

Exploring the Relationship between Customer Engagement and Brand Advocacy among TikTok Shop Consumers: A Qualitative Literature Review

Stefani I. Angmalisang^{1*}, Harrychoon Angmalisang², Syaloomitha G. Rattu³, Praished M. Setlight⁴, Vianti R. Pakasi⁵, Reginaseli M. Muaja⁶, Otniel S. Sembiring⁷, Enrique Pangemanan⁸, Simon Dugupa⁹, Gabriel Sumolang¹⁰

Universitas Negeri Manado, Indonesia

¹stefaniangmalisang@unima.ac.id, ²angmalisangharry@unima.ac.id, ³rsyaloomitha@gmail.com,

⁴praished.setlight@gmail.com, ⁵viantipakasi03@gmail.com, ⁶reginas.muaja@gmail.com,

⁷otnielsembiring@gmail.com, ⁸Enriquep@gmail.com, ⁹dugupasimon@gmail.com,

¹⁰gabrielsumolang19@gmail.com,

Kata Kunci:

Keterlibatan Pelanggan,
Advokasi Merek, Toko
Tiktok, Pemasaran
Digital, Loyalitas
Konsumen

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi hubungan antara keterlibatan pelanggan dan advokasi merek dari perspektif konsumen di TikTok Shop. Penelitian ini berfokus pada bagaimana interaksi konsumen dengan merek memengaruhi kesediaan mereka untuk menjadi pendukung merek. Pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif digunakan dengan tinjauan literatur sebagai metode utama. Data dikumpulkan melalui tinjauan sistematis jurnal terkait keterlibatan pelanggan, advokasi merek, dan pemasaran digital di TikTok Shop. Analisis tematik digunakan untuk mengidentifikasi pola hubungan antar variabel. Hasil menunjukkan bahwa keterlibatan pelanggan memiliki dampak yang signifikan pada advokasi merek. Keterlibatan terbentuk dari konten kreatif, komunikasi interaktif, dan partisipasi komunitas digital. Konsumen yang terhubung secara emosional dan sosial lebih cenderung berbagi pengalaman positif dan menjadi pendukung merek. Studi ini memberikan wawasan baru dengan menyoroti dinamika keterlibatan merek dan advokasi di platform berbasis video seperti TikTok Shop, menekankan pentingnya keterlibatan emosional dan pembangunan komunitas sebagai strategi pemasaran digital.

Abstract

This study aims to explore the relationship between customer engagement and brand advocacy from the perspective of consumers on TikTok Shop. The research focuses on how consumers' interactions with brands affect their willingness to be brand advocates. A descriptive qualitative approach is used with literature review as the main method. Data was collected through a systematic review of journals related to customer engagement, brand advocacy, and digital marketing on TikTok Shop. Thematic analysis is used to identify patterns of relationships between variables. Results show that customer engagement has a significant impact on brand advocacy. Engagement is formed from creative content, interactive communication, and digital community participation. Consumers who are emotionally and socially connected are more likely to share positive experiences and become brand advocates. This study provides new insights by highlighting the dynamics of brand engagement and advocacy on video-based platforms like TikTok Shop, emphasizing the importance of emotional engagement and community building as a digital marketing strategy.

Key Word:

Customer Engagement,
Brand Advocacy, Tiktok
Shop, Digital Marketing,
Consumer Loyalty

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INTRODUCTION

In recent years, social media has become one of the main platforms in influencing consumer behavior, especially among Millennials and Generation Z who are very active in using digital technology. One of the fastest-growing platforms is TikTok, which not only serves as an entertainment medium, but has also transformed into a marketing and e-commerce channel through the TikTok Shop feature. With this feature, consumers can make product purchase transactions directly within the application, making TikTok Shop an interactive and innovative buying and selling platform.

According to the latest data, TikTok users in Indonesia reach tens of millions of people, with a very high level of engagement, especially in the form of interaction through videos, comments, and content sharing. This creates a great opportunity for micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) to reach consumers more

widely and effectively without having to rely on traditional marketing channels. However, behind this great potential, the phenomenon of customer engagement and brand advocacy on TikTok Shop still needs to be studied more deeply, especially how consumers are emotionally engaged and actively supporting brands through voluntary recommendations and promotions on this platform. Customer engagement and brand advocacy are not only indicators of digital marketing success, but are also crucial factors in building loyalty and increasing sales in today's digital era.

In recent years, TikTok Shop has become one of the fastest-growing and popular e-commerce platforms, especially among Millennials and Generation Z. These developments show a significant shift in digital consumer behavior that focuses not only on buying and selling transactions, but also on deeper interactions and engagement with brands (Chen & Li, 2021; Huang et al., 2024). TikTok Shop integrates entertainment content and shopping functions in a single app, creating a more interactive and enjoyable shopping experience. Consumers can view product reviews in real-time, get recommendations from influencers they trust, as well as participate in communities that actively support certain products (Lu & Zhang, 2023; Kim & Park, 2022). This makes TikTok Shop not only a place to transact, but also a place for consumers to build an emotional connection with the brand through customer engagement.

This consumer engagement is very important because consumers who actively interact with brands tend to show higher loyalty and are willing to become brand advocates (brand advocacy), namely recommending the product to others voluntarily (Sari et al., 2023; Wijaya & Putri, 2023). Brand advocacy that emerges from consumers has a huge positive impact, not only increasing brand awareness but also strengthening brand reputation organically. In addition, TikTok Shop provides various features that facilitate the purchase and interaction process, such as live streaming, live comments, and an integrated payment system, thereby increasing consumer convenience and trust in transacting online (Aliah Viona et al., 2023). Thus, this platform becomes a strategic medium that can help MSME actors and companies in increasing sales and expanding market share.

Therefore, research on the factors that affect customer engagement and brand advocacy on TikTok Shop has become very relevant and important. These studies can provide in-depth insights into how consumers interact and influence purchasing decisions, as well as how brands can leverage those interactions to improve business performance in the ever-evolving digital age.

Although TikTok Shop has become a very popular e-commerce platform and offers great opportunities for digital marketing, many brands and MSME players still face various challenges in utilizing the platform optimally. One of the main problems in the field is the lack of a deep understanding of how to build effective and sustainable customer engagement in this dynamic digital environment (Rahmawati & Nugroho, 2022; Santoso et al., 2023). Many brands still struggle to create interactions that not only increase the number of likes, comments, or shares, but that are able to emotionally and cognitively bind consumers to the brand. This causes high interaction on social media to not always be directly proportional to customer loyalty levels or their tendency to do brand advocacy (Kusuma & Puspitasari, 2021; Li & Wang, 2024). In addition, understanding of the factors that specifically shape brand advocacy on platforms like TikTok Shop is also limited. Many business actors have not accurately identified the elements that trigger consumers to voluntarily recommend products to others, even though brand advocacy is one of the most effective forms of promotion that can increase brand awareness and reputation (Fitriani & Hidayat, 2023; Suryani et al., 2024).

This problem is exacerbated by the dynamics of digital consumer behavior that changes very quickly and tends to be more selective in choosing the products and brands they support. Therefore, a more in-depth study is needed to uncover the factors that influence customer engagement and brand advocacy simultaneously, as well as how the relationship between these two variables can have a positive impact on marketing success on TikTok Shop. This study seeks to answer this gap by comprehensively examining the factors that affect customer engagement and brand advocacy on TikTok Shop from a consumer perspective, so that the results can provide strategic recommendations for business people and digital marketers in optimizing the potential of this platform.

In the increasingly growing digital era, brand engagement or *brand engagement* is becoming a crucial factor in marketing strategies, especially on social platforms like TikTok Shop. According to Kumar et al. (2020), *brand engagement* is the level of interaction a consumer emotional, cognitive, and behavioral with a brand, which directly affects consumer loyalty and their intention to recommend the brand to others. This is reinforced by research by Lee and Lee (2021) which confirms that high engagement encourages consumers to be more active in sharing positive experiences as well as becoming brand advocates voluntarily.

Furthermore, the concept of *brand advocacy* is understood as the behavior of consumers who voluntarily support and recommend a brand to their social networks, which can strengthen the brand's reputation and credibility (Zhang & Kim, 2021). According to Purnama and Wulandari (2023), brand advocacy is not just a

recommendation, but also an expression of high loyalty and trust in brands, which has a significant impact on business growth, especially for MSMEs that rely on digital marketing. In explaining consumers' intentions to carry out brand advocacy, *the Theory of Planned Behavior* developed by Ajzen (1991) and updated in a digital context by Lopez et al. (2022), provides a strong framework. This theory states that a person's intentions are influenced by attitudes towards behavior, subjective norms, and perceptions of behavior control. In the context of TikTok Shop, the positive attitude towards the brand, the social influence of the online community, and the ease of interaction on digital platforms significantly affect consumer advocacy intentions. In addition, *the Consumer Culture Theory* (CCT) that has been updated by Williams and Chen (2019) highlights how consumer culture and digital social practices shape consumer behavior. CCTs provide insights into how consumers are adopting new technologies and creating meaning through their interactions with brands in the digital environment. This is especially relevant in the context of TikTok Shop, where creative content and social interaction are important aspects of building brand engagement and advocacy.

Various previous studies have extensively examined the relationship between *customer engagement* and *brand advocacy*, especially in the context of digital marketing. These studies generally found that customer engagement plays an important role in building brand loyalty and advocacy, which in turn positively impacts purchasing decisions and brand growth (Kumar et al., 2020; Zhang & Kim, 2021). However, most of this research focused on common social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube, and it is still very limited that specifically examined the TikTok Shop platform as an e-commerce and marketing channel. In addition, research that examines the context of consumers and MSME actors in Indonesia, especially in the TikTok Shop platform, is still very rare. This is an important gap considering the rapid growth of MSMEs in Indonesia and the role of social media as their main marketing tool. Studies by Purnama and Wulandari (2023) and Sari et al. (2022) highlight the need to understand the behavior of local digital consumers so that marketing strategies can be more effective and relevant to the characteristics of the Indonesian market.

On the methodological side, the majority of existing studies use a quantitative approach with a focus on measuring statistical relationships between variables, while in-depth qualitative or exploratory approaches to consumer experiences and perspectives are still minimal. The qualitative approach is considered to be able to provide richer insights into how consumers shape engagement and advocacy for brands in their daily interactions on TikTok Shop. Thus, this study is here to fill the literature gap by using a qualitative approach, examining the factors that affect *customer engagement* and *brand advocacy* from the perspective of MSME consumers in Indonesia, especially on the TikTok Shop platform. This approach is expected to provide a more comprehensive and contextual understanding of the evolving dynamics of digital marketing.

While there have been many studies examining the relationship between customer engagement and brand advocacy, research that specifically links the two concepts to the context of TikTok Shop is still very limited. Notably, there is very little research exploring the factors that affect customer engagement and brand advocacy across the board on these e-commerce platforms. In addition, most previous studies used quantitative and sparse approaches that used qualitative or exploratory methods to gain a deeper understanding from the perspective of consumers, especially MSME consumers in Indonesia.

In addition, there hasn't been much research examining the further impact of brand advocacy and customer engagement, such as how they contribute to customer loyalty, increased sales, and overall brand perception in this highly dynamic digital environment. This is important considering the rapid development of TikTok Shop as an increasingly dominant marketing platform, so a deeper and contextual understanding is needed to help brands and MSMEs design effective strategies. Thus, this study is here to fill the literature gap by using a qualitative approach, examining the factors that affect *customer engagement* and *brand advocacy* from the perspective of MSME consumers in Indonesia, especially on the TikTok Shop platform. This approach is expected to provide a more comprehensive and contextual understanding of the evolving dynamics of digital marketing.

Hypotesis 1 (H1)

Social media has become the primary platform for consumers to interact with brands in real and real-time. Through interactive features such as comments, likes, shares, and live streaming, consumers are not only recipients of information but also actively participate in building relationships with brands. A study by Zhang et al. (2021) shows that social media increases customer engagement by strengthening two-way communication and providing relevant and emotionally engaging content. Wang & Li (2022) also add that consistent interactions on social media can increase a sense of closeness and customer loyalty, which is a core part of customer engagement. Therefore, effective use of social media will contribute significantly to increasing customer engagement on digital platforms like TikTok Shop.

H1: X1 (Social Media) has a positive effect on Y1 (Customer Engagement).

Hypotesis 2 (H2)

TikTok Shop as an e-commerce platform that is directly integrated into TikTok's social media application offers special features such as live commerce, algorithm-based product recommendations, and user reviews that make it easier for consumers to transact and interact with brands. Research by Aliah Viona et al. (2023) shows that these features encourage more intense interactions between sellers and buyers, which in turn increases customer engagement. Chen & Xu (2022) added that the ease of use of TikTok Shop's features, as well as social integrations that make purchases more personalized and interactive, contribute to an increase in the time users spend interacting with products and brands. Thus, the TikTok Shop feature not only facilitates transactions, but also significantly increases customer engagement.

H2: X2 (TikTok Shop Feature) has a positive effect on Y1 (Customer Engagement).

Hypotesis 3 (H3)

High customer engagement means that consumers feel closer and have an emotional connection with the brand. This engagement makes them more likely to become brand advocates, i.e. voluntarily recommending products or services to others. Kumar et al. (2020) in their research revealed that consumers who are actively involved in interactions with brands tend to promote the brand positively, both online and offline. Lee & Kim (2021) also affirm that a strong level of engagement can strengthen loyalty and encourage advocacy behavior, which is one of the important indicators of digital marketing success today. Therefore, the higher the customer engagement, the more likely they are to become active brand advocates.

H3: Y1 (Customer Engagement) has a positive effect on Y2 (Brand Advocacy).

Hypotesis 4 (H4)

Brand advocacy is the highest form of customer loyalty where consumers not only buy back the product, but also actively recommend it to others. A study by Pansari & Kumar (2017) proves that brand advocacy has a direct positive impact on the purchase decision of potential consumers, because recommendations from fellow users are considered more credible than traditional advertising. Jenkins & Merz (2016) add that brand advocates help strengthen brand reputation and expand market reach, which contributes to increased customer loyalty and retention. In other words, strong advocacy from customers can influence new consumers to make purchases and retain existing customers to remain loyal.

H4: Y2 (Brand Advocacy) has a positive effect on Z (Purchase Decision and Loyalty).

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative method with a literature review approach that aims to examine in depth various results of previous research on the relationship between customer engagement and brand advocacy, especially on the TikTok Shop platform. This approach was chosen because the focus of the research is the exploration of dynamic and complex phenomena in the context of digital marketing, so it requires an in-depth analysis of concepts and patterns, not just numbers and statistical data. The literature review allows researchers to collect, organize, and analyze findings from various scientific journals and the latest academic articles. This is important to ensure that this research is relevant to the latest developments and trends in the world of digital marketing, especially related to TikTok Shop as an e-commerce platform that is increasingly popular among millennial and Generation Z consumers.

The qualitative method with the literature review approach used in this study refers to the approach developed by Boote and Beile (2005) and Snyder (2019), which states that literature review does not only summarize previous research, but also aims to build theoretical foundations, identify research trends, and find gaps that can be filled by new studies. This method is particularly relevant in the context of exploratory studies that do not aim to test hypotheses through quantitative data, but rather to develop a conceptual understanding based on evidence that is already available in the scientific literature. In a qualitative context, this research is based on an interpretive paradigm, which views reality as something that is socially and dynamically formed. Therefore, this approach does not seek to find causal relationships statistically, but rather explores the meanings, processes, and relationships between concepts such as customer engagement and brand advocacy through an in-depth understanding of the narratives and findings of previous studies. This literature review is carried out systematically with the stages of collecting relevant scientific sources, critical evaluation of the quality and contribution of each source, and the preparation of thematic synthesis that describes the patterns and relationships that emerge in various study contexts. This approach also refers to the systematic literature review (SLR) methodology of Tranfield, Denyer, and Smart (2003), which emphasizes the importance of a transparent, structured, and replicated review process in social research.

In this study, TikTok Shop was chosen as the focus of the research because this platform has unique characteristics that combine social media functions with direct transaction features, so that it has a significant

impact on consumer behavior, especially in shaping customer engagement and brand advocacy. Through the literature review method, researchers can identify and evaluate the factors that affect both variants.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on a literature review from various recent studies between 2019 and 2024, it was found that customer engagement is a fundamental element in building sustainable relationships between consumers and brands on the TikTok Shop e-commerce platform. Customer engagement on TikTok Shop includes not only basic interactions such as liking, commenting, and sharing content, but also active participation in challenges, use of live shopping features, and interactions with relevant influencers. Research by Kim and Ko (2020) shows that this active engagement is able to create a stronger emotional attachment to the brand, which in turn increases loyalty and intensity of product use.

Furthermore, customer engagement has a significant positive influence on brand advocacy, which is a behavior in which consumers voluntarily recommend and promote a brand to their social circle. Wang and Chen (2021) and Liu et al. (2023) affirm that customers who feel emotionally engaged and active tend to be strong brand advocates, contributing to increased awareness and sales. In the context of TikTok Shop, where the buying process and social interaction take place on a single platform, this relationship is becoming increasingly strategic.

Discussion

The results of the literature review that have been previously presented confirm that customer engagement in TikTok Shop plays a crucial role in building an emotional and functional relationship between consumers and brands. High customer engagement is not just a digital activity in the form of likes, comments, or shares, but also a form of active participation in various interactive features such as live streaming and challenges provided by TikTok Shop. This phenomenon is in line with the theory of Brand Engagement put forward by Brodie et al. (2011), which states that brand engagement is an interactive process that involves cognitive, affective, and consumer behavioral aspects simultaneously.

Furthermore, these discussions corroborate the findings that customer engagement has a significant and positive influence on brand advocacy. This supports the argument of Jenkins & Merz (2016) and Pansari & Kumar (2017) that customers who are actively engaged are more likely to become loyal brand advocates, voluntarily recommend products and build a positive reputation for brands in their environment. In the context of TikTok Shop, which integrates social and e-commerce aspects in one platform, emotional attachment built through engagement is the main asset in creating strong advocacy. This shows that TikTok Shop is not only a transaction channel, but also a medium of social interaction that strengthens consumer loyalty.

However, not all interactions lead to brand advocacy. The quality of interaction and relevance of content are key factors that distinguish effective engagement from passive activity. Previous research (Putra & Sari, 2020) highlights the importance of positive experiences and trust built through authentic, educational, and personalized content. This shows that businesses on TikTok Shop must focus not only on the quantity of engagement, but also on the quality of relationships with consumers through targeted content strategies.

In addition, the role of influencers as a figure that consumers trust is very important in shaping brand perception and motivating engagement. The study of Chen & Huang (2022) and Lee et al. (2021) confirms that influencers can be a bridge that connects brands with the consumer community through more personalized and relatable communication. This is especially relevant on TikTok Shop, where influencer live streaming and endorsements have a direct impact on purchasing decisions and brand advocacy.

From the perspective of the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), consumers' intentions to advocate for brands are influenced by perceived attitudes, social norms, and behavioral controls. In the context of TikTok Shop, strong engagement can influence positive attitudes towards brands and social norms in online communities that promote advocacy behavior. This emphasizes that marketing strategies must be able to create a digital environment that supports and strengthens those advocacy intentions.

Overall, this discussion showed that building quality customer engagement is a key foundation in driving effective brand advocacy on TikTok Shop. Business actors need to understand the factors that affect these two variables in order to design a digital marketing strategy that not only attracts attention, but also inspires consumers to become active advocates. The research gaps found also open up opportunities for further studies that can explore the psychological, social, and technological factors that affect the relationship between engagement and brand advocacy on these platforms, particularly in the Indonesian market.

Factors that support customer engagement and brand advocacy include consumer trust in the brand, perception of the quality of the content displayed, and the influence of trusted influencers (Chen & Huang, 2022; Lee et al., 2021). Influencers play an important role in shaping positive perceptions and motivating active consumer interaction, which in turn strengthens consumers' bond with brands. In addition, TikTok Shop's interactive features such as live streaming shopping and creative collaborations provide a more personalized and enjoyable shopping experience, thereby increasing consumer engagement and loyalty (Aliah Viona et al., 2023; Susanto & Dewi, 2022).

However, not all high engagement on TikTok Shop is directly proportional to strong brand advocacy. Several studies, such as those conducted by Putra and Sari (2020), highlight that the quality of consumer experience as well as the relevance of content greatly influence whether such engagement leads to positive advocacy. This emphasizes the importance of a marketing strategy that not only pursues the quantity of interactions, but also pays attention to the quality of relationships with consumers through authentic, educational, and personalized content.

Overall, the results of previous studies indicate a significant positive relationship between customer engagement and brand advocacy on TikTok Shop, with a number of supporting factors reinforcing this effect. This discovery provides an important overview for business actors and digital marketers in designing effective marketing strategies in today's digital era.

KESIMPULAN

Based on the literature review conducted, it can be concluded that customer engagement has an important role and a significant positive influence on brand advocacy on TikTok Shop. Active customer engagement not only increases interaction with brands, but also encourages consumers to become loyal advocates and volunteer to promote products. Factors such as the quality of the content, the authenticity of the interaction, and the role of influencers are the main keys in strengthening this relationship. However, not all interactions result in brand advocacy; The quality and relevance of engagement are the main determinants. Therefore, business actors on TikTok Shop must focus on marketing strategies that create meaningful engagement and are able to build consumer trust and loyalty. This study also identified gaps in studies that connect factors that affect customer engagement and brand advocacy as a whole in the context of TikTok Shop, especially in Indonesia. This opens up opportunities for more in-depth follow-up research with qualitative and quantitative approaches.

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