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Exploring the Factors Influencing Gen Z's Buying Behavior attitude when engaging with
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Preface

First and foremost the social media TikTok is such a new and interesting phenomenon within these past years. Even until today, not everyone engage with the app and the people who do, don't think too much about it. I would like to express the special gratitude to our research supervisor, Truls Eric Johan Engström who found the thesis interesting and was engaging on the topic. He was providing me with valuable feedback, shared his own knowledge, and dedicated his time in order to enable me to complete this study. Secondly, I would like to thank all the other people who gave me useful pieces of advice, either casually during a conversation when I talked about my thesis or when I asked for it. I would like to thank family, friends, co-workers and classmates who supported me through the process and were always there from start to end. Thirdly, I want to express my gratitude to all the individuals who participated in the process of data collection despite the time demanding schedules, demanding questions and understandings, and agreement to record their voices. All of those actions gave me an opportunity to conduct this particular research, and helped me to complete what was planned. Without them, there would not have been a research done. Lastly, I would like to express my gratitude to each of the professors during my master's studies for offering support, lots of energy, and dedication to the research and knowledge.

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Abstract

This study utilizing the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) and the Consumer Purchase Decision-Making Process model as theoretical frameworks to investigate Gen Z's attitudes towards User-and consumer generated content creators (U/CGCC), the factors influencing Generation Z (Gen Z) and their purchasing behavior. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with Gen Z TikTok users in Stavanger, Norway, revealing nuanced attitudes towards U/CGCC, including factors such as entertainment value, credibility, relatability, and authenticity. While U/CGCC influences awareness of Gen-Z, factors such as pricing, product quality, and shipping logistics take center stage during the evaluation and purchasing stages. The study highlights the need for marketers to adopt a holistic approach, prioritizing transparency, product quality, and customer service to engage with Gen Z consumers effectively. The results are reported, implications are discussed, limitations are noted, and directions for future research are indicated.

1 Introduction

In the era of e-commerce, virtually every sector engages in online sales, and the prominence of online marketing and product placement has reached unprecedented levels. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, Youtube and TikTok have taken center stage and serve as pivotal channels for companies to showcase their products and engage with consumers on a global scale. The interactions between potential customers and the product could be delicate. The outcome of this interaction, whether it culminates in a sale or the customer's decision to abstain from the product, depends on various intermediary factors.

Online reviews are readily accessible, rapidly updated, and widely available across numerous review platforms. They provide users with the convenience of accessing information from any location and at any time as long as there is an internet connection. They have essentially become a digital version of word-of-mouth (WOM) in the online space (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). WOM on social media is particularly powerful as it has the ability to persuade consumers to make a decision. Two equally good products can exist at the same time, however the product which is spoken and raved about on social media is more likely to be searched up on google and be bought versus the counterpart where the product is being represented in regular ads on Television (Shetu, 2023). Online reviews play a critical role in the online sales of e-commerce and online-retail industries. Potential customers spend a lot of their time reading online reviews to assist their decision-making (Zhu & Zhang, 2010). This is because they want the most value out of their time and money (Payne, Bettman, & Johnson, 1993).

1.1 Research question and aim

Social media platforms have a lot of potential in the e-commerce and online-retailer field, especially in the consumer and user-generated content. I have been a participant in the consumer-generated content and experience user-generated content online from posting my own reviews and experiences with a product or being influenced to buy products from watching youtubers, tiktokers, instagrammers etc. I have been creating my own videos on and off as an amateur reviewer throughout the years prior to that. I have consumed and used some of the products being advertised as well. I am thus fundamentally interested in this field of marketing for professional, academic and identity-based reasons. The data I observed in the usage of social media and being surrounded by people around my age (Gen Z) specially

the platform TikTok was the impetus for this research. I have detected the importance of online WOM and user/consumer generated content (U/CGC) from the digital world. There has not been a lot of research on user/consumer generated content creators (U/CGCC) specifically on TikTok world wide, with every article mentioning the lack of research done to this phenomenon of TikTok, and even less with the research done to the Norwegian youths. Although Stavanger/Sandnes is one of the biggest cities in Norway, there is a limited scholarly investigation into this specific topic in the whole country. The motivation for the research presented in this dissertation was borne of my observation. I have devised the following research question in order to investigate these themes:

“Exploring the Factors Influencing Gen Z's Buying Behavior attitude when engaging with User and Consumer-Generated Content on TikTok: A Qualitative Analysis”

The primary objective of this dissertation research is to explore the factors shaping the buying and consumer behavior of Norwegian Gen Z youths when engaging with user-generated content creators on TikTok. Through interviews, this study aims to decipher their perceptions and motivations, focusing on key themes such as the 'how,' 'why,' and 'what' behind their actions when encountering user-generated content creators on the platform TikTok.

1.2 Research process

The core topic of this thesis, which is buying behavior is widely discussed in many journal articles from Google scholar and academic books online and physical books from the University of Stavanger (UiS) campus library. However, the research specificity of the theme TikTok is limited. The main factors for consumer behavior are influenced by multiple

variables and theories. For researchers' to comprehensively answer the stated research question of this thesis and fill out the research gap, a qualitative research approach was applied. A select body of data was gathered through in-depth semi-structured interviews, and the thesis is organized as follows; an extensive review of extant academic literature sourced from Google Scholar, complemented by precise definitions of pertinent concepts relevant to the thesis subject matter. The thesis manuscript heavily relies on the corpus of preceding research conducted within the domains of user-generated content and consumer-generated content. While the majority of previously researched academic articles predominantly employed quantitative methods, with occasional qualitative exceptions, they uniformly centered around themes related to Generation Z, user-generated content (UGC) and consumer-generated content (CGC), and purchasing behavior. Commonly recurring keywords and phrases, such as 'How do user-generated content (UGC) influence Generation Z's social media search behavior?' and 'How does Generation Z's search intent impact online purchasing behavior?' were indicative of the prevalent themes throughout these articles. Although variations of these sentences existed, they collectively underscored the overarching focus on these thematic areas. Furthermore, the appropriate type of methodology for this research is elaborated as well as data collection and data analysis are also identified in the section on methodology.

2 Literature review

2.1 Social media

With the introduction of the internet, individuals have been increasingly dependent on accessibility of the digital world, and social media has been one of the main center focuses of this phenomenon (Moriuchi, 2019). Social media is a collection of websites and applications

designed to build and enhance online communities for networking and sharing information, as well as used for entertainment (Gowey, 2014). Social media opens up many business opportunities to companies and organizations to reach the desired market. In addition, UGC is also a phenomenon that comes with the social media scene. This phenomenon is prevalent on different social media platforms and is integrated deep into them. Social media can be anything from facebook, instagram, youtube, tiktok, snapchat, whatsapp etc (Gowey, 2014).

2.2 TikTok

TikTok is the international derivative of the Chinese word “*Douyin*” which was first launched in Beijing by the parent company ByteDance in 2016 created for the Chinese domestic market (Abidin, 2021). The video-sharing social network app allows users to create and post short videos of between 3 to 60 seconds with accompanying music, audio and video effects, and as the time of writing the app has over 1-billion users and is expected to pass 2-billion users in 2024 (Iqbal, 2024). Tiktok is predominantly a site of youth culture. The iconography, rituals, spaces and lifestyle of youth culture can be seen in TikTok’s trend, lingo, and interests, most notably its dance and stunt challenges. The demographics of some of the most followed user-generated stars of Tiktok are under the age of 20 and 41% of TikTok users are aged 16-24 years old (Omnicores, 2020).

The rise of TikTok seems to appear sudden, however it was not coincident as there were multiple factors that led up to the popularization of the app. Although the app's existence has been around since its original launch back in 2016. The app experienced a surge in popularity due to the increased boredom during COVID-19 lockdown (Boateng, Doku, & Enyan, et al., 2021). Consequently, TikTok swiftly evolved into one of the prominent entertainment platforms, capitalizing on the amplified demand for digital distractions during the pandemic era. Notably, it is rapidly growing faster and faster, surpassing snapchat users (750 million

users) and rivaling Instagram (1.4 billion users) and Facebook (3.4 billion) users (Chaffey, 2024).

Although TikTok started out as an app used by younger generations in the *mise-en-scène* of its videos, often filmed in messy teenage bedrooms, the kitchen, bathroom with a low budget production and seemingly spontaneous content creation. The app has transcended to something more, and the user-generated content can be monetized, giving the apps options for casual fun to cure boredom to a full time job and the main sources of income for some users. The app is now used for anything between dance videos and challenges, to vlogging, news sharing, keeping up with the celebrities, product placement, promotions and reviews and overall advertisement (Abidin, 2021).

2.2.1 TikTok in Norway

TikTok in Norway has grown significantly since its original release in the country. The app is the fastest-growing social media platform in Norway. Ipsos has been measuring the platform growth since 2019 (Ipsos, 2022). According to results from Ipsos SoMe-tracker for Q4 2022, 30% of Norwegians over 18 years old now have a profile on TikTok. In the younger age group of 18 to 29 years old, 66% claim to have a profile. This number is equivalent to 555,000 individuals (Ipsos, 2022). Remen also reported a similar finding in the early 2023 that TikTok is now among the five most used social media platforms in Norway. 1.26 Norwegians over the age of 18 claim to be registered users on the social media platform. Which accounts for 30% of the adult population. In comparison back to 2020 with only 14% users (Remen, 2023). The daily users of TikTok is higher among young users, over all 21% of Norwegians over 18 years old use the app daily, but in the 18 to 29 age groups, the percentage is significantly higher at 58% (Ipsos, 2022).

2.3 Buying behavior

Buying behavior is a subject area that falls under the category of sociological, psychological and social anthropological (Thjømmøe & Olson, 2011, p.21). This subject is a direct contrast to the technical subject where the subject is significantly more precise. Buying behavior is complex and does not necessarily have a right answer (Thjømmøe & Olson, 2011, p.21).

However, the behaviors can be dissected and studied to get as close to the right answer as possible. All companies, organizations, private or public that offer products or services are dependent on the knowledge of the market and the behavior within that market. This is to increase the organization's success probability. To understand buying behavior you must understand the building blocks first, which are as mentioned. Sociological, psychological and social anthropological concepts make up the buying behavior (Thjømmøe & Olson, 2011, p.29). These three concepts touch on human's attitudes, personality, influence from one individual to another, or impact of one person towards a group. In addition to, how society, culture, development of norms and values as well as preferences or behavior that are present due to different backgrounds (Thjømmøe & Olson, 2011, p.29). These three concepts are wide and can be applicable to other fields of studies as well. Understanding consumer behavior consists in understanding how an individual or a group of individuals makes decisions when they use their resources such as time and money to acquire goods and/or services that will satisfy their various needs. This includes studies of what they buy, when and why they buy, how they buy, where they buy and how often they buy and on whose behalf (Thjømmøe & Olson, 2011, p.30).

2.3.1 Psychology, sociology, social psychology and anthropology

Psychology is heavily leaned towards studying and understanding the individual. This study is about motives, attitudes, personality etc. Sociology studies groups and how the different types of groups affect the individual. Social psychology is about how the individual is being affected by social factors. It explores topics like social cognition, attitudes, perception and interpersonal relationships. Lastly, anthropology is about humans, their society, language, beliefs, cultures, backgrounds, and development over the years. These concepts are borrowed concepts and theories from other aspects of the world's professional field and are highly relevant for buying behavior (Thjømmøe & Olson, 2011, p.30).

2.3.2 Time and convenience

The core of today's buying behavior is about the simplicity and convenience of acquiring a product. There are many steps from the moment of contact between the individual to the actual purchasing phase. Understanding this process and removing and filtering out unnecessary touchpoints can significantly persuade the customers to buy the product (Thjømmøe & Olson, 2011, p.30). This type of thinking is exactly what differentiate TikTok from regular marketing methods. The filtering of the different touch points is being done through user and consumer-generated content.

2.4 Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA)

The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) stands out as a prominent framework for predicting individual behavior volition. As depicted in Figure 1, this theory claim that behavior stems from the intention to engage in said behavior. These intentions, in turn, are shaped by two key

factors: attitudinal and normative considerations (Vallerand et al., 1992). Originating from the work of Ajzen and Fishbein (1975), TRA delves into the interplay between behavioral intention, attitudes toward behavior, and subjective norms. It emphasizes the social influences on consumer behavior, particularly those that are voluntary (Sheppard et al., 1988). TRA does not directly address behavior outcomes; rather, it focuses on elucidating the determinants of consumer intention and subsequent behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1975; Sheppard et al., 1988). Within TRA, intention refers to the likelihood of engaging in a specific behavior within a given context. Beliefs about the consequences of behavior shape attitudes toward said behavior, as illustrated in Figure 1. A positive attitude toward a behavior enhances the likelihood of its execution by consumers (Albarracín et al., 2001).

Ajzen and Fishbein (1975) outlined that attitude components can be categorized into three attitudes. Attitudes towards a physical object, attitudes towards behavior, or the act of performing the behavior. In accordance with TRA, two primary components are utilized to forecast consumers' purchase intentions: attitudes and subjective norms. The initial predictor of intention is the attitude towards a behavior, influenced by individuals' overall positive or negative evaluations of engaging in a particular behavior (Elena et al., 2013). Subjective norms serve as the secondary predictor of intention, representing the social influences on an individual's behavior and the perceptions of relevant others regarding whether one should or should not perform the behavior (Isaid & Faisal, 2015). Subjective norms can be seen as a combination of how others view the behavior and an individual's willingness to go along with it (Solomon et al., 2010).

