

**BUDAPEST UNIVERSITY OF ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS**

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**The Rise of Social Commerce: Analyzing TikTok Shop's Affiliate Marketing Model and  
its Impact on Gen Z Consumer Behavior**

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## INTRODUCTION

TikTok has become one of the most popular and influential social media platforms as of 2025 with at least 1.59 billion global users as of January 2025, which makes it the fourth largest social network worldwide after Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram. It has revolutionized the way users consume digital content thanks to its innovative the short form video model and advanced personalization algorithms gaining popularity rapidly becoming a global phenomenon since its launch in 2016.

The platform itself started mostly as an entertainment platform, with dances and funny videos and no presence of ads. Later, TikTok rapidly evolve with a strong new ecosystem that merges entertainment and commerce. The first release of TikTok Shop started in Indonesia in 2021 and then reached the United States by the end of 2023 for a total of 9 markets worldwide by 2024 which include six Southeast Asian countries (Indonesia, Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia, The Philippines and Singapore), the United States, the United Kingdom and Saudi Arabia, marking a revolutionary change in e-commerce models and continuously expanding to new countries. TikTok Shop allows users to discover and purchase products directly on the app, either by watching videos, livestreams or browsing through the shop page.

The platform has been very popular among young audiences specially Gen Z which are the ones born between the mid-1990s and early 2010s, being very relevant for this study since they represent a significant portion of TikTok's user base as well as being native to the digital tools, familiar with these social media platforms and presenting a unique set of consumer behaviours. Understanding the way Gen Z interacts with TikTok Shop is crucial for businesses that are looking to use this platform as a new way to commercialize their products, as well as the affiliates that promote these products, evolving on this model itself of affiliate marketing, where shops offer different products and content creator promote those products, earning commissions on sales generated through their video links. Bringing a model to the table that democratizes influences empowering any individual to drive sales, thanks to TikTok's algorithm reach.

My personal interest on this topic was born from my direct experience on the TikTok Shop Affiliate space which began in March 2024. Although TikTok Shop is not yet available in Hungary, my active participation on this space, communities and observation of the U.S market has allowed me to be part of the continuous evolution of TikTok Shop, its regulations and emerging trends. Seeing how this model has already matured in Asia, I recognize the

potential of TikTok Shop to transform global practices of electronic commerce, specifically as Western markets begin to adapt to this new reality.

This research aims to analyse the influence of TikTok Shop's affiliate marketing model on Generation Z's purchasing behaviour, identifying key factors that build trust, satisfaction and spontaneous purchase decisions. Through a mixed methodology approach combining quantitative surveys of Generation Z consumers and qualitative in-depth interviews with affiliate creators and a shop owner, providing a dual perspective on the TikTok shop ecosystem. This comprehensive review intends to contrast this new social commerce model with traditional e-commerce and provide valuable insights and information for academics, marketers, digital entrepreneurs, and businesses interested on taking part in the rise of social commerce.

The study is guided by the following research questions:

- How does the integration of content creation and e-commerce in TikTok Shop's affiliate marketing model influence Gen Z purchasing decisions and overall shopping experience?
- What key factors influence Gen Z consumer trust and satisfaction in TikTok Shop's affiliate marketing system across markets where the platform is available
- How does Gen Z consumer behaviour within TikTok Shop's affiliate marketing ecosystem differ from traditional e-commerce platforms, and what implications does this have for businesses

## OVERVIEW OF TECHNICAL LITERATURE

### SOCIAL COMMERCE

Social Commerce can be defined as an evolution of electronic commerce often known as “E-Commerce” that incorporates characteristics and tools from social medias facilitating a direct interaction between consumers and sellers within the same platform (Putri et al., 2024)

That integration is what allows users to discover products, share their experiences, receive feedback and personal recommendations, as well as making transactions without leaving the digital social environment where the user is at. (Prilosadoso et al., 2024). From its beginning, social commerce has been improving considerably, initially it was limited to external links that redirected the users to third-party websites, often increasing friction and giving more time to question the purchase purposes, nowadays social commerce offers integrated experiences that allow direct purchases on social medias such as Instagram, Facebook and

specially TikTok Shop (Putri et al., 2024; Rahmawati & Ramli, 2024). This allows the user to have a smooth buy process.

The Covid-19 Pandemic slightly boosted this evolution by provoking deep changes on global consumption patterns. Particularly in the United States of America, consumers quickly adapted digital behaviours due to the sanitary restrictions, lockdowns and social distancing creating a need for users to be on the digital space. This drove strong growth on digital platforms oriented to E-commerce and social Commerce, this way consolidating the electronic commerce as a strong alternative compared to traditional face to face methods of commercialization(Xu, 2025)

On a global scale, the social commerce has experienced an accelerated growth over the past years. In 2022, TikTok reached approximately one billion active users globally, positioning itself as a key platform for this commerce model (Putri et al., 2024). As of 2025 TikTok is the 4<sup>th</sup> largest social media in the world after Facebook, YouTube and Instagram. Where the United states ranks as the country with the largest TikTok Audience having around 138 million active users bringing important volume and economic potential (Woodward, 2025).

In the United States specifically, The Electronic and Social Commerce have had an exponential growth over the last 5 years. Which some key factors such as the high technological penetration, advanced digital infrastructure and favourable government policies have facilitated this expansion. It is estimated that the spread of E-commerce will continue to increase significantly in the US, mainly boosted by the growing adoption of social platforms integrated with direct commerce functions (McGann et al., 2008).

#### KEY PLATFORMS IN SOCIAL COMMERCE

Current leading platforms include Instagram, Facebook and particularly TikTok Shop. The last one mentioned differentiates from the others by its innovative model based on content generated by users or influencer, mixed with specific direct selling tools within the app itself (Rahmawati & Ramli, 2024).

TikTok Shop offers a unique experience through advanced algorithms that personalize the content on user's feed based on the individual preferences, facilitating highly effective organic discovery to drive rapid purchase decisions (Putri et al., 2024).

## EMERGENT TRENDS IN SOCIAL COMMERCE

A major trend is live shopping which allows users to buy through livestreams. This format has gained popularity due to its capacity to create emotional trust between potential consumers and sellers through authentic interactions in real time. Recent studies show that this modality substantially increases both the intention and the final purchase decision (Prilosadoso et al., 2024; Putri et al., 2024).

Another key trend is the continuous use of marketing based on personalized recommendations done by advanced algorithms. Platforms like TikTok take advantage of these algorithms in order to adapt commercial (advertising) content specifically to the individual user preferences, increasing significantly the advertising effectiveness and facilitating fast, impulsive purchasing decisions (Rahmawati & Ramli, 2024; Azmi et al., 2025).

Furthermore, the growing role of digital influencers is another relevant trend to understand the current rise of social commerce. Influencers do not only act as brand ambassadors but also, they significantly increase the positive emotional perception towards the sponsored brands thanks to the authenticity perceived by young audiences (Rahmawati & Ramli, 2024). This dynamic is particularly relevant in the United States where athletes and sports influencers have seen an exponential increase in their commercial value due to the strategic use of social media for sponsorship and promotion directed to young consumers (Yin, 2025).

The current rise of social commerce represents a deep transformation of traditional e-commerce towards more integrated and interactive models, combining social elements with digital business processes to significantly improve customer experience (Prilosadoso et al., 2024). This phenomenon has been driven by technological, social and contextual factors, specially highlighting the recent impact of Covid-19 on global and regional patterns of digital consumption, particularly in the United States (Xu, 2025).

## TIKTOK SHOP AND ITS AFFILIATE MARKETING MODEL

TikTok a prominent social media platform was launched in September 2016 by ByteDance a Chinese company (Duan, 2025) is a digital platform based on short form content that has revolutionized the social media space, transforming the way that users consume digital content. Unlike traditional platforms based primarily on text or static images. TikTok focuses on short form videos, dynamic and highly personalized through personalized algorithms (Putri

et al., 2024) This model allows the platform to capture the user’s attention in a effective way, generating high interaction levels and emotional engagement (Rahmawati & Ramli, 2024).

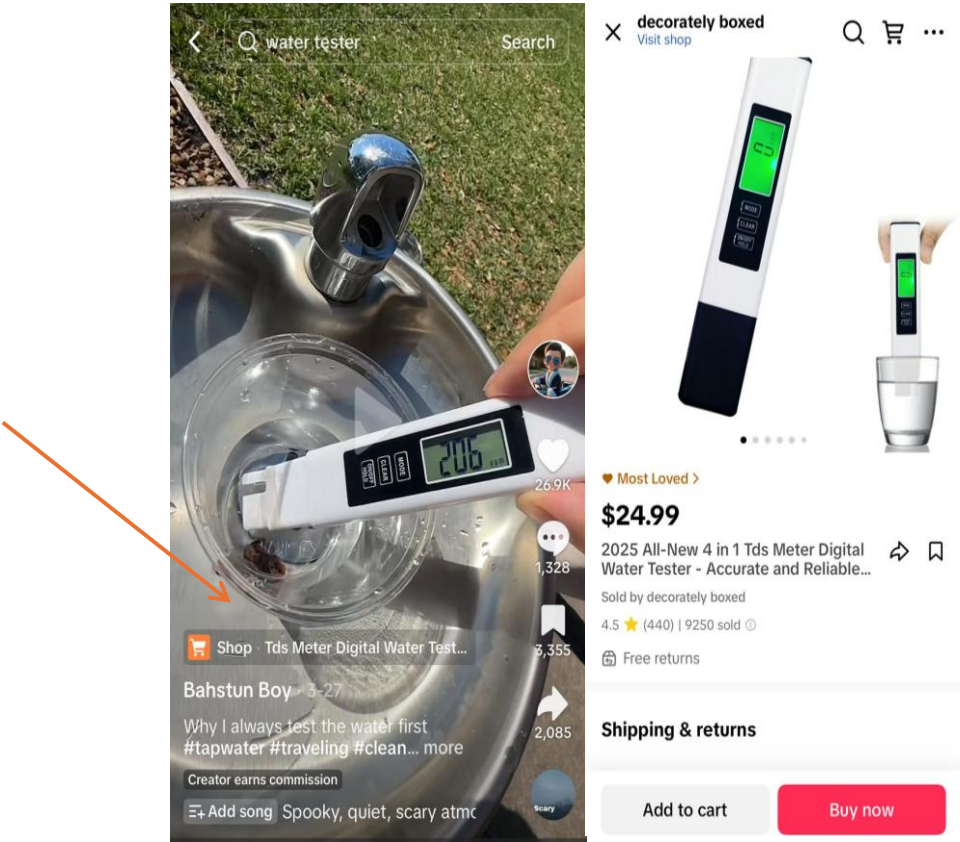
TikTok's multifaceted business model combines entertainment with e-commerce through integrated tools that enable users to discover products and make purchases without leaving the app (Duan, 2025). This hybrid approach has redefined the traditional concept of e-commerce towards a more social and entertaining experience, especially for young audiences.

### GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS AND KEY FUNCTIONALITIES OF TIKTOK SHOP

TikTok shop is a direct extension of the original model of the platform, designed specifically to integrate commerce functions within the social interactive space. Its principal characteristics include.

Direct integration of the shopping cart: It allows users to acquire products directly from short videos or livestreams, facilitating immediate transactions without leaving the social environment (Wiryanawan et al., 2023).

Figure 1 Shopping feature integration on videos



Source: Own Screenshot extracted from TikTok App

Live Shopping: Livestreaming allows direct interactions between consumers and sellers or affiliates. This function creates emotional trust and increases significantly the intention and satisfaction with the purchase (Poh et al., 2024).

Figure 2 Live Shopping Feature on TikTok



Source: Own Screenshot extracted from TikTok App and own edition

User Generated Content (UGC): The platform is strongly based on authentic content produced by users and influencers that promote products through creative videos, generating emotional closeness and credibility perceived by consumers (Rahmawati & Ramli, 2024).

**TikTok's unique content-driven discovery model:** A distinctive characteristic on the commercial model of TikTok is the personalized algorithm. This system analyses individual behaviour patterns to offer highly personalized recommendations that facilitate the organic discovery of relevant products for each user (Putri et al., 2024). Personalization considerably increases the advertising effectiveness by showing relevant content based on individual preferences previously identified by the platform.

Additionally, TikTok has successfully integrated commercial features such as direct tags in videos (“shoppable content”), allowing creators to tag specific products with affiliate links.

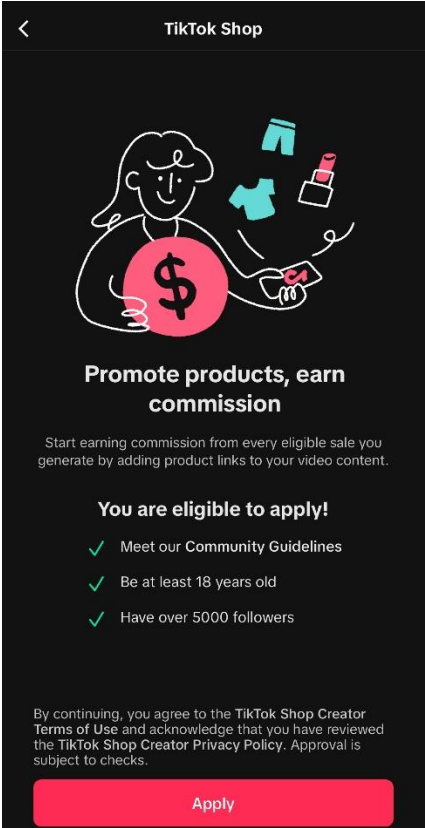
Making it easier for immediate purchases and drives quick, impulsive consumer decisions. (Rahmawati & Ramli, 2024; Duan, 2025)

**Structure and operation of TikTok's affiliate marketing system:** The Affiliate Marketing Model of TikTok shop works under a scheme where digital creators promote products through content that has specific links created by the system. When a user makes a purchase using the affiliate link, the creator receives a commission set by the merchant/shop. (Rahmawati & Ramli, 2024)

This Affiliate marketing system is based on a defined and organized structure that connects three main parties: Registered sellers (Brand or Shops), Creator Affiliates (Influencers or content creators) and consumers.

Registration and Selection: Creators interested in joining the program must officially register on the affiliate program through the official TikTok Shop portal. To be approved as an affiliate, creators must meet certain requirements established by the platform such as the following count and interaction levels (TikTok, 2025).

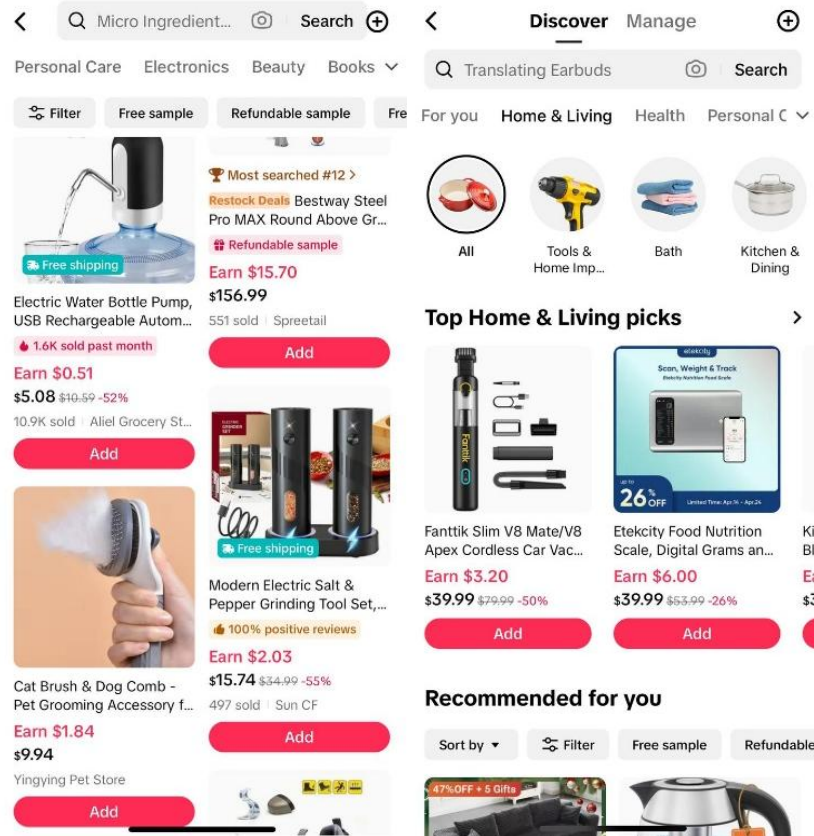
Figure 3 Affiliate Program Requirements



Source: Own Screenshot extracted from TikTok App

**Product Marketplace for affiliates:** TikTok provides an internal marketplace (Product Marketplace) where creators can choose specific products offered by different verified sellers to promote through affiliate links automatically generated by the platform itself. Those affiliate links allow to keep track of the sales generated by each affiliate creator (TikTok, 2025).

Figure 4 Product Marketplace for Affiliates



Source: Own Screenshot extracted from TikTok App

**Commissions:** Those are previously established by each registered seller based on its specific commercial goals. When a consumer makes purchases through other affiliates, the creator will receive the commission set by the shop of that products, creating incentives to create engaging and authentic content that would boost sales (TikTok, 2025)

**Metrics and performance tracking:** TikTok provides analytic tools that allow affiliates and sellers to track their commercial performance: Total number of clicks generated by affiliate links, Product views, GMV, Estimated Commission, Items sold and detailed statistics about behaviour and interaction of the consumer and its promotional content. (TikTok, 2025)

**Direct Support for creators:** TikTok offers constant support through educational resources designed to support digital creators optimize their commercial strategies on the affiliate program. This includes practical guides for effective creation of promotional content and specific strategies to increase earnings through direct sales within the app (TikTok, 2025)

**Current Trends and future opportunities:** Among the most important emerging trends is the intensive use of marketing based on personalized recommendations using advanced algorithms. These algorithms considerably increase advertising efficiency by adapting advertising content specifically to the user individual preferences (Azmi et al., 2025)

#### COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES OF THE TIKTOK SHOP AFFILIATE MODEL

**Consumer trust:** Content generated by affiliates tends to be perceived as more authentic in comparison with traditional advertising. That authenticity significantly improves trust between the Gen Z consumers, who value genuine interactions explicitly marketed messages. Studies have shown that authenticity perception on promotional content substantially increases the credibility of the product recommendation and the purchase intention between young audiences. (Ismail & Mohamed, 2024; Azmi et al., 2025)

**Integrated and Personalized Shopping Experience:** The direct integration of shopping functionalities within the video itself, reduces the friction points traditionally associated with e-commerce transactions, This seamless experience fosters impulsive buying behaviours within young consumers that are used to instant gratification on digital environments (Putri et al., 2024; Duan, 2025).

To properly understand friction and why it is a key strategy on the TikTok Shop experience, it can be defined in the realm of e-commerce as any unnecessary delay or interruption that prevents users from completing their desired actions efficiently, as an example it can be a broken link, a difficult check out process or pop-up ads that distract and interrupt a smooth flow for users when making a purchase (Tomalin, 2023).

The advanced TikTok algorithm ensures that promotional content reaches highly segmented audiences based on individual preferences and previous behaviours. This personalization substantially increases the effectiveness of advertisements by closely aligning product promotions with specific interest from the customer resulting in a higher conversion rate (Putri et al., 2024).

**Democratization of Influence:** As opposed to traditional influencer marketing dominated by celebrities or macro-influencers with large following base, the affiliate model of TikTok empowers micro-influencers with small audiences due to the possibility of reaching non followers easily through the “For you” page. This democratization allows for broader participation in commercial activities by common users that can effectively monetize their influence on specific niche creating a more diverse and inclusive commercial ecosystem (Rahmawati & Ramli, 2024).

#### CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS OF THIS MODEL

Despite its advantages, the TikTok affiliate marketing model also faces multiple challenges that can affect its effectiveness and sustainability in the long term.

**Transparency Concerns:** There are concerns related to transparency on commission-based structures and authenticity of promoted products, without a clear communication about commercial relationships and product authenticity, consumers may feel distrustful, leading to lower satisfaction and loyalty, as well as their increasing awareness of advertising practices on social media. Recent studies indicate that a perceived lack of transparency can negatively affect consumer trust if it is not clearly communicated (Dung & An, 2024).

**Dependency to the Algorithm Risks:** Affiliates heavily rely on visibility driven by algorithms; changes in algorithmic policies can unpredictably affect their reach and revenue potential. This dependency creates vulnerabilities for creator that have built their business model based on the platform, specifically when the criteria of content prioritization change without prior notice, making the creators adapt quickly to any changes (Putri et al., 2024).

**Regulatory Compliance:** As social commerce expands globally, affiliates must go through various regulatory frameworks related to advertising disclosures, protection of consumer rights, data privacy standards and tax requirements in different markets. Compliance with those regulations is crucial to keep the trust with users and the legal validity of the business model (Duan, 2025). By proactively addressing those challenges through clear communication strategies, transparent policies between Shops, affiliates and consumers, as well as regulatory compliance mechanisms, that way TikTok can sustain long-term growth while maintaining credibility among Gen Z audiences.

**Integration with TikTok Algorithm:** Efficiency with the affiliate marketing model of TikTok shop is intrinsically linked to its advanced algorithmic system as mentioned previously, which facilitates the organic discovery of products, as opposed to other traditional e-commerce

platforms where users actively search for specific products, TikTok makes it easy for user to have unexpected findings through the highly sophisticated recommendation algorithm based on the individual user behaviour discussed by Dr. Marcus Collins on (WARC, 2024).

The algorithm analyses interaction patterns such as watch time, engagement with similar content, behaviours from previous purchases and proven preferences to present relevant products within the entertainment content. Non-intrusive presentation of products within genuine and entertaining content significantly increases the advertising effectiveness compared to traditional advertising formats (Azmi et al., 2025).

## GENERATION Z CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR IN DIGITAL SPACES

### CHARACTERISTICS OF GEN Z AS DIGITAL CONSUMERS

Purchase behaviours: Generation Z's shopping behaviours in digital spaces, especially in the context of social commerce through TikTok Shop, present distinctive characteristics that differentiate them from other demographic groups. The integration of content creation and electronic commerce on platforms like TikTok has transformed the way that youth interact with products and take purchase decisions.

