

Variances in the Purchasing Intention of Sports Items on TikTok Shop Based on Gender, Educational Institutions and Academic Programs

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ABSTRACT

TikTok presents a compelling opportunity for marketers to engage with a diverse community of sports enthusiasts. However, there is limited empirical evidence addressing how demographic factors, such as gender, educational background, and academic programs, intersect to influence consumer decisions regarding sports merchandise purchases on TikTok Shop. This study examines the variations in purchasing intention of sports items on TikTok Shop based on gender, educational institutions, and academic programs. Conducted among 222 undergraduate sports students from both public and private educational institutions, the research used students' purchase intention for sports items on TikTok Shop (rated on a 10-point scale) as its primary instrument. The findings revealed no significant difference in the main effect of students' purchasing intention of sports items on TikTok Shop, including gender ($F(1, 216) = .720, p = .397$), academic program ($F(1, 216) = .042, p = .838$), and educational institutions ($F(1, 216) = .042, p = .838$). These findings underscore the importance for businesses operating on TikTok Shop and other digital platforms to adopt a more inclusive and universal approach in their marketing strategies and product offerings, rather than segmenting them based on demographic or institutional factors.

Keywords: Purchasing Intention, TikTok Shop, Sports Items, Undergraduate Students

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1. INTRODUCTION

The emergence of social media platforms has profoundly reshaped the e-commerce landscape, offering brands innovative avenues to engage with consumers and influence purchasing behavior (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Among these platforms, TikTok has rapidly ascended to prominence, captivating a global audience through its succinct video content and immersive user experience. The recent introduction of TikTok Shop signifies the platform's foray into social commerce, allowing users to seamlessly explore and purchase products featured in videos and through live sessions. Within the sports retail domain, where brand visibility and engagement are critical, TikTok offers a compelling opportunity for marketers to connect with a diverse community of sports enthusiasts. E-Marketer (2023) ranks second only to Instagram in terms of social shopping among young consumers in the United Kingdom.

Purchasing intention refers to consumers' predisposition to buy a particular product or service, influenced by various internal and external factors (Cheung et al., 2008). For undergraduate students, factors such as social influence, product perceptions, brand image, perceived usefulness, and perceived ease of use play significant roles in shaping their purchasing decisions on TikTok Shop.

As TikTok continues to expand its influence as a social commerce platform, there remains a gap in understanding how purchasing intentions for sports items on TikTok Shop vary by gender, educational institutions, and academic programs. While existing research has explored the impact of social media on consumer behavior and purchase intentions, there is limited empirical evidence that specifically examines how demographic factors such as gender, educational background, and academic programs intersect to influence consumer decisions in the context of sports merchandise purchases on TikTok Shop. Understanding these variances is crucial for marketers, educational institutions, and brands aiming to effectively target and engage diverse consumer segments on TikTok, ultimately optimizing marketing strategies and enhancing consumer satisfaction and brand loyalty in the sports retail sector.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Gender Difference in Purchasing Intention Through Online

The study generally emphasizes that gender comparisons are endlessly debatable. The same goes for this study. Gender differences in online purchasing intentions were discovered a couple of years back, so many findings presented different results. Bay and Lee (2011) in their study show a significant difference among genders in online shopping, whereby females tend to purchase online more compared to males due to online consumer reviews. Gender roles and stereotypes, ingrained through socialization processes, can influence how men and women approach shopping and make purchasing decisions (Meyers-Levy & Loken, 2015). In addition, a qualitative study of eight focus groups by Elmira D. and Tamar (2021) indicates significant gender differences in impulse purchasing behavior on Instagram. However, the study by Lu and Wei (2017) on online shopping attitudes among undergraduate students found that demographic characteristics, such as gender, did not significantly affect attitudes toward online shopping. The differing findings regarding gender gaps in the studies were interesting and useful for the present study. Therefore, the current study aims to examine consumer purchase intention on TikTok by including the same variable: gender.