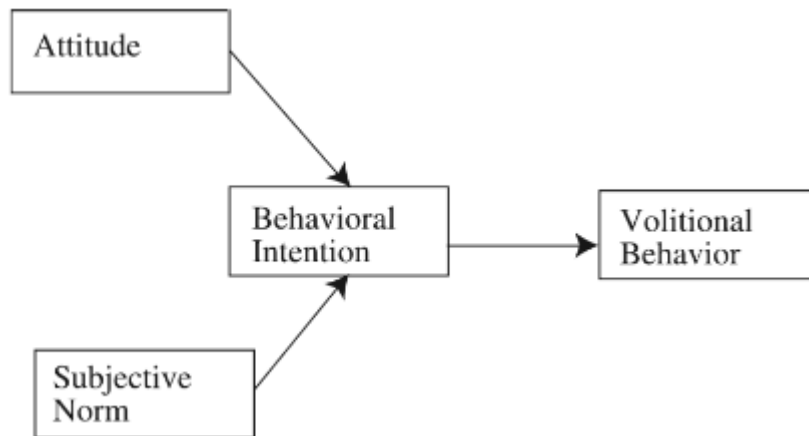


Figure 1, The theory of reasoned action

Industries such as banking, education, hotel marketing, health and information technology use the model to predict an individual's behavior (Mishra et al., 2014), thus this theory is highly relevant and applicable to the marketing industry as well (Buttle, 1996). Attitudes toward performing a behavior have generally been viewed as assessments of how much one likes or favors doing the behavior (Finlay, Trafimow, & Villarreal, 2002) and that subjective norm refers to the influence one's personal community has on the specified behavior (Young & Kent, 1985). Therefore, together, attitude towards specific behavior and subjective norms have been shown to account for much variance in intention to perform a specified behavior (Finlay et al., 2002). Shih and Fang (2004) argue that attitude significantly controls consumers' intention, implying that subjective norms might not have a significant impact on consumer behavior intention. Additionally, they suggest that behavioral intention, influenced primarily by attitude, significantly affects actual use. However, Kim et al. (2015) propose expanding the normative part of TRA by analyzing both personal descriptive norms and injunctive norms to better predict behavior on social media. This suggests that Kim et al. are challenging the findings of Shih and Fang, suggesting that subjective norms might indeed have an important role in predicting behavior, especially in the context of social media use.

With this in mind, a study exploring beliefs about TikTok usage was conducted and its findings were integrated into TRA. This study defined beliefs about behavior, a component of attitude in TRA, as specific statements about the attributes of the platform. Five categories of behavioral beliefs were identified, including personal gratification, usefulness of features, socializing, product information, and entertainment. Additionally, the study found that relevant others (a part of subjective norms in TRA) encompass three factors: relatives, close friends/peers and friends in general.

Having outlined TRA as the chosen framework for determining consumer attitudes, the decision was made to employ the Consumer Decision Making Process theory to analyze the influence of U/CGCC on consumers' purchase decisions, which will be discussed in the following section.

2.5 The consumer decision making process

Purchase stage is just one phase within the broader spectrum of the buying process, which commences with the recognition of a need and progresses through several subsequent stages (refer to Figure 2) (Kotler, Armstrong & Parment, 2016). It is proposed that consumers navigate through a sequence of phases when contemplating the acquisition of a specific product or service. This is called the “consumer decision-making process” (Solomon et al., 2010), this progression encompasses the following five stages: need/problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, and post-purchase evaluation.

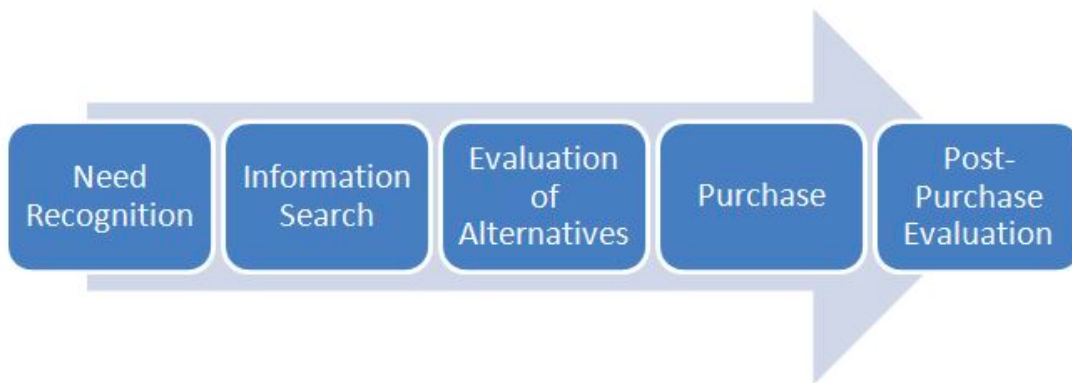


Figure 2 Stages in consumer decision making process (Solomon et al., 2010).

Although it is suggested that the decision-making process model has five stages. However, depending on the importance of the purchase decision and the individual themselves, consumers often skip some of the stages and the amount of effort they put into each stage can vary (Kotler & Keller, 2012).

2.5.1 Need recognition

The very first stage of the model is need/problem recognition when consumers realize that they need something (Stankevich, 2017). A need can occur immediately and can be a very basic impulse, this is called an internal stimulus. An external stimulus is when a person is affected by outside influences (Stankevich, 2017). The amount of time dedicated to this step usually depends on the consumer's past experience with buying the product, the risk involved and the level of interest.

2.5.2 Information search

The process of looking for information, in this case, is a moment that matters for consumers. The second stage of the consumer decision-making process is information search. In this stage consumers begin by collecting more information concerning the solution to her/his need (Tyagi & Kumar, 2004). Recommendations from friends and family and reviews from other consumers will be taken into account as well (Kotler et al., 2016). Moreover, previous experience of using the product or similar one and personal experiments while searching (testing the samples) will influence the process (Stankevich, 2017).

2.5.3 Evaluation of alternatives

At the third stage of evaluating alternatives, a consumer may ask themselves if there are alternatives out there. Usually, the consumer chooses one the most important attribute based on which they will make a final decision e.g., price, quality, brand, etc (Stankevich, 2017). Here moments that matter could be emotional connections/experiences with products, surrender to advertising/marketing campaigns. The process on this stage is individual for a consumer as they are looking for the best deal. A meaning of the best deal based on attributes that are more relevant to each consumer, it could be price, quality, brand, product positioning, a location to buy, consequences or outcome of using the product, etc (Kotler et al., 2016).

2.5.4 Purchase

At some point, the consumer stops to evaluate the evoked set and switches to the buying process. Once a consumer chooses which brand to buy, he/she must still implement the

decision and make the actual purchase. Also at the beginning, consumers may make a purchase intention to buy a certain product, but don't close a deal. Additional decisions may be needed factors that influence, such as when to buy, where to buy, and how much money to spend (Stankevich, 2017).

2.5.5 Post purchase evaluation

Post-purchase (satisfaction or dissatisfaction), consumers evaluate and review the product. If a customer finds that the product has matched or exceeded the promises made and their expectations, they will potentially become a brand ambassador influencing other potential customers in the stage two of their customer journey, increasing the chances of the product being purchased again. The same can be said for negative feedback, which would yield an opposite effect.

2.6 Main theories combined theories

The past chapters (2.4 and 2.5) different topics relevant to the particular research were presented. Theory of reasoned action and Consumer decision making process were introduced. Those two models are combined into one (see figure 3). This was done in order to facilitate answering of the research questions in terms of data collection and analysis. The more detailed overview of data collection and analysis methods is discussed in the following chapter

Below you can see a model which combines the two theories: Theory of reasoned action and the Consumer decision-making process. Both theories are combined to represent the flow which leads to buying a particular product. It starts with need recognition followed by

information search, then the evaluation of alternatives, intention to buy a product (which is influenced by attitude and subjective norms), purchase and post-purchase behavior.

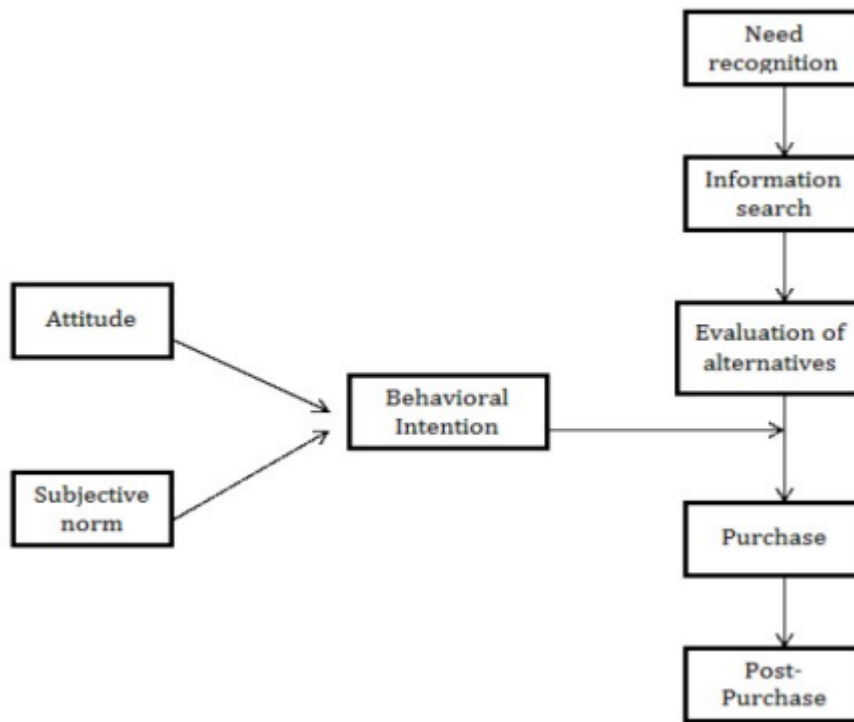


Figure 3, combined theories of TRA and decision making process

There five stages which can be included in the consumer decision making process.

Sometimes consumers are likely to skip one of the stages. This depends on situations and the amount of effort that they want to put into a certain purchase decision. Intercepted in between the Need recognition stage, and in between Evaluation stage and Purchasing stage by Theory of reasoned action. This theory suggests that there are two factors that can influence our behavior; subjective norms and attitude towards behavior (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975).

Theory of reasoned action is suggested that it can be applied to the purchase behavior (Ming-Tien et al. 2010). It can explain what can influence an intention to buy a certain product. Therefore, intention to buy a product can be a missing step in the consumer decision

making process which should take place before the actual purchase and after the evaluation of alternatives. In other words, purchase plays the role of behavior when combining the TRA and Consumer decision making process. Intention, influenced by attitude and subjective norms is an important step before the actual purchase is performed. Therefore, it was seen as an important step between the evaluation of alternatives and purchase stages of the Consumer decision making process. Due to this, it was decided to combine the two models into one.

2.7 User generated content (UGC) and Consumer generated content (CGC)

2.7.1 User generated content (UGC) and User generated content creator (UGCC)

UGC refers to media content that is created or produced by the general public rather than by paid professionals and is primarily distributed on the internet instead of cable, print media, radio, outdoor advertising, direct mail, telemarketing, as well as events and sponsors (Daugherty, Eastin, & Bright, 2008). The UGC includes online content such as digital video, blogging, vlogging, podcasting, mobile phone photography, wikis, and user-forum posts, among others (Daugherty, Eastin, & Bright, 2008). Whether consumers share information about a brand or products in the form of online reviews or talk about their experience, UGC in social media functions as eWOM messages. Although with limited research done specifically in the context of TikTok, previous research papers have explored behavioral consequences of eWOM in various contexts (i.e., consumer review sites, brand websites, personal blogs).

2.7.2 Consumer generated content (CGC) and Consumer generated content creator (CGCC)

Similarly to UGC, CGC captures the user-as-producer dynamic and refers to content that is not generated or published by corporations on the internet. Unlike UGC, CGC mandates that content creators maintain a direct interaction with the products they endorse or discuss. CGC is strictly about how a consumer talks or promotes the product that they have personally used while UGC can be generated by professionals or regular consumers who talk about a topic they are interested in without having to have a direct contact with a product at all. CGC is defined in terms of situations where consumers refer products or services to other consumers on the internet. eWOM is closely related to CGC and can be applied to many online forums for UGC and CGC (Rodgers & Wang, 2011). Although UGC and CGC are closely related, it is important to distinguish the two as UGC can encompass a wide range of material as long as it is created and shared by individuals online. The content can take various forms, including but not limited to; text-based, such as blogs, comments on social media, reviews. Visual and video content such as images, memes, tutorials, short clips or audio content such as podcasts, music tracks, recordings and so on, while CGC is more personal and direct.

2.8 Social influence theory (SIT)

SIT is important tied directly to the consumers' purchasing decisions. This theory is widely recognized among domestic as well as international marketers. Buying decisions are not made independently or isolated when the individual is in their decision-making process. The consumers might conclude that they desire a product or a service due to the needs or various other reasons. However, the individuals are subject to influence from several potential sources such as; family, friends, associates, sales people, and even strangers who may express

an opinion (Maram & Kongsompong, 2007). The importance of social influences has been embodied in one of the most important theories in consumer behavior mentioned in the earlier chapter: the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA). *“TORA specifies that individuals’ behavioral intentions (e.g., with regard to the purchase of a product or service) are predicated upon their own internal attitudes toward the contemplated act and, relevant to the present study, on their motivation to comply with the wishes of others”* (Maram & Kongsompong, 2007). Although SIT’s strength comes mainly from close relatives such as family, friends and associates where they might have a better say in what the end behavior of the individual might be, the latter part of the theory stands relatively weak on its own when it comes to sales people and strangers influencing the individual.