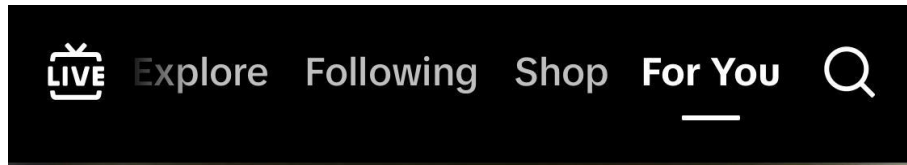
Content Quality is a key factor that influences purchasing decisions of TikTok users. studies such as the one from (Sibulan & Limos-Galay, 2024) indicate that consumers are more likely to buy products that are presented on attractive and insightful videos. Furthermore, the presentation of the product, price comparisons and source credibility play an important role on the purchase decision(Sibulan & Limos-Galay, 2024).

Impulsive buying behaviour is another remarkable characteristic among online shoppers, including the ones that use TikTok shop. Online shoppers tend to be more spontaneous and impulsive compared to shoppers that buy directly on physical stores (Dung & An, 2024) this behaviour is heightened by the dynamic and visually stimulating nature of the content on TikTok. Trust is an essential element to foster purchases on TikTok shop, trust transfer theory and the theory of security assurance used on studies such as (Putri et al., 2024) suggest that trust in sellers and privacy concerns significantly influence buying behaviour, it is fundamental for TikTok to evoke a sense of security within their users to facilitate transactions.

Moreover, the innovative TikTok algorithm, oriented towards a younger user base and influencer-friendly features, creates a dynamic ecosystem where the personalized and interactive content can profoundly impact the consumer's behaviour (Ismail & Mohamed, 2024).

This approach enables brands and creators to engage with their audiences in a personalized and effective way. The “for you” page (Figure 5) also plays a major role since 95% of young people consume content that appears on this section more in comparison to the videos shared by the people they follow (“Following” page) (Martínez Casillas, 2022). That demonstrates how the algorithm can effectively direct user attention to certain products or content.

*Figure 5 Distribution of Content Sections on TikTok*



*Source: Own Screenshot extracted from TikTok App*

The affiliate marketing model on TikTok not only incentivizes purchase intention but also the final purchase decision. The degree of prior interest a person has in buying a product can affect on how much affiliate content influences them at the moment of deciding whether to buy or not. In addition, it is important for affiliates to promote products showing clear and informative reviews, as well as usage experiences to influence purchase intentions and decisions (Asadiyah et al., 2023).

As proven by (Arlana Hidayatullah et al., 2025) Social media marketing has been shown to directly and indirectly influence purchase decisions through the brand awareness improvement among Gen Z users. That research suggests that increasing brand awareness can significantly boost final decisions within the digital commerce environment. Briefly, the shopping behaviours within the digital ecosystem such as TikTok shop, are shaped by multiple interrelated factors: Content quality, impulsiveness, trust, personalized algorithms and effective direct and indirect strategies. These elements highlight the ongoing need to investigate how these dynamics evolve and affect Gen Z as digital consumers.

Content preferences of Gen Z in the context of social commerce, particularly through TikTok Shop, reflect a trend towards the integration of content creation and e-commerce. This Generation shows a significant interest towards content that not only informs about the product but that also offer immersive experiences and attractive narratives, the Parasocial interaction, which consumers feel connected with content creators as if they are friends, plays a crucial role in this process (Mardhiana, 2024).

The thematic and comparative analysis of successful TikTok campaigns, such as the challenge #GuacDance from Chipotle, fitness influencer campaign of Gymshark and the campaign #EyesLipFace from e.l.f Cosmetics, demonstrate that the campaigns that combine entertainment and promotion, are highly effective to captivate Gen Z's attention (Ismail & Mohamed, 2024). These contents not only generate engagement but also encourage a positive word of mouth within the platform (Cordero Cruces, 2023).

Moreover, TikTok shop makes it easier for consumers at all stages of their journey, from product awareness to the purchasing process. The cognitive trust on TikTok shop as a commercial platform can increase the trust on the sellers. This is an essential aspect, because when consumers emotionally trust social platforms, they feel more comfortable and confident making purchases.

Quantitative research was conducted using questionnaires distributed within Gen Z in Indonesia and it reveals that this generation tends to buy after looking at feeds, stories or livestreaming certain products (Poh et al., 2024). This behaviour highlights how TikTok serves both as a source of inspiration for purchases and as a channel to gather information on specific needs (Putri et al., 2024)

#### GEN Z SHOPPING PREFERENCES AND HABITS ON SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

The use of social media platforms to purchase products has significantly transformed how Gen Z interacts with brands and takes their buying decisions. TikTok has emerged as a leader platform in the social commerce space by creating a dynamic ecosystem where content creation and ecommerce are integrated effectively.

Influencer Marketing campaigns on TikTok have proven to be particularly effective, as brands are allocating higher budgets to these strategies. Empirical research is crucial to understand how these campaigns influence consumer behaviour and the underlying psychological mechanisms, Additionally, TikTok offer an unique set of characteristics that foster a high level of engagement within users, which is essential to study the dynamics of influencer marketing (Ismail & Mohamed, 2024).

The previously mentioned research from (Poh et al., 2024) on Gen Z in Indonesia reveals that this generation uses TikTok not only as a social platform but also as a space to make purchases. This study was conducted using primary data obtained through questionnaires distributed online to individuals born between 1995 and 2012, who have used and purchased

from TikTok, results indicate that the integration of social content and commercial results in an easier purchase process without the need of leaving the app.

The quality of content by affiliates on TikTok has a noticeable impact on purchase decisions, especially within young professionals. Researchers have found that the attractive content and well elaborated, positively influences purchasing choices, notably on products such as personal care (Sibulan & Limos-Galay, 2024). This type of content not only influences the initial decision but also generates positive feeling towards the platform that last even after the purchase. Users tend to share post-purchase experiences through video tutorials and unboxing, which boosts a favourable word-of-mouth inside the app (Cordero Cruces, 2023)

Comparison on preferences and purchasing habits on social media platforms between Gen Z and other demographic groups, reveal significant differences on the way these groups interact with the content and the way they take their purchase decisions, Gen Z who grew up being exposed to the internet and social media from a young age, shows an increased demand for authenticity and speed in trends changes (Nataraj & Shivanna, 2025). This Group is particularly difficult to target because of their ability to recognize genuine content and traditional advertising.

On the other hand, Millennials, even though are also adapted to digital technologies, they tend to value more detailed information and direct communication on their interactions with brands (Munsch, 2021). Millennials look for content that is not only attractive but also informative, which influences their consumer behaviour. This difference is due since Millennials have experimented the transition from traditional marketing to digital marketing, while they were growing up, meanwhile Gen Z has been immersed on a completely digital environment since the beginning.

Furthermore, research indicates that the advertising content is perceived in a different way within these groups. For instance, there is a study that shows 71,8% of users perceive a lower presence of promotional content on TikTok compared to other visual social media platforms such as Instagram or YouTube (Cordero Cruces, 2023). That could suggest that Generation Z find TikTok more authentic and less intrusive in terms of advertising, which could positively influence their purchasing intentions. The impact of affiliate marketing on TikTok also varies across different demographic groups. While the content quality from affiliates has a significant impact on the purchase's decisions of young professionals, the effect could be less prevalent in older generations that are not as familiar with the dynamic and interactive format

of TikTok. The innovative characteristics of the algorithm and its user base oriented towards youth, make this platform be effective for marketing campaigns towards Gen Z generation (Ismail & Mohamed, 2024).

Not least to mention, it is important to consider the legal implications and ethics when using TikTok as a commercial platform. Shops must address issues related to privacy and data protection, intellectual property rights and advertising laws to use TikTok ethically and efficiently (Sibulan & Limos-Galay, 2024). Those considerations could be more relevant for older audiences or specific niches where trust and security are critical factors.

### INFLUENCING GEN Z PURCHASING DECISIONS ONLINE

Factors influencing purchasing decisions of Gen Z consumers in TikTok shop include perceived usefulness, trust, promotions, product reviews, consumer feedback and social impact (Dung & An, 2024; Maharani & Aulia Adnans, 2024). Those elements are crucial to understanding how young people perceive and interact with the marketing strategies of this platform. Trust and promotion are particularly important since those can significantly increase the purchase intention, and with promotion this study by (Dung & An, 2024) refers to marketing strategies and activities with intention of encouraging the customer to purchase products, this can include discounts, special offers, advertising campaigns, and other incentives designed to boost sales.

Also, influencers play a fundamental role in shaping the behaviour of the consumer. Influencers can affect consumer behaviour by acting under social and psychological influences (Caballero et al., 2024). The Ability of those influencers to generate authentic and relevant content is essential to captivate attention from Gen Z as well as Millennials (Munsch, 2021).

However, there are gaps in the current literature on the impact of TikTok Shop on Gen Z consumer behaviour. Even though some influential factors have been identified there is still more research needed to fully understand how these elements interact within each other and affect final purchases decisions. The unique combination of attractive content and e-commerce functions within the TT Shop ecosystem, offers new opportunities to get better understanding and how purchase intentions and decisions are formed among young digital consumers (Ismail & Mohamed, 2024).

**Trust in Affiliate Creators:** The trust on the affiliates is a crucial factor that influences online purchase decisions on Gen Z. In the context of TikTok shop, trust can be built through various mechanisms that assure a safe and satisfactory shopping experience. The privacy and

security policy implemented by TikTok has a fundamental role in this aspect. Users feel more comfortable sharing their personal data when they perceived that there is an existence of effective measures are in place to protect their information (Putri et al., 2024) This feeling of security is essential to encourage trust and reduce hesitation when buying online. In addition, transparency in transaction processes (when consumers feel that the transaction process is clear and straightforward they are more likely to engage in activities without fear of fraud or misunderstanding) and credible verification of sellers are key elements when maintaining consumer trust. Research indicates that these measurements are essential to maintain consumer satisfaction on a digital environment that is in constant evolution (Mahbob et al., 2024). Trust mediated by these factors can significantly influence purchase intentions, as consumers tend to trust more brands and products that they perceive as safe and transparent contributing to the overall shopping experience.

Affiliates also play a very important role in the construction of trust. Consumers are interested in buying products that are reviewed by affiliate creators, especially when they genuinely use, review and are passionate about the products that they promote (Sibulan & Limos-Galay, 2024). This perceived authenticity is crucial to create reliability within young consumers who value honest opinions and real experiences shared by creators.

The social influence exercised by affiliates also has a significant impact on purchasing decisions. Consumers tend to consider recommendations from friends and family, as well as suggestions made by affiliates on TikTok (Azmi et al., 2025). This phenomenon highlights the importance of personal and social connection on the decision-making process, where the trust placed on creators, can be as influential as the trust placed on close family members.

Marketing through affiliates, has proven to be effective not only because of its capacity to connect with the interest of the target audience, but also for its ability to adapt advertising campaigns that resonate with followers (Caballero et al., 2024). This adaptation improves the general user experience and strengthens the relationship between the consumer and seller, which is essential to build a solid foundation of trust.

To sum up, the trust in affiliates within the TikTok Shop ecosystem is built through vigorous privacy and security policies, transaction transparency, perceived authenticity by the creators and meaningful social connections. These factors combined create an environment where young consumers feel safe and confident making purchases motivated by genuine

recommendations.(Munsch, 2021; Ismail & Mohamed, 2024; Sibulan & Limos-Galay, 2024; Arlana Hidayatullah et al., 2025).

## TIKTOK SHOP VS TRADITIONAL E-COMMERCE

### KEY DIFFERENCES IN USER EXPERIENCE AND PURCHASING JOURNEY

The user interaction on TikTok Shop is significantly different from the experience on traditional e-commerce platforms. On TikTok, the integration of entertaining content and e-commerce creates a dynamic setting that influences consumer's purchasing decisions, especially among generation Z. The user opportunity to directly interact with affiliate content creators during livestreams encourages a more personal and authentic with the products, which can increase trust and purchase intention (Asadiyah et al., 2023; Caballero et al., 2024). As well as the opportunity to receive immediate feedback which improves the understanding about the products and reduces barriers at the moment of purchase (Sarda, 2024)

The affiliate marketing model of TikTok uses creators to promote products, from new affiliates to big influencers, which establishes an emotional and trusting connection between the consumer and the product (Mahbob et al., 2024).

The ease of use is also a fundamental aspect that distinguishes the user experience on TikTok shop compared to the other ecommerce platforms. The ease of use refers to the simplicity and efficiency that users have to navigate, interact with and make purchases on a platform. According to (Rahmawati & Ramli, 2024) the perceived ease of use has a positive effect on e-satisfaction, which implies that the greater the perceived ease by users, the greater their satisfaction with the platform. This relationship is crucial, since a high satisfaction can translate into higher e-loyalty, which is essential to maintain a loyal and recurring customer base.

The transformative impact of TikTok on Ecommerce is reflected on its impressive global growth. In 2023, TikTok reached \$20 Billion in merchandise sales significantly expanding its e-commerce business (Duan, 2025). This number was reached with the presence on the Asian market, nowadays with the introduction of the U.S market during all 2024 the potential growth rapidly increases. That growth is attributed to the efficient algorithms that turn videos into viral content, providing brands with unprecedented exposure. The ability to convert viral content into direct business opportunities is a clear sign on how TikTok has optimized its ease of use to maximize not only user experience but sales.

It is important to highlight as well what (Putri et al., 2024) mentions; factors such as knowledge-based trust and interactions have respective influences on cognitive and emotional trust towards sellers. Making the ease of use a key differentiating factor of TikTok in the E-commerce ecosystem, Innovative characteristics together with a personalized approach and strict regulations contribute to the improvement of satisfaction and customer loyalty.

The [influence](#) impact? of influencer marketing on brand awareness is noticeable, the demographic group of Gen Z, known to be innovative, pragmatic and technology experts, responds positively to campaigns using both normative and informational influence (Ismail & Mohamed, 2024; Arlana Hidayatullah et al., 2025). Normative influence encourages the conformity to social norms, when people look to obtain social approval or avoid disapproval following expectations from others in order to belong to a group, while informational influence is based on the knowledge and experience shared by influencers, when people accept information from other individuals relying on them as credible sources, when they lack their own knowledge (Ismail & Mohamed, 2024).

Additionally, content strategies on TikTok shop benefit from the short video format and interactive characteristics such as comments and likes that allow users evaluate the product quality based on the interactions of other users. Positive feedbacks/reviews, act as a form of social validation providing a sense of security and reducing the risk of disappointment for potential buyers (Azmi et al., 2025)

As it has been mentioned on this research, this affiliate model has demonstrated to be efficient in influencing purchasing decisions, however, it is important to point out, whereas influencer marketing does not always have a significant impact on purchasing decisions, the social media marketing does (Hidayatullah et al., 2025). Suggesting that strategies that mix both approaches can be more effective.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This investigation's primary research aims to answer the following research questions that were stated at the beginning of this paper:

- How does the integration of content creation and e-commerce in TikTok Shop's affiliate marketing model influence Gen Z's purchasing decisions and overall shopping experience?
- What key factors influence Gen Z's consumer trust and satisfaction in TikTok Shop's affiliate marketing system across markets where the platform is available?
- How does Gen Z's consumer behaviour within TikTok Shop's affiliate marketing ecosystem differ from traditional e-commerce platforms, and what implications does this have for businesses?

To address these questions, the data collection methods were structured to analyse each aspect from different perspectives that complement each other. A mix of quantitative and qualitative methods were used to comprehensively understand the TikTok Shop ecosystem, identifying both general patterns and reasons behind the observed behaviours. The main objective is to analyse how the affiliate marketing model of TikTok Shop redefines the consumption dynamics of Gen Z, which strategies are effective in creating trust and how shops and affiliates can adapt to this new commercial environment

### MIXED METHODS APPROACH

The research utilized a combined approach to ensure a balanced perspective

- Quantitative component: a structure survey to measure behaviours and preferences
- Quantitative component: Interviews with key stakeholders on the ecosystem (affiliates and sellers)

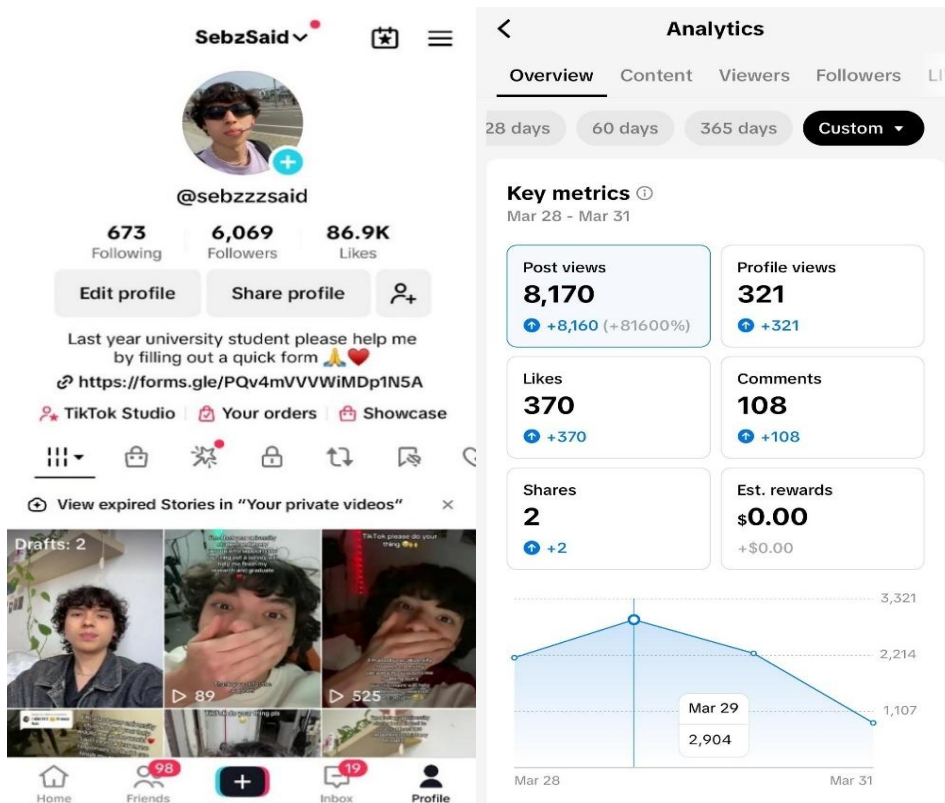
This mix allows us to:

- Combine statistical patterns from survey data with rich contextual insights from interviews.
- Enhance validity by cross-verifying results (e.g., survey findings on impulse buying vs. creators' strategies to drive urgency). Contrasting both sides, consumers and affiliates.
- Delve into the motivations and strategies behind the observed behaviours.

## THE QUANTITATIVE QUESTIONNAIRE

To determine how the affiliate marketing model of TikTok shop influences the purchase and trust behaviour of Gen Z consumers, an online survey was carried out. The questionnaire was chosen as the data-collecting method since it allows to collect accurate and objective data quickly and efficiently. The questionnaire was created using the Google Forms platform, and it was distributed via TikTok channel. One U.S based account was used; all previous videos were archived and a link to the survey on the Bio was added. There was a total of 9 posts appealing to the Gen Z demographic of me, Sebastian Rueda, asking users on the platform for support on my research. The videos gathered 8,170 views in a span of 4 days which led to 157 responses being a 1.9% conversion from viewer to respondent, all of them from the United States of America who was the target audience for this research.

Figure 6 TikTok Account for Survey Responses Collection



Source: Own Screenshot extracted from TikTok App

**Inclusion Criteria** are used to ensure consistency and increase the validity and accuracy of the results. Typical inclusion criteria may include age, gender, demographic factors such as race and ethnicity, lifestyle habits that could affect outcomes, et. For this research, I chose to focus on active TikTok users that belongs to Generation Z (ages between 15 to 29) that have interacted with TikTok shop at least once, either exploring products or making a purchase. The

participants must live in regions where TikTok shop is available, which assures that they are familiarized with the TikTok shopping ecosystem.

**Exclusion Criteria:** Individuals over the age of 29 were not included in this research, as they are not part of the main target group (Generation Z). Those individuals who never used TikTok shop or did not have any prior experience browsing or buying products on the integrated shopping ecosystem of TikTok were also excluded. This guarantees that the data recollecting are relevant for the study's specific focus on young consumers active within the TikTok Shop system.

The structured approach ensures that the collected data represents the target audience and is directly relevant to answering the main established questions on this research about the impact of social commerce on Gen Z through the affiliate marketing model of TikTok shop

#### IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

A total of 5 experienced individuals in the industry and TikTok took part in the in-depth interviews individually, there was a total of 8-10 questions depending on the flow of the interview which were planned in correlation to the survey questions and the three main research questions. All of them U.S based where 3 of them are affiliate creators, one is an Affiliate creator coach, and the last one is a Shop owner of a supplement brand. Every interviewee was informed previously about the interview's purpose, showing clear consent and willingness to contribute on the research. All interviews were conducted online through the platform Zoom, were recorded and transcribed to ensure accuracy and completeness.

Among the interviewees there were three creator affiliates: John Scalia, Rudy Cornejal, and Destiny, each of them with a wide experience as TikTok Shop creators and have generated a substantial amount of Gross Merchandise Value (GMV) for multiple brands.

John Scalia joined the affiliate program in March 2024 and has generated over \$1 Million GMV sharing his insights and journey from traditional employment to becoming a full-time creator successfully with the Affiliate Marketing Program manifesting that creators can take advantage of their own skills to choose products that resonate with their audiences. Destiny also shared her experiences, who also started on the Affiliate program in March 2024 and has generated over \$2 Million GMV since starting, becoming a full-time creator as well, highlighting how authenticity, a balance with humour and selling a product without actively selling it can be key components on a successful product promotion. Rudy Cornejal started in

January 2024 without prior experience on sales nor TikTok and after multiple challenges and more than 5 accounts restricted due to changes in TikTok guidelines, he has generated over \$300,000 GMV making a point on the importance of solving real problems for consumers and engaging in creative ways with audiences.

The fourth participant is Hunter Hewitt, he has been in different realms of e-commerce since 2017/2018 and now is the creator and owner of the supplement brand “BreatheEase” which he first launched on TikTok shop in May 2024, generating over \$500,000 GMV in less than a year all from affiliate marketing. He provided an insightful narrative from the brand side perspective, taking advantage of the power of micro influencers and highlighting how efficient and easy the integration of affiliate marketing into his business model is. His main consumer demographics are Gen Z individuals and even though they are in the process of expanding to different demographics, his expertise in this audience is key.

