- Lounge wear (7)
- Swimwear (8)
- Accessories (9)
- Other (10) _____

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements: **"I use TikTok to buy fashion items for the following reasons.."**

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
TikTok can provide me with information about clothes. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can ask other users questions on TikTok to learn more about clothing. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
TikTok users are recommending clothing that might be interesting. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
TikTok makes it simple and quick to access information regarding clothing. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There is a variety in brands. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There is a variety in clothing types. (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Trendy clothing can be found on TikTok. (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

TikTok offers realistic clothing content. (8)

TikTok makes it simple and quick to purchase clothing from internet retailers. (9)

TikTok's fashion-related channels frequently give out free items (10)

TikTok offers discounts on fashion items (11)