2.9 Interpersonal influence theory (IIT)

The interactions that the individuals have are being influenced through our everyday lives, shaping our thoughts, behaviors and decisions in many ways. Sometimes we are not even conscious while these influences affect us. While some influences mold our perceptions and behaviors, such as overt influences done by marketing campaigns or direct guidance from peers, many others operate more subtly (Cheah & Phau, 2011). Guiding our choices and actions more discreetly without our conscious realization. These interpersonal influences, stemming from social norms, cultural expectations and behaviors of those around us have a profound impact on our lives (Cheah & Phau, 2011). IIT primarily consists of the impact of acting to persuade, convince or influence individuals for the purpose of having a specific effect or outcome. An important determinant of an individual’s behavior is the influence of others (Bearden, et al., 1989). According to Cheah and Phau findings; *“(…)social cognitive theory, the process of interpersonal influence advocates a bilateral-directional interaction that also occurs between environmental and personal characteristics (Bandura, 1977, 1986,*

1989).” (Cheah & Phau, 2011). This statement is discussing the perspective done by the social cognitive theory regarding interpersonal influence. The statement suggests that IIT involves two-way interaction and communications and it is not just about one person influencing another, but rather a reciprocal process where both parties influence one another. Additionally, it also mentions that this interaction extends to environmental and personal characteristics as well. Furthermore, as part of this process, social influences and physical structures within the environment naturally would develop and modify human expectations, thoughts, beliefs and just the overall cognitive competencies. Humans evoke different reactions from their social environment as a result of their physical characteristics such as age, size, race, sex and physical appearances (Cheah & Phau, 2011).

2.10 Endorsement theory

2.10.1 Traditional celebrity

Celebrities, although when it comes down to it, they are just regular people like everyone else. However, the title that they have and the representation of competence and attractiveness comes with a complex of bundles of cultural meaning. Daniel Boorstin introduced the definition of celebrities; *“the celebrity is a person who is well-known for their well-knownness”* (Boorstin, 1971). Also; the Rojek’s definition of celebrity is one *“as the attribution of glamorous or notorious status to an individual within the public sphere”* (Rojek, 2001). Essentially, celebrity is about fame or influence on society. Celebrities serve as focal points for various societal values, norms, and aspirations. They can embody and reflect trends, ideals, controversies, and other cultural phenomena (McCracken, 1989). Therefore, celebrity endorsement is a practice that has been actively used by marketers for

decades. Choosing the right person to represent a product can create trust among potential consumers (Seno & Lukas, 2007).

Celebrity endorsement tactic require preliminary knowledge and experience to be successful (Seno & Lukas, 2007). Although the celebrity status of the individual might have more influence over a regular person. Some combinations of celebrities and products are better fit than others. This is dependent on whether the connection between the product/service fits the celebrity or not (Till & Bussler, 2013). Physical attractiveness, celebrity source credibility as well as product involvement influence the success of celebrity endorsement (Kahle & Homer, 1985). The combination of the three is expected when doing a celebrity endorsement. Although it is stated by O'Mahony & Meenaghan (1998) that Consumers mostly have a positive attitude towards celebrity endorsement, they are not necessarily convincing and believable (O'Mahony & Meenaghan, 1998). As mentioned earlier by Till and Bussler (2013). Celebrity endorsement has to make sense, in addition, the celebrities' character and credibility play a significant role in marketing and advertising. We can safely assume that someone like Kylie Jenner endorsing a skincare product would most likely be received significantly better by the audience versus her doing a promotion on a digital camera.

Companies tend to invest a lot into celebrity endorsement (Agrawal & Kamakura, 1995). This is especially true in the modern day social media scene. Companies such as the economist, have reportedly paid influencers anywhere from \$5k dollars to \$300k depending on their followings and their respective platforms (Economist, 2016). The purpose of this

research paper is to highlight the concept of micro-celebrity endorsement which is similar to traditional celebrity endorsement, the following section introduces this topic.

2.10.2 Micro-celebrity

In today's digital age, the path to fame has radically changed and there are lesser steps needed to be taken to achieve this fame. Unlike the past, where celebrity status required talent and industry connections, social media platforms have democratized the process (McCracken, 1989).. Now, anyone with internet access can potentially become famous, regardless of traditional markers of success like talent or attractiveness. The rise of influencers, both beloved and notorious, illustrates this shift. Furthermore, the internet has blurred the distinction between fame and infamy, anyone is able to garner attention, power and influence through notoriety as well as acclaim. Having a sizable following equates to power and influence thus creating a micro-celebrity status among the ‘regular’ people (Ecmercer, 2015).

The definition of micro-celebrity from Marwick is *“a state of being famous to a niche group of people(...) and the presentation of oneself as a celebrity regardless of who is paying attention.”* (Marwick, 2013). Marwick points out that *“micro-celebrity treat themselves as a celebrity”* (Marwick, 2013). Another definition stated by Clarewells (2014). Micro-celebrities are individuals who use social media as a mechanism for creating their audience and people who are not famous in the common way (Clarewells, 2014). Today, in order to become a microcelebrity, people are required to have the abilities to catch the attention of social-media users (Cultureshop, 2015).

According to Marwick (2013). There are two types of micro-celebrities; ‘‘Ascribed micro-celebrity’’ who are only famous in the specific group and they also identify themselves as celebrities. And ‘‘Achieved micro-celebrities’’ who are similar to traditional celebrities. (Marwick, 2013). This type of micro-celebrities has a comprehensive strategy about positioning and promoting themselves such as, crafting a persona, sharing personal lives in order to develop intimate and close relationships with audiences. Marwick points out that *‘‘microcelebrity exists a continuum, from ascribed to achieved.’’* (Marwick, 2013). However, Marwick mentions that the ascribed micro-celebrities consider themselves as celebrities and they believe they have a higher status than their audiences in mentality. Achieved-micro-celebrity on the other hand tends to develop an equal and intimate relationship without any celebrities’ traits.

2.11 Source credibility theory

Source credibility, down to its core can be explained and showcased by an illustration, a study by Guéguen and Pichot (2001) They found that pedestrians were more likely to ignore a ‘no crossing’ light and follow a well-dressed (high-status) person through an intersection than a poorly dressed (low-status) person. Similarly, shoppers in a store were less likely to confront or report a well-dressed person who shoplifted (10% intervened) than a shabby dressed person (39% intervened) even though they might have seen or perceived suspicious behavior on both accounts (Guéguen & Pichot, 2003). Credibility is a perceptual phenomenon, and involves what the individual sees with their own eyes and understanding of it. In addition, credibility is multidimensional and comprises three primary dimensions:

competence, This refers to the perceived level of knowledge, expertise, or skill that the source possesses in a particular subject or field. Trustworthiness, This relates to the perception of the source's honesty, integrity, and reliability in conveying information or fulfilling promises, and Goodwill, this encompasses the perception of the source's intentions, motivations, and benevolence towards the audience or recipients of their message (Elo, Kanste, Pölkki, Utriainen, Kyngäs & Kääriäinen, 2014). According to the statement, sources that demonstrate these dimensions, particularly competence or expertise, have a significant advantage in influencing others socially. People are more likely to trust and be influenced by individuals or sources perceived as knowledgeable, trustworthy, and well-intentioned (Pornpitakpan, 2004)

Source credibility is an important aspect of social marketing campaigns, as they often have to convey relatively complex messages in simple and understandable arguments (Dahl, 2015). However, source credibility can vary depending on the cultural and social/historical contexts in which a message is transmitted. In this context of social media, the source credibility theory is heavily reliant on the number of individual's followers count. Suggested by Jin and Phua (2014), that the number of follower's influences a consumer's perceived credibility of a celebrity (Jin & Phua, 2014). Similar conclusions could be drawn from the importance of trust in user-generated content such as skincare products, gym clothes, gifts ideas and recommendations. Consumers often place their trust in individuals with sizable followings, viewing them as reliable sources of information and guidance, as long as it makes sense. This type of buying behavior highlights the dynamic nature of credibility in today's digital landscape and shows how important it is to establish trust in social marketing.

3 Methodology

Hereby, the practical steps of the research process are presented. The logical steps of choosing the methodology and method are explained and details are elaborated upon. The reasoning for choosing a particular philosophy, followed by research approach and design are introduced. After the general methodology is set, the further procedure of data collection and analysis are presented.

3.1 Research design

Selecting the right method is crucial in the research process as it ensures that the chosen approach is well-suited to the specific inquiry, thereby optimizing the capacity to address the research question effectively. The methodology outlines the specific procedures guiding the study and research design in order to investigate the designated research question. The research method is classified into two types, quantitative and qualitative methods (Davies & Hughes, 2014, p.8). Regardless of what field of study the subject matter is about, the research will utilize either one of the two distinct paths. Both methods can deliver useful and informative results that are sought after when they are properly executed, but each serves a rather different purpose (Davies & Hughes, 2014, p.8). However, while quantitative and qualitative methods have traditionally dominated in the research practices in the world, the recognition of their respective limitations in capturing the richness and depth of phenomena has led to the rise in popularity of mixed-methods approaches. Suggested by the name, this blending of quantitative and qualitative methodologies allows researchers to leverage the strengths of both approaches, thereby enhancing the validity and comprehensiveness of their findings (Davies & Hughes, 2014, p.8).

3.1.1 Quantitative and Qualitative method

Quantitative research methods objectively evaluate theories through statistical analysis of extensive datasets and the examination of relationships among measurable variables (Johannessen, Tufte & Christofferson, 2016, p.95). This method is numbers-based, countable, or measurable in a logistic sense. In addition, bigger sample pools tend to create more accurate and reliable results. The qualitative research methodology seeks to attain a profound comprehension of the conceptual framework under study, while also furnishing supplementary insights into the subject matter at hand (Johannessen, Tufte & Christofferson, 2016, p.95). This method focuses more on the feelings, interpretation-based, descriptive, and relating to language as well as focusing more on the social patterns outside delimited areas, the method tackles the opposite of numbers and countable data (Johannessen, Tufte & Christofferson, 2016, p.95). The mixed-method is a combination of the quantitative and qualitative research approaches. In mixed methods research, the researcher collects both quantitative and qualitative data and information to answer the research question.

The appropriate method that was chosen to solve this study was the qualitative research method. This method is considered the most suitable due to the fact that the interpretation of people's opinion on the subject was used in the study.

3.2.2 Soft and hard data

In the social sciences, a distinction is made between soft and hard data. Hard data is data that can be quantified with the help of using numbers. Examples of this are gender, age, and income, while soft data is available in the form of text, possibly sound, or images

(Johannessen, Tufte & Christofferson, 2016, p.33). A combination of hard and soft data were used to answer this research paper. Gender and age that were collected represents hard data, while the opinions from the interview candidates are more personable and represents soft data.

3.2 Research approach

In this particular work an abductive research approach was chosen. Before explaining the reasoning behind choosing this particular way of research, it was decided to shed a light on other types of approaches that exist in order to see the reasoning of not choosing them. The deductive approach to scientific research, as outlined by Saunders et al. (2009), centers on a specific hypothesis. In contrast, the inductive approach, also discussed by Saunders et al. (2009), involves gathering empirical data to formulate a theory that explains the collected information. Thomas (2010) describes abduction as a process rooted in case normativity and dependent on practical wisdom, rather than the development of theory. The decision to employ the abductive research approach in this manuscript stemmed from the understanding that the findings are neither typical nor easily replicable (Thomas, 2010). This study's outcomes are drawn from a spectrum of generalizations, ranging from weaker to stronger, which aligns with the nature of abductive reasoning. As a result, the results and findings are open to interpretation. Furthermore, opting for an abductive approach was motivated by the study's aim to uncover practical implications.

3.3 Data collection

Primary data and secondary data were the main focus data sources of this research in order to achieve the purpose of this research paper. The research commenced with the collection of secondary data, which encompassed theories and concepts derived from existing literature. This provided a theoretical framework for the research endeavor, enabling a deeper understanding of the issue. Secondary data is data, which has already existed and collected by others for purposes other than the problem at hand (Davies & Hughes, 2014, p.32). In contrast to primary data, secondary data is readily available, cheap and fast way to obtain data. There are a number of secondary data sources that are available for researchers such as, academic literature, books, government publications, electronic sources, websites and social media. Primary data is the data that is directly collected by researchers for a specific problem at hand (Currie, 2005). Primary data was gathered through interviews conducted with participants to gain firsthand insights into the research topic. The most common methods of collecting qualitative data are conducting in-depth interviews and observation. In this study qualitative research was done because the notion of qualitative research matches with my research purpose, which was to determine the effectiveness of using user/consumer-generated content creators in marketing and assess customer's attitude, experiences, opinions and perspective towards these individuals on TikTok. The interviews were done with 16 participants separately and are classified as individual interviews. Each participant would provide their responses independently, and there wouldn't be group dynamics or interaction among them or other individuals in the room during the data collection process. This is to isolate them to only the moderator and not have them be influenced by anything other than their own experiences.