Last but not least, Andrew Bourdeau an experienced affiliate coach who started TikTok shop approximately two months after its release in the United States of America in October 2023 offering an unique perspective as someone who started as an affiliate and later started to mentor multiple creators on a community with over 300 people. His valuable insights showed content strategies, demographic engagement and multiple viewpoints on TikTok shop, highlighting significant differences on consumer purchasing behaviours among Gen Z and older demographic groups. He emphasized a particular effectiveness on visual and emotional appealing short form impulsive content to drive conversions as well as audience targeting based on creator’s skillset.

The defined structure of the interviews allowed that each participant had room to elaborate on their responses, which led to rich, detailed discussions. Nevertheless, minor non-relevant exchanges have been omitted for clarity and conciseness. The transcription aimed to keep the original words, and the detailed transcript of each interview can be found in the appendix section, providing a full transparency and ease on correlations with survey data.

#### LIMITATIONS

The study’s sample was heavily skewed toward female respondents, which means the shopping behaviours and trust factors of male and non-binary Gen Z consumers are underrepresented. This gender imbalance may show different behaviours between genders, indicating on this research a higher representation of female considerations and beliefs, future

work should include a more gender-balanced sample to capture potential differences in shopping attitudes and behaviours across genders.

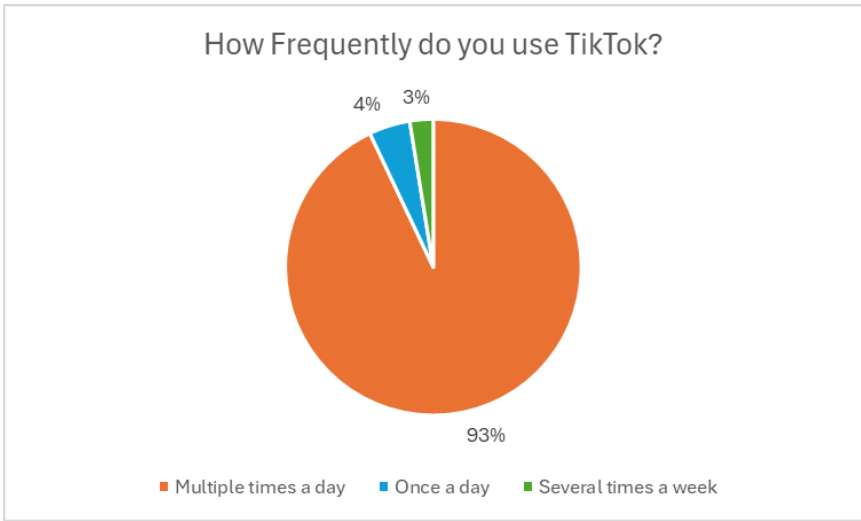
## FINDINGS

### SURVEY RESULTS

The survey data presents 156 Gen Z respondents, predominantly ages 18-26, all U.S based, with a large majority of female respondents on the sample resulting in gender subtly influencing purchasing decisions and trust factors, however, due to the scope of this study, the results will be treated as a general representation of Gen Z with a note that the female perspective is predominant in the sample.

Gen Z’s heavy engagement with TikTok provides a constant exposure to the shopping tools integrated in the platform. As the survey results shown, 93% of respondents uses TikTok Multiple times a day, meanwhile a 4% uses it once a day, only 3% uses it several times a week and no respondents marked “I don’t use TikTok” or “Once a week or less”.

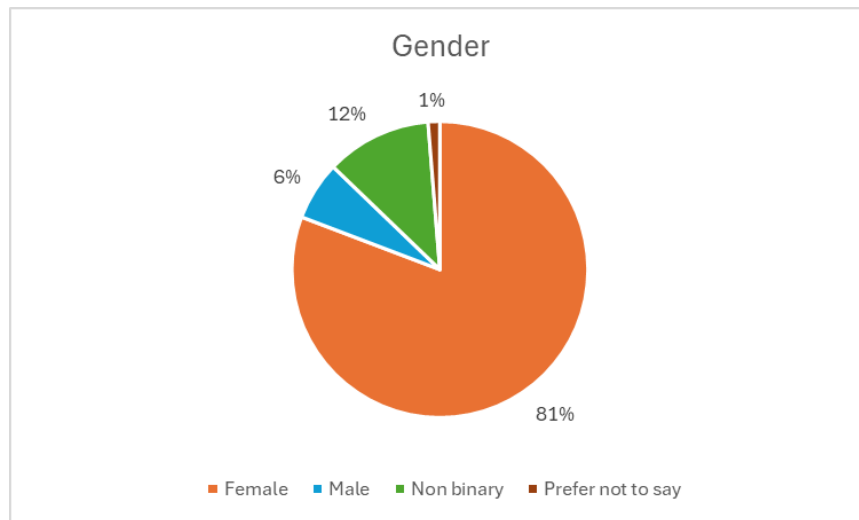
Figure 7 Frequency of TikTok’s Usage



Source: Own editing based on primary research

As for the gender, on this survey, gender distribution was 81 % female, 6 % men, 12 % non-binary respondents and 1 % who preferred not to state their gender.

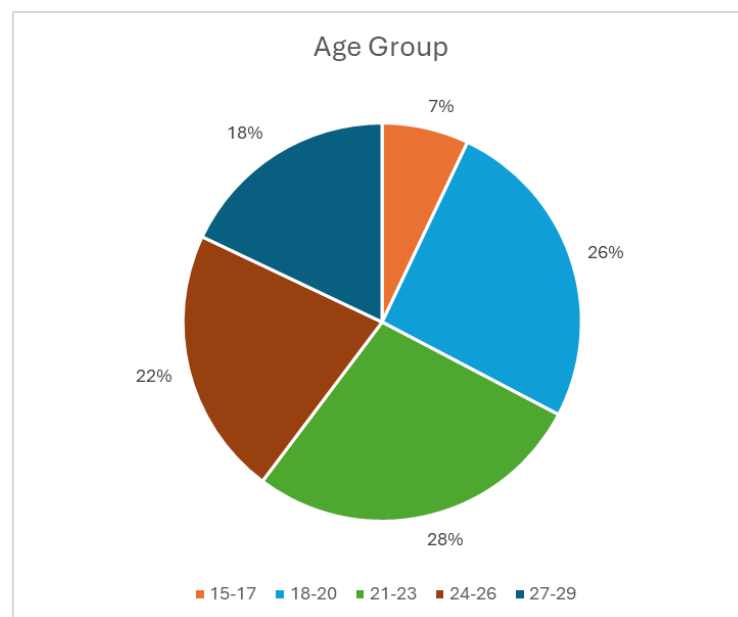
Figure 8 Gender Distribution



Source: Own editing based on primary research

The survey was only aimed towards Gen Z (15-29 years), as for the internal distribution there is a fairly balance sample where **26 %** are 18–20, **28 %** 21–23, **22 %** 24–26 and **18 %** 27–29; the youngest portion (15–17) accounts for **7 %**

Figure 9 Age Groups of Respondents

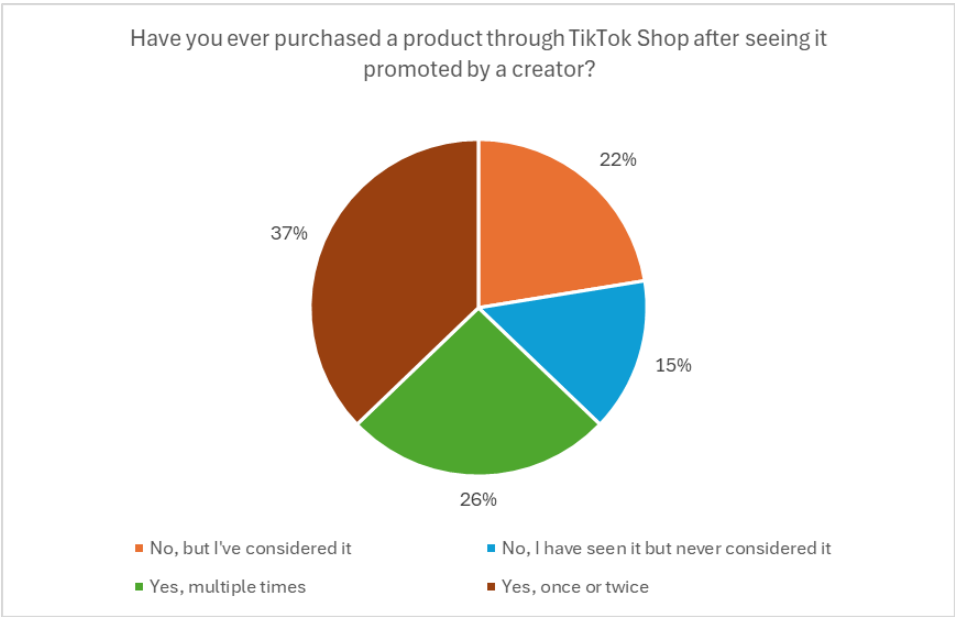


Source: Own editing based on primary research

When asked if respondents have purchased a product through TikTok Shop after seeing it promoted by a creator 37 % answered “yes, once or twice” and 26 % “yes, multiple times.” On the other side 22 % have considered purchasing but have not yet done so while 15 % have

never considered it. Which shows that nearly three in five respondents have already converted at least once.

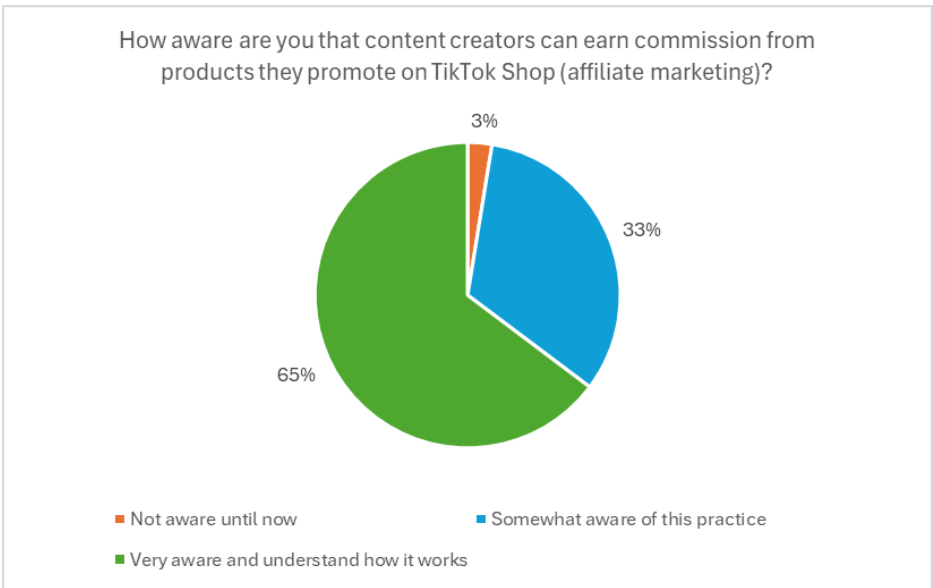
Figure 10 Product Purchase Distribution Of Users



Source: Own editing based on primary research

Respondents also showed that there is a high level of awareness towards the promotional relationship that affiliate marketing involves 65 % are very aware and understand that creators earn commission, a further 33 % are somewhat aware, and only 3 % were unaware until the survey.

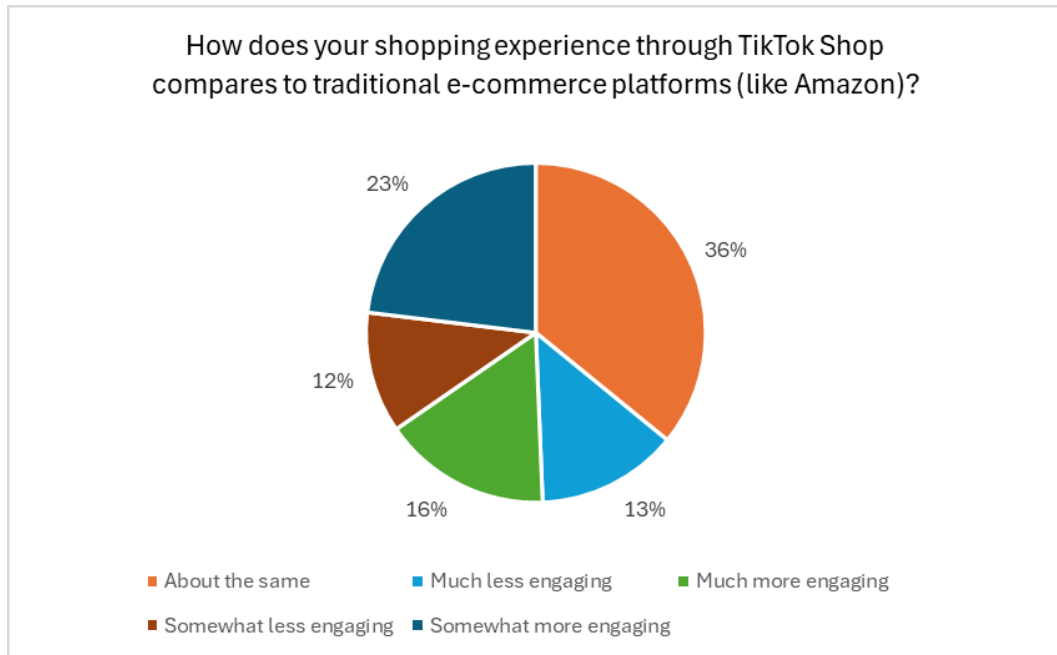
Figure 11 Awareness of Creator's Affiliate Relationship



Source: Own editing based on primary research

## ENGAGEMENT AND CONTENT VALUE

Figure 12 How does your shopping experience through TikTok Shop compare to traditional e-commerce platforms (like Amazon)?



Source: Own editing based on primary research

Gen Z consumers are exposed to a form of “*Shoptertainment*” which is entertainment mixed with shopping, respondents show that their experience on TikTok shop compared to traditional e-commerce platforms was about the same on the majority of respondents with 36%, while the rest of the sample stayed mixed, however if it is grouped on 3 main categories (More, same and less engaging) 39% of respondents found buying on through TikTok shop either “*somewhat more*” or “*much more engaging*” than traditional e-commerce, while only about 25% found it less engaging. This suggests that even with the prematurity of the shop features on the United States market there is a good portion of users whose experience with the integration of video content and shopping is considerably enhancing the engagement

In fact, the survey results indicate that Gen Z values more the authentic and informative content as part of their purchase process identifying “*seeing authentic product demonstrations*” as the most valuable aspect of TikTok Shop’s integration of content and commerce with 32% (Figure 13), far outweighing the number of respondents who answered “*nothing, I prefer traditional e commerce*” (17%).

Figure 13 What do you find MOST valuable about the integration of content and shopping through TikTok Shop?



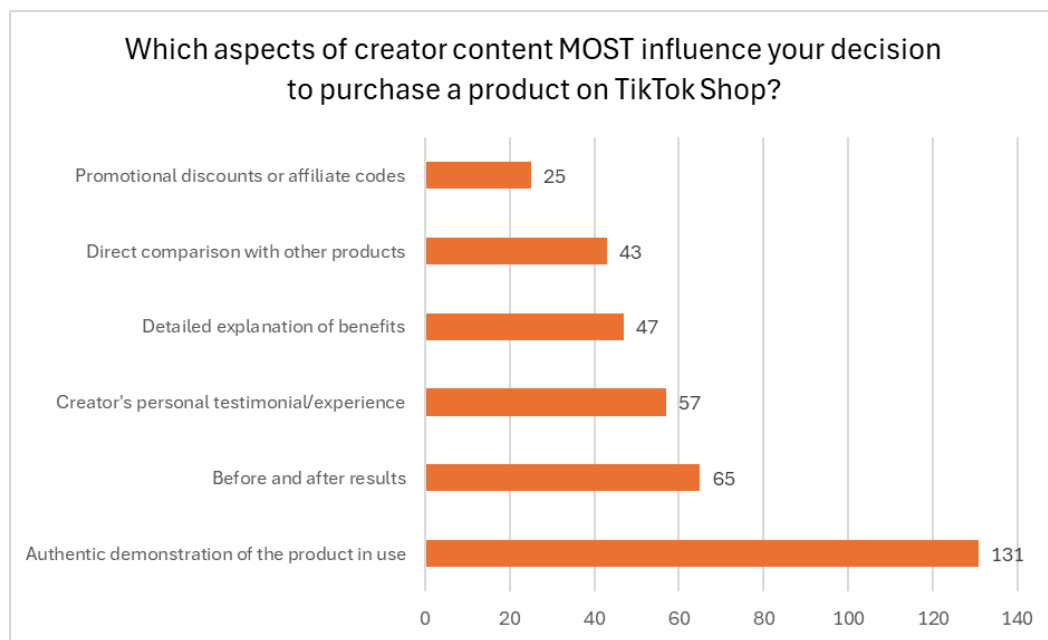
Source: Own editing based on primary research

The subsequent most valued aspects were “discover unique or trendy products” 15% and the “entertainment value of shopping” 13%, showing a rather balanced status with the others. These results confirm that Gen Z highly appreciates the rich content environment that TikTok provides regarding shopping; they enjoy being informed and entertained (through authentic demonstrations) as part of their purchasing journey, which is something that the traditional e-commerce is hard to replicate.

#### AUTHENTIC CONTENT AS A PURCHASE DRIVER

The integration of content creation on the purchasing funnel implies that the quality of content directly influences purchasing decisions. Respondents strongly indicated that authentic, informative content from creators are their main motivators to buy. When asked which aspects of creator content most influence them on their purchase decision, the most popular answers chosen by 131 respondents, roughly 84% was “authentic demonstration of the product in use” Followed by some other important aspects such as “Before and after results” (65) and “Creator’s personal testimonial/experience” (57).

Figure 14 Which aspects of creator content MOST influence your decision to purchase a product on TikTok Shop?



Source: Own editing based on primary research

On the other hand, “*promotional discounts or affiliate codes*” Scored the lowest among the six options with only 16% which show us that for Gen Z, Authenticity and usefulness of content matter more than discounts or coupons (See figure 14). Which is also supported by the study from (Dung & An, 2024) where their initial hypothesis was that promotions (including discounts, time-limited offers, and bundled deals) would have a positive impact on purchase decisions, moreover their data did not support this, with statistical results showing that promotions had no strong influence when Gen Z consumers considered to make a purchase, while the perceived usefulness and trust did significantly influence purchase intentions. This confirms the argument previously discussed on the literature by (Munsch, 2021) that affirms authentic, relevant content is essential to captivate Gen Z’s attention.

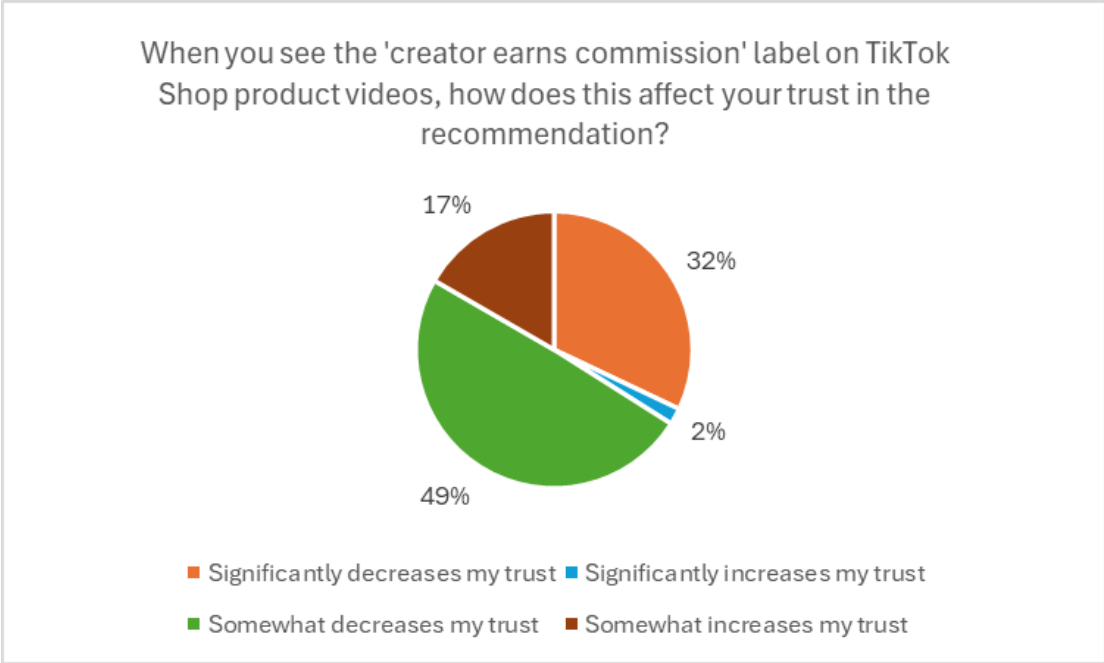
Therefore, findings support that the fusion of content and commerce in TikTok Shop influences Gen Z by making the purchasing process more immersive, authentic and impulsive, confirming theoretical expectations that this unique social commerce model being not fully adapted to so many countries, has a big potential to reshape the consumer’s purchasing journey as well as how the e-commerce industry works in the future.

#### TRANSPARENCY AND COMMISSION DISCLOSURE

Transparency is another important trust factor, although its effect in this context is complex. TikTok automatically adds the label “creator earns commission” on posts made by affiliates, making the commercial intent explicit. It was asked to Gen Z consumers how this

label influences their trust towards the recommendations. The majority, 81% combined (127 respondents) said that seeing “creator earns commission” somewhat or significantly **decreases** their trust towards the video/affiliate recommendation.

Figure 15 When you see the 'creator earns commission' label on TikTok Shop product videos, how does this affect your trust in the recommendation?



Source: Own editing based on primary research

32% of the 81% strongly claimed that it significantly decreased their trust, only a small fraction (19%) indicated that it increases their trust. It suggests that many Gen Z viewers become sceptical once they are aware the creator has a financial incentive, immediately perceiving the content as an advertisement.