2.2 The Difference Between Diploma and Bachelor's Degree Students Towards Purchasing Intention Through Online

The growing Gen-Y population is also contributing to the growth of the e-retailing business. (Likut et al., 2022). Many findings reveal the relationship between education level and online shopping intention. For instance, the higher their education level, the better their decision-making tends to be. Individuals with higher education levels tend to have greater digital literacy and are more likely to engage in online shopping (Nysveen et al., 2005). In other words, some findings indicate that diploma students with very limited financial resources and limited experience with online transactions may perceive higher risks associated with online shopping (Suh & Han, 2002). Conversely, this trend is not observed among bachelor's degree students. However, the specific differences in online purchasing intention between diploma and bachelor's degree students, especially on the TikTok Shop platform, remain underexplored in

the Malaysian context. Understanding these differences is crucial for marketers and e-commerce platforms to develop targeted strategies and enhance the online shopping experience for diverse consumer segments.

2.3 The Comparison of Sports Students Among Public and Private Institutions On Purchasing Intention Through Online

Ahmad et al. (2017) stated that university-level students in developed Asian countries such as China and Thailand primarily rely on online shopping platforms such as eBay, Tmall, Taboo, and Amazon. Meanwhile, Jin et al. (2015) demonstrated that public university students exhibit a moderate level of attitude toward online shopping. This reflects a situation in which university students are shifting their purchasing behavior more towards online platforms than towards physical stores. Within the student population, those enrolled in sports-related programs, whether in public or private institutions, represent a unique subset with distinct purchasing behaviors and preferences. Previous research indicates a significant difference in purchasing intention through online platforms. A study by Li and Zhang (2020) found that students enrolled in private institutions tend to have higher disposable incomes and may prioritize premium products and personalized services in their online shopping experiences compared to their counterparts in public institutions. In line with this, Crosby et al. (2020) indicated that students attending public institutions may prioritize affordability and accessibility when making online purchases. In contrast, those in private institutions might prioritize exclusivity and prestige.

3. METHODOLOGY

To meet the objective of this research, a quantitative study will be conducted using questionnaires to measure differences in purchasing intention for sports items on TikTok Shop by gender, educational institution, and academic program. The questionnaire serves as the survey instrument in this research as it can generate high-quality, usable data, attain favorable response rates, and ensure anonymity. The latter aspect promotes greater honesty and candor in participants' responses (Williams, 2003).

3.1 Population and Sampling

This study involved 222 undergraduate sports students from both public and private educational institutions. These students, currently pursuing diplomas and bachelor's degrees in sports management, were selected from institutions in the Klang Valley. According to Divanoğlu, S. U et al. (2022), university sports students consider both brand and quality factors when making decisions about purchasing sports products. The participants in the study were part of the sampled population, all of whom willingly contributed to the expansion of knowledge in this field.

3.2 The Process of Data Collection and Analysis

The research employed the Student Purchasing Intention of Sports Items on TikTok Shop questionnaire (rated on a 10-point scale) as its primary instrument. In line with the research objectives, this instrument was distributed to targeted respondents from both public and private higher learning institutions in Malaysia. To uphold the study's robustness, participants received a comprehensive briefing on the study's purpose and concept, along with essential terminology in survey instruments, before the distribution of questionnaires. This preemptive measure aimed to minimize potential misunderstandings during the questionnaire response process. All respondents had prior experience purchasing sporting goods through TikTok Shop, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the survey instrument items. The collected data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 28.0.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The reliability of a particular instrument focuses on the consistency and dependability of the data (McMillan, 2007). In this study, Cronbach's Alpha was used to check the internal consistency of the Purchasing Sports Products on the TikTok Shop scale. The study showed that the Cronbach's alpha was 0.942, exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.6 for instruments with 10 or more items (Pallant, 2001).

Following the completion of the analysis, the three-way ANOVA analysis was employed to assess whether there exists an interaction effect among three independent variables (gender, education institutions, and academic program) on a

continuous dependent variable (Purchasing Intention of Sports Items on TikTok Shop). Therefore, Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variance was conducted to examine the homogeneity of variances for a variable computed within two or more groups. The table below shows Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variance (a): $F(1, 220) = 0.023$, $p = 0.879$; $p > 0.5$, is significant. Consequently, the assumption of homogeneity of variance is fulfilled.