3.4 Data analysis tool Nvivo

NVivo is a CAQDAS program. CAQDAS programs assist qualitative researchers to collect, organize, analyze, visualize, and report their data. CAQDAS programs assist the researcher by offering tools and features to organize and structure the data collected. Nvivo is able sort, label, and organize coded data hierarchically through the node and through classification and mapping tools (Dakhal, 2022). Thematic coding in NVivo is easily performed by selecting a section of text from a source document, like an interview transcript which was used in this research and then tagging it with a node (Dakhal, 2022).

Nvivo was solely used in its basic form to only identify and map thematic data to case data to find patterns from the interview transcript text. The first phase is coding of the datasets.

Coding essentially means labeling and creating categories for sections or “chunks” of data in the dataset. In the nodes tool, researchers developed parent codes and child codes (Dakhal, 2022).

3.5 Sampling

Just like other steps in a research process, the sampling process is an important part of any research design. It includes closely interrelated several steps and a thorough planning and choosing the right and relevant sample size (Malhotra & Birks, 2007). The sampling process starts with determining the target and desired population and is followed by such steps, to develop the sampling frame, determine the sample size, specify sampling technique, execute

the sampling process and validate the sample. In the following paragraph, steps that are used in this research will be discussed.

According to Malhotra and Birks (2007), the target population is a particular group of individuals who have certain characteristics that researchers are interested in. The research targeted individuals comprising the TikTok user base who actively engage with content related to both U/CGCC, Influencers, micro-celebrities, have made purchases inspired by TikTok content, exhibit a propensity to consider purchasing products promoted on the platform, and demonstrate a tendency to conduct independent research following exposure to products on TikTok. No demographic distinctions were made regarding nationality among the targeted population. However, the age criteria for inclusion aligned with the parameters defining Generation Z, which encompasses individuals born from 1997 to 2012. Specifically, the research sample was restricted to individuals aged 19 to 26 years, encompassing those who were turning 20 or 27 in the year 2024. This age range was selected based on the presumption that individuals aged 19 would likely possess greater economic independence and smartphone accessibility compared to those aged 12 to 18, who might not have yet entered the workforce or acquired smartphones or have not finished highschool (In Norway) yet, rendering data collected from the latter age group less informative for the research objectives. It is necessary to mention that the exact number of target population of this research is undefined due to the fact that there is no such statistics which shows the amount of people who uses TikTok, done a purchase due to TikTok, follow a standard U/CGCC, influencer, micro-celebrity, all at the same time.

A sample represents a subset of the broader target population, as acknowledged by Malhotra and Birks (2007). Selecting an appropriate sampling size is crucial as it constitutes a

fundamental aspect of the sampling methodology. Aghili (2011) underscores that an insufficient sample size fails to accurately reflect the characteristics of the entire target population, thereby rendering the study inconclusive. On the other hand, an excessively large sample size may impose significant demands in terms of time, effort, and resources (Aghili, 2011). In this research, data collection took place in Stavanger, Norway, involving the participation of a single focus group comprising 16 individuals from Generation Z.

There are different sampling methods used by researchers, classified into two categories: probability sampling and nonprobability sampling (Malhotra & Birks, 2007). Probability sampling ensures that individuals in the target population have an equal chance of being selected, often through random selection. Nonprobability sampling, on the other hand, does not guarantee equal chances of selection and may involve selecting participants based on convenience or judgment of the researcher. In this research, a combination of both probability and nonprobability sampling methods was employed. Probability sampling was utilized to select participants from specific locations, including the University of Stavanger, BI, and Workplace, with the aim of ensuring representation from diverse segments of the population. However, it is important to note that this method does not guarantee a truly random selection from the entire population. Simultaneously, nonprobability sampling was utilized to target individuals who use TikTok and have been influenced by it. Participants were chosen based on their easy access and convenience to the study, but efforts were made to ensure some level of representativeness and qualification through pre-qualification criteria. Overall, while a combination of sampling methods was employed, it is acknowledged that bias may be present in both probability and nonprobability sampling approaches, as participants were selected based on various criteria determined by the researcher. The participants selected were asked pre-questions before they participated in order to ensure that (1) they were users of TikTok

(2) they follow U/CGC creators, influencers and micro-celebrities, in any sense not just only having subscribed to a following button (3) they use TikTok regularly, and has been in any way shape or form performed an action due to TikTok's influence.

3.6 Procedure data collection

3.6.1 Pilot interviews

Prior to running the focus groups, it was decided to run three test interviews in order to ensure the understandability of the questions. Respondents were asked to evaluate the questions by their understandability, layout, and clarity according to Saunders et al. (2009) guidelines. The feedback was taken into consideration, and the questions were revised afterwards. Thus I ensured that the content provided during the focus groups sessions was easily comprehensible.

The initial pilot interview was conducted in English. However, it became evident that the questions were too complex for individuals who were not heavily involved in academic discourse. Words such as "*user-generated content*" and "*consumer-generated content*" had to be explained. Consequently, researchers had to provide additional explanations for the questions. Despite this effort, Norwegian (especially young) speakers still found some words and sentence structures difficult to comprehend, making it challenging for them to respond in English.

For the subsequent interview, I asked the questions in English and then translated and explained them in Norwegian, enabling participants to respond in their preferred language. This approach was necessary because the English proficiency levels of these three participants varied; one understood every word in English, while the other struggled with certain words, finding them too difficult to comprehend, and the last one fell somewhere in

between. This hindered their understanding of the entire sentence. While I did replace some of the most challenging words, I recognized the importance of maintaining the integrity of the questions. Altering them too extensively could result in a complete shift in meaning or render the answers irrelevant to my research question. The conclusion drawn from this is that the interviews will be conducted in a semi-structured manner, allowing for the addition of questions without deviating significantly from the questions outlined on paper. I will conduct the interviews using a mix of English and Norwegian to ensure participants' understanding. However, I will keep the questions primarily in English to facilitate easier writing and reporting for my research paper later on.

3.6.2 Details of focus group

The interviews were conducted during the 14th (Three pilot interviews), 21th (Three participants at a different time during the day), 22th (Two participants), 25th (Two participants), 26th (Three participants), 28th (one participant), 30th (three participant) of April, 2024 and 2nd of May, 2024 (Two participants).

A total of 16 individuals participated in the research. 25% were participants from BI (Four participants). 56,25% University of Stavanger (Nine participants), and 18,75% were participants from workspace (Three participants). The research recruitment of participants was done by personal verbal contact, messenger, snapchat and phone. The invitation to the individual was delivered steadily already in early March whether or not they were interested in taking the studies or not. A total of 36 people were asked, 27 wanted to participate, however only 16 participants were needed. After conducting 16 interviews with participants,

I reached data saturation, as no new themes emerged from subsequent interviews. I started to notice that I was moving toward redundancy around interview number nine but kept going to ensure that majority of the big themes were covered.

Table 1

Participant	Date	Age	Gender	Duration
1	21.04.24	23	Female	33 Minutes
2	21.04.24	22	Female	36 Minutes
3	21.04.24	25	Male	28 Minutes
4	22.04.24	27	Female	31 Minutes
5	22.04.24	24	Female	30 Minutes
6	25.04.24	26	Male	29 Minutes
7	25.04.24	21	Female	31 Minutes
8	26.04.24	20	Female	25 Minutes
9	26.04.24	26	Male	38 Minutes
10	26.04.24	25	Male	35 Minutes
11	28.04.24	23	Female	27 Minutes

12	30.04.24	20	Female	36 Minutes
13	30.04.24	26	Female	32 Minutes
14	30.04.24	22	Male	31 Minutes
15	02.05.24	19	Female	26 Minutes
16	02.05.24	20	Female	36 Minutes

The participants were all Norwegians, gender distribution was heavily leaned towards female participants (See Table 1). All of the participants use TikTok at least once a day and have been using the app for at least a year. The participants followed U/CGCC, Influencers, micro-celebrities, celebrities, in different industries such as fashion, make up, food, technology, gym, comedy, DIY (Do it yourself) projects, inspirations videos, book reviews, perfume reviews etc. The discussion guide (See appendix 1) was developed based on the purpose of the study. It was structured into seven major dimensions such as: Need Dimensions, Trust and Information Dimensions, Experience Dimensions, Purchase and Purchasing Behavior Dimension, Content Perception Dimensions and Recommendation. Discussion guide included open-ended and semi-structured questions and was developed after a comprehensive review of relevant academic literature as well as guidance and results from the pilot interviews.

3.6.3 Interview structure

Each individual interview started with an introduction of myself, and handing participant a contract for them to read and sign (See appendix 2). Then a structured introduction, which

included a brief description of the rules, the purpose of the study, and approximately how long the interview is going to last. A short definition of “User and Consumer generated content” and “Micro-celebrity” were provided with examples. In addition, the participant gets the option to answer either in Norwegian or English and as well as having the option to ask any additional questions if they don't understand something. They are also provided with the options to pull out their phones and log into or open TikTok if they are not able to recall some information in order to get an accurate answer. All answers were listened carefully after, and the participants were given plenty of time to answer the questions, this is to ensure that no pressure was placed upon them. They were also aware of the voice recordings that were placed in front of them. The answers were recorded using a digital phone recording app during all of the interviews to assist with accurate and thorough data capture and subsequent analysis. During the interview, I will mark any confusions and ask a follow up question for clarity. After the interview is done, and when participants have left the room, a brief conclusion is written down to form a core bullet point and I go over key points. The interview and discussions were transcribed verbatim. Detailed notes were taken from the recordings and analyzed for content themes, current ideas and key points.

3.7 Data Analysis (Qualitative content analysis QCA)

A mixed-methods approach was employed to comprehensively analyze the data gathered from 16 in-depth interviews with Gen Z participants regarding their experiences with TikTok and the factors influencing their behavior and purchasing decisions. Content data analysis and thematic analysis were utilized to extract meaningful insights from the interviews as well as patterns from repetitive answers.

Content data analysis, drawing from Shields and Twycross (2008), was chosen to systematically identify and interpret the characteristics and messages within the participants' discussions about TikTok and U/CGC. Each interview was translated and transcribed verbatim from English to Norwegian to ensure accuracy. Detailed notes were taken during the interviews, capturing key points, emerging themes, and relevant quotes. The analysis involved interpreting the meanings of words line by line, categorizing non-standardized data into categories, and conceptualization to uncover patterns and relations among key concepts. The audio recordings from the interviews were transcribed to ensure accurate representation of the spoken words. Thematic analysis was also employed to explore the underlying meanings, experiences, and broader themes expressed by the participants. Themes and patterns emerged through this process. Additionally, categorization of attitudes towards User-Generated Content on TikTok and related concepts were identified. Each interview conversation was summarized to make sense of the data, with adjustments made to transcription to enhance clarity and understanding. Nvivo was used as a tool as it is easy to find patterns and repeated answers from the interview questions in contrast to flipping through pages of transcript notes manually as NVivo provides search and query functions that enable researchers to quickly locate specific words, phrases, or themes within the data. This makes it easier to identify recurring patterns or repeated answers to interview questions.

By employing a mixed-methods approach encompassing both content analysis and thematic analysis, this study aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of Gen Z's experiences with TikTok and the factors influencing their behavior. This approach allowed for a nuanced exploration of both the content of the participants' discussions and the underlying meanings and themes expressed within the data. Filler words that were removed are; um, huh, lit, slay, i don't know, yeah, like, legit, broke, fat, chatte, *'those people'*, bro, hæ, etc.

Example of a transcribed verbatim from a female participant could be;

Norwegian: *‘um, girlie eg vett che, eg føle hvis hu ser bra ut og slaye så hadde eg kjøpt det liksom’*

English: *‘um, girlie, i dont know i feel like if she looks good and slays then i would have bought it like’*

Adapted translation / Paraphrasing: *‘I don't know, i feel like if she looks good, then i would have bought it’*

Example of a transcribed verbatim from a male participant could be;

Norwegian: *‘ah, ærlig talt as, parfyme og sånn greie e liksom det eg ser mest av as’*

English: *‘ah, honestly though, perfume and stuff is like the thing i look at the most man’*

Adapted translation / Paraphrasing: *‘Honestly, perfume and similar product is the only thing i look for the most’*

The essence of the sentence remains unchanged. This is to make it easier to understand as the participants were GenZ and rely heavily on the Gen Z lingo. Using adapted translation and paraphrasing is to better suit the linguistic or cultural context of the target reader and make it less informal.

3.8 Criticism of the research when conducting a research

One of the main struggles that was faced is striving for the highest quality possible (Cope, 2014). Both quantitative and qualitative research have their different criteria of critique. In case of qualitative research there are four common components used to evaluate the research trustworthiness: credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability (Cope, 2014).

3.8.1 Credibility

Credibility can be defined as an objectiveness of the data and the way researchers interpret it (Polit & Beck, 2012). In order to enhance the credibility of qualitative study, researchers have to use demonstration of engagement and audit trails (Cope, 2014). The engagement from the

moderators' side was shown by enhancing the informal and relaxing atmosphere among the participants, so that they would feel comfortable and open minded. The interviews often took place in a rather calm location. The participants were led according to the general question guide, however, when needed, some probing questions were asked in order to receive the in-depth knowledge on a specific aspect. For the reason of not missing any comments and answers provided by participants, an electronic device recorder was used and was told beforehand and that I will be the only one who will ever listen to their recordings.

3.8.2 Dependability

Dependability can be defined as consistency of data over similar conditions (Cope, 2014). It has to be achieved through data collection process taking place under similar conditions and participants, giving similar results. Participants were screened according to the criteria of being active TikTok users. All participants settings were similar or the same; the process of data collection took place at University of Stavanger for all participants in a separately rooms with a friendly atmosphere. Except for the three participants from work, where the interview took place at the workplace where no one was around. All participant acted in a similar relaxed manner and gave similar results under the conditions.