Essentially, the transparency given by the commission label represents a double-edged sword: from an ethical point of view, it is important to disclose a sponsorship (likely as part of the policies) which some small groups of Gen Z individuals appreciate that honesty. In fact, a very small group from the survey, only a 2% on figure 15 responded that the label significantly increases their trust, presumably because it communicates transparency about the commercial partnership. However as mentioned before, the majority tend to be triggered with scepticism by the disclosure, unless the content is compelling enough that will overcome the initial distrust.

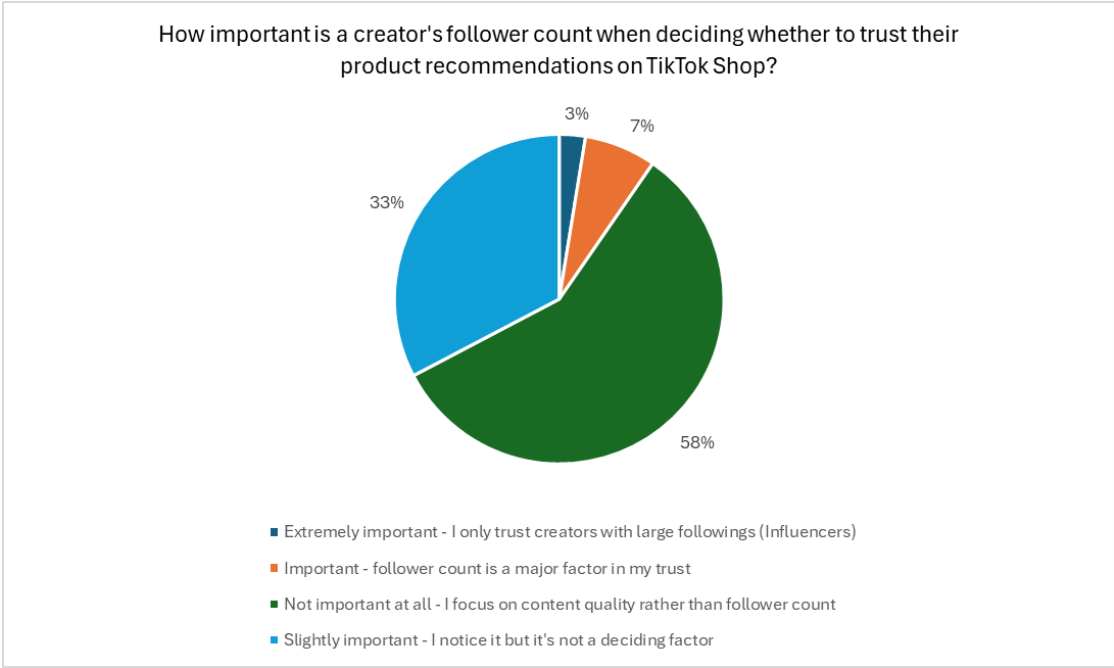
To sum up this finding, the data leans toward the disclosure hurting trust, which creators can counter by being highly engaging or already having a loyal audience. It is worth mentioning that previous literature on social commerce emphasizes transparency in transactions as a

generator of trust but mostly referring to platform transparency about processes, in this case, meanwhile TikTok is still transparent about the relationship of affiliates, the consumers may interpret that information in a human perspective, in most cases as a sign of bias. Hence, the challenge for the creators lies in complementing this transparency with a clear authenticity, making sure that the audiences feel that they are getting a genuine recommendation/content despite the commission motive.

**FOLLOWER COUNT AND CREDIBILITY**

One might assume that creators with large followings are usually more trusted, however, survey findings suggest that follower count is relatively unimportant on trust for Gen Z. A big majority 58% of respondents affirmed that the creator’s number of followers is “Not Important at all” for whether they trust their product recommendations; another 33% considered it to be only “Slightly important” but that did not make it a deciding factor. In total, more than 90% does not attribute relevance to the number of followers in order to trust on the content by an affiliate, only a small fraction 10% considers that the amount of followers is “important” or “extremely important” to trust.

*Figure 16 How important is a creator’s follower count when deciding whether to trust their product recommendations on TikTok Shop?*



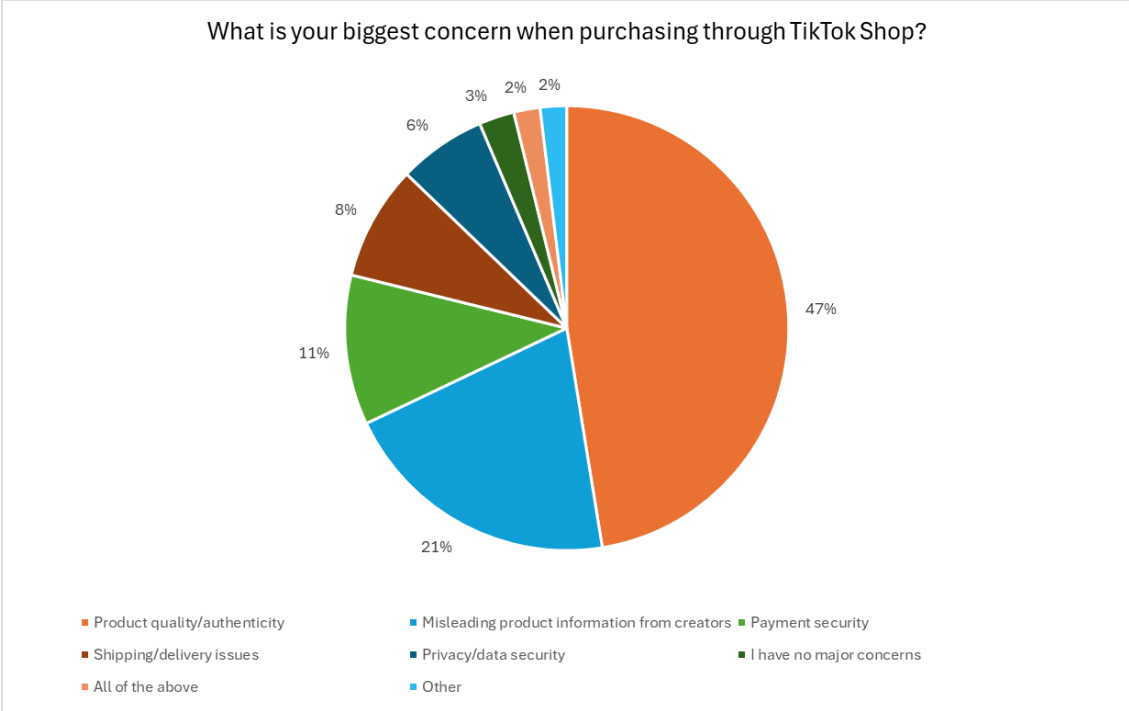
*Source: Own editing based on primary research*

**PRODUCT QUALITY AND POST-PURCHASE SATISFACTION**

Beyond the content and creators, the product experience itself is indeed a determining factor in terms of trust and satisfaction for Gen Z, the survey asked, “What is your biggest

concern when purchasing through TikTok Shop?” the top concern with a big difference was “*Product quality/authenticity*” chosen by 74 respondents for a total of 47%. Second on the scale was “*Misleading product information from creators*” (32 respondents, 20%). These two main concerns are closely related, since they both reflect a general fear of being misled or ending up receiving a low quality, perhaps a counterfeit product.

Figure 17 What is your biggest concern when purchasing through TikTok Shop?



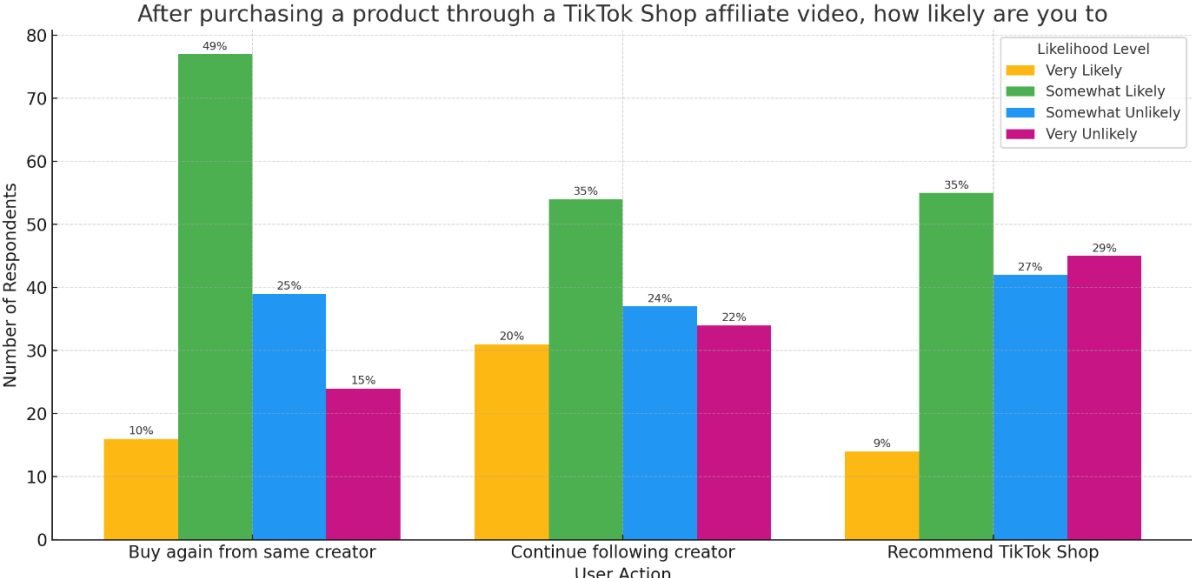
Source: Own editing based on primary research

These results implicate that, no matter how charismatic a creator can be, Gen Z will not be satisfied if the product does not live up to their expectations. This also aligns with academic literature that emphasizes on the need of a throughout verification of sellers and product quality in social commerce to maintain consumer trust (Mahbob et al., 2024). In fact, TikTok’s policies of verifications for sellers, shop scores (see image 17) and allowing reviews on product pages, is oriented to address this aspect. On the interview (Bourdeau, 2025) (see Annex 1 for the interview abstract) specifically mentioned that affiliates should always make sure to verify the product quality “*make sure you’re selling a product that has good reviews and good statistics on TikTok ... so that you don’t make a phenomenal video and then the reviews take the people away from it, with a lot of that trust you’re talking about.*” In other words, even if the content initially builds up that trust, multiple negative reviews or the poor quality will break that trust.

Some other noticeable concerns based on the survey included 11% *payment security* and 8% *shipping/delivery issues* which are factors related to the platform’s operations. As well as a

smaller segment has concerns about *privacy/data security* with a 6% that aligns with factors identified previously, for instance (Putri et al., 2024) found that robust privacy and security policies of platforms will result on users feeling more comfortable and trusting. Even though on this study, those platforms issues were secondary concerns next to product related ones, but still being relevant, especially since Gen Z is often informed about technology and mindful when it comes to online security. It is worth stressing that only 4 respondents indicated that they have *no major concerns* with TikTok, which indicates that the majority of Gen Z users approach this platform with some caution, which can be due to the relatively new introduction of TikTok shop in the United States, (introduced at the end of 2023) Consumers have not yet developed the same level of trust that they may have with platforms such as Amazon for example that has been around for 30 years.

Figure 18 After purchasing a product through a TikTok Shop affiliate video, how likely are you to



Source: Own editing based on primary research

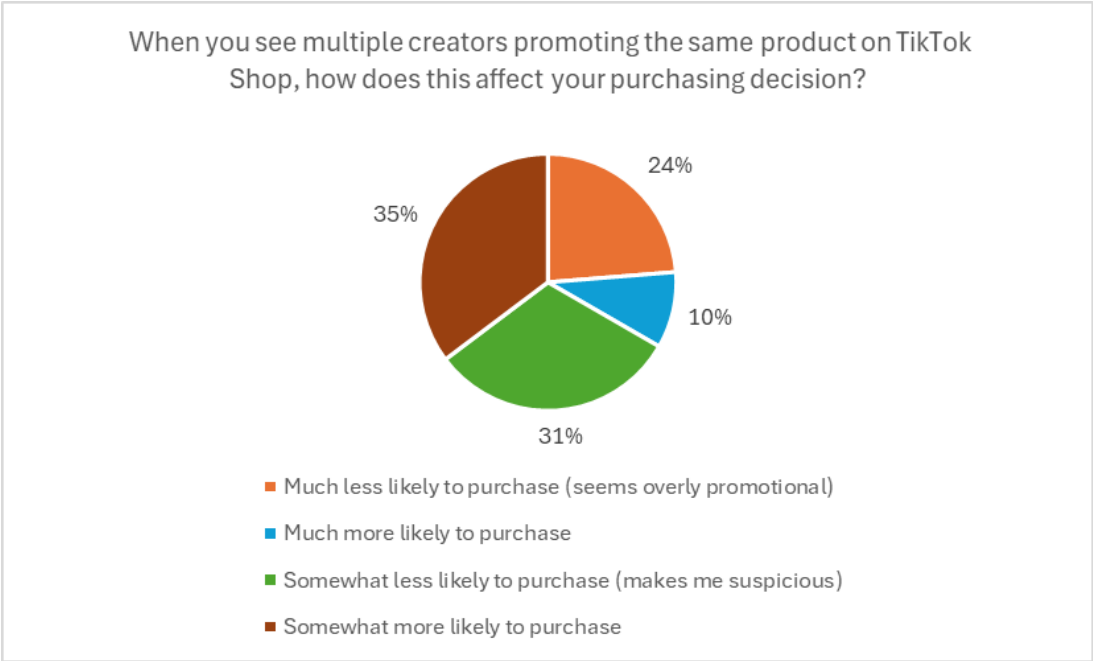
With that being said after purchasing via TikTok shop many seem reasonably satisfied; the majority (59%) indicated they would likely buy other products recommended by the same creator (77 somewhat likely, 16 very likely) and 55% continue following that creator (54 somewhat likely, 31 very likely) with it suggesting that when trust is rewarded (if product meets expectations and the recommendation was successful), loyalty can be form and it is shown on creators like the interviewee Destiny, whose (Bourdeau, 2025) (see Annex 1 for the interview abstract) also touched on saying “When Destiny started with her account, she was at like 90,000 followers. She’s at like 280,000 followers now, which is just crazy, it shows she’s built an audience”. Nevertheless, a smaller group said they would *recommend TikTok Shop* to friends

(only 14 very likely (9%), 55 somewhat likely (35%), while 87 were unlikely (56%)) So this suggests the broader trust in the platform is still limited. The consumers can trust on some specific creators and products, but not yet evangelize the entire TikTok shop ecosystem.

### SOCIAL PROOF AND COMMUNITY

Inside TikTok Shop Ecosystem, Gen Z consumers also pay attention to those community signals which influence their trust, such as seeing multiple creators promoting the same product or reading comments and reviews. It has been identified by the survey answers a split on social proof from different creators which has an impact on purchasing decisions, 35% respondents indicated that seeing many creators promote the same product makes them “somewhat more likely to purchase” marking the highest number compared to the other answers, probably because this fact can make them feel the product is popular or trending. However, if we group the next 2 biggest results which are 31% and 24% indicating “Somewhat less likely to purchase” and “Much less likely to purchase” respectively, it gives a total of 55% respondents who reacted oppositely, citing that it makes them feel suspicious or seems overly promotional (Figure 19).

Figure 19 When you see multiple creators promoting the same product on TikTok Shop, how does this affect your purchasing decision?



Source: Own editing based on primary research

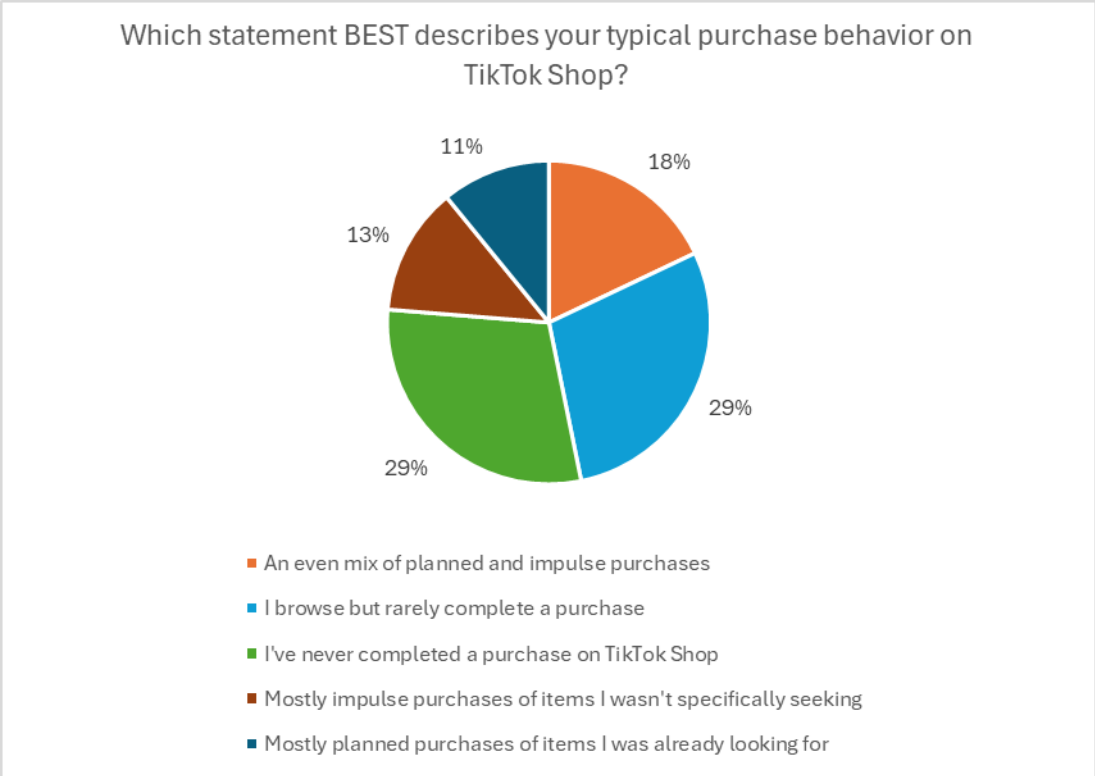
This polarization reveals two types of responses in terms of trust, some Gen Z consumers interpret the widespread promotion of a product as positive encouragement, it can

be perceived as a viral product or validated by multiple sources, meanwhile others perceived a feeling of “too good to be true” or fear that is some sort of artificial hype.

### PLANNED VS. SPONTANEOUS PURCHASING

One key difference relies between the balance between planned and impulse purchases. On traditional e-commerce platforms such as Amazon, users generally buy with a specific intention, searching for specific items or browsing within desired categories. In contrast, TikTok Shop blurs the line between consuming content and buying, leaving room for unplanned purchases. On the Survey it was asked to Gen Z about their typical purchase behaviour on TikTok Shop and the category with the lowest percentage, only 11% indicated that their purchases on TikTok Shop are "mostly planned purchases of items I was already looking for" meanwhile a slightly bigger percentage 13% said “mostly impulse purchases of items I wasn’t specifically seeking”. Other 18% described it as an "even mix of planned and impulse purchases" (Figure 20). It is important to highlight that a 58% combined is more inclined towards no purchases, 29% Browses but rarely completes a purchase and the other 29% Has never completed a purchase on TikTok Shop despite being an active user (Figure 7).

Figure 20 Which statement BEST describes your typical purchase behaviour on TikTok Shop?



Source: Own editing based on primary research

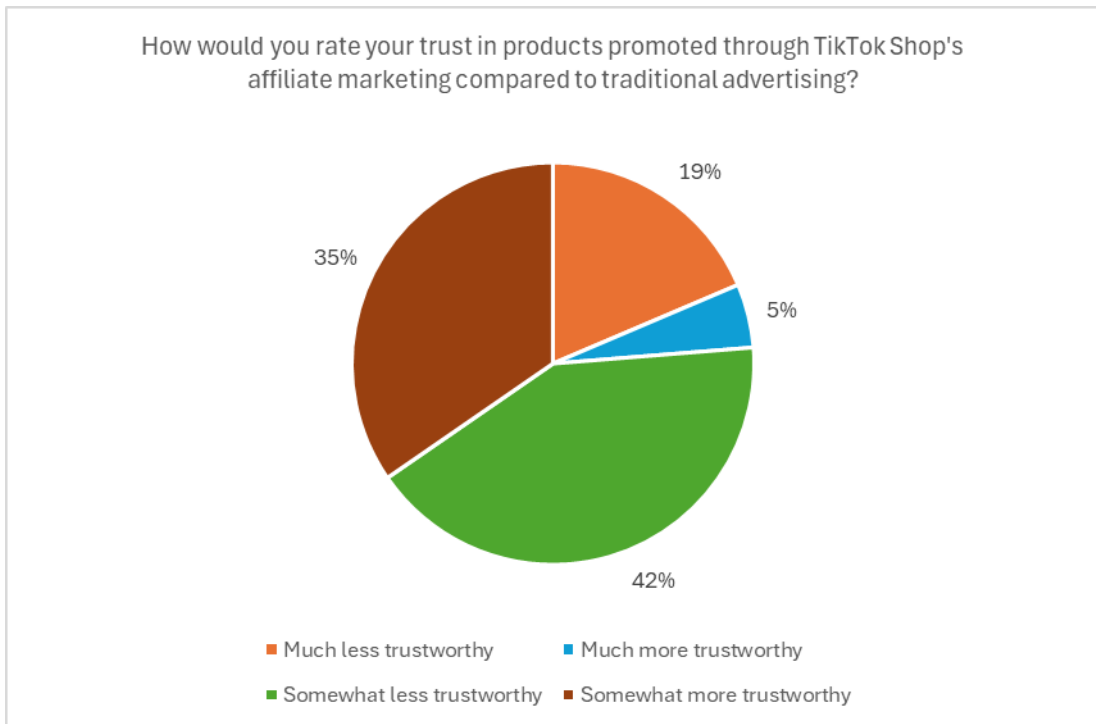
This shows that the adoption of TikTok Shop is not yet universal among Gen Z, many of them are just observers of affiliate content rather than active shoppers. However, those who do buy, tend towards spontaneity. Among the active shoppers, those impulse purchases (frequently induced by discovering products on their “For You” page) are more common than in traditional ecommerce platforms.