Table 4.1

Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variance(a)

F	df1	df2	Sig.
.023	1	220	.879

The table below shows the mean score and standard deviation of purchasing intention for sports items on TikTok Shop by gender, educational institutions, and academic programs. The results indicate that male students are enrolled in diploma programs at both public ($M = 33.509$, $SD = 1.433$) and private ($M = 33.373$, $SD = 2.169$) education institutions. Meanwhile, male students enrolled in bachelor's degree programs at public institutions scored ($M = 31.659$, $SD = 1.602$), and there were no students enrolled in bachelor's programs at private educational institutions. Female students enrolled in diploma programs at public education institutions scored $M = 31.561$ ($SD = 1.659$), whereas those at private education institutions scored $M = 29.625$ ($SD = 2.656$). Similarly, female students enrolled in bachelor's programs at public education institutions scored ($M = 32.672$, $SD = 1.639$), whereas no students were enrolled in bachelor's programs at private education institutions.

The findings showed that there is no significant difference in the main effect of students' purchasing intention of sports items on TikTok Shop, including gender ($F(1, 216) = 0.720$, $p = 0.397$), academic program ($F(1, 216) = 0.042$, $p = 0.838$), and educational institutions ($F(1, 216) = 0.042$, $p = 0.838$). Therefore, all dimensions showed no significant differences in purchasing intention for sports items on TikTok Shop.

Table 4.2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Gender, Educational Program, and Higher Learning Institution
Dependent Variable: Purchasing Intention of Sports Items on TikTok Shop

Gender	Academic Program	Educational Institutions	Mean	Std Error
Male	Diploma	Public	33.509	1.433
		Private	33.375	2.169
	Bachelor	Public	31.659	1.602
		Private	0.00	0.00
Female	Diploma	Public	31.561	1.659
		Private	29.625	2.656
	Bachelor	Public	32.762	1.639
		Private	.00	0.00

Table 4.3: Test of Between-Subjects Effects, Dependent Variable: Purchasing Intention of Sports Items on TikTok Shop

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	271.569a	5	54.314	.481	.790	.011
Intercept	158577.562	1	158577.562	1404.911	.000	.867
Gender	81.275	1	81.275	.720	.397	.003
Educational Program	4.728	1	4.728	.042	.838	.000
Higher Learning Institutions	29.203	1	29.203	.259	.612	.001
Gender*Educational Program	104.458	1	104.458	.925	.337	.004
Gender*Higher Learning Institutions	22.126	1	22.126	.196	.658	.001
Educational Program*Higher Learning Institutions	.000	0	.	.	.	.000
Gender*Educational Program*Higher Learning Institutions	.000	0	.	.	.	.000
Error	24380.723	216	112.874			
Total	256935.000	222				
Corrected Total	24652.293	221				

5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, while the investigation into gender, educational institutions, and academic programs as factors influencing purchasing intention for sports items on TikTok Shop explored various factors, it revealed no significant differences in purchasing intention among these groups. Despite initial expectations of disparities in purchasing behavior by gender, institutional affiliation, and academic focus, the findings indicate remarkable similarity in purchasing intention across these dimensions. This suggests that within the context of sports items on TikTok Shop, factors such as gender, educational background, and academic program may not significantly influence consumers' propensity to purchase. The absence of significant differences underscores the importance of recognizing the universality of consumer behavior, even in diverse contexts. While demographic and contextual factors may shape consumer preferences and behaviors in other contexts, the digital nature of TikTok Shop appears to mitigate these influences, fostering a more homogeneous consumer experience. These findings have important implications for

businesses operating on TikTok Shop and other digital platforms. Rather than segmenting their marketing strategies and product offerings by demographic or institutional factors, businesses may benefit from adopting a more inclusive, universal approach. By focusing on delivering value, relevance, and convenience to all consumers, regardless of their gender, educational background, or academic program, businesses can maximize their appeal and effectiveness in the digital marketplace. Overall, while the study did not uncover significant differences in purchase intention by gender, educational institution, or academic program, it provides valuable insights into the nuanced dynamics of consumer behavior in online retail. Moving forward, businesses can leverage these insights to refine their strategies, enhance customer experiences, and drive sustainable growth in an increasingly competitive digital landscape.

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