3.8.3 Confirmability

Confirmability pertains to the capacity of researchers to offer impartial data derived from participants' responses, rather than from the subjective assessments of the research team (Cope, 2014). Demonstrating the confirmability of a study involves providing examples of how conclusions and interpretations were derived. One way to achieve this is by citing specific responses and statements made by participants. In this study, each interview session

was transcribed verbatim first in Norwegian, and these transcripts served as the basis for further data analysis. Quotes extracted from these transcripts were utilized. The findings were directly derived from the data itself.

3.8.4 Transferability

Transferability refers to the capability to use the findings obtained in different contexts (Cope, 2014). Essentially, it means making it simple for readers to relate the research to their own situations. For research to be considered "transferable," the researcher must furnish sufficient information. In this study, I provided suggestions regarding the managerial and academic implications of the findings. These suggestions enhance the transferability of the research, making it applicable beyond the specific conditions examined during the study.

3.8.5 Limitations of method

Qualitative research method has its advantages and disadvantages. It was acknowledged that this kind of studies provide readers with a generalized and holistic perspective instead of being a rule that can be applied to any situation. Another limitation connected with qualitative research method is unavoidable presence of the researchers during the data collection process, and therefore it might have an influence on the research participants (Saunders et al., 2009). Convenience sampling method which was selected for this study has its limitations as well (Malhotra & Bricks, 2007). It can in some cases lead to under- or over-representation of a certain group within a sample. This undermines the ability to generalize accordingly to the chosen sample (Saunders et al., 2009).

4 Empirical Findings and Analysis

4.0.1

The background information provides the basics information of the participants, such as the importance of social media for them and how often they use it, the purpose of, and the interest of Tiktok, as well as experience of using TikTok for active and passive reasons. This type of data was collected pre-interview to ensure that participants met the required criteria. The next part describes the use of combined theories of different influential theories and purchasing behavior and consumer decision making process. The most important findings are applied and analyzed into the combined models' stages in order to facilitate answering the research purpose.

4.1 Background information

The participants of the research were selected due to their direct connection to the social media app, TikTok. They are actively using TikTok in their everyday life at least once a day either from just passively scrolling through their timeline feed for relaxing or just to cure their boredom. They have had TikTok for over a longer period of time. All of them have mentioned that social media in general plays an important part of their lives, and that TikTok also naturally falls under it. There are two ways of how participants uses TikTok; passive and active. Active means mostly staying connected to friends, family members, creating posts, commenting, liking and sharing the videos of other U/CGC. Passively using TikTok refers to being informed about events around the world, news, celebrity gossip, educational purposes, checking others posts, entertainment, research purposes and wanting to be inspired. The participants were already active users of Snapchat, Instagram and Facebook. Some of them

also mentioned that although they don't necessarily seek out knowledge from other people (user-generated content creators, micro-celebrity, celebrity, influencer) they do, however, randomly and passively learn things. Such as random fun facts, makeup tutorials, food making videos, guides, restaurants and bar recommendations and so on. The following topics are of the interest of the respondents; makeup, skincare, activities to do, gym, educational pages etc.

4.2 Need recognition

During the data collection phase, participants who were exposed to products shared by UGCC on TikTok showed an inclination to purchase the featured item, leading to a desire to possess it. Furthermore, the findings of this research shows that the UGCC are regarded as external stimuli for provoking participants' needs (Kotler et al., 2016). Even though the participant voiced that they didn't think they needed the said product to begin with. A common comment left by the participants were;

"I guess i need a refill of the concealer anyways, it looked very pretty on her (...), i wanted it as well"

"(...)Everyone on TikTok buys from Temu now, i thought it was a scam, but it wasn't, its really cheap(...)"

At this stage, it was determined that UGC as a marketing tool creates a push towards desire of a product and a need that is somewhat already there within the participant to start with or a product that makes sense as long as it would benefit the participant. Among the participants, there was confirmation of thesis that TikTok UGCC might trigger need recognition, this can be exemplified by quoting two answers;

“I didn't know I needed a tongue scraper until I saw it (...) i didn't even know what it was”

““(...) When i'm in the store Normal (...) i find a dupe from Ariana Grande cloud perfume, i wanted to try it”

“(...) i bought that big toe corrector, it is so useless now, but it seemed useful when i first saw it”

This is well correlated with Hoyer et al. (2012) who mentions that the needs are our understanding of the difference between the desired and actual states. The participants can feel the difference between those two states as they see a promotion by a UGC. When consumers perceive a gap between these two states, such as noticing that they need a tongue scraper or a cheaper knock off version of a well-known perfume, it prompts a recognition of need, potentially leading to further information seeking and purchasing behavior. There were also instances where participants didn't need something, but liked an item so much that they wanted to buy it regardless, knowing they'd make an occasion to use that item at a later date anyways. In addition, the way that the individual looks and their attractiveness that promote a product have someone correlation to the state of need during this phase, also previously mentioned by Guéguen and Pichot (2001). Some of the participants stated that;

“(...) If she looks like me and i think the item look pretty, im most likely to buy it if i know need it later on anyways”

“If i already need something, then it doesn't matter how the person look, as long as the comments think that it is good”

“I just skip if i dont need something(...) sometimes when i want something and i see someone attractive i spend more time on her video”

There is a clear distinction between ‘‘want’’ and ‘‘need’’ when it comes to encountering UGCC who provoke the participant to act a certain way due to their attractiveness. An attractive UGCC can create a ‘‘want’’ even though a participant does not necessarily need it to begin with, similar to earlier principles where an item that an individual never needed suddenly becomes a ‘‘need’’ due to the sheer practicality of the product itself (Tongue scraper). However, in this case, an attractive UGCC can even compel the participant to want an item even though the product might not differ too much from what is already out there in the market. Some participants pointed out the challenge of distinguishing whether they perceive an item as attractive independently or if its attractiveness is enhanced by the appeal of the UGCC using or wearing it. Quotes to support this claim;

‘‘I saw a cute top on her, but she was much bigger than I am(...) i saw the same blouse on another girl, and she was my size and the color looked good on blonde hair so i bought it’’

‘‘I don't know, i feel like if she looks good, then i would have bought it’’

4.2.1 Information search

Most of the participants stated that after recognizing the need provoked by a UGCC, a further research on the internet is taken into consideration in order to help them make a conclusive decision. 16 out of 16 participants behaved the same straight away, which was going into the comment section of the TikTok video to see if they even want to spend more time doing more research elsewhere on the internet as time and convenience is important stated by Thjømøe and Olson (2011) as well as (Kotler & Keller, 2012). . Some of the participants (Two participants) voiced that if there were enough positive comments, it would’ve been the

deciding factor to buy a product. However, the majority of the participants have longer but a similar step by step on what they did after recognizing the need. The following ways of searching for more information were found with the participants as they first; checked the comments, likes, checked the UGCC homepage or profile, look at the amount of followers, look at the ‘vibe’ of the user, and look at if they have posted a similar video in the past, as mentioned earlier by Jin & Phua (2014), this behavior is participants signalling that they try to look for credible source. The content being promoted have to make sense with the UGCC personality and brand. Afterwards, depending on the participant, they then move on from the TikTok app, and start doing either research on Google for more information. Some participants also used Youtube reviews, read online reviews and even asked friends for opinions, this correlated with SIT theory done by Maram and Kongsompong (2007). They also go to the official website of a product in order to learn more about it. Some typical ways of information collection can be exemplified in the following quotes;

“I go straight to the comment section to see what other think”

“(...) the likes and share is very important, but most importantly, the comment of the video and if the comments have many likes, that is the most important part”

“If i see one or two negative comments, i don’t really care (...) when i see many more, then i just scroll to the next video”

As was mentioned in the study done by Chen et al. (2015), eWOM plays a huge role in consumers’ decision making process. Amongst the ways of searching information, the majority agreed that friends’ advice play an important role when they look for more information on a certain product, however, UGCC with a decent following and

Micro-celebrity words weigh more than friends recommendation when it comes to TikTok products. When given the chance to choose who the participant trusted more, between friends, family, UGCC, micro-celebrity or celebrity. Majority chose UGCC, because the participants perceived that they seemed more knowledgeable than friends and family, but more relatable than celebrities. This contradicts some of the existing theories done with by Kotler et al. (2012) who state that; friends opinions are usually considered as the *‘most real’* or *‘most trustworthy’* implying that a friend's words might have a final say in some situations. Although this might be true to some extent, my findings suggest otherwise. Most of the participants agreed that UGCC who are able to make a personal connection and be relatable to them, were more likely to be able to convince the participant to act a certain way Guéguen and Pichot (2001). If UGCC have created an environment where; although participants might not personally know the UGCC, they make it seem like they are friends and are trustworthy, which aligns better with the credibility theory where a person can be trust another person through persuasion due to credibility, even tho they have never met before. Furthermore, searching for more information was found to be helpful to making the purchase decision. This finding is supported by the study by Fleishman-Hillard (2012) which showed the results that 89 % of customers use the Internet in order to decide on a purchase. Different kinds of additional information gained through the information search stage are helping the potential customers to move from the total set of products to the decision set (Kotler & Keller, 2012).

4.2.2 Evaluation of alternatives

According to Kotler and Keller (2012), after the participants gathered information that they needed about a certain product, consumers came to the phase of evaluating alternatives. In

this research, the following factors were found to be as important when evaluating alternatives; price of the product, location accessibility of the product, shipment policy such as shipment price and time, quality of the product, its popularity, attractiveness, its uniqueness and the way of how the product was promoted. These factors was extracted from quotes such as;

“I’ve seen that sunscreen everywhere on TikTok it has vitamin C in it, but i think you can find something similar on Korean skincare for better price”

“(..) I didn’t realize I had to pay toll when i got the product (..), i don't think i will buy from that site again though, but other site might work”

“I will go and look for what other people have posted about similar product”

Kotler and Keller (2012) stated that attributes of interest of consumers vary by products. It could be location, atmosphere and price which correlates well with some findings of this. However, some participants also are so unsure of the different alternatives, to the point of they would rather revert back to buy what they already have at home and get a refill rather than try something new altogether. Some participants also think that when there are too many alternatives it makes them unsure and they revert back to relying on likes and comments on the videos and compare them as well as the price. Participant stated that;

“(..) if the two or more items says that it will do the same thing, then i just buy the cheaper one, or none”

“If the products perform similar i look at the likes and comment”

Although there are many alternatives of the different products on TikTok with positive performance, price seems to be the biggest factor even when participants are in the evaluation phase.

4.3 Intention of behavior

4.3.0

In this section the findings of the research were applied into the TRA based on two determinants: Attitude towards the behavior and subjective norms. Attitude was divided into three main parts which are attitude towards UGCC, attitude towards products and attitude towards product promoted by UGCC.

4.3.1 Attitude toward UGCC on TikTok

Participants noticed that UGCC seems more genuine when they use a product and talk about that said product because they know that it is not a paid promotion. The participants experienced that have had a positive attitude towards UGCC because they know they either will get; (1) piece of advice (comparing product with competitors' products), (2) entertained, (3) learn, especially learning through other experiences, (4) Updates on the world, (5) Trends. The researcher found that the following reasons were expressed as the main attitude towards UGCC and why participant follow them on TikTok; passive learning, sharing interests, passion, values of UGCC, living in a similar lifestyle, how UGCC look, how known they are, how they brand themselves, as well as celebrity gossip and news. This is confirmed by following quotes mentioned by participants;

“I would only stop and watch videos of someone who talks about something nice and i like”

“I listen to UGCC if i find them interesting (...) if they talk about my interests”

“(...) sometimes i find myself listening to the celebrity drama and theories”

“(...) I randomly learned about different websites of clothes”

Also, the lifestyle of most UGCC is believed to be reachable for individuals, which puts them somewhere in between ordinary people and celebrities, which would be micro-celebrity. The participant also voiced that although they do follow celebrities and look at what they wear or items that they have. It is not always pretty or affordable. Thus, the participants opt to buy products or behave a certain way that falls in between normal people, UGCC and micro-celebrity as stated by these quotes;

“I buy things from UGCC because they seems more affordable”

“(...) I only buy clothes when UGCC recommends it or if the likes and comments agree (...) i look stupid if i were to dress like that (Kendall Jenner) on a party”

This finding is supported by Rogers' (1983) statement that compatibility of the celebrities' lifestyle with the consumer's lifestyle is a crucial factor that influences consumer's attitude. During the research phase, it was found that almost all the participants had a positive attitude towards UGCC, even positive attitude towards micro-and traditional celebrities. The main reason for causing a positive or negative attitude amongst the respondents was depending on the perception of UGCC actions, relatability, background, and their genuinity and even political views (Albarracin et al., 2001). Participants felt that the UGCC who was promoting or giving advice and talking about their experience, do not really have anything to gain from it other than just wanting to share, as most of the UGCC are not sponsored or being paid to talk about a product. Among the factors causing a positive attitude towards following UGCC,

one major factor was found; trustworthiness of UGCC and their credibility (Pornpitakpan, 2004). This findings can be supported by these quotes;

“I feel like when UGCC make a recommendation they don’t have anything to gain from it other than followers, so i trust them more, they aren’t being paid”

“I can watch a promotional video but i never trust them or buy it (...) if i see the same product but its not promoted i would consider to buy it more”

“I trust UGCC more than someone like Isabel Raad, celebrity in general seems ingenuine when they promote anything at all”

“My main thing about TikTok and what to trust is like and comments”

Paid promotion seems to decrease participants' trust in the content that they consume.