#### TRUST IN PLATFORM AND TRANSACTION SECURITY

Big platforms on the e-commerce industry have spent decades building trust through a reliable service, reviews, buyer protection and fast logistics. TikTok shop being a relatively new feature, haven't had the time to consolidate a base of trust broadly. As it was previously mentioned, only 14 out of 156 Gen Z respondents said that they will be “very likely” to recommend TikTok shop to other people, while 29 indicated that they would be “very unlikely” to do it. As opposed to recommending Amazon or eBay to a friend would hardly be an issue, since those platforms already have a consolidated reputation. This difference suggests that Gen Z still considers TikTok shop as something experimental or transitory adding the fact that in the U.S Market there were issues such as the Potential TikTok Ban and legal issues that become extra burdens creating uncertainty.

Interesting enough, some Gen Z find TikTok shop more trustworthy than traditional advertising where 5% of respondents said, “much more trustworthy” and 35% “somewhat more trustworthy” in comparison with traditional advertising. This could be because users like user generated content over polished brand advertisements,

Figure 21 How would you rate your trust in products promoted through TikTok Shop's affiliate marketing compared to traditional advertising?



Source: Own editing based on primary research

However, a higher number (61%) total found TikTok shop less trustworthy than traditional ads. This ambivalence shows how Gen Z hasn't yet collectively defined their position on TikTok shop in the trust spectrum which probably varies depending on the case (product by product, creator by creator). Traditional advertising doesn't have such variability as well as if we also compare it to traditional e-commerce platforms, trust comes largely from standardized policies and consistent reviews on-site, whereas TikTok's trust is decentralized, it relies on the individual content and external cues.

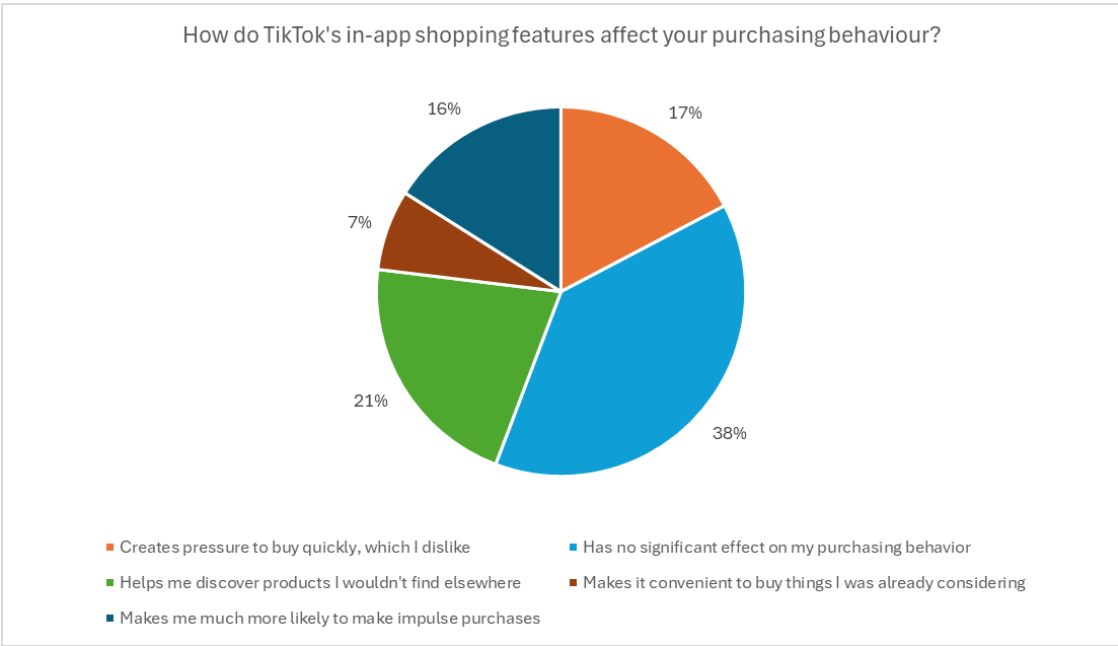
#### CONTENT-DRIVEN DISCOVERY VS. SEARCH-BASED SHOPPING

Another behavioural difference is the way how Gen Z finds products. On traditional platforms, the principal modes of discovery are search bars and browsing through categories; a Gen Z shopper can enter Amazon, type a keyword of the product, compare different options, browse through categories if they have the general idea of what they need. In TikTok Shop, on the other hand, the algorithm and the creators are the ones who drive discovery. Products often find the consumer (via the "For You" page) rather than the consumer actively trying to find a product.

Survey responses can give us some idea on this pattern, while is not a big number, there is still 21% of respondents who said TikTok's in-app features "helps me discover products I

wouldn't find elsewhere" suggesting that TikTok is showing unique, innovative or niche products that Gen Z did not even know they wanted.

Figure 22 How do TikTok's in-app shopping features affect your purchasing behaviour?



Source: Own editing based on primary research

On the interview with Rudy Cornejal he manifested this aspect, highlighting that TikTok’s algorithm can make a product go viral overnight through affiliates, reaching people who were not even shopping, *"TikTok is a platform where anyone and anything can go viral... there's no other platform doing what TikTok Shop is doing... it makes people feel like they're seeing something from a friend, not a store"* (Cornejal, 2025) (see Annex 1 for the interview abstract). Which encourages in some way those casual, unexpected purchases. A less common behaviour on Amazon. Moreover, even though there are identified behaviours as the one discussed, a higher majority of respondents with a 38% mentioned that it *"has no significant effect on my purchasing behaviour"* which again might be tied with the maturity of the shop feature or simply is not relevant for those users.

Correlating this smaller trends, 24 respondents in the survey said *"discovering unique/trendy products"* is their most valuable aspect on TikTok shop (See Figure 13 earlier) Some Gen Z are enthusiastic on finding the latest gadget or piece of clothing through social trends, that otherwise on a traditional site they might not encounter such trends till they intentionally search for those products, and even in that case there is also some prior exposure

to social media. From the literature standpoint, this relates to the concept of social commerce as experiential shopping where social interaction and entertainment lead to the discovery of products (Ismail & Mohamed, 2024). Gen Z's FOMO (Fear of missing out) can also be intensified on TikTok, if they see that multiple users are using a product on their videos which makes it more likely to join on the trend, a behaviour that is harder to replicate on Amazon's interface for instance.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

### ENTERTAINMENT AS VALUE FOR TIKTOK SHOP

In regard to figure 12 relating to previous literature about how social commerce offers more personalized and engaging experiences compared to traditional e-commerce (Rahmawati & Ramli, 2024) leading to future research questions if this preference increases over time. The interviewee Rudy Cornejal touched on this topic describing Amazon as a platform where people go there and buy, is purely an e-commerce not a social media, as of TikTok *"People go there to be entertained. And where they are scrolling, TikTok will feed them an ad"* emphasizing the social and community factor. Unlike Amazon, TikTok *"Makes people feel like they are friends"* in the shopping experience (Cornejal, 2025) (see Annex 1 for the interview abstract) .This also alludes with (Rahmawati & Ramli, 2024) who found that the content generated by affiliates is perceived as more authentic and engaging than the traditional advertising, therefore improving the shopping experience of young users.

### AUTHENTICITY ON PURCHASEING INFLUENCE

In regard to figure 14 multiple interviewees backed the preference of authentic content. Andrew Bourdeau an experienced affiliate coach touched on this topic saying:

*"the more you can relate the audience to the issues that you got solved from this product, the more they're going to see that authenticity and the more that they're going to be like, OK, this is serious. Like, he's not lying. This is actually helping him out a lot."* as well as that short form viral videos perform best *"focusing on impulse purchases off of a problem people have"*, for example demonstrating a retractable car charger to target how annoying is to have cables laying around people's cars (Bourdeau, 2025)

By showing a product solving a real problem on a quick, authentic, relatable video, creator affiliates can evoke immediate purchase decisions. Destiny also said that her strategy consisted on finding products that she truly enjoys and then *"selling the feeling"* of using those

products, connecting with the audience by being genuine on her video and product demonstrations (Destiny, 2025).

These approaches highlight how the integration content creation allows storytelling and appealing to emotions (pleasure, humour, problem solving) which can directly translate into purchase behaviour of Gen Z. This is an absent dynamic on traditional e-commerce websites, where videos usually are shown as static images and text.

#### PLATFORM FEATURES AND SEAMLESS CHECKOUT

Another element that is relevant to mention about the purchasing behaviour on TikTok shop is the integrated seamless checkout process that keep users within the app till the end of the purchase. Hunter Hewitt, Owner of a supplement brand on TikTok shop, highlighted the ease with which users can shop on TikTok: *“The ability to use micro influencers to get mass volumes of amount of content posted... and the seamless integration where they can check out with Apple Pay all on the same platform “* Has created, in his words, an completely different opportunity like no other he has ever experienced on the e-commerce space (Hunter Interview). By removing friction (meaning that there is no need to leave the app nor open an external browser) allows that the Gen Z consumers to be in a “flow state” since the first moment the consume the content till the finalize the purchase. This frictionless integration has been cited in the literature as a relevant competitive advantage since it “reduces the friction points traditionally associated with e-commerce transactions” and therefore fosters buying behaviours on young consumers (Putri et al., 2024).

The interviews confirm this: Hunter credits affiliates and integrated features of TikTok for generating over USD \$500,000 in GMV (Gross Merchandise Value) for his brand within 8-9 months, an impressive figure that certainly reinforces the argument that when the purchase process is simple and is linked to attractive content, young consumers can take purchase decisions in an almost immediate way (Hewitt, 2025) (see Annex 1 for the interview abstract).

#### AUTHENTICITY AND RELATABILITY OF CREATORS:

The authenticity of affiliate creators seems to be, without a doubt, a base which trust is built with Gen Z. The 4 interviewees that work as affiliates coincided that being genuine is crucial to earning their audience’s trust. (John interview) Explained that if the audience can relate to you and feel like *“we are friends”* the probability of them to buy increases considerably, *“If I just come off as a salesy salesman... people are going to scroll. But if you’re [talking as if] FaceTiming a friend... I’m being authentic... you’re going to trust me a lot*

more”. Also highlighted that his most successful products have been those that he genuinely likes and uses on his life, due to his genuine enthusiasm being expressed; *“people are smart... they can see the emotion in my face... you’re going to think, OK, I trust this guy. We’re friends now. I’ll buy it”* (Scalia, 2025) (see Annex 1 for the interview abstract)

This insight directly supports (Sibulan & Limos-Galay, 2024), who claimed that consumers prefer products promoted by affiliates that *“genuinely use and are passionate about the products”* as this perceived authenticity leads to building reliability with young consumers.

The survey as previously noted on figure 14 reflects how important this element is, 84% of Gen Z respondents said authentic product demonstrations influence their purchase decisions. This type of content works as an indicator of trust, as seeing the actual unfiltered use of a product can give them confidence that it works as advertised. (Bourdeau, 2025) (see Annex 1 for the interview abstract) advised that in order to build trust *“#I is definitely selling something you believe in. If you don’t use it... people will notice if you’re just faking it”* (Bourdeau, 2025) also added that showing emotions that are relatable with the audience is key *“relatability is what really builds up trust with the audience”* Likewise Destiny mentioned that she never promotes products she doesn’t like personally *“if I feel like I’m forcing myself to enjoy the product, I won’t do it, because... people can truly see, OK, this person enjoys this product – now I want to buy it too”* (Destiny, 2025) (see Annex 1 for the interview abstract)

These consistent testimonies reinforce the idea that creator authenticity and enthusiasm translate into consumer trust, which also boosts satisfaction, as the buyer feels they received exactly what they expected from someone they trust.

#### TRANSPARENCY IN THE DISCLOSURE OF PROMOTIONAL PARTNERSHIP

In regard to Figure 15 (Cornejal, 2025) (see Annex 1 for the interview abstract) On his interview, agreed that the small orange shopping cart icon and the *“creator earns commission label”* can turn viewers off immediately: *“people will see that...and automatically... they do not care, they don’t even give it a shot. That’s not everybody but a good majority of people don’t like being sold to at all.”*

Figure 23 Orange Shopping Cart and Commission Label



Source: Own Screenshot

Both he and (Destiny, 2025) (see Annex 1 for the interview abstract) mentioned that generally audiences dislike obvious ads, so the actual successful affiliate content tries to often “*make it seem like it’s not an ad*” (Cornejal, 2025) (see Annex 1 for the interview abstract) on the first seconds of the video which is the so called “Hook”. (Destiny, 2025) (see Annex 1 for the interview abstract) suggested that even some viewers do not even notice the label if the content is engaging enough *some people do not know it is a sales video till the end of the video, the watch till the end and then they are like wow, this is such a good video, this is such a good ad*” her opinion was that if a creator builds a authentic relationship and entertains the viewer “*people... don’t mind watching the video and just support*” the creator by buying, that way “*that label at the bottom doesn’t matter on this case*”.

This perspective can be aligned with what (Bourdeau, 2025) (see Annex 1 for the interview abstract) commented that the negative impact of the label has potentially reduced over time, Initially TikTok users were “*sick of it, they wanted the ads gone*” but now that viewers are familiar with TikTok shop, “*as long as you're targeting the audience you're trying to sell to, you're trying to show them you can solve their problem. I don't think it matters as much as it used to back in the day*”

#### TRUST ON FOLLOWER COUNT

In regard to Figure 16 This implies that micro influencers (with smaller followings) can build trust with Gen X as long as their content is high quality and authentic,(Hewitt, 2025) (see Annex 1 for the interview abstract) supported that saying “*Micro influencers are the future*”. This finding supports the idea of “democratization of influence” discussed earlier on the literature, where even creators without massive follower bases can influence effectively on the purchase decisions, thanks to TikTok’s algorithm reach and Gen Z’s focus on content over status. In the literature, this can be highlighted as a shift from the traditional influencer

marketing (dominated by celebrities) towards a more trust based in relatable peers. It is interesting how this works and specially on TikTok's for you page, users are most of the time exposed to creators that they do not follow, leading to higher organic reach but that doesn't mean creator can't have fanbases. For instance, if a user is following a creator they know and trust regardless of the amount of followers it could have higher probabilities to appear on that person's for you page and have higher probabilities to convert as well, due to the fact that there is already a previous established connection.

Our interviewees confirmed this perception, (Cornejal, 2025) (see Annex 1 for the interview abstract) observed that if a creator has an existing fanbase for non-shopping content, the built trust of user-creator can lead to very high conversions on the few posts that they are promoting something. For example, a lifestyle TikToker who occasionally recommends a genuinely useful product, will manifest that previously established trust over many authentic interactions. Interesting enough there are many different types of accounts on TikTok, and there is also those accounts that only post product ads all the time (with no other kind of content), which based on (Cornejal, 2025) (see Annex 1 for the interview abstract) opinion those might struggle with credibility compared to the other accounts. These statements are in line with previous research indicating that Gen Z trusts creators in a similar way as they trust recommendations given by family and friends (Azmi et al., 2025).

#### PRODUCT SELECTION IMPORTANCE

In regard to figure 17 This also aligns with academic literature that emphasizes on the need of a throughout verification of sellers and product quality in social commerce to maintain consumer trust (Mahbob et al., 2024). In fact, TikTok's policies of verifications for sellers, shop scores and allowing reviews on product pages, is oriented to address this aspect. On the interview (Bourdeau, 2025) (see Annex 1 for the interview abstract) specifically mentioned that affiliates should always make sure to verify the product quality *"make sure you're selling a product that has good reviews and good statistics on TikTok ... so that you don't make a phenomenal video and then the reviews take the people away from it, with a lot of that trust you're talking about."* In other words, even if the content initially builds up that trust, multiple negative reviews or the poor quality will break that trust.

In regard to figure 19 As (Destiny, 2025) (see Annex 1 for the interview abstract) a top performing TikTok Shop affiliate explained, "The Golden Key is supply products that people haven't seen... that hasn't been too trendy" which let us know her acknowledgment that over relying on hyped products can later on come across as doubtful and might reduce trust in the

product. At the end trending products are like a wave and depending on how early creators get on the wave It might determine the amount of the market share they are able to capitalize on. If creators hop on the wave/trend too late, the audience already has some fatigue with the product but if they join on the right time, it could be more beneficial for them and the audience. There is a remark from (Scalia, 2025) (see Annex 1 for the interview abstract) another successful TikTok Shop affiliate, who shared similar perspectives by saying that he now tries to find products he is genuinely passionate about, instead of just trying to jump on trend after trend as others might do. He emphasized that on some periods where he experienced a product drought, he found himself sometimes having a hard time being authentic but realizing that authenticity is a very important role in building trust and converting viewers into buyers.

*“Last month I saw no good products on there... when I promote a product, I like to be passionate about it. Right? Like this is really cool. I really like it. I couldn't buy one of those products for a long time, so in a way I was forcing myself to pretend to be happy about it, like ‘This is an awesome toothbrush.’ I don't care. It's a toothbrush. But I have to pretend that I really like toothbrushes for the video. So I think just trying to be authentic is pretty difficult, you know.”*

From the literature perspective, this finding relates to the idea of social influence by (Azmi et al., 2025) where Gen Z considers suggestions by affiliates similar as those by friends, moreover as explained before with the wave idea and backed by the data, it shows that if too many affiliates push the same product, after a while, it can backfire and a more time sustainable approach is when creators discover products they have a personal connection with, which in this case trust is more likely to happen, showing the value of micro online communities and genuine connections. As it can be seen on one of the open answers, where their concern was *“people reviewing product, they got for free saying it's great... I trust reviews more than what one person says.”*. Highlighting that Gen Z crosschecks information from multiple sources, they can trust their favourite creators up to a certain extend but they also look for reviews from other consumers and a broader consensus to confirm a product's authenticity. Therefore, the Satisfaction is highest when creators and crowds both align indicating a product is worthwhile.

## PURCHASE BEHAVIOR ACROSS PLATFROMS

In regards to figure 20 (Scalia, 2025) (see Annex 1 for the interview abstract) contrasted this statement with his own behaviour *“I love Amazon. I buy so much stuff from there... but if I was going to buy something expensive, I probably wouldn't get it on TikTok.... I would probably get on Amazon because It's more trusted, right? TikTok Shop is a Year and a half old. So, it's*

*not that established, I'm sure in a couple years it's going to be on par with Amazon. But yeah, I think with TikTok, it's more impulse buys, whereas Amazon or eBay is more a couple hundred dollars”* This comment represents a trend: Gen Z might trust on TikTok Shop mostly for cheap and innovative products that catch their attention but reserve higher value or planned purchases to more established e-commerce platforms.

Another aspect which is interesting to add on this topic is that even though a portion of users might not convert directly on TikTok, it could potentially lead to them converting on a more established and trusted platform creating what (Hewitt, 2025) (see Annex 1 for the interview abstract) talked about, which is the so called *“spill over traffic to other platforms”* . He expressed that

*“Something that we'll notice in buying patterns. is if we get a really viral video on TikTok, we can easily see the the Amazon spike on the day of, because people will be doing search find buys on Amazon. They'll look up, you know, they'll see the video on TikTok. They don't trust, you know, TikTok shop yet. So they're going to go open up their Amazon app, and they're going to search up my brand name and buy it off of Amazon. And so we see that pretty often and and a lot of brands utilize that”*

With that making Amazon their second biggest platform after TikTok and Shopify as the third one, bringing an opportunity for discovering and brand awareness for TikTok Shop Brands.

Previous literature on consumer behaviour indicates that impulse purchases are being encouraged by the kind of entertaining and low friction environment TikTok offers, which is something the findings touch on. Meanwhile, Intentional search based purchases on Amazon are more oriented to satisfy or solve an existing need, which is something that the TikTok algorithm could create instead of responding to those needs. The interviewee (Cornejal, 2025) (see Annex 1 for the interview abstract) pointed out that TikTok *“is not a platform where people go to buy”* like Amazon; instead, *“people go there to be entertained, to be distracted.. and then when they're scrolling, TikTok will feed them an ad”* so the users which first intention was just entertainment, might accidentally buy if an appealing product appears. Thus, TikTok shop inverts the traditional consumer journey where content is the starting point and then the commerce is integrated into, whereas Amazon, commerce is the beginning point, and content such as reviews, images, videos support the decision.

## PERCIEVED TRUST AND EXPERIENCE

In regards to figure 21 As previously quoted, (Scalia, 2025) (see Annex 1 for the interview abstract) on TikTok's maturity and preference of Amazon for more expensive purchases, John Scalia predicts that TikTok could reach the level of trust Amazon has once it reaches its maturity in the market but as of now, Gen Z treats it with more caution when it comes to major purchases. Similar to what (Bourdeau, 2025) (see Annex 1 for the interview abstract) said "*In the beginning, people were really sceptical because TikTok Shop was new and just felt intrusive... but nowadays, people know TikTok Shop is credible, and it's getting better. As long as creators genuinely believe in the products they're selling, trust will continue to build*". While all other interviewees agreed on this statement, believing TikTok shop has that potential to become a giant on the industry and a credible force in the future of e-commerce.

The previous literature on trust (Putri et al., 2024) concurs that trust is built through consistent positive experiences and robust structures of consumer protection, something that Amazon has being stablishing over time and TikTok is just starting to stablish.

## COMMUNITY AND INTERACTIVE SHOPPING

Traditional e-commerce tends to be a solitary experience, the user can read reviews, maybe ask a question on de Q&A section, but the interaction is limited. Whereas on TikTok, buying can feel more interactive and community oriented. Gen Z viewers have the possibility to tag friends on the video comments, or you can often see "this is so cool" "I did not know I needed this" and also discuss the product on the comment section. This social layer implies that purchase decisions can have some influence by the feedback from their peers on real time, the collective enthusiasm or negative attitude towards the content. (Destiny, 2025) (see Annex 1 for the interview abstract) Noted that when her videos are funny or engaging, people might just buy to support her work, her content and be part of the community. This sense of community can be seen on figure 13 where 18 respondents said they value "*community engagement and discussion*" in TikTok Shop) which is something Gen Z does not get on Amazon. However, as we discussed previously, the collective enthusiasm can be a double-edged sword, since too much hype could trigger scepticism in some people, so it all depends where on the hype wave people are.

Although, in platforms such as Amazon, eBay, AliExpress, Gen Z users rely on star ratings, written reviews and overall feedback found on the page which they can trust up to a certain extent, considering that those lack the liveliness and dynamism of comments and Livestreams on TikTok.

