Factors Influencing Brand Awareness on Social Media Flatforms in Vietnam: The Case of Young Tiktok Users in Ho Chi Minh City

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Abstract: *Nowadays, TikTok has surpassed Instagram to become the second most popular social network in Vietnam after Facebook. This social media flatform has also quickly become a potential marketing channel in the country where one of its apparent impacts on users is increasing their brand awareness. This study focuses on identifying six factors of TikTok marketing activities (i.e.: informativeness, trendiness, customization, interaction, entertainment, and electronic word-of-mouth) that have impact on brand awareness of young TikTok users (18-24 years old) living in Ho Chi Minh City, the largest city of Vietnam. The quantitative research obtains data from 177 valid answers via both online and offline formats. In findings, the study indicates that, in this case, the factor 'interaction' has the most impact on brand awareness, followed by the factor 'customization'. The remaining 'informativeness' and 'entertainment' factors do not have much impact on the issue. As a result, the paper aims to contribute to the current existing literature of the field. Furthermore, as this study does not delve into a specific industry, the paper also hopes to be seen as a general reference point for businesses in relevant marketsto consider when they plan their marketing strategies using this social media flatform.*

Keywords: social media flatform, brand awareness, TikToK, young consumer, Vietnam

1. Introduction

The Covid-19 Pandemic triggered an actual explosion and growth in internet usage. The number of internet users in Vietnam increased by 3.4 million (+4.9%) between 2021 and 2022. According to the Vietnam Social Media Popularity 2022 report by(Asia Plus Inc., 2022), it is pointed out that 44% of people use social networks to shop, up to 79% use them for entertainment, and 72% for news and information update. One of the impressive social media developments in recent years is TikTok - a form of entertainment and online shopping that is loved especially by many young people in Vietnam. TikTok, which launched in Vietnam in April 2019, currently has 49.6 million Vietnamese active users and is growing at the fastest rate in Southeast Asia. The majority of TikTok users are currently between the ages of 18 and 24 (accounting for 39.8% of adults aged 18 and above who make up the platform's advertising audience).

TikTok sets itself apart from other social networking platforms by making it simple for users to produce original content (user generated content) in the form of short videos with animation and sound effects. It seems that TikTok is an unlimited source for content in all most aspect, including fashion, education, health, beauty, food and beverage, travel or even services, etc. Today, more and more consumers use TikTok as a source to explore and search for product and service information. According to statistics, TikTok's capacity to raise brand awareness in comparison to other platforms is better than 1.7 times; and 81 percent of TikTok users use TikTok to search for information about products/services and 43 percent of them assert TikTok helps them find new brand and items.

On the other hand, brand awareness is a vital factor for a brand that wants to offer products because it is the first step in the marketing funnel that helps consumer know about the existence of a brand, product, or service. In the context where more and more brands are launched, brand awareness is an indispensable factor that businesses want to achieve to get in the top of consumers' minds.

It is observed that TikTok is quickly becoming a potential marketing channel that businesses need to explore and take advantage of, especially for small and medium businesses. However, given TikTok's variety of marketing forms and dearth of case studies, it will be difficult for Vietnamese businesses to start utilizing the platform effectively. Furthermore, since each company's target market and end customers are positioned differently (cheap, high-end, luxury, etc.), not every business or product is appropriate for beginning to generate brand awareness via TikTok. Businesses need additional data and real-world study to pinpoint and fully comprehend the marketing variables that TikTok uses to increase brand awareness. As a result, enterprise have a panoramic perspective for effective implementation to not only achieve marketing goals—enhancing brand awareness—but also consider the long-term business goal—developing profit.

Hence, this research aims to examine the variables that influence the brand awareness of TikTok users in the case of the Vietnamese youth from 18 to 24 years old that reside in Ho Chi Minh City, the largest city of the country. In this regard, there are two objectives that need to be fulfilled, including: (1) identifying the factors that affect brand awareness of young TikTok users in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam; and (2)determining the most and least dominant

factors that have impact on the issue. Therefore, relevant research questions are as follows: (1) What factors influence young people's brand awareness? and (2) How influential are these factors on young people's brand awareness?The study was conducted for 3 months from October 2022 to January 2023 and was limited to young Vietnamese people living in Ho Chi Minh City between the agesof 18 and 24 years old. Data were collected in a non-probability sampling and convenient method with a sample size of about 200.This study, which is clearly different from the actual purchasing behavior, focuses on the brand awareness of young people using the TikTok platform - the early stage of the marketing funnel.