Especially paid promotion by celebrities, or even when a product is being talked about by anyone individual other than UGCC is perceived to be lean towards negative attitude. It's the relatability that is the selling point of UGCC. This result is coincident with the statement by Solomon (2010) that choosing the right person who could create trust among consumers is vital for a company (Solomon, 2010). In addition, other important factors were also found that positive attitudes towards UGCC were due to the; positive, friendly, kind and genuine attitude from the creators, practical information about specific products or services, good value for money, useful advice, positive vibes, correlation between item and person that make sense. These factors were perceived to be highly positive. These findings are proven in the following quote;

“If i get a good vibe from them and they seem nice i listen to them more”

“When they seems knowledgeable and if i can confirmed what they say with my own research later on, then i trust them”

“(...) she talked about blush and makeup and she looks really pretty, it makes sense, then i trust her way more. But if she never talked about make up in her previous upload then i don't trust her”

On the other hand, there were also negative attitudes and many factors triggered the feeling of avoidance and dismissive attitude towards some of the UGCC. When there are paid promotions on the item that they have never mentioned before, bad correlation between user and product, negative personality traits such as being; annoying, too pushy, loud, overly edited videos that makes the UGCC seem childish and static as well as too low follower count, as it seems like they are less knowledgeable and less people trust them. These are supported by quotes;

“I scroll right away if its a paid promotion unless i need that product already”

“(...) She is very annoying and loud, i just move on”

“(...) why would she talk about polaroid camera, her TikTok and instagram feed doesn't even have anything to do with photography”

The other (negative) factors that were found are if UGCC are conceived to only be acting in order to (1) gain popularity and followers, (2) increase their profit, (3) content does not match with their real personality or previous interests or (4) attention seeking and controversial. The idea that UGCC perform in order to increase their profit is supported by the findings by Temperley and Tangen (2006) It is under assumption that most celebrities or Micro-celebrity endorse a product in order to increase their net profit or popularity. Many consumers have

that expectation from these micro- and celebrities. However they don't expect this behavior from UGCC, so when UGCC acts a certain or similar way of micro- and traditional celebrity, they receive negative feedback in contrast to when micro-and celebrities does it, then the participant just ignore it, cause it is an expected behavior, unless it is wildly controversial topic. In addition, it was found that negative attitudes towards UGCC emerge when there are contradictory attitude towards the same product between different UGCC.

“If UGCC talk about gym clothes and rave about it and the product is sponsored, then i its already suspicious, but i don't dismiss it (...) however, if i see other video that is not sponsored talk negative about that product, then i will never trust that UGCC ever again”

“If more than one or two contradict each other i just ignore the product as a whole, its too difficult to know and i don't really care”

“If different UGCC talks differently about the same product, i am more thoroughly checking the comments”

4.3.2 Attitude toward promotion done by UGCC

It was noticed that many companies use UGCC to promote their product, as their status and profile are perfect to reach the relatability of today's social media users. In addition, it is less expensive to hire these smaller UGCC to promote their products (Warren, 2024).

However, all of the participants have negative condensation towards promotional products, especially paid promotional products done. About three fourth of the participants had a positive attitude towards getting a piece of advice, or product information from UGCC. As it was determined, this can often be a push for further information search that could lead to

buying a product. However, it was discovered that being advised does not lead to direct purchasing, especially being advised while having to keep in mind something is a paid promotion. This example is supported by the following quotes;

“When i hear them (UGCC) talk about a product, i go straight to the comment section and look at the comment, then it search the item names and look what other say about it”

“(...)I don't really use other websites to double check, videos on TikTok is enough”

The attitude towards product placement is strongly negative from all of the 16 participants. Furthermore, this type of promotion was found by the participants to be too unreliable as the real intention is hard to decipher. It was also said to be too commercial. Some negative attitudes become less negative such as honestly about the sponsorship and being open regarding being paid, as well as if the UGCC is already someone who has good credibility already, or that they are someone who uses the promotional product regularly. Some participants mentioned that;

“If a product is paid promotion, i take it with a grain of salt”

“If it's paid promotion i have to double or even triple check”

“(...) paid videos are not really trustworthy, i just do follow up research”

“it helps if they are honestly that they are being paid to talk about it”

“(...) i can't stand it if they put a small text at the corner of a video that says AD (...) i know that norwegian tiktokers have to tell if its promotion or not, and if they are being sneaky about it”

However, some participants admitted that they still bought a product due to the product placement on UGCC accounts. Three vital elements were formulated that influence their attitude for making a decision on buying or not buying a product/service;

1. **Customer trust in the UGCC** who is promoting the product is the most important. It was found that regardless of what is being promoted. As long as participants trust that UGCC. They will give them the time and listen to the person. This is because they are familiar with the person from previous encounters. This gives them a clear knowledge about who they are, their lifestyle and pattern, credibility, which helps them to develop trust.
2. **The product** itself, and that the product has to make sense to the UGCC.
3. **The urgency** of need they feel about the product/service.

Although these three elements do not trump over one another, but rather a combination of the three that makes it easier for the participant to act or behave a certain way even with the paid promotion video or product placement. In addition, paid promotional videos were met with dismissive attitude straight away at first, regardless of the follower count. However, if the promotional video fulfill, any of the three mentioned vital elements mentioned above, then the likelihood of the participant listening or even buying the product is more likely.

Furthermore, even if the participant moves on from the promoted video. They would seek after similar product that is being talked about by other UGCC. Examples of these factors are illustrated in following quotes;

“If i already trust the person whether i have brought things because of them before or if i have followed them for a longer time, then i trust them, yes”

“It depends on the product, if i don't like or need the product, i just move on, i don't really care, but i do listen to them if i have followed up”

“If i really need a product, then i listen to them yes, even if its a paid promotion”

Moreover, in addition to these important elements, some other minor factors were found that influence participants' attitude. For example, expertise in the product, performance over time usually shown in time laps or a before and after videos/images, and reconcilability makes followers/consumers consider buying the product or at least leads them to search for further information (Pugazhenthii, 2014). A positive attitude towards these factors has an influence on whether the individual would buy the product or service (Albarracin et al., 2001), regardless of it being a paid promotional video or not. However, a few general factors were found that make participants skeptical of a product promoted by a UGCC.

1. Unnoticeable promotion (see through text that states that it is a product placement on the screen) Participant don't want to feel deceived
2. Being too pushy
3. Too transparent (Any mentions on the performance of the product that is negative)
4. Raving too much about the product during the video (Seems too suspicious)

These factors are explained in the following quotes;

“When she used the product and the ad was a tiny text at bottom of the screen, i rolled my eyes”

“Emma chamberlain used to talk about her coffee all the time and she would go on a tangent about it, i have never brought her coffee, it can't be that good”

“(...) i wanted that Jaclyn Hill lipstick, but she said that there would form bubbles on the tip of the lipstick and that it was harmless, but i don't want it now...”

However, the study revealed that participants didn't always intend to buy the product or service they encountered through product placement. While they might occasionally make a purchase influenced by product placement. However, this isn't a typical behavior of them. Most of the participants said that they mostly become prompted to conduct further research on people's experiences (comments and likes) other UGCC, micro-celebrity, google. Even if they like the product that they see. Among the participants there was a confirmation of this notion in the following quotes;

“I like being told what an item does, i don't wanna read about it though, don't make my decision based on that (...) i try to see what other people say” This quotes ring through almost to all of the participants with some using extra time to search it up and look further into the google search.

4.3.3 Subjective norms

After exploring the participants attitude towards UGCC and attitude towards products promoted by them. The influence that others have on participants are investigated. The majority of the participants voiced that they generally are influenced by what their closest friends think or say when they ask for advice or opinions when choosing to buy something. This findings goes in correlation with statement by Asiad and Faisal (2015) that stated relevant of others opinion such as close friends, relatives etc plays an important role in the decision making Kotler et al. (2012), however their opinions are not final as it was found in

ch. 4.2.1. The main reason for listening to them was that perceive that the opinion of friends and family have no other motivation other than real raw opinion behind it and that it is trustworthy. WoM from friends and family in this case will trump over UGCC if the participants perceive the different parties to have the same or similar knowledge about the subject. However, participants expressed that depending on the subject, knowledge and situation, they may choose to listen to UGCC, and that family or friends will not always trump over UGCC. The statements were highlighted in quotes;

“(...) if i know that my friends knows alot of skin care, then i would rather listen to her, rather than UGCC (...) if i feel like my friend does not know alot of a subject, then i don't really listen to them”

“i might have different taste than my friends, i listen to my friends more if i know beforehand that they know alot about something”

“When it comes to practical things like food and stuff, i listen to my mom more”

It was found that some participants have followed a certain UGCC for months or even years. To the point that UGCC have become a micro-celebrity and that they feel like they can trust them. This correlates to what Marwick (2013) states, that micro-celebrity who is able to make a true connection to their audience can function as a long distant friend and they were prepared to listen to them.

“I have followed them for a long time, so i feel like i can listen to them”

“If i have followed them for a long time, then i by the time they promote something, i already trust them (...) unless they have done something suspicious in the pastor recently”

Almost all of the participants felt that they are not influenced by the opinion of UGCC when it comes to making their purchase final decision (Shih & Fang 2004). The following quotes illustrate this statement;

“I wouldn’t buy the product just because a UGCC alone”

“I wouldn’t buy the product from one person telling me about it, not even family or friends, i have to check something or somewhere else too”

“i would buy the product if i can confirm for myself through other informant that it is a good product”

4.4 Purchase stage

After the choice set of products is selected, consumers have to narrow their search down and decide on which product to buy (Kotler & Keller, 2012). Three types of behaviors were determined when it comes to purchase;

1. Actual purchase of the product promoted
2. Decline of buying a product
3. Purchase of a similar product or an alternative

Food and perfume were the most common purchases made by male participants. While makeup and skincare was the most common purchase done by the female participants. Food was said to be affordable and inspirational related to dinners and calorie intake, while perfume makes the male participant go and smell the perfume at the store and maybe later buy it. While female participants talked about the quality, hype, performance of a product.

“I buy food or ingredients to make a certain food because i don't know what to have for dinner”

“food is easiest because i have to buy it anyways”

“i listen to perfume nerds and then i go to the actual store to smell it”

“If its popular and has good reviews, i will buy the blush”

It was found that all of the participants who bought a product promoted or talked about by UGCC had their influenced by other factors other than the UGCC themselves. The study revealed that while there might be an initial intention to buy a specific product because of UGC, actual purchases did not always occur as expected. Various barriers were identified that hindered participants from completing purchases, including factors such as pricing, shipping challenges, customs duties, the realization of not needing the product, as well as later receiving negative feedback and information about the product's quality from family or friends which changed their mind. The primary obstacle identified in the purchase decision-making process was the consideration of price. Despite positive feedback in the form of numerous favorable comments and likes, or endorsements from sources deemed trustworthy and credible, participants tended to opt for alternatives when confronted with high pricing for a given product. Some quotes states;

“price is very important to me, (...) i don't think i have bought anything if i have deemed it to be too pricey even if i needed it”

“even if the comments have many likes, if i can't afford it, i try to wait or find other options”

Shipment difficulties were found to be the second most important obstacle. Quotes that

confirm this statements are;

“Shipment sometimes don't ship to Norway”

“I do not like long shipping (...) last time i had to pay a toll i wasn't informed”

“i didn't get my product before 4 weeks later, if i see that the product is gonna be shipped from this country again, i just don't order it”

These barriers were followed by lack of urgency; around almost all of participants mentioned that they would not buy something if they do not feel an urgent need associated with a product. This arguments are illustrated by the following quotes;

“For me the main factor for buying a product would be if i need it”

“I will not buy a product if I do not feel a need for it”

“i check and reflect first if im about to be empty on something, if i just bought it, then i probably won't be influenced to buy similar product any time soon”

Some participants mentioned that even though the product seemed attractive, they would prefer not to buy it because of lack in the opportunity to check it in the real life (Trocchia 48 & Janda, 2003). Confirmation of this statement was found in the quotes presented further:

“parfyme is too expensive to just buy without smelling first, i need to smell it”

“i need to try to clothes first before buying, to see if it will fit, but i guess i can sent it back, but i never do”

Nevertheless, a notable subset of female participants exhibited a tendency to purchase clothing items and subsequently mention that they can just return it if the items did not fit properly. Additionally, approximately one-quarter of the total participants abstained from direct product purchases, instead opting for analogous alternatives. This behavior is exemplified in the remarks provided by participants;

“I bought duplication for much cheaper elsewhere”

“i try to find similar product for cheaper”

Despite various impediments encountered by participants in their purchasing decisions, pricing emerged as the predominant factor influencing nearly all 16 respondents. Regardless of the product meeting various criteria signifying its quality, such as favorable reviews, positive feedback, ample likes, accessibility, necessity, and convenient shipping options, pricing consistently overshadowed other considerations. Participants indicated that if they deemed the price to be unjustified, they were disinclined to proceed with the purchase.