## DEMOCRATIZATION OF SELLERS AND INFLUENCERS

The affiliate marketing model of TikTok Shop allows that micro influencers and smaller businesses reach Gen Z and the public in general, whereas the traditional e-commerce tends to favor more established brands (or it requires a considerable amount of Advertising budget to gain visibility). The interviews revealed how this democratization affects Gen Z's behaviour. Who end up buying products recommended by creators that are "everyday people" and not only from corporate storefronts. (Cornejal, 2025) (see Annex 1 for the interview abstract) expressed his interest in how affiliates that don't have a established following can generate high sales volumes with just one viral video. In addition, Gen Z and overall consumers can make purchasing decisions based on what these everyday creators offer them, which represents a shift on their behaviour; it is like trusting a recommendation from a friend but on a massive scale. Which is still on a consolidation phase in case of the U.S market, and it is about to be launched on multiple European unions, leading to future improvements and establishment.

This can also be supported by the previous literature where it emphasizes that TikTok's affiliate model empowers micro influencers and shifts the influence that was previously limited exclusively to macro-celebrities.

Previously on e-commerce, even though affiliate influencer marketing exists, it generally occurs outside the platforms (For instance, a YouTuber leads his followers to Amazon through a referral link on the description) Or even on Facebook Ads, if there is a video or an image, it leads users outside Facebook to a ecommerce website. TikTok instead integrates the influencer, the shops and the user into one merged experience, shortening significantly the path towards the purchase. Gen Z's behaviour reflects this approach, as seen on the surveys., those who do buy on TikTok, tend to do it on a quick repeatedly way if the experience was satisfactory (many said they'd likely buy again from the same creator) This sort of "loyalty" towards a creator's "shop" reminds how someone could follow their favourite eBay seller, or a store owner on Etsy, which in case of TikTok, what keeps the consumer from coming back is not just the product catalogue, but the personality and content as well as the algorithm itself and the way the interact with the platform.

## CONCLUSION

The innovative shopping ecosystem of TikTok Shop reveals a detailed panorama on how the content and commerce can be merged to transform purchase behaviors and habits of Generation Z's. Mixing entertaining and authentic content with direct shopping links has been

found to create an immersive environment that feels more like discovery than obligation. Unlike a traditional electronic commerce, where users search for and plan specific purchases, TikTok Shop encourages entertaining scrolling and spontaneous shopping, adapting naturally to a generation that looks for the unexpected and creative storytelling around products. This fusion of entertainment and commerce turns shopping into an experience rich in narrative and discovery for young consumers.

Trust and satisfaction emerged as key elements in the study findings. Generation Z's trust in TikTok Shop relies heavily on authenticity and transparency. When creators show genuine enthusiasm for a product and interactions are perceived to be honest, young consumers are quick to trust the recommendation. At the same time, aspects such as secure payment systems and clear return policies form the foundation of trustworthiness that drives them to complete a purchase. In particular, this trust is delicate: any hint of over-promotion or a product that doesn't meet expectations can quickly damage satisfaction. At such moments, Gen Z shoppers clearly express their disappointment, highlighting that satisfaction in this ecosystem is only achieved when authentic creators, quality products, engaging content and smooth purchasing processes align harmoniously.

When comparing the Shop with other e-commerce platforms, differences such as the purchase behavior can be spotted. Young consumers on TikTok tend to act more on social influence and slight impulses, enjoying the feelings that discovering unexpected products gives them. On the other hand, traditional e-commerce tends to act with more attention, looking to satisfy their specific needs and trusting already recognized platforms, especially for high ticket or planned purchases. This dual pattern suggests that many young people currently reserve their most important or risky purchases for the reliability of established platforms, while allowing more experimentation and spontaneity on TikTok. As time passes and TikTok Shop reaches maturity in the space, this preference might be likely to reduce, as trust and quality on the platform increase, Generation Z may gradually shift even their most planned purchases to TikTok. For now, they continue to navigate between the excitement of social commerce and the efficiency of traditional e-commerce.

Reflecting on the research as a whole, it is clear that TikTok Shop has opened a new chapter on social commerce in a space of digital native users. This study highlights that success on this platform depends as much on respecting Generation Z's desire for authenticity and community as it does on offering good prices. In practice, this implies that brands and creators must focus on building genuine relationships and online communities beyond simply chasing

clicks. Ultimately, TikTok Shop represents more than a sales channel: it encapsulates the idea that shopping can be part of a community experience. Embracing this shift where entertainment, community and commerce combined will be key for any brand or creator looking to thrive in this constantly evolving marketplace.

There is plenty of room for research since it is a newly emerged platform specially in the West, and its continuous expansion opens new pathways where further research could dive, such as analyzing gender and demographic differences revealing if consumers on different genders react in different ways to social commerce. As well as price sensitivity and product categories to clarify and understand what kind of customers have each price range and category. Another important path that could be studied is the effects within platforms. Studies could analyze the spillover traffic from TikTok towards other E-commerce platforms, measuring how viral content can stimulate purchases on other platforms such as Amazon. Finally, cultural and regulatory context are worth the attention. The impact of TikTok likely varies across different countries and cultures, so comparing markets could reveal how sociopolitical, economic and cultural factors shape Generation Z's purchasing behavior.

## SUMMARY

Reflecting on the journey of this research, I look back on how much I have learned about TikTok and social commerce. I started this study with a genuine interest on the dynamic world of TikTok Shop, aiming to understand more about consumers my age, their interactions and interests on this new model and how it changes over time. The survey conduction to Gen Z consumers and interviews with professionals on the TikTok Shop affiliate marketing space provided me with valuable perspectives and insights. The process of combining academic literature with real world in practice experiences was both challenging and rewarding, showing me, how quickly social commerce platforms can reshape consumer behaviour.

In general, this work has re-affirmed my enthusiasm on this field, leaving me eager for further research and in practice application of the knowledge acquired, demonstrating to me the importance of combining data, theoretical research and practical understanding. Looking ahead, I am excited about the impact social commerce will have on society and the changes that comes with it. I am optimistic the findings of this study will help future marketers and businesses better understand how to connect with Generation Z consumers. Maintaining an emphasis on user experience, community and authenticity will be essential as TikTok and Other platforms develop further.

The rise of TikTok Shop is more than just a trend, it captures how social media and commerce are integrated into our lives, leading to any individual that dives into the space with an opportunity to maximize its potential.

## ANNEXES

### ANNEX 1 – Interviews transcripts

#### **Interview Transcript – Andrew Bourdeau**

(Communication on the 27<sup>th</sup> of March 2025)

**Interviewer:** Juan Sebastian Rueda Velasco

**Interviewees:** Andrew Bourdeau (Affiliate Coach)

For practical reasons, each participant's initials are used to represent them in this transcript. Since the transcript is based on a Zoom recording and supported by word transcription tools, it may not begin or end precisely as the conversation did in real life.

**Sebastian:** First I wanted to ask you if you could share your background on the TikTok shop, I know you. First started as an affiliate and now you have been kind of like coaching other affiliates. So how long have you been on it and if you could share more about your experience on this? Program.

**Andrew:** Yeah, of course. So I started TikTok shop basically two months after it first ever came out. So I had always been interested in e-commerce and you know, selling products online through other avenues. And when TikTok shop came out, Matt, reach out to me and he's like, yo, dude, this is crazy. You got to check it out. He helped me get an account, so I was an active affiliate for probably about 6 to 8 months posting and with being affiliate, I was able to learn a lot more by actually digging in there. And then on top of that, with working with the community that we had grow from 100 members to 1000 members down to 300 members, I've worked with so many different people and I've seen so many different types of content and what works and what doesn't work. So yeah, that's kind of an intro about myself. This is it. Again, I was an affiliate. For about 6 months right when TikTok Shop came out was still posting and coaching at the same time. And then once we crossed a certain threshold I shifted my focus to helping other affiliates grow rather than focusing on all of my own pages with the time that I did have. So yeah.

**Sebastian:** Sure. Thank you. And when did it come out?

**Andrew:** TikTok shop came out in, I believe it was October of 2023, October and November of 2023 and I started around December.

**S:** That's it. All right. Well, thank you. It's crazy. How long? How fast time goes already more than.

**A:** You know it, it seems. A lot longer because it was right at the end of 2023. So like we got that extra year there, but it has been out for.

**A:** Yeah.

**A:** A while now.

**S:** True. True. Great. Thank you. So I wanted to ask you as well for the next question. Oh, I forgot to mention you, it will be 8 questions. And it will take approximately 30 minutes to 40 minutes. I hope that's right for you.

**A:** Yeah, that works, man.

**S:** Around that time and the next question will be what type of video you will video type like bottom bottom of funnels demonstration. So what kind of videos do you think work best for driving sales? In your experience? I guess it changes during the time, but.

**A:** Yeah. So it does change a lot, but personally in my experience, the short form viral content has worked and made the most money. The types of videos where you're focusing on impulse purchases off of a problem that people have a good example of this could be the retractable car charger that you know of like that like. Immediately focusing on. Going viral off of everybody having these cables dangling around in their car and selling them off of that product back, a funnel, like I said, I have to, you know, my opinions on back of funnel. But I'll say it again, back of funnel is really only good for experienced affiliates who have multiple accounts. You know who want who have extra time and who are doing TikTok. Full time now to the point where they have the time in their day for an hour or two to record the extra 10 videos. In my experience, short form viral content has succeeded.

**S:** Got you. Thank you. And also will we mentioned about the access that you guys have as an agency? And I wanted to ask, I don't really know what kind of data can you see, but based on like picture of demographic data, if you can see any? Is there? Any key differences that you see in purchasing behaviors between GNC and older range age groups?

**A:** Oh 100%. So to answer your question, I can't see like overall statistics on TikTok Shop, but I can see statistics per creator and with this type of marketing.

**S:** For creating.

**A:** The physical appearance of a creator and that you know it matters so much, right? So for example, like if you were speaking Spanish right off the start of video, it would target the Spanish audience so much better. If there was a young kid who's 18 and 19 years old and they're trying to sell a supplement to the older audience, it's not going to convert. So from what I've seen is. So the older generation likes to buy from the older generation for the most part, it's very hard for the younger generation to target the older generation, like for example, a 20 year old making a supplement video. It is a lot harder for them to do. Do that and successfully convert them versus somebody who's older, right? Like beans. If you know beans who's like a 40 year old man, he's got a beard. He's got a mustache. He's visibly older. When he gives people health advice and he sells supplements to that older audience, they'll listen. And also to double back on to Gen. Z, they really don't convert. To be honest, man like they don't spend their money. A lot of Gen. Z on tick. What goes viral and you can specifically tell it's Gen. Z content is when it's something for like vaping. It's something for smoking weed when people are making a video about something like a smoke buddy or like the night bites, breathes supplement, which helps you with them, you can sing your lungs. They're very controversial. They really do not buy a lot. Also like they argue. Brought they're very confrontational from what we've seen. The the money audience is anywhere above like 26 to 40. That's the range that's purchasing a lot.

**S:** That's good to know. To 26 to 4 you said.

**A:** Yes. And also the double back on audiences. So like like I said, you can't see overall audience on TikTok, but if I'm clicking on a user's profile and they're like a 34 year old man with a beard and I can see that their audience for the most part is going to be 70% men, 65% men in their age group. If it's a woman just by them being a girl and having their face on the camera.

**A:** OK.

**A:** It's most likely going to be a large majority of women and. These the men will stay. Just how men always do. Right. Like if it's an attractive woman, they'll stay. But that's basically how it works. And it even gets deeper to the point where it's like when a kid is recording like, I've seen adults record videos and they have their child to hold the phone for them as a skit, and

their kid will be like. Six or seven years old and they genuinely sound like they're recording the video and TikTok targets other 10 year olds, 8 year olds, and all of the comments are just like inaudible random things from children like, you know, just like random brain rock comments. So. Your target audience and the audience you're targeting, besides demographic and age and stuff, just gender is automatically also kind of pre targeted if that makes sense just based off of you and what you look like and how you sound and things can change like that too. Like if you're a four year old man and you start your video off you know like listen ladies you want to get this for your boyfriend. Like that can help with it, but just as a baseline. That's kind of what I've noticed with audiences and how they work and how they interact with Gen. Z and with. The older audiences as well.

**S:** That that makes a lot. Of sense. So for example, if there is. A agency affiliate, let's say from 18 to 29. Well, that's. Big range of age but. Yeah, let's say. From this range and they, they most likely target other people in that age range. What would you consider that? It would be best for the affiliates to convert those. People, even though they are not. Buying as much as older audiences.

**S:**

**S:** So with what we've.

**A:** Noticed with that and let me let me just rephrase the question to make sure I have it right. Have you said like what have I noticed works for people to still capitalize off of that less converting audience? Is that what you're asking? OK, So what works is is typically stuff in their niche, right? Like kids that are 18 to 20, they like video games, they like snacks.

**S:** Yeah, that's me.

**A:** They have cars, right? They all have just started getting their cars. And when you're a kid, especially in like America. Having a car is like a personality trait for a lot of people, so a lot of products like that can still easily be targeted and they will still convert. It's just never gonna be those crazy conversions that people get, you know, on supplements. Unless you're selling a supplement or your audience is majority of women because women, they just convert a lot more. They spend a lot more money on online shopping. They'll fill their card up from your page like it's a lot different than selling to men, if that makes sense. So.

**S:** So.

**A:** What works for them is targeting anything that's in their niche. If it's 120 year old, making a video to target for other 20 year olds and they're like hey dude, you want to check. Out this mouse pad. It's, you know, it's sick. It lets you charge your phone while you play your games. Right? That'll work really well. But what I have noticed is when you're trying to tell Gen. Z like. Something is wrong, right? Like if you start a video off and you're like. If you're still. Using a mouse pad without a a charger, then you're an idiot. In 2025, right then people are going to freak out in the comments. They will really not even care for the most part. Like what you have to say. They're going to start arguing. Same way when it comes to like addiction, I've seen a lot of products that are oriented around like people quitting smoking and helping them. Couldn't be easier. They're not interested like they will not budge. They'll. They'll cuss you out in the video. Tell you you're stupid. And then there's also more to like with selling something where somebody's trying to quit, if that makes sense. You don't necessarily want to target people like, I don't know, let's. A drinking coffee was addictive and it was like a problem with the whole world face. And you drink coffee every day and I walked into the coffee shop and I handed you like a bottle of something else. And I was like, quit drinking this coffee like you're gonna look at me like I'm an \*\*\*\*\*. You're you're not gonna have any interest. Right? So that's where I notice a lot of the Gen. Z conflicts coming in. There are a lot more controversial. They will tell you to \*\*\*\*\*. They won't even want to. I'm sorry, I don't want. To swear actually I'm. Sorry, off they.

**S:** No, no worries. Yeah, fine.

**A:** They will tell you to go away and you know other audiences. They'll use that as clickbait, right? Like they'll stop. They'll listen to what you have. Say Jensen doesn't care. After you, you flip that switch once. It's kind of like it's over for them, if that. Makes sense?

**S:** Yep. Thank you so much for the next part. I wanted to touch on transparency and trust. And is how do you consider creators can create trust and transparency? In this case, the relationship of creators and their audience, and also if you consider that this label that says Creator earns Commission, does it change? How audiences react in your opinion?

**A:** Good question. So the first question again or actually I'll answer your second one first and I'll come back. So with credit turning Commission, I definitely do think in the beginning it affected it a lot like ring one TikTok shop came out. People like if they saw that they would know I think in today's day and age, it really depends on the consumer.

**S:** OK, sure, no worries.

**A:** It depends on if they're looking for the product, because at the end of the day, like. With being a normal TikTok shot or a TikTok user before TikTok shop and with having TikTok shop dropping, it was definitely very annoying. Like very annoying. Everybody's feet used to just be content they liked and now they were just being shoved items in their face for them to buy. So you know in the beginning it definitely pushed a lot of people away, they didn't even care, they wanted their normal. Feedback they didn't want to see these products didn't want to be sold to. Nowadays, they definitely do still care, like that's a lingering effect, but it's a little bit different. I feel like people know TikTok shop is credible now they know that there's a lot of good stuff on TikTok, so it really just depends on if the product is interested to them or if they're interested in it, and that double s back on, like how well the creator is targeting their audience. You know, cause for example like. If you figure out a way to target the audience that is quitting smoking right instead of the audience that's currently smoking and you're trying to get them to quit and you're selling them something that's gonna interest a lot of them. You know a lot of them will stop scrolling and don't get me wrong, a lot of people will still scroll away because it's not in their needs. They're not interested, they're still vaping or whatever, and also because they'll see. That creator earns Commission. But yeah, so I guess to summarize that on a little recap, I think. In today's age, it does matter, but at the end of the day, as long as you're targeting the audience you're trying to sell to, you're trying to show them you can solve their problem. I don't think it matters as much as it used to back in the day where everybody would see it. They were sick of it, they wanted it gone. So it is a little bit different now. I think it's it's not as important now. Or not as much of A conversion rate decriaser, if that makes sense, as it was before, than it is now. So yeah.

**S:** Well, that's a great answer actually. And Destiny mentioned also something familiar is that if the content was good enough, like for example in. Her case like. If her content was like good enough, they even though it says that the Creator Commission, they will stay because the content. Good quality. And she knows how to catch their attention. So.

**S:**

**S:** Exactly.

**A:** Yeah, as long as it's good quality and it's in their niche, right? Yeah. Because for the most part, at the end of the day, people are going to scroll away if it's not good content or if it's not in their niche. If it's not something they want to watch. And that really comes back to the hooks, you know, making sure your hooks are targeting the right audience.

**A:**

**A:** Yeah.

**S:** Yeah. No, great.

**A:** What was the first part of that question that I've missed?

**S:** Sure. And how creators can create trust and transparency on their relationship with the audience.

**A:** So that's a good question. I'm a firm believer that your audience is really only it's different per video. Destiny is like the one creator I would say in a pass for to where like. She really has built an audience up because. When she started with her account, she was at like 90,000 followers. She's at like 280,000 followers now, which is just like crazy like it shows she's built an audience, right? But for most creators, like per video, it changes. So the best. Way to build. Trust, I would say, is actually selling something you believe in, because if you don't believe in that product if. You don't sell it. If you don't use it, my bad. Not sell it. Then it's gonna show. People will notice. If you're just \*\*\*\*\*. Right. And this also comes back to kind of like those 20 year olds that are trying to sell health supplements, right? Saying things like, oh, this will make you feel so much better. Your back won't hurt.

**A:**

**A:** Yeah.

**A:** Like the 20 years have never experienced that before in their life. So when people are watching that, they see that there's a lack of authenticity versus if like let's just say and this may be like a a darker example, but it was a 20 year old with like some really bad disease that made them really, really sick. But they found a supplement that helps them a lot like that would add. A lot more trust, a lot more authenticity, and obviously that's not something you can just make right, like you can't just say like, oh, I have cancer or whatever and make yourself look sick. So I think it comes into a lot of things like #1 is definitely selling something you believe in. #2 is the tone that you're going to take in that video. You don't want to like be going crazy with the sales and saying like all these different things, you really just want to focus on the problem at hand. That's being solved by the product, really keep reinforcing that and key. Reminding them of it with relatability, the more you can relate the audience to the issues that you got solved from this product, the more they're going to see that authenticity and the more that they're going to be like, OK, this is serious. Like, he's not lying. This is actually helping

him out a lot. So I think it's product selection. First off, with the creators. Make sure they sell something they genuinely use, and then secondly, I think it would be. The reliability keep consistently reminding these people why they may need it and also thirdly, not focusing too much on the features and on the sale, focusing on that emotion, why they would want it right, how many times they were annoyed in their car when all those cables were everywhere and they couldn't even move anything, that they not, that they couldn't move, they couldn't move their cable. Out because it was so tangled, focusing on that emotion that relatability is what really builds up trust with the audience, I would say. And there's also another layer of that to like with the creator making sure they're selling a product that has good reviews and good statistics on TikTok. Just so that they don't make a phenomenal video and then the reviews take the people away from it with a lot of that trust that you're talking about.

**S:** Oh, that's a great answer. Thank you. Definitely gives me a lot of great information.

**S:** So for the next part, is related to what we've talked already. But in which aspects of content do you believe most influenced Gen Z purchasing decisions on TikTok shops? So basically, what makes them actually buy? Is it humor? Is it fear of missing out? Or any. Any other?

**A:** That's a good question.

**S:** Strategy.

**A:** I think there's a couple of things. Like I said before, the same way Gen Z will jump on you to say negative things when you say something they don't like. They also jump on it to agree with it. If you say something they do like. So I think one thing that really helps is making content that's really targeted to them, like no disagreeing with them. Giving them like straight value in the video, whether it's whatever they're doing. Another thing I think that really affects it too, is what was I gonna say? I think it would be the fact that. A lot of Gen. Z, the the content that they're watching, like you said, it does include a lot of humor because a lot of them, they they watch like brain rot, tik. Toks you know? So keeping that humor in there and saying stupid things can help a lot, even the other things I've seen influenced it is like referencing like trendy pictures, right? Like there's. I'm trying to think there's like a picture of these two dudes. Kissing right and it's it's like a meme picture, right? But whenever I see people use those in their videos, for the most part, they get more views. And it's weird. And it's because when that product is targeting Gen. Z and they slip in something like that to add in humor, they'll stay a lot more once they see it in terms of affecting purchasing.

**S:** Yeah.

**A:** I'm not too sure if it directly affects that. I think that it affects purchasing in the sense how the humor helps Genji stay in the video longer, so it gets them to those crucial points in the video, which would get them to make that purchase more likely. Yeah, I think that's that's what I would. Say for that.

**S:** Yeah, makes a lot of sense. So would you consider well that let's say we can divide this again see in two parts, let's say the younger part of Yancy, 16 to 24 and then 25 to 29 probably because. I guess maybe that older Dentee audience has not the same. Let's say preferences as the younger part of DNC. MHM.

**A:** So if I could separate them, I would say the older Gen Z audience is definitely like more prone to purchase. It's the younger audience that puts out more of a a fight, more of. A hassle.