2. Literature Review

First of all, regarding TikTok, alongside with the strength in user-generated content feature, hashtag is another significant part on TikTok. TikTok has built a behavior of using hashtags on this platform and thereby creating trending topics and trending videos on the platform. For example, '#TikTokMadeMeBuyIt' is one of TikTok's successful hashtags that has attracted more than 7.4 billion views along with other prominent hashtags like '#learnonTikTok', '#Booktok', etc. Along with smart algorithms and content classifications thanks to hashtags, TikTok has succeeded in distributing relevant content to each user with 96.96% of video views coming from the 'For You' page. Especially, TikTok is called the center of "Shoppertainment" with an infinite loop that powers sales throughout the purchase journey of users/consumer.

TikTok presents a very distinct customer purchase journey that more effectively incorporated nested entertainment in the purchasing process (products, brands) than other platforms. In terms of brand awareness, sharing the experience, and information of using a product or service is one of the most viewed contents on TikTok with hashtags like '#TiktokMadeMeBuyIt', '#foodreview', '#booktok', etc.with a huge number of viewers (TikTok, 2022). Content creators will provide detailed product or service information to convince viewers to make a purchasing decision. As a result, these videos have quickly gone viral and influenced the brand awareness stage of the recipients through the information.

On a different note, brand awareness is the initial stage in the customer's purchasing journey; without it, buyers can't seem to be aware of the brand in the market. As a result, brand awareness is critical for any organization and is regarded as one of the brand assets used to assess brand strength. The greater the brand recognition, the more likely the brand will emerge in the thoughts of customers. Meanwhile, a good brand recall will demonstrate how readily a brand can be remembered. The higher the brand awareness, the more likely it is to be at the forefront of the customer's mind and to be considered and chosen during the product/service and brand selection process. In this case, TikTok is a fast-developing social network that allows marketers to unleash their creativity and leverage the platform to promote products/services and brands. Marketing on TikTok, like other social media platforms, assists businesses in branding, increasing brand awareness,

providing means to communicate with existing consumers, at the same time reaching new customers, and providing value to customers via sharing information, messages, and recommending products and services (Chi, 2011; Yadav & Rahman, 2017).

Many distinct characteristics are used to measure and define social media marketing in research studies. Yadav & Rahma (2017) built the e-commerce social media marketing action scale in their research into five primary factors: (1) information, (2) engagement, (3) trendiness, (4) customization, and (5) word-of-mouth (WOM). Another prior study by Rimadias et al. (2021) uses a social media marketing application on the TikTok platform to analyze the variables that impact the brand awareness and brand image of the tourism industry in Indonesia. This research studying users with the ages between 20 and 25 showed that electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) and significant interactions promote consumer brand attachment, which has a favorable impact on brand awareness. Trending and customized content have a low influence on consumers' brand engagement and awareness, as well as impact on the brand.

Other than that, many prior studies in various sectors demonstrated features of social media marketing, such as the research from (Kim & Ko, 2012) on luxury products, which used WOM, interaction, entertainment, personalization, and trends as the five components of social media marketing (SMM). Another research paper on the Korean aviation sector indicated five components, including perceived risk, customization, entertainment, trends, and interactions (Seo & Park, 2018). In Vietnam, a quantitative study on elements influencing brand awareness in the context of viral marketing conducted by (Nguyen& Nguyen, 2020)revealed that social media, messaging, attractiveness, spread, credibility, entertainment, and influencers all had a positive impact on brand awareness.

In addition to entertainment, social media is now a passive source of information, and for many users, social media is where they actively seek information - be it unrelated or relevant information about the product. products, services, and brands (Muntinga et al., 2011; De Vries et al., 2012). Information on social platforms is not only information from a business side, but users also easily find and/or view information shared by other users. Consumers are also more likely to engage with adverts, articles, and material that provide them with value, according to (Taylor et al., 2011). The aspect of information is quite broad with the TikTok platform where information may be communicated by companies directly to customers or through key opinion leaders(KOLs), key opinion consumers(KOCs), or even information about brands, product/services from other peer-to-peer users. As a result, informativeness is chosen as a component of social media marketing activities that has a favorable influence on brand awareness in this study. In this paper, the first hypothesis (H1) is: TikTok's informativeness has a positive relationship with brand awareness.

Next, social media is considered a mean to help providing news and information quickly to viewers. As a result, it is seemedas a core product search channel where customers

can obtain product knowledge (Vollmer & Precourt, 2008), because they believe the social network can offer more new and reliable information than other traditional advertising channels funded and delivered by business (Mangold & Faulds, 2009; Gallaugher & Ransbotham, 2010). According to studies conducted by (Godey et al., 2016; Liu et al., 2021), trending information can attract viewers' attention, and evoke positive emotions in consumers leading to promote purchase intention and awareness of new brands. Therefore, the trendiness factor that also needs to be considered is the fact that the content on TikTok has a positive effect on brand awareness. As a result, in this study, the second hypothesis (H2) is as follows:TikTok's trendiness has a beneficial influence on brand awareness.

On a different note, according to (Bagozzi & Dholakia, 2002; Manthiou et al., 2013), people utilize social networks to find and enjoy fun and entertainment, and in many situations, they also like and share entertaining content with others, therefore entertaining content frequently produces greater interaction. Although not all entertaining content is tied to products/services or brand reminders, the integration of brand, product/service promotion in content on social networks in general, or TikTok particularly, is presently increasingly popular with marketers to enhance brand awareness (Bilgin, 2018). Entertainment content can also satisfy viewers' desires for entertainment, aesthetic pleasure, and emotional release (Genadi & Furkan, 2020), allowing businesses to direct marketing content toward entertainment in order to create a sense of closeness with consumers, increasing brand recall and persuading them to purchase (Dessart et al., 2015). TikTok is a social media that is deemed highly entertaining, with various creative content, hence entertainment should be considered to have a good influence on brand recognition. Hence, in this study, the third hypothesis (H3) is:Entertainment content on TikTok has a positive effect on brand awareness.

Furthermore, media contributes to the development of new ways of connecting companies/brands and customers, as well as interactions amongst customers - sharing and debating products or brands (Gallaugher & Ransbotham, 2010; Muntinga et al., 2011). Engagement on social networks may take numerous forms, such as likes, comments, sending messages, and more. Regarding TikTok partcularly, interaction generates distinctiveness in comparison to other platforms that allow users to remake other users' content by using the same music to create short videos. TikTok has attracted a large number of users to interact and share their content on the platform as a result of this feature. This is a factor that is considered to help spread the content to promote the image of the brand, product/service to many customers. Previous research conducted by (Godey et al., 2016) and (Jamali et al., 2018) determined that customer interaction increases brand awareness, credibility, and credibility. As a result, the following hypothesis (H4) will be evaluated in this study:TikTok's interaction has a positive influence on brand awareness.

Also, customization is when marketing content to customers is personalized to suit each person to help increase customer satisfaction because they easily find the right information

and content, bringing them a certain value (Schmenner, 1986; Cheung et al., 2020). Thanks to the development of digital, the personalization of displayed content has become the key point of any social networking platform, personalization for each user is considered to help users stay longer on platforms and help control the content customers reach (Seo & Park, 2018). TikTok is no exception when in the application there is the 'For you' section - suggesting customizing content for each individual customer based on data about the content customers have viewed, and the search keywords that customers use before. According to (Martin & Todorov, 2010), brand engagement and brand awareness can be increased by providing customized content on social media. Therefore, in this study, customization will be a variable that has a positive impact on brand awareness (i.e.: H5:Customization and brand awareness has a positive relationship).

Last but not least, eWOM seems to be a brand promotion method that has a direct correlation with brand awareness (Jansen et al., 2009; Xu & Chan, 2010). Particularly consumers who have strong feelings, and intents about the brand, product, or service willing to share their opinion. This might be great or negative for the brand in this situation, and it is impossible for businesses to regulate in advance, but it all contributes to increased brand awareness. At the same time, social media engagement increases the volume of eWOM since the great openness of the information makes social media more trustworthy in comparison to conventional media. TikTok, like other social networking platforms, is a space where a lot of eWOM is spread among users, thus this paper will investigate the idea that eWOM has a beneficial influence on brand awareness (i.e.: H6: Electronic Word of Mouth on TikTok has a positive impact on brand awareness).
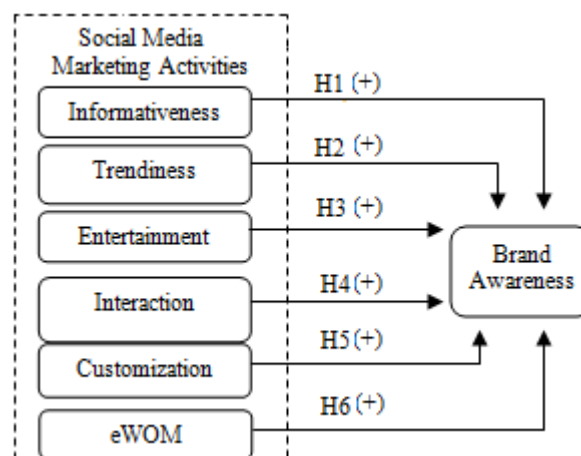

Figure 1: Conceptual research model
Source: adapted from (Kim & Ko, 2012; Seo & Park, 2018)

3. Research Methodology

Firstly, the questionnaire survey was chosen as the method to investigate the factors influencing the brand awareness of young Vietnamese TikTok users in Ho Chi Minh City. In addition to the convenience sampling method, data was also collected using the Snowball sampling technique to take advantage of the relationships of the subjects who responded to the survey to collect quicker responses. The research

sample was selected from the population of young Vietnamese individuals aged from 18 to 24 years old who are living, studying, and working in Ho Chi Minh City. As this study on young people's brand awareness is influenced by the social media network TikTok, the respondents to the questionnaire have a mandatory condition that they are currently using the TikTok application on their personal devices.

The minimum sample size to adopt the exploratory factor analysis (EFA) is 50, 100 or more is better, (Hair et al., 2014). As a result, the formula N >= 100 and N >= 5k will be used to calculate the size of the research sample (where k

is the number of observed variables). With a total of 26 variants in this investigation, the required minimum sample size is 5x26 equals 130. As a result, the survey was administered to a sample size of about 200 participants in order to boost confidence in the survey respondents' responses and guarantee more objective survey results.

The questionnaire was created using Google Form with Vietnamese questions that included three sections with two types of questions (i.e.: multiple-choice questions, and questions with 5-point Likert Scales from strongly disagree to strongly agree). The questionnaire for this study was developed from relevant previous studies, as follows:

Table 1: Questionnaire design

Variables	Question	Code	References
Informativeness	TikTok offers accurate information on products and services	INF1	Yadav & Rahman (2017)
	TikTok offers useful information	INF2	
	The information provided by TikTok is comprehensive	INF3	
Trendiness	Content visible on TikTok is the lastest information and trend	TRE1	Yadav & Rahman (2017)
	Using TikTok help me update lastest information and trend	TRE2	
	Lastest information, updating trend is available on TikTok	TRE3	
Entertainment	The contents found on the TikTok seem interesting.	ENT1	Kim & Ko (2012)
	Using TikTok is exciting and great fun	ENT2	
	Reading/Watching information about product/service or brand on the TikTok brings me joyfulness.	ENT3	
	It's easy to spend time using TikTok social media.	ENT4	
Interaction	I can share, express my opinion on the TikTok easily.	INT1	Seo & Park (2018)
	I can discuss my opinion and have a conversation with other users on TikTok	INT2	
	It is possible to have two-way interactions through TikTok social media	INT3	
Customization	I browse customized information on TikTok social media on "For you" section.	CUS1	Kim & Ko (2012)
	It is possible to search customized information on TikTok for product/service or a brand. For example: It easy to find the information I'm looking for	CUS2	
	TikTok provides customized features. For example: provide choices to select: save video, share video, view by videos, etc.	CUS3	
	TikTok social media provides interesting feed information that I'm interested in.	CUS4	
Electronic Word-of-mouth	I use TikTok platforms as a source to search for information and get others' opinions about product/service or brand	EWOM1	Chu& Kim (2011); Somayeh et al. (2013)
	I trust information of products and services of brands obtained via TikTok platforms by users.	EWOM2	
	I want to share opinions about brands, goods, or services obtained from TikTok social media with my friends	EWOM3	
	I want to share information about brands, products, or services from TikTok social media with my friends	EWOM4	
Brand awareness	I am always aware of brand or product/service after using/watching content on TikTok	AWA1	Pappu & Quester (2006); Das(2014)
	Characteristics of brand, product or service come to my mind quickly	AWA2	
	I can quickly recall the symbol or logo of brand after watching content of this brand on TikTok	AWA3	
	I can remember a brand that I watched on TikTok often.	AWA4	
	I can recognise the characteristics of a brand after see them on TikTok	AWA5	

Source: authors

4. Results and Discussion

In relation to the abovementioned conceptual research model, there are a total of six independent variables, including 'informativeness', 'trendiness', 'entertainment', 'interaction', 'customization', and 'eWOM', and one dependent variable which is 'brand awareness', with 36 measurement items. Convenience sampling, a non-probability sampling technique, is used in this quantitative investigation. As a result, the survey received 224 responses via both online and offline formats; therein, 177 of them were legitimate responses, the rest was invalid, mostly

because the respondents weren't the survey's intended population.

Demographic variables were analyzed in the form of a nominal scale by demographic analysis, and the questions to test the variable were measured using a 5-point Likert Scale. After that, such data was analyzed by descriptive statistics, reliability test, EFA, correlations, and regression analysis to give the final result.

After the EFA analysis was performed, two variants were eliminated ('eWOM' and 'trendiness' and there were two additional measures removed). From the obtained results,

eWOM and propensity are two poor-quality observations. Then, when the data were analyzed with regression analysis, only two factors that are 'interaction' and 'customization' showed a significant impact on brand awareness. The factors of 'informativeness' and 'entertainment' have a positive relationship but insignificant effect on brand awareness. In this regard, the regression equation of the study is as follows: $AWA = 0.932 + 0.115ENT + 0.304INT + 0.196CUS + 0.098INF$.
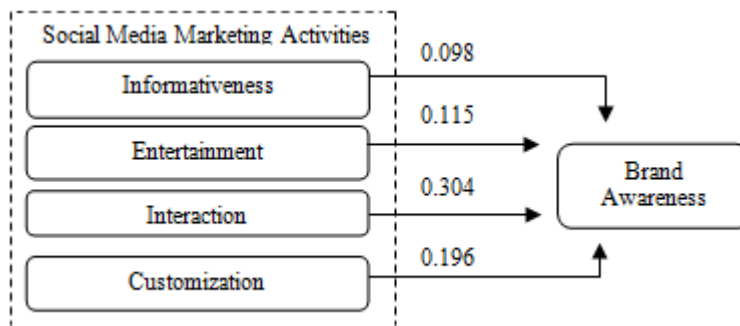

Figure 2: The result model
Source: authors

The results of this survey contribute to further academic development on the field and also provide relevant suggestions for businesses to refer to when considering to use TikTok as a marketing channel. First of all, contemporary studies in the marketing field related to TikTok flatform are still limited in Vietnam, although the flat form's influence on local consumer habits and behavior has grown rapidly where this might eventually affect the fundamental nature of digital marketing. In overall, the result of this paper also shows that different social media channels impact on brand value (including brand awareness) differently. In other words, same social media marketing model can be applied to study the issue, but the factors and their levels of impact via the flatforms are different (e.g.: factors and their effects on Facebook and TikTok are totally different).

Secondly, in practical terms, marketers who want to promote their brands, especially small and medium-sized businesses that want to raise brand awareness among young customers, can consider TikTok as a potential and important channel. When planning an integrated marketing strategy, marketers can consider both a strategy or tactics that focus on user interaction and optimize content that is relevant to a brand's potential audience. With the TikTok platform, marketers have the flexibility to use a variety of tactics from using user-generated content to create trends, adding hashtags, and using KOCs for content marketing. Moreover, brands can create interactions with potential customers by producing videos with catchy music or effects, etc to encourage them to create their content (user-generated content) based on the foundation brand's content.

5. Conclusion

In this study, based on the research model of social media marketing activities, it is observed that, in Vietnam, the interaction and customization elements in marketing content created most impact on young TikTok users' brand awareness. The two factors of 'informativeness' and 'entertainmen' had impact on brand awareness but not significantly. More especially, the factors of 'trendiness' and 'electronic Word-of-Mouth' were the two weak observed variables where they had been removed by the study. With limitations, although the study was carried out in the largest city of the country, it may not be able to sufficiently reflect the whole country's context. Other than that, further studies can be conducted by focusing deeper into specific industries such as fashion, cosmetics, food and beverages, automobiles, housewares, etc. to gain more insights about the topic.

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