4.5 Post purchasing behavior

After completing their purchases, the researchers sought to explore whether participants would advocate for TikTok-promoted products to their social circles, or alternatively, suggest TikTok as a primary source for product information when it comes to UGCC

When it comes to recommend the product which is promoted by UGCC to friends, participants opinions can be separated into three categories and supported by quotes:

1. Those who would recommend to their friends

“i would obviously recommend the products for my friends if i like it, but i would put the decision on them by stating that; ‘it work for me, i don't know about you”

“(...) its natural that i would recommend to my circle if i like it or if the product work like promised”

2. Those who would not recommend to their friends

“If i don't recommend, then its because it was not good”

“(...) The quality is lacking, i just don't talk about the product, except if i want to complain, i guess that's a recommendation in its own right”

3. Those who would just talk about their experience with their friends

“I talk about almost all of my purchases done online with my girls, regardless if its good or not, then they can decide”

“If the product is bad i can talk about it, but i think everyone just forgets about it unless someone ask specifically about the topic again”

It was also found that even if the product underperform or does not meet the participants' expectations, they would not completely dismiss the TikTok app as a whole, but rather the specific UGCC.

“Last time, i bought the blush and it turned out to be too orange, i just didn't buy from that brand again, but i was still looking on other things from the same creator (...) she did mentioned it worked for her and it look good in the video”

“I don't think i have ever blamed the platform as a whole even if the product i got didn't match my expectations looks wise”

“(...) usually when something isn't as pretty on me, i just dont use it”

From the research, it was revealed that even if a product performs differently, the brand is often held responsible if it does not meet expectations. UGCCs who are cautious or articulate often use phrases like 'This works for me, but it might not work for you' or 'This is just my opinion.' These phrases serve as a contingency against negative comments on their videos. This approach yields similar results to previous phases; as long as UGCCs are transparent and appear nice, humble, and relatable, they can even mitigate criticism for products that may not necessarily underperform but perform differently than initially perceived in the video.

4.6 Summary

This chapter presents the empirical findings of the research, analyzed through a combined model. The findings are presented individually, organized according to the stages of the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) model and the Consumer Purchase Decision-Making Process model, with additional support drawn from prominent theories outlined in the literature review. Participant quotes are utilized throughout to illustrate key points. Furthermore, the findings are reinforced by relevant research from the theoretical framework.

5 Conclusion

This chapter presents the applications of the analysis into answering the research questions (RQ) of this study, which are:

RQ1: "What is Gen Z's attitude towards U/CGCC on TikTok?"

RQ2: "What are the main factors U/CGCC that influence Gen Z's buying behavior on TikTok?"

RQ3: "What specific factors, beyond U/CGCC influence, drive Gen Z's purchasing decisions on TikTok?"

5.1.1 Gen Z's attitude towards U/CGCC on TikTok (RQ1)

The research findings indicate that consumers generally hold a positive predisposition towards UGC as a phenomenon. However, this positivity may diminish or at least decrease when participants encounter various negative factors depending on the content they come across on TikTok. The attitude can fluctuate between positive, negative, or mixed.

Nevertheless, these mixed attitudes tend to be short-lived as they can swiftly change between videos.

Three different attitudes can be defined and highlighted towards UGC; positive, negative, and mixed, based on the influencing factors. The summary of influencing factors can be seen on the Table 2.

Attitude towards UGC	Positive	Negative	Mixed
Influencing factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Entertainment * Follower counts * Interests * Physical appearance * Credibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Negative personality traits; -Too loud -Too annoying -Too pushy * Non genuine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Passive scrolling * Neutral * Don't really care

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Trustworthy * Good branding * Genuine * Relatability * Inspiration * Positive attitude * Positive content * Positive personality * High content quality - Shows before and after - A short video - informative * Amount of likes * Positive comments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Advertisement * Promotion * Sponsor * No match between content and person * Too high follower count for a UGCC * Too low follower count for a UGCC * Low content on profile Low content quality - Too long video - Sped up video - Too long text on videos * Amount of likes * Negative comments 	
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Table 2. Consumer's attitude and influencing factors of attitude.

Initially, users approach UGC on TikTok with optimistic expectations, anticipating entertainment, relaxation, and learning experiences. Nonetheless, their engagement with the content may expose them to negative elements, such as negative personality portrayals and advertisements. Moreover, repeated exposure to negativity, particularly during the

information seeking phase, negative factors can decide if the consumers want to buy product or not. Although consumers may maintain a generally favorable attitude towards UGC, this positivity does not always translate into purchase intent. Promotional content, advertisements, and paid partnerships tend to have detrimental effects on the UGC itself. However, it is the comments and likes, which serve as indicators of social validation, that often sway participants closer to making a purchase.

5.1.2 UGC main factors influencing Gen Z behavior (RQ2)

U/CGCC on TikTok have a significant influence over Gen Z's consumer behavior, particularly in the need recognition stage of the purchasing decision process. The of U/CGCC lies in its perceived authenticity, relatability, and entertainment value. Through various forms of content, including product reviews, recommendations, demonstrations, and lifestyle showcases, U/CGCC establishes a direct connection with their audience, fostering trust and credibility. Other factors such as the quality of content, and relevance to Gen Z's interests contribute to the influence of UGC at this stage as well. Likes, comments, and shares serve as indicators of content popularity and credibility, influencing Gen Z's perception of a product's desirability and social validation.

One of the primary factors contributing to the influence of UGCC on Gen Z is the relatability of content creators. Unlike traditional celebrities or micro-celebrities, UGCC often portray themselves as everyday individuals, sharing personal experiences and genuine opinions. This relatability resonates with Gen Z audiences, who value authenticity and seek validation from peers rather than traditional authorities. Moreover, UGC is tailored to align with the interests and preferences of Gen Z, covering a diverse range of topics from, lifestyle, fashion and beauty, gaming and social issues and gossip etc. By catering to niche interests and subcultures, UGCC attract highly engaged audiences who perceive their content as more

relevant and trustworthy than what it would've been otherwise through traditional media. Additionally, the interactive nature of TikTok allows users to actively engage with UGC through likes, comments, shares, and duets or clips. This engagement fosters a sense of community and belonging among Gen Z users, further strengthening the influence of UGC. Furthermore, the likes, comments and share function as a guiding line for Gen Z to behave a certain way while being on the app.

However, while UGCC plays a pivotal role in shaping consumer awareness and preferences, its influence wanes when entering the Evaluation of alternatives stage, and almost completely diminishes during the purchasing stage of the decision-making process. Despite generating interest and desire for certain products or brands, UGC creators have limited control over external factors. The findings suggests that the TRA would technically be present and already exists in the Need recognition phase, and that majority of UGC influence happens at the start of the decision making process, suggested by figure 4 below, rather than solely being present at only in between evaluation of alternatives and purchase stages.

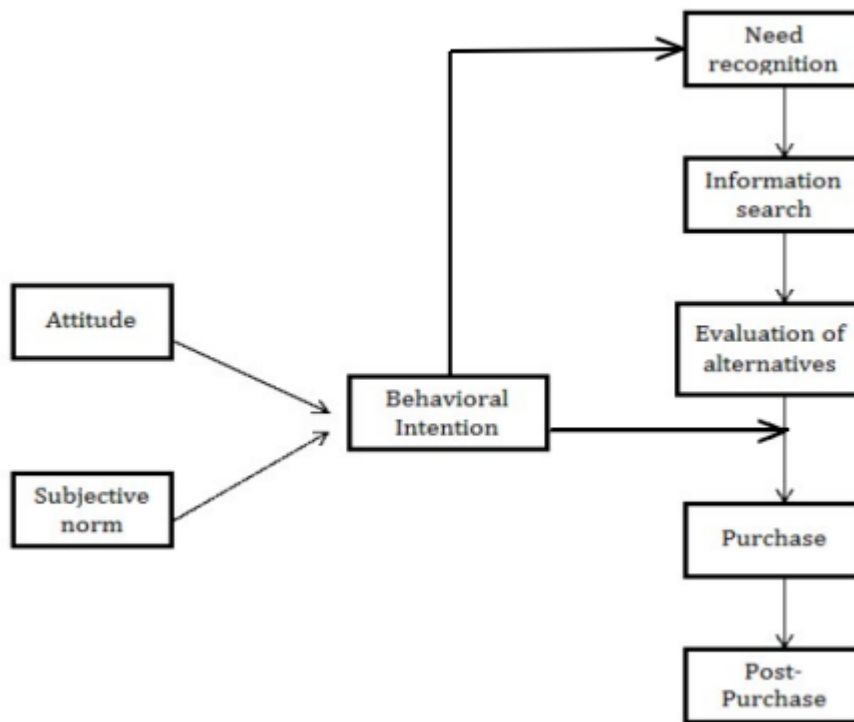


Figure 4, TRA and position of Decision making process

5.1.3 Gen Z's purchasing decisions

As consumers progress from awareness to consideration and ultimately to purchase, other factors come into play, such as perceived value, and personal needs. Furthermore, the credibility of UGC creators may be called into question during the purchasing stage, especially if their content is perceived as overly promotional or lacking transparency regarding sponsorships or partnerships as well as product actual performance. Consumers may conduct additional research, seek confirmation from other sources, or rely on personal experiences and recommendations from comments, friends and family before making a final purchasing decision, as these factors operates outside of the UGCC control, the influences of these UGCC naturally decreases.

However, when it comes to the purchasing stage, the primary influencing factor shifts from social validation to practical considerations such as pricing, shipping logistics, and product availability. While UGC may generate interest and desire for certain products, Gen Z consumers are ultimately guided by budget constraints and perceived value for money. Pricing emerges as the predominant factor influencing purchasing decisions, with consumers opting for products that offer the best combination of affordability and quality or a dismissive of the product as a whole if there are no affordable alternatives.

In addition to pricing, other factors such as shipping challenges, customs duties, and the urgency of need also influence Gen Z's buying behavior during the purchasing stage. While UGC may facilitate awareness and consideration of products as mentioned, its influence diminishes when consumers are faced with practical constraints and logistical considerations.

6 Discussions

The findings of this study shed light on the complex interplay between U/CGCC on TikTok and Gen Z's consumer buying behavior. One of the central themes that emerged from my research is the nuanced influence of U/CGCC at different stages of the consumer purchase decision-making process. While UGCC hold significant sway over Gen Z's awareness and consideration of products, their influence wanes during the evaluation and purchasing stages. This finding challenges conventional wisdom about the efficacy of influencer marketing on social media platforms and underscores the need for marketers to adopt a more holistic approach to engaging with Gen Z consumers. My study also highlights the critical importance of factors such as pricing and product availability in shaping Gen Z's purchasing decisions on TikTok. Despite the persuasive power of UGCC endorsements, participants consistently cited price and perceived value as primary determinants of their purchasing behavior. This finding

suggests that while UGCC content may drive initial interest in a product, consumers ultimately rely on rational decision-making criteria when making purchasing decisions.

7 Theoretical implication

7.1 Validation of Existing Theories

The findings of this study largely align with established theories such as the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) and the Consumer Purchase Decision-Making Process model. Specifically, the research confirms that attitudes towards U/CGCC on TikTok play a crucial role in shaping Gen Z's buying behavior. Furthermore, the identification of factors such as price and product quality as key considerations during the evaluation of alternatives resonates with the principles of rational decision-making outlined in these theoretical frameworks.

7.2 Extension of Theory

While this study validates many aspects of existing theories, it also extends our understanding of consumer behavior in the context of social media platforms like TikTok. For example, the research reveals that U/CGCC on TikTok can exert significant influence over Gen Z's purchasing and evaluation of alternatives stage, particularly during the awareness stage. However, unlike traditional marketing channels, the impact of UGCC diminishes at later stages of the purchase decision process, such as the actual purchasing stage. This nuanced understanding underscores the need for theoretical frameworks to adapt to the unique dynamics of social media-driven consumer behavior.

7.3 Contradictions or Challenges to Theory

One notable discrepancy between my findings and existing theories is the limited influence of UGCC during the purchasing stage. While TRA and other models emphasize the importance of attitudes and subjective norms in shaping purchase intentions, my research do agree, but also suggests that factors such as pricing and shipping logistics often take precedence over UGC endorsements at this stage. This discrepancy challenges the assumption that attitudes towards UGCC will directly translate into purchase behavior and highlights the need for a better understanding of the role of social media influencers in consumer decision-making.

7.4 Emerging Trends

The study also identifies several emerging trends in Gen Z's consumer behavior on TikTok. For instance, the reliance on likes, comments, and shares as indicators of product desirability suggests a shift towards peer-driven recommendations and away from traditional advertising channels. Traditional advertising does not seem to convey enough convincing to Gen Z as there are no likes, comments, or share, to confirm the performance of the product. Availability of likes and comments significantly save Gen Z alot of time to do further research as Gen Z values time and convenience.

7.5 Practical Implications

For marketers, brands, and content creators operating on TikTok, these findings have important implications for designing effective marketing strategies. Rather than solely focusing on influencer endorsements, practitioners should prioritize factors such as pricing transparency, product quality and performance, and customer service to win over Gen Z consumers. Additionally, strategies that leverage peer recommendations and facilitate

experiential shopping experiences may resonate more strongly with this demographic and drive higher levels of engagement and conversion.

8 Limitations and Future research

There are several limitations to this study that require careful consideration. Firstly, the findings are based solely on TikTok users in Norway, specifically in Stavanger. Consequently, it's essential to recognize that perceptions of U/CGCC on TikTok may differ among users in larger cities like Oslo or even in different countries such as the USA where shipping might be significantly less and thus naturally convey different answers than what my research found. Therefore, any generalizations drawn from this study must be approached cautiously. Moreover, the study exclusively focuses on TikTok, while other social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, or Snapchat may yield different or even contrasting perspectives.

Additionally, limitations and issues emerged with the use of the TikTok app. Participants sometimes conflate UGCC with micro-celebrity content, intertwining their experiences with both categories. This confusion stemmed from difficulties in distinguishing between UGCC and micro-celebrity content even with guidance from researchers, leading to inconsistencies in defining UGCC. In addition, some UGCC profiles transitioned to micro-celebrity status due to a viral video where they would gain vast followers in small period of time, blurring the distinction between the two categories, while others ceased to be relevant due to cancellations or account removals, affecting the study's scope and definition of U/CGCC. Furthermore, the study's sample size of TikTok participants, though insightful, may not fully capture the diversity of Gen Z consumers. Future research could benefit from including a more extensive and diverse sample representing various demographics, including different geographic locations, socioeconomic backgrounds, and cultural contexts, to ensure broader

generalizability. Temporal factors, such as changes in consumer behavior and trends, as well as the evolution of social media platforms like TikTok, may also influence the study's findings. Longitudinal studies could track how Gen Z's attitudes and behaviors towards U/CGCC on TikTok evolve over time in response to external factors and platform-specific dynamics. Lastly, the study's broad scope, encompassing various topics such as makeup, perfume, gaming, and food, may have been too expansive. Future research could benefit from narrowing the focus to specific product categories, to provide a more in-depth understanding of Gen Z's consumer behavior on TikTok within a more delimited context.

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Appendix 1

Discussion guide

Blue marked text symbolized follow up question from the researchers

Red marked text were not asked bullet points, but rather a guide for the researchers to look at and take note to see if a theme was mentioned repeated times.

Interview questions:

1. Need dimensions:

- a. When you need something, do you go on TikTok and search it up?
- b. Have you ever used TikTok passively and then suddenly **realized** you ‘needed’ something when UGCC posted something?
- c. Have you ever not needed something, but then made occasions for needing an item?
- d. Have you ever actually bought an item that you didn't even know you needed?
- e. Does attractiveness of a person matter when you passively use tiktok and see them use a product you want?

2. Trust and information Dimensions:

- a. What factors do you consider when deciding whether to trust user-generated content on TikTok?
 - **Relatable**
 - **Followers**
 - **Shares**
 - **Likes**
 - **Comments**
 - **Quality of the video**
 - **Attractiveness of the person**

- Previous posted content

- b. How do you perceive the credibility of user-generated content compared to traditional advertising on TikTok?
- c. How do you determine the credibility of TikTok creators when they review or endorse products or services?
- d. Can you discuss any instances where you felt misled or deceived by user-generated content on TikTok?
 - Did you ever listen to that user again? (Why or why not)
- e. What role do factors such as transparency play in your trust towards TikTok creators and their content?
 - Can someone be too transparent?
- f. What if they talk about a product that you need, but they mention something negative about it, do you care?
- g. How many negative comments, review does it take for you to refrain from buying a product/service?
- h. Do you trust UGCC more or less when they tell you if their content is sponsored?
- i. If a Micro-celebrity (10k followers - 100k followers) and (other)User-generated content creator (Under 10k followers) made a recommendation of a product, which of the two would you listen to more? Why?
- j. When a celebrity promotes something, what is your attitude towards that?
 - What if it is a paid promotion? Why/Why not?
 - Have you ever bought something even though you know it's a paid promotion by celebrity? Why/Why not?

- k. When a micro-celebrity promotes something, what is your attitude towards that?
- What if it is a paid promotion? Why/Why not?
 - Have you ever bought something even though you know it's a paid promotion by Micro-celebrity? Why/Why not?
- l. When a UGCC promotes something, what is your attitude towards that?
- What if it is a paid promotion? Why/Why not?
 - Have you ever bought something even though you know it's a paid promotion by UGCC? Why/Why not?
- m. When family or friends promotes/talk about a product, do you trust them?
- n. If a family member and User-generated content creator post/talk about the same product and make recommendations, which of the two would you trust more?
- What if the User-generated content creator seems way more knowledgeable?
 - What if the family seems way more knowledgeable?

3. Experience Dimensions:

- a. Why do you follow UGCC or people in general on TikTok?
- b. What do you value in UGC?
- Personality, professionalism, passion, knowledge, informal?
- c. Can you describe your experience with using TikTok as a consumer of user-generated content when it comes to buying products?
- Horrible, Bad, Average, Good, Excellent (Why)
- d. Have you ever experienced a discrepancy between your expectations and the actual performance of a product recommended by a TikTok creator? How did this affect your attitude in user-generated content on the platform?

- e. Can you share any personal experiences related to your consumption of user-generated content on TikTok that have influenced your behavior in the platform?

4. Purchasing Behavior Dimensions:

- a. After realizing that you **must** have a product, where do you do your research?
- Item's information page
 - Comments
 - Other UGCC
 - Micro-celebrity
 - Celebrity
- b. At the last stage of actually buying a product/service based on recommendations or reviews from TikTok creators? What were the last factors that influenced you?
- c. Have you ever become interested in an item or service that you initially weren't curious about, but later changed your mind? If yes, what factors influenced this change?
- d. If two different items from different stores suggest doing the same thing, how do you make a decision to choose between them?
- The UGCC who talk about it
 - The likes between the videos
 - The attractiveness of the UGCC who talks about it
 - Second opinion from friends and family who has similar interest
 - Comments
 - The UGCC's overall profile
 - Price? Cheaper or more expensive?

- e. Does it matter how many times an item/service needs to be talked about by different people for you to decide whether you are interested or not? Why and why not?
- f. When you are interested in a product, between user-generated content, micro-celebrity and celebrity, who do you gravitate to trust more and why?
- g. What factors stops you from buying the product when you have decided that you want it
 - Price
 - Shipment
 - Location
 - Lack of urgency
 - Realization that you don't need it
- h. How do you balance your reliance on user-generated content on TikTok with other sources of information when making purchasing decisions?
- i. Have you initially thought something was “unattractive” but later changed your mind and bought it? Why?
 - Did your friends start to have it?
 - Did the celebrity start to have it?
 - Did your family start to have it?
 - Did the UGCC talk about it?

5. Purchasing:

- a. Does shipping cost matter? Why/why not?
- b. How much influence do you feel a UGCC have over you when you buy the product

- Or does other factors play more of a role to influence you etc; WoM, eWOM (Comments, likes & share), Price, Availability.
- c. If you really need a product and its urgent does the shipping cost matter?
Why/why not
- d. If you don't need a product but want it, does shipping time or similar factor matter? Can you reflect on this answer

6. Content Perception Dimensions:

- a. Are there specific content formats or genres on TikTok that you find more engaging? If yes, why do you think that is?
- Sped up videos
 - Comedy and Sarcasm
 - Before and After pictures
 - Long texts on screen and explanation
 - Slideshow
 - TikTok live
 - Still pictures
 - Videos
- b. What role do comments, likes, and shares play in shaping your perception of user-generated content on TikTok?
- c. How do you think the frequency and consistency of content production by TikTok creators affect your trust in their recommendations?

7. Recommendation:

- a. Do you ever talk about products you bought to your family and friends?

- b. Would you ever recommend if the product performed well?
- c. Would you ever recommend if the product performed badly?
- d. If the product performs bad, is it the brand or the UGCC that you don't trust afterwards?
 - Why trust/not trust UGCC even when the product performs badly?

Appendix 2

Contract/Kontrakt

Vil du delta i forskningsprosjektet: Exploring the Factors Influencing Gen Z's Trust in User and Consumer-Generated content on TikTok: A Qualitative Analysis Formålet med prosjektet

Dette er et spørsmål til deg om du vil delta i et forskningsprosjekt hvor formålet er å

- Formålet er å utforske og analysere faktorer som påvirker tilliten til bruker- og forbrukergenerert innhold på TikTok blant Gen Z.
- Dette er en mastergrad forskningsprosjekt
- Opplysningene som blir gitt vil kun bli brukt privat og ingen vil ha tilgang til navnet ditt eller hvem du er. Kun alder og kjønn vil bli publisert når oppgaven er ferdig. Hvorfor får du spørsmål om å delta?

Du får denne forespørselen fordi

- Du faller innen kategori generasjon z (Du er mellom 19-27 år)
- Du har Tiktok
- Du bruker Tiktok
- Du har blitt påvirket av Tiktok på et tidspunkt til å gjøre en handel

Hvem er ansvarlig for forskningsprosjektet? Universitetet i Stavanger (UiS) er ansvarlig for personopplysningene som behandles i prosjektet.

- Norsk Hotellhøgskole (UiS)

Det er frivillig å delta Det er frivillig å delta i prosjektet. Det vil ikke ha noen negative konsekvenser for deg hvis du ikke vil delta eller senere velger å trekke deg.

Hva innebærer det for deg å delta? Beskriv:

- Metoden som skal bruke for å samle inn data er; intervju
- Omfanget mitt; prosjektet mitt undersøker faktorer som påvirker tilliten til bruker- og forbrukergenerert innhold på TikTok blant Gen Z, med fokus på kvalitative intervjuer for å forstå oppfatninger og reaksjoner blant unge forbrukere. Prosjektet tar sikte på å bidra til kunnskapen om forbrukeres atferd og oppfatninger i den digitale sfæren, spesielt med tanke på sosiale medieplattformer og influensermarkedsføring.
- Personopplysninger som samles inn er; Alder, kjønn og personlige meninger og opplevelser

- Opplysningene registreres med; Notater og lydopptak

Kort om personvern: Vi vil bare bruke opplysningene om deg til formålene vi har fortalt om i dette skrivet. Vi behandler personopplysningene konfidensielt og i samsvar med personvernregelverket. Du kan lese mer om personvern under.

Med vennlig hilsen Truls Eric Johan Engström
(Forsker/veileder)

Sky Pittaya Sirikanin Hansen

Utdypende om personvern – hvordan vi oppbevarer og bruker dine opplysninger

- Beskriv hvem som vil ha tilgang til personopplysningene (f.eks. prosjektgruppen ved behandlingsansvarlig(e) institusjon(er), student og veileder, eksterne forskere ved samarbeidende institusjoner).
- Det er kun jeg og veileder vil kunne ha tilgang til dine opplysninger. Evt. institusjonen når/hvis oppgaven bli publisert
- For å sikre at ingen uvedkommende får tilgang til personopplysningene, tar jeg ikke med navnet og krever ikke kontaktopplysninger dine.
- Du vil ikke gjenkjenne at du har vært med på oppgaven min. Fordi det er ingenting personlig som kan noen gang knytte det opp mot deg.

Hva gir oss rett til å behandle personopplysninger om deg?

Vi behandler opplysninger om deg basert på ditt samtykke. På oppdrag fra Universitetet i Stavanger har personverntjenestene ved Sikt – Kunnskapssektorens tjenesteleverandør, vurdert at behandlingen av personopplysninger i dette prosjektet er i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

Dine rettigheter Så lenge du kan identifiseres i datamaterialet, har du rett til:

- å be om innsyn i hvilke opplysninger vi behandler om deg, og få utlevert en kopi av opplysningene,
- å få rettet opplysninger om deg som er feil eller misvisende,
- å få slettet personopplysninger om deg,
- å sende klage til Datatilsynet om behandlingen av dine personopplysninger.

Vi vil gi deg en begrunnelse hvis vi mener at du ikke kan identifiseres, eller at rettighetene ikke kan utøves.

Hva skjer med personopplysningene dine når forskningsprosjektet avsluttes? Prosjektet vil etter planen avsluttes (Ca.16.05.2024)

Opplysningene vil da lagres videre og personopplysningene når prosjektet er avsluttet vil arkiveres.

Dersom datamaterialet med personopplysninger skal arkiveres/lagres for videre forskning, må du beskrive:

- Datamaterialet med personopplysninger skal lagres videre for eventuelt videre forskningsformål innenfor samme forskningsfelt, undervisningsformål eller etterprøvarhet.
 - Datamaterialet med personopplysninger skal lagres ved behandlingsansvarlig institusjon. ●
- De som kan få tilgang til datamaterialet med personopplysninger er studenter og andre forskere.
- Personopplysninger skal lagres på ubestemt tid.

Spørsmål

Hvis du har spørsmål eller vil utøve dine rettigheter, ta kontakt med:

- Veileder; Truls Eric Johan Engström
- Kontaktinformasjon til Truls; Telefon nr. 51833702
- Email til Truls; Truls.engstrom@uis.no

- Vårt personvernombud: Terje Ingebrigt Våland
- Kontaktinformasjon til Terje; Telefonen nr. 51833732
- Email til Terje; terje.vaaland@uis.no

Hvis du har spørsmål knyttet til Sikts vurdering av prosjektet, kan du ta kontakt på e-post: personverntjenester@sikt.no, eller på telefon: 73 98 40 40.

Jeg har mottatt og forstått informasjon om prosjektet "*Exploring the Factors Influencing Gen Z's Buying Behavior attitude when engaging with User and Consumer-Generated Content on TikTok: A Qualitative Analysis*" og har fått anledning til å stille spørsmål.

Jeg samtykker til:

- å delta i intervju
 - å delta i opptak
 - at Sky Hansen kan gi opplysninger om meg til prosjektet
 - at opplysninger om meg publiseres slik at jeg kan gjenkjennes
 - at mine personopplysninger lagres etter prosjektslutt
 - Jeg samtykker til at mine opplysninger behandles frem til prosjektet er avsluttet Signatur
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