**S:** Yeah.

**A:** What I mean by that is. You know the older end, they've, they've gone through more parts of life. They're either out of college or out of their university. And they they're working right. And they're in the working field now. There's a lot of things they need. And let me pause real quick. I'm answering the question correctly. Right. You're asking the difference between the two. Yeah. OK. So I think they're more prone to buy more, prone to make purchases 100% where the younger audience, they don't, they think that's all mumbo jumbo. When people talk about, oh, you need this for. Your floor to clean it, you know they don't care. Their mom cleans the floor, but when the 25 year old Gen. Z person who lives on his own sees how dirty his floors is and he sees how well this cleaner works, he's more likely to purchase it. So I think what it comes down to. With Gen. Z's conversion, honestly, is their lack of responsibility because when you don't have responsibility, you don't worry about maintaining anything, right? Like if you don't have a car, you don't care about how your mom's car looks, if it's dirty, if you're making. I'm messing it. You don't care about any of that? You just wanna. Get in and. Go on a ride. But what you do care about is like, you know what you're eating, right? Cause you like food. Or what you're. Planning what accessories you have for. Your phone, but as you get older. And these. Things come up in life, you know, like you have to pay rent. You have to clean your apartment. You have to maintain your vehicle. You have to do X&Y. You have to take care of your health. I think that's when a lot more things come up. A lot more responsibilities come up that makes trends. You kind of realize, like, oh, \*\*\*\*\*, this, this is real, you know? Like I need

to maintain my property. I need to maintain myself. It's just not things that they're worried about immediately when they're so, so much younger, if that makes sense.

**S:** Yeah. Thanks a lot. Thank you also for the next question. I wanted to ask, what is the difference about how people buy on TikTok compared to traditional e-commerce on platforms such as Amazon and eBay for example?

**A:** Great question. So in two great examples. So I would probably compare it more to like to talk to more like Facebook ads and stuff like that. But to compare it to Amazon and eBay, it's completely different. There's never, I mean, I don't want to say never, but that I can remember there is never, ever, ever spent. Time in my life where I impulse purchased something off of Amazon or I impulse purchased something off of eBay every time I made a purchase off of Amazon or eBay. It's always been something that I'm looking for that I know I need right, like if I need. Something for my car, like a car cleaner. I do my research on my phone and then I figure out what I need online. I order it on Amazon. It comes to my house. I'm good to go eBay, right? eBay is even more. Niche specific because. It's like older thing. It's collectible things that. People are looking for. So when they're going on eBay, sure people are making money off e-commerce on there, but it's a lot more individual sellers that have things that you want. Like maybe I have a limited edition iPhone that released in 2011, spotless, unopened like that may be something that attracts you to my store. It's my page to search. For me, TikTok is all impulse. People do not want to buy when they buy on TikTok like you're just selling them literally like you're just selling them stuff like it's popping up on their phone. It's an impulse purchase. The videos are designed to be made so people don't even like realize they want them until the video pops up, and then they're like, Oh my God, I could use this. You know what I mean?

**A:**

**A:** Yes.

**A:** UM. So I think that's how that works. And with Facebook, Facebook is more similar with the way people drop ship things on there because it is more impulse purchases. People will be scrolling and then something, you know, pops up on their phone and they're like, Oh my God, this is. Incredible I could. Use this and they get it and that that's how Facebook ads are kind of designed. Same with TikTok. And Amazon and eBay e-commerce platforms are a bit more like new specific, if that makes.

**S:** Yeah, absolutely. Actually didn't really think about the Facebook ads before, so I was like mostly this difference about the inputs, because I and you also confirmed that, for example, in Amazon or eBay, you wouldn't input impulse purchase something. Most of the time. And raised my curiosity about Facebook ads. Is it because I I think I'm not really familiar with it, but do you? The app and it redirects you to a. For example our website for with the product or how does it work? OK makes sense.

**A:** Exactly. So it's basically targeted ads. So let's say make a website and from one ad you do.

**S:** OK.

**A:** You see that people in Texas aged like 70 and above are buying tons of your products, right? So you then target that ad to ages 70 and above from Texas to only target your products or to only target that audience for your product. Sales. And then it pops up so they're scrolling on Facebook and they see like, whoa, whatever it is popped up. They're wicked interested. They click on your website. That's the impulse purchase, and the ads are different. It's not just like an ad you click on. There's sometimes videos like TikTok style videos, short form content to get people hooked onto it. So yeah, that's basically how it works. But that's why. I said that kind of relies more on impulse.

**S:** Yep, sure. And then pick, talk through it. It's crazy for me and one of the things that I chose this and it's there is almost no friction like we will reduce all the friction in terms of there's let's say on Facebook apps you still have to go to a different website put the your payment information and everything. But in picture you can directly. Right from the product and but for me I think was crazy and I was like, OK, I need to. Research more about this.

**A:** Yeah, I agree. Tik, TikTok is a lot like you said, a lot more impulse designed with how the card payment is saved. It's like a platform that like utilizes it all together, if that makes sense. Like instead of constant, it's like a Facebook had a payment system and you could put your shop on to Facebook. You know, so it definitely does get rid of a lot of that. Anything of that? Yeah, it's it's a lot more. Impulse for sure.

**S:** Yeah. Thank you. For the next question, I wanted to touch on what do you consider are the biggest challenges that affiliates face when promoting products on TikTok Shop?

**A:** I've been one. One moment.

**S:** No worries.

**A:** I think the biggest issue affiliates face. Is finding their niche not even that they're they're niche, I mean like.

**S:** Mayor.

**A:** Personal niche, not a page niche, just product sets in categories that they enjoy promoting. To capture that authenticity in the video. I think a lot of creators suffer from firing in all directions and also from FOMO like creators suffer from FOMO more than the audience, I believe. From.

**S:** Yeah.

**A:** Seeing somebody have a product? That's going crazy and being like, Oh my God, I need this, you know, like I. Need to pick it. Up. That's a lot of the. Film that I see for creators. Yeah. What was the original question again, I'm sorry.

**S:** Yeah.

**A:** Ohh, the hardest thing for creators. Yes, FOMO. And just picking their own product selection instead of like, you know, ordering everything else that everybody else is doing, making sure it's something that they can actually promote that they know how to promote, not just something they want to promote, something that's in there in the that's going to keep it authentic. In the video for them. And when I say in their niche, again, I don't mean like their pages in niche.

**S:** Yeah, yeah.

**A:** I mean their personal niche, things that they enjoy doing.

**S:** OK. Makes sense and. I don't know if if the this 10 minute. Timer pop out for you. But we have 10 minutes left on the meeting, but we have. Two more questions to go and it's just because of the the zoom call maximum time is 20 minutes so.

**A:** No worries man. You can take more time if you need. Bro. I'm. Not in a rush.

**S:** OK. I appreciate it my. 10 minutes more, I believe, but The thing is that the meeting will finish automatically after 10, so if it's the case I will. I think you can join with the same link right away if it's not a problem and then we can have like extra then 15 minutes.

**A:** Yeah, no problem, man.

**S:** But the last two questions is. This one is related to the brands and the shops. So what you can see the businesses. So this the shops should optimize on TikTok to better connect with GNC consumers.

**A:** It's a good question. So it's hard to say because I think it depends on what they're selling, right, because sometimes Gen. Z is just out of their discrete graph your whatever you want to call. I don't know the word. Sorry. It's out of their range for who they're looking for. If it's a product that they're targeting gency, I think that they should really think about. Like the physical products branding like packaging, right? If it's coming in a box or whatever, how that looks, how attractive that is to the eye because the same way where like Captain Crunch cereal for example. And I don't know if you have that in Hungary or yeah, I.

**S:** Not really listening.

**A:** Think it's hungry but. It's Captain Crunch, captain, Captain Crunch. So that cereal box is literally designed to, like, look you in the eyeballs no matter where you. Are in the aisle. So as a kid. Is walking up and down the aisle with.

**S:** I see.

**A:** Their. Parents. The thing is, staring at their eyes right, so it's kind of similar like that. I think helping with packaging and stuff would help and also like. Product description and what it looks like on the listing would help tremendously. And yeah, I think it really also does. Come down to the. Product they're trying to sell, right? If they're trying to sell. If they're trying to sell, you know, like working boots to Gen. Z, it's not going to happen. But if they're trying to sell something that helps Gen. Z vape or something that helps Gen. Z hide something from their parents, right. Because that's really what Gen. Z is nowadays. I would say, like the younger, younger audience, then it's easier for that and also things just that just fit the younger niche. And also like slipping in those like trendy brain rot memes like. I don't know if you've ever seen the video where it's like my boss told me we needed to market our dealership and they put, like, the dancing car on the OR the dancing cat on the roof of the dealership. And it made it go viral, like stuff like that, incorporating trending topics into your marketing.

**S:** Yeah, yeah.

**A:** To target the younger audience can help a lot more, as long as the audience can still benefit off of that product. You know what I mean and what I mean by that is like, as long as

it's still. Something for their age, like as long as you're not trying to target Gen. Z for supplements with some trendy little meme, it won't work as well if that makes sense.

**S:** Yeah, absolutely. Thank you. You are searching for topics that I didn't. Think before, so that's. Very helpful for me. Thank you so much.

**A:** Of course.

**S:** And.

**S:**

**S:** Well.

**S:** Actually I have the last one, but before the last one I am. I was also curious. I don't know if you can see that on your end, but. What like can you see a price range on like what people purchase, let's say on a creator or that will be only for a? Sorry. Hold on. So.

**A:** I don't think I can, I think. I know like. The like you're trying to see, like how much money Jens is spending, basically.

**S:** Yes, I wanted to like the question is what price range drives the most impulse purchases for Gen. C so let's say from \$10 to 30 or from 30 to 50, but I I don't, I'm not sure. If you can see that on the creator.

**S:**

**S:** So.

**A:** I don't 100% have the statistics, but from personal experience from my end and from also like everybody else that I've helped work with that has had these audience targeted 100%, the cheaper the better like 10 to \$20 range is the sweet spot because that shows it's not cheap junk and it's also not too expensive for them to break the bank.

**A:**

**A:** Mm-hmm. OK.

**S:** Yeah, makes a lot of sense. Yeah, that's good. Yeah. Answer my question. So. Is good and now the last one is. Where do you see TikTok shop heading. So we'll creators and brands work differently in one to two years. How do? You see the.

**A:** Honestly.

**A:** OK.

**A:** I see the brands and creators connection staying the same, but I see the agency connection growing more and more and more because there's only so much that a brand can do like for example. Goalie. They have. Thousands, if not 10s of thousands of traders selling their products, it's a lot harder for them to stay in touch with them and make sure they're doing everything up to date and stuff versus an agency or 10 different agencies that all have control over, like 100 different creators. I see TikTok shops staying the same. I see it advancing 100% whether they're going to come out with new features that can benefit. People like more shipping, saving and stuff like that, or shipping to other countries opening in other countries. But yeah, I see the agency aspect building a lot more to bridge that gap because like I said, there's thousands of creators and thousands of brands and want to brand goes viral. There's so many creators coming to them, buying their products, promoting it. It's a lot harder. For that connection to be fixed versus a a connection between. The brand and the agency and then the agency and the brand. Because it gives them a lot more. And also in terms of just where I see TikTok going in the future, I don't think it's going anywhere. I think it's going to get bigger than ever as they're already working on rolling out in other countries like European Union countries and Mexico and stuff like that. So I see it growing more and more and more and eventually becoming global scale to where, you know, you could buy anything. Regardless of shipping, regardless of this and that.

**A:**

**A:** Yeah.

**S:** That that'll be crazy when it's lower because yeah, right now I believe, for example, if it's in the US or in the UK, it's only you can only buy from. Your region and maybe only specific products you can like have worldwide kind of shopping, but yeah they implement that later on that you can buy from any country and that will be that'll be great. That'll be that'll be crazy.

**A:** Oh yeah.

**A:** Yeah, they've, they've rolled.

**A:** so like us can. Global buy like it'll tell you if the products coming from global. But yeah, as we move forward, I think just more and more and more will become accessible.

**S:** Yeah, makes sense. Well, those were all the questions and that was it pretty much regarding my interview. I really, really appreciate and actually we are right on time within the 14 minute frame. So I think was very useful. And I'm really grateful once again for. Having my call and like answering all those questions, I really got a lot of insights and then later I will, but I need to like make a transcript of the interview, so I will definitely get a lot of good information as well from reviewing the call so. He was very helpful. One, thank you once again and not just for the interview, but for all the help all the time. I really appreciate it.

**A:** Of course, bro, there's nothing else that would have made me happier to connect with you. I mean, obviously, unless. It was like. You made 1,000,000 bucks, but to know I'm helping you with your projects and for the research. I love it, man. So I'm glad you reached out and sorry it took so long for us to connect.

**S:** No, no worries.

**A:** I am glad we were able to.

**S:** Sure. I appreciate it. Yeah, it's all good. And I'll keep you updated with the results of the whole research.

**A:** Of course. Thank you, man. Well, let me know how the paper goes. If there's anything else I can do.

### **Interview Transcript – John Scalia**

**(Communication on the 1st of April 2025)**

**Interviewer:** Juan Sebastian Rueda Velasco

**Interviewees:** John Scalia

For practical reasons, each participant's initials are used to represent them in this transcript. Since the transcript is based on a Zoom recording and supported by word transcription tools, it may not begin or end precisely as the conversation did in real life.

**Sebastian:** I just started recording and basically it will be. Probably 30 to 40 minutes maximum and it will be around 8 questions that will be like about TikTok. And yeah, I once again really appreciate your support on the research and for the first one, I wanted to ask you if you could share a bit more about your journey with. The Tiktok shop. how long have you been doing it and? If you can share if you will feel if you feel comfortable sharing your GMV across all this time, doing Tiktok shop and approximate doesn't have to. Be exact but yeah.

**John:** Yeah, sure, of course. So how you doing, everyone? My name is John Scalia. I've been Sebastian's friend for a little bit. We're in the same discord together, so we're always talking. Yeah, I started TikTok shop a year ago in March of 2024. And. I was actually in college during that time and leaving college, I didn't really like working a normal job. It really wasn't for me. I've always wanted to do business. I've started and failed multiple businesses across my timeline. I've done snow plowing, construction, and vengeance, you name it. I've done it so TikTok shop was just another business I was pursuing.

**Sebastian:** OK.

**John:** And initially I started just as a side hustle. I'm like, alright, well, if I can make a couple of bucks for rent, that be. Kind of cool. The first month in March, I made \$700.00 profit and that was I made. I only made \$10,000 a year around this time, so I didn't have that much money. So 700 bucks in a month was crazy. On top of my normal job. So from there I really took it seriously. I'm like, alright, well, this could be something big. Let's really double down. So I dedicated a lot of time. I did a lot of product research. I was always in the discord talking to everyone. Like, hey, could you help me with? This. Could you help me with that? So we ended March. At 700 bucks and then. April was a lower month that was around \$300.00 profit, but May was my very first big month I hit I think it was 11,000 dollars, \$11,900 profit, which was crazy. That's my year salary in a month, you know.

**J:**

**J:** Well, yeah.

**J:** So yeah, from there I just kept going in and I was lucky because college had ended. I graduated and I started working a ramp job for an airline, so I was pushing all the bags under the airplane, doing all that stuff. I hated it. It sucked, but. Yeah, I was doing that for a little bit. I really wanted to quit my. Me. Brother, my older brother who's a father figure to me. He was telling me like, stick with the job. Stick with the job. Like the business is risky, blah blah blah. But that same month I made \$40,000 profit in one month. So I did the math. I'm like, all right, thank you. Yeah. This I was mind blown. This was.

**J:**

**J:** Well.

**S:** Correct.

**J:** Absolutely crazy, but I saw the money in the bank and I was like, oh, you know. But this is enough to sustain me for three years at least if I live by my mom's house. No. Expensive. So I quit my job. My brother yelled at me for it, but that's a different story. But yeah, I quit my job and I just decided, like, I'm going to do TikTok full time. Man, it sounds crazy, right? I remember when my brother asked me. That as we hung out one time, he's like, hey, John, you should be at your job. It's a Monday. What are you doing? I'm like, I gotta tell him, don't I? When I told him I quit my college job for TikTok, he blew up. Like, wait, that's. Stupid. Like what? That doesn't make any sense. And I don't blame you. It does sound dumb, but it's the Internet, man. It's crazy out here. So yeah, I just. I doubled down with TikTok. I started doing it. I was hitting 40,000 months. I was hitting 20,000 months back-to-back to back and I think it was.

**S:** It is.

**J:** Around November of 2024, I officially made \$100,000 cash in profit in my bank account.

**S:** Crazy. Crazy. It's crazy, you know? Yeah.

**J:** So yeah, ever since then, it's, you know, April first. Right now 2025, I was able to move down to Miami. I have my own place now. And yeah, we're just continuing to grind.

**S:** Wow, congratulations. Congratulations. That's crazy. I mean, crazy. You you did it. And. And. Well, that's that's that's human me way that liement so great job on that. And also I want to ask you, do you have a current strategy right now to promoting products?

**S:**

**S:** Thank you.

**S:** At the moment, what's your current strategy?

**J:** Yeah, it's good that that's a good question because it's. I've been changing my strategy recently because I'm I'll be completely honest. As of recently since January, my. Their earnings have been a lot slower. They're still really good and I'm still able to live off of it, but it's nothing crazy anymore. So I've been changing my strategy up. I've been getting a lot of views. I hit million million views, 100 hundreds, hundreds of \$1000, no hundreds of thousands of views, millions of views, no problem. But I'm having a really hard time. Converting them to customers. So right now I'm taking an approach of. I have to be less entertaining and I have to be more

salesy if that makes sense. So I'm currently working with a new strategy to kind of get those conversion rates going. But yeah, as of finding good products, what I like to tell people is we all have an advantage at something, right? I'm 23 years old. I'm a boy. You know, I live in Miami. I'm a teen, not teenager anymore. I'm getting old, but you know, so I have an advantage. I like cars. I'm good with mechanics. I work blue collar. So I promote a lot of tools. Stuff, and if you're a girl, you could promote makeup products. You can promote, you know, dresses. You could promote bathing suits, all that kind of stuff. So we all have an advantage over another person. So my advice is just finding what's good for you. You know, if you love playing video games, I mean, right here. This is TikTok shop. You know, it's a video game keyboard. It's TikTok shop. All this is TikTok shop so. Yeah, just find your advantage and go from there, because we all relate to an. Audience, you know.

**S:** Got it. Yeah, for sure and. Now you mentioned do. You. Well, this one is not really on the structure of the questions, but do you have a specific audience like age group because you mentioned that you have your strengths in terms of what you do and also your. Your age. So do you have like let's say, mostly an audience of 18 to 25, or is it 25 to 30? Have you checked that or not really?

**J:** Yeah, I have been checking it so. I like to call it a good. Problem. Excuse me, I my age range is usually 18 to 25 and on TikTok you have to be 18 years old. So if you're like a 10 year old you just pretend you're 18 and. Go from there. A lot of my videos I like to be pretty funny, which attracts a lot of younger people, which is great for views, but they don't have money. You know, they're still teenagers. They're still going to school so.

**S:** Mm-hmm.

**J:** Well. I'm getting the views but that same audience isn't going to be able to buy the things that promote, if that makes sense. And I've noticed my more successful videos where I do make a lot of money. The audience is older, so my most successful audience is males and females 354555 typically with.

**S:** Alright.

**J:** Hard working blue collar husband. That's in construction, mechanics, something like that. Because if I'm able to attract that audience, they have money. They're adults, right? So they're gonna actually buy products from me, so. I attract a bunch of different audiences. Some

are good for some things, some are bad for some things, and you could kind of go from there. But right now I'm just trying to target older people cause they actually buy stuff, you know.

**S:** Yeah, that that makes a lot of sense. And yeah, actually, so mostly my research I am focusing on the Gen. C so kind of like from 15 to 29 that the the range of. And yeah, that's what I'm kind of like trying to understand and like research. And how does this and see interact with picture show and like, how is their consumer behavior? So it's good that you touched on that, but the also the entertainment part and yeah. That's interesting. So for the next question, I wanted to ask what type of videos? You can see their work best for driving sales in your case.

**J:** That's a good that's a good question. That's that's. The answer we all want to. Know, right?

**J:**

**J:** It's just.

**J:** Yeah, for me. So like I said, the best TikTok shop videos is a video that's both entertaining but also sells the product. And from my own experience. I recently had a video that hit 1,000,000 views in three days. Crazy, right? Guess how much money I made from that.

**S:** From the 1,000,000 views.

**J:** 1,000,000 views, yeah.

**S:** Is that a lower conversion I would say? Maybe. Can be 2000 profit.

**J:** \$10.10 dollars.

**S:** Very easy.

**J:** Well, yeah, that's what I was talking about is like you said, a million views should have a couple \$1000 of profit. That's normal. But I think I was being too entertaining in the video, which attracted a lot of. People. But I didn't push my product out enough and. I didn't introduce the product until halfway through the video, so I think that's.

**S:** OK.

**J:** A big made. So I think the best TikTok shop videos is something that's entertaining, but you're also really selling the product, but you don't want to be too salesy either, because then they'll start scrolling. It's hard, right? You gotta find that nice little balance.

**S:** Yeah, that's curious. Yeah.

**J:** But another thing I want to say is. Just use the product as it's intended. I see so many videos where you know it's like sunglasses or something. It's like this is really cool you. Should buy it. I don't think that's the best video you should put it on your face. You should, you know, say, like, oh, it's got a UV index of blah blah blah actually use the product. So the person watching is like, OK, so that's how it actually. Works. This guy really likes it. I'll buy it. For myself, you know.

**S:** Yeah. Well, I'll actually make a comment on that. After we finished the interview because I have something else curious to show you, but I'll be after the interview and the third question and thank you for answering the previous one is how do you approach transparency and trust on their relationship with your audience and also comes with the. Do you think that this label that says Creator earns Commission on the videos for affiliates changes how audiences react to the videos?

**J:** Ohh that's a great. Question. Yeah, it definitely does, because I mean, I'm sure you've got the comments where it's, you know, put the fries in a bad little bro. You know, you're like, yeah, it's unfortunate, but as humans, we get jealous of each other, right. And I remember.

**J:** I mean half my comments are just hate comments and it's not because I'm a bad person. That's. Just how it is if you're.

**J:** And you know, it sounds weird, but I can't really blame them because I've worked hard. Jobs. I've done construction in 100°, I've burned my skin off. I have like burn marks for me, like, yeah, working is hard. So if you see some just kid on the Internet saying buy this right here and he's making your yearly salary in a month. Yeah, some people are going to get angry and they're going to type it, type it on the comments. But yeah, I think that.

**J:** The whole creator earns Commission. It does stir some people up, but I don't think that's a TikTok problem. That's just they're just bad people. Unfortunately, you know, just they don't have the right mindset. You can either.

**J:** I mean, you know, I want to ask you this too, but when I first started seeing TikTok Shop and creator earns Commission, I didn't think I'm jealous of this person. I thought, how can I be this person? So there's two ways to approach it, right? You can either get jealous or if you get inspired. And I think that's just a human thing, you know.

**J:** But yeah, when it to your first question about trust and relationships, that's a big one. If an audience can relate to you and trust you, they're going to buy from you, right? If I just come off as a sleazy salesman like you should buy this, it's really cool. People are going to trust me, they're going to scroll. But. I heard this piece of advice and I really like it. If you're making a video as if you're selling no, as if you're facetimeing a friend, right? So what I'm talking to you and I want to say this water tastes really good. I'm not going to say, are you thirsty? Well, I got the perfect solution. This is like, I'm not going to do that. Right. I'm just like, dude, this is this is really good. Like.

**S:** Yeah.

**J:** I don't know. I just don't like drinking normal water. This is sparkling water. It's got no calories. I. Really like it? You're going to trust me a lot more than that because I'm being authentic and one more thing I want to say is. That my most successful products are products that I actually like. If I actually like a product, I'm genuinely happy to make a video on it and convey it to you, and people are smart. So over the screen, if I say I really like this water, it makes it like it tastes so good, you know, regular water, so boring. You could see the emotion in my face. And that's going to convey over to the screen and you're going to think, OK, well, I trust this guy. We're friends now. I'll buy it from you. So, yeah, I think it makes a big difference for sure.

**S:** Yeah, absolutely. Thank you. Yeah, that's great insights on that. And for next word is which aspects of your content do you believe most influenced GenC purchasing decisions on TikTok Shop. So what makes GenC actually buy from your videos? This same age range I mentioned before, like 15 to 29 well. People under 18, Mumbai, but let's say 2018 to 29. It's quite a big range, but.

**J:** Yeah, that's a good question though, because that's, you know, that's us pretty much so. Let's see. I think. I mean all sales is solving a problem right? And if we can solve a problem that we personally relate to as well, that's a big one, right? And for example, let's see.

**S:** Yep.

**J:** Something that's sold really good for me. A good one was a phone holder. You know, we're all on our phones, right? Especially Gen. Z. And a lot of us, including you and me. We're content creators. We're influencers. So how'd it go? I had it over there, but it's a little suction cup foam mount, right. You stick out tiny surface.

**S:** Ohh yeah.

**J:** Yeah, I that's the thing. I love that product. I use it every single day. And for people that are trying to film content like you and I and make money off of it, that's a big problem. And I think if you can really. Relate to the audience, especially in our age range and solve a problem that exists for both of us. We come off as a friend saying like, hey, you want to be an influencer, right? Well, I am an influencer, and I started from nothing. This is what I use right here. If you want to grab. It it's right here on. TikTok. Yeah, so kind of like the FaceTime thing, just come off as a friend. And solve a mutual problem. I think that's the best way to do it.

**S:** Yeah, that it's very right. I forgot to ask you how old are you?

**J:** I am. I'm getting old, man. I just turned 23.

**S:** 23.? when is your birthday.

**J:** It's March 12th

**S:** What's 12? Ohh, I'll be turning 23 next. I know this week on Friday. Happy birthday to you as well.

**J:** Ohh no. Hey, happy birthday bro.

**S:** Yeah, there's yeah, same feeling, but yeah, well, we are kind of the same age, basically. So. OK. For next question, fifth one and is what's the difference? About how people buy on TikTok shop versus traditional e-commerce platform such as Amazon or eBay.

**J:** That's a that's a great question.

**J:**

**J:** Ah.

**J:** You know what's interesting? So. Well. You can sell. There's a ton of stuff on TikTok, right? I mean, hold on. Give me one second.

**S:** Hey Lord.

**J:** Like you see.

**S:** The scooter, yeah.

**J:** That I got that TikTok which is crazy, right? And that's the thing I think.

**S:** That's nice.

**J:** The best performing products on TikTok are impulse buys, right? And I think a really good price range for it is.

**S:** Mm-hmm.

**J:** I would say anything below 20 dollars, \$30. Excuse me around that range. Right? Because for \$20.00 or \$30 you're scrolling through TikTok, you're, you know, getting entertained. You're getting that dopamine. You see a cool product like it's 20 bucks. I'll buy it. Whatever. Boom. That's the best performing products on TikTok whereas.

**S:** Yeah.

**J:** Amazon or eBay or e-commerce, that's something. I mean, impulse does exist, right? I bro, I love Amazon. I buy so much stuff from there, so I can really. But. My personal experience, if I was going to buy something expensive, I probably wouldn't get it on TikTok. I would probably get on Amazon. It's more trusted, right? TikTok Shop is, it's a Year and a half old. So it's not that established, I'm sure in a couple years it's going to be on par with Amazon. But yeah, I think with TikTok, it's more impulse buys, whereas Amazon or eBay is more a couple hundred dollars, and the reason I that's where I got off, TikTok, which is crazy.

**J:**

**J:** Yeah. But.

**J:** But I got it for free, which was great. Because that's something else too. When you're a TikTok shop affiliate, especially a successful one, companies will beg you to review their products and they'll send it to you for free. I mean, they sent me an air conditioner for free. They send me.

**S:** Ohh, on the air conditioner.

**J:** That for free. It's crazy, right? I just saw it. And I'm like. Oh, it's a free sample available. They approved me three days later. It's at my door.

**S:** Wow, OK.

**J:** There we go. Yeah, they sent me this. I mean, so yeah, I think TikTok is more in general, impulse buys. You could buy big products on there as well. But I saw a motorcycle on there. I I don't know how legit. That is but.

**S:** Yeah, that's crazy. Well. Oh. And what are the rule? Basically, what is the hardest part for you of promoting products on TikTok Shop?

**J:** Ah, good question. I think it's. Me personally. I think it's when there's no good products available, so I'm sure you can relate TikTok and I'm experiencing myself Tik tok's been in a bit of a drought recently where. Creators that have been making tons of money aren't making that much money now. And I could tell from personal experience, I think just. Last month I saw no good products on there, you know, and like I was saying earlier, when I promote a product, I like to be passionate about it. Right? Like this is really cool. I really like it. I couldn't buy one of those products for a really. Long time so, in a way I was forcing myself to pretend to be happy about it. For example saying, Like this is an awesome toothbrush. I don't care. It's a toothbrush, but I have to pretend that I really like toothbrushes For the video. So I think just. Trying to be authentic is pretty difficult, you know. And I think especially with certain products too, you know it's easy like right now I'm getting a lot of good products in the mail, so I'm. Really happy about it, but. I think just really getting in the mindset and another thing is people overcomplicate it. You know, people say like, oh, my engagement rate is this. Oh, it's really difficult. Well, I don't know TikTok shops, and we're just posting Tik Toks. It's not a crazy big deal, you know, like, tell people, like, put the phone down, go for a walk, touch some grass and. You'll be fine. Like you don't worry. You know, we're making insane money from posting tip. Talks. Don't overthink it too much. Just you know, go with the flow.

**S:** Yeah.

**J:** And you'll you'll. Be chilling, don't worry. Right.

**S:** 9th so we're approaching to the last two questions and the next one will be. This one is more related to the shops and it's what advice would you give to businesses looking to optimize their TikTok shop strategy to better connect with Gen. C consumers? I don't know if you have. Relationships with some shops or if you talk to them or anything. But yeah, if you could be on that side of the shops. What would you think they should optimize?

**J:** Are you saying just on TikTok or in general?

**S:** Yeah. Tiktok, like, shops that are all Tiktok.

**S:**

**S:** That's all right.

**J:** Yeah, I'm. I'm pretty. Close to a few brands, I mean this right? Here. Boom, boom. I talked with them a lot company.

**S:** Yeah.

**J:** I mean high commissions, we love high commissions, right? If you're like, boom boom, for example, this is 20. Something bucks, it's 15% commissions. So if I sell for 20 bucks, I get like 3 bucks, something like that's a pretty good deal. So I promote it a lot and. I made a decent amount from. It, but I think high commissions is definitely. Something that as affiliates we love. It doesn't actually solve a problem. I like booms. I use them. All the time they're. Pretty cool and. If you're going to go strategically from the brand advertising itself. I like to call it the Duolingo method. I mean Duolingo huge, right? It's when you think Duolingo, you don't really think.

**J:**

**J:** Hmm.

**J:** Actually I put this. Duolingo is a a language learning app. Yeah, it's pretty boring. Right. No one ever thinks like I'm gonna go learn Spanish today. That's awesome. They're not really passionate about it. But what Duolingo did was amazing. They took a Spanish learning app they took. The owl, I think it's an owl, is a mascot.

**S:** No.

**J:** Yeah, when Duolingo first got popular, people started making memes about it, right? It's. Like oh if. You don't, you know, do your Spanish lessons. The Duolingo owl is gonna come get you. You did an amazing job and absolutely jumped on that bandwagon like ohh, perfect. So they took the Duolingo owl, hired someone like me or you to promote it on their own platform, and now it's absolutely huge. People look at Duolingo as a funny creative relating to us, but they learn languages so.

**S:** Yes.

**J:** I would say to brands do something like that if there's a joke going around really hop on it, you know.

**S:** Yeah. That's that's very interesting approach, yes. Yeah, their hair lower, but yeah, it's very right. Makes a little sense. And do you think, for example if a brand, let's say does a campaign like this? Then they should. Contact let's say their creators, so they. Follow that

campaign to purge the the consumer. Or the brand itself should run the campaign, not the creators. What do you think?

**J:** That's a great question. I know that that's a good question. I know for I'll use Duolingo as an example. Again, they hired someone like me or you to run their social media, so they hired an outsider that you know it's hip and cool with the Gen. Z. They can relate and they did an excellent job. So I think that's the best way to do it is.

**S:** Yeah, that sounds good.

**J:** Hiring outside help, especially people like in in college, right? I mean, we'll work for cheap. You. Know I did so.

**S:** Yeah, sure.

**J:** I think letting the community run your campaign, of course, with supervision so it doesn't go too crazy.

**S:** Yeah. That's true. We'll probably.

**J:** Another thing. It's like gold, for example, right? Their campaigns are insane. I mean, you can literally win.

**S:** Which one first?

**J:** Goalie something my company, goalie campaigns. That's something else. That's absolutely amazing.

**S:** Yeah. Holy yeah.

**J:** They just sell.

**S:** Yes, it's crazy.

**J:** Gummies, whatever. But if you sell a certain amount, you get a Rolex, you get a Lamborghini, you get a expense to Miami. It's that's crazy. And that's a really good way too, because, well, a ton of people are going to promote it, and they're going to make way more money than a Lamborghini.

**S:** Yeah.

**J:** Whatever cost to them. So that's another great thing too.

**S:** Yeah, absolutely. Yeah. Golly, those campaigns went crazy now. So with the brand awareness after those campaigns, everyone was promoting gold at some point. So yeah, that's. That's true. And for the last question. Would be. Where do you see Tiktok Shop heading and real creators and brand. Work differently in one or two years, or will it remain the same? Where do you think?

**J:** Great question. That's something I'll think about.

**J:**

**J:** This.

**J:** I think. Hmm. I think TikTok. Shop. I'm thinking about this. TikTok Shop itself is a concept and it's a very successful one and what I mean is when Instagram was first, the thing, it was just pictures. You like a picture. You scroll like a picture, you scroll. I don't know if you remember this, but when Instagram was first, you know getting bigger when you scroll through your feed, you would hit the end of your feed. Do you remember that?

**S:** Oh yeah, I remember that. That was actually good at some point.

**J:** We would scroll through our feed and we would end and then close the end and close our.

**S:** Yeah, yeah, that's true.

**J:** App.

**S:** Yeah.

**J:** That this anymore it's an infinite scroll. We can scroll for literally forever and it'll never end. And that's because of TikTok, TikTok introduced short form content. TikTok was the first app to really prioritize taking YouTube videos. Clipping them up, clipping was a big thing on TikTok and now Instagram reels. YouTube shorts. It all exists. On there, right? Yeah. So in that same way where TikTok started shorts and now it's across all the other platforms, I think with TikTok Shop did is ohh you can really mix in e-commerce with entertainment and do it very successfully. So I think. I think Instagram is rolling something out, but I'm sure Instagram shop, YouTube shop, Facebook shop, I mean Facebook Marketplace exists, but I think short form content type commerce is a concept that TikTok birth and I think it's gonna spread like crazy. So I think TikTok shop's going to be around for.

**J:**

**J:** OK.

**J:** A while I think it is, you know.

**S:** Yeah, absolutely.

**J:** Even if it gets banned, which it's not going to get banned. But you know, hypothetically if it gets banned or if it slows down, people don't really care about it anymore. Other platforms going to start picking it up. But I think TikToks gonna be around for a. Bit especially TikTok shop.

**S:** Yeah, makes a lot of sense and well, actually that was the last question, but something came to my mind as well before we finished to ask you and we already mentioned it. A bit, but if you could. And talk a bit more about it is what key differences do you see in purchasing behaviors between gen z? In this case, 18 to 29 and older age groups?

**J:** Oh, that's a good question. So key behaviors that both of them have.

**J:**

**J:** Hmm.

**S:** Or if you consider that that also I took the using those I interviewed using. If you consider that. You would rather divide Gen Z into two different ones. For example, the younger Gen Z from. If you consider that a younger age from 18 to 24. Are different than 25 to 29. And yeah, what which difference do you see under behaviors for example?

**J:** That's a great question. It's. Let's see. I'll do. I'll do similar similarities and differences. I think similarities is. Attention span, I think all of our attention spans have been parried, especially with TikTok, TikTok, right, I mean.

**S:** So true.

**J:** I mean, this is a different generation, but I remember I was at the grocery store and this little kid in the car, five years old, iPad and a freaking iPhone 14 like 16 for all like scrolling on both playing Minecraft and the other one. I'm like, dude, it's getting that's bad parenting cause this kid's fried. He can't even look at the sky looking bored. Yeah, attention span. I think is in general getting shorter and shorter for everyone. And I think because we're all on social media, right, even Facebook, which just used to be reading people's posts and stuff that has

reels now. So I catch myself doing it, I'll go on TikTok, I'll get bored, swipe out Facebook, Scroll, scroll, scroll. Yeah. Excuse me, Instagram. School YouTube short snow shows I'll catch myself doing it. Excuse me.

**S:** No worries.

**J:** But. Yeah, I think attention span is definitely something that's universally going down, but. I think. Hmm. This one's interesting. I think criticism is similar between the younger and older generation where. On my videos I'll see people our age criticize us. Right? Like, oh, like you're doing. Tick tock, where I get a real job, blah, blah, blah. But I'll also see a good majority say like, oh, this is really good. Can I actually start doing TikTok shop? And it's weird. I see a similar split in the older generation. So especially when I do like blue collar products and stuff, I always get like you got the soft hands. Boy, you know, you don't need a fan for man, we don't. We work in the sun, I get a lot of those comments. But on the other side I get a lot of comments saying this. It was for portable fan just for reference out selling. But I get a lot of comments saying this is really great. The husband works in HVAC. This is really nice for him so. I don't know. There's an interesting split of. It's not like one generation is nicer than the other. I think in both generations it's good people and I don't want to say bad people. But critical people, people that are. Critics, you know.

**S:** Yeah. Thanks a lot.

**J:** That's something interesting I noticed.

**S:** Yeah, makes a lot of sense. Well, that was pretty much it. Thank you so much for answering all the questions and for all the support with it.

### **Interview Transcript –Hunter Hewitt**

(Communication on the 1st of April 2025)

**Interviewer:** Juan Sebastian Rueda Velasco

**Interviewees:** Hunter Hewitt (Shop owner of BreatheEase)

For practical reasons, each participant's initials are used to represent them in this transcript. Since the transcript is based on a Zoom recording and supported by word transcription tools, it may not begin or end precisely as the conversation did in real life.

**Sebastian:** I appreciate it. OK, so I started recording and well, I'm aware that you have a supplement brand or with this and I wanted to ask you if you could describe your experience

for running a supplement shop on TikTok shop and how do you incorporate the affiliate marketing? Into your business strategy. In this case the creators.

**Hunter:** Well, so I've been in e-commerce since since about 2017/2018 and so I I've I've been in a lot of different realms of ecom and and you know of online businesses and and in my honest opinion, I don't think there's ever been an opportunity like there is. TikTok shop, but I think the reason why that is is kind of what you just brought up is the affiliate. The the affiliate model that TikTok has made so easy. The ability to use micro influencers to get mass volumes of amount of content posted in a mass millions of views and really no effort has never been. Easy. It's never been. Link the products to the the video seamless integration where they can check out with Apple Pay all on the same platform and so you know I've used affiliates personally. You know to generate over you know \$400,000, \$500,000 of of GMV of gross merchandise value. For for my brand alone in less than a year and that's that's. All. From affiliate marketing, so. Yeah.

**S:** That's amazing congratulations. I also wanted to ask you, when did you start your brand on this?

**Hunter:** So I started, so it's it's you're familiar with breathes, which is the lung detox coming. I started that in the end of May of 2024. So yeah, I mean it's been it's been less than a year eight, 8-9 months now.

**H:**

**H:** You have made. Yeah.

**S:** Well, that's crazy. And we deal with that because, yeah, I I've seen it and since the first time I saw. The product I was like, wow this. Great product. Yeah. I mean, I've seen a bunch of different supplements, but I think. This one was. Pretty innovative, innovative and I know a little smokers like like around me and definitely that will.

**H:** Yeah.

**S:** Help them for sure so I know. It's a great. Solution you're bringing right for the next question I want to ask you, what characteristics do you look for when selecting Affiliates to promote your product?

**H:** For sure. So this there's a couple of different, you know, answers to this this question. So I think primarily and like probably the most important thing is like a driven and efficient

affiliate. So what I mean by efficient? Is you only get in my opinion, like three to five posts a day that that you can take advantage of. I think after 5 posts a day you know the algorithm starts changing slightly and your videos don't get pushed out. As much and so I think the efficient affiliates are the ones that are making really good content for all 5 videos instead of just making like a quick, you know, 15-20 second video with like no thought process with no story, none of that. I think I I you know that's not. That's what I look for as a as a. Red flag. M. And so affiliates there that know what they're doing that have generated some GMV and then secondary, it's also really important to. You take your affiliates based on their demographic, so something that we've noticed in our business is we've used a lot of younger creators, a lot, a lot of younger affiliates under the age of like 24 and as a result of that, a lot of our GMV. Uh. And a lot of our consumer base is 18 to 24 majority of our of our consumers are actually in that age that age range, which is actually not common for lung detox, so. It you know, I I think those two are really important like you know driven efficiency and then demographic.

**S:** Yeah, absolutely. And that's great. You touched on that point about the demographics because as I mentioned before, my research is mostly on Gen Z. So it will be like from 18 to 29. And yeah, it's curious as you mentioned that and the question the next question is related to that since it will be what key differences do you see in purchasing behaviors between Gen Z's? In this case, let's say 18 to 29? And older age groups. Do you target them differently? I guess you choose different creators if you want to target older audiences, or how do you see these differences between the age groups?

**H:** Define. Really. Yeah. Yeah, great question. So big, big thing is like exactly what you said we we create the videos, we curate the videos and creators based on the demographic we're trying to target. So if we have a product that is geared that we want to start gearing or is geared towards an older demographic. We will have older creators make. Content that product and then to go further, we even have like certain video styles that do better for older demographics compared to other demographics. And so the biggest difference between the two like Gen. Z and anything after. Is. Is we want the older demographic because they have higher purchasing power so Gen. Z is obviously the youngest generation compared to I guess there's what gin, gin, alpha now or whatever like the the the most recent or whatever. So but besides them, Gen. Z has the lowest.

**S:** The other one.

**H:** Purchasing power like that means you know they're the newest to the workforce. They don't have the most disposable income. Compared to like a baby boomer that's over 55, or compared to a millennial that's in their 30s, like these people statistically have more disposable income, which means they're more likely to make a impulse purchase or they're more likely to buy something. That you know more related to their health or so and so forth. So that's the big difference that we see and that we try to take advantage of is you know we want the older demographic because they they purchase more, they have a higher conversion rate.

**S:** Yeah, that it makes a lot of sense. Yeah. Absolutely. Thank you for your answer. So you you mentioned. That well, you're trying to target their older audiences because of the disposal income, but your most of your customer base is younger generation, right, like younger ages.

**H:** Yeah, yeah.

**S:** And does does it? Is it hard for you to, like convert these audiences?

**H:** Yeah, it it is. So something that like we've kind of made a mistake on like while we've kind of grown this brand is we only focus on the younger demographic not knowing it would be a ceiling and not knowing it would.

**S:** For the graphics lesson.

**H:** Be. Like a a damaging part of our business. But. Because of that, we've now learned that there are other sides of the market and that we need to start shifting the content. What makes it hard makes it difficult is finding high quality older demographic creators. So like you know, it's hard to find a 35 year old mom that can. Make good high converting TikTok content. It's not impossible, but it's definitely not common and and so it you know it it makes it definitely has its own challenges, but then like a way we can get around that is by getting like maybe a later or mid 20s. Uh. You know, male or female that can kind of make the conspiracy style content or whatever kind of content that they need to. That is, you know, geared toward the older audience, and those can still kind of convert the older audience rather than like a a younger video.

**S:** Yeah, yeah. Makes a lot of sense. Thank you so much. Wait, actually, I was very intentful it will this will be very useful for sure for. What I'm writing about. Perfect. And for the next question, it will be about trust and satisfaction. And is how do you monitor and manage

product satisfaction and customer feedback feedback when your products are primarily sold through affiliates? Do you have anything?

**S:** Yeah.

**S:** Related to. Customer satisfaction.

**H:** So not necessarily on TikTok itself, we do some like customer feedback surveys with Shopify and we have an e-mail list and phone numbers that that we that we use to to get feedback. But for TikTok, because TikTok. Holds all the data, so we don't see emails, phone numbers or anything. We don't. We can't do like customer service. Yeah. But what we do is like. Let's say someone gets a leaves a bad review on our on our TikTok. We always try to reach out. And see how we can help them and see you know what we can do to make their experience better. And and I think that's really important. I think like TikTok platform. In order for it to continue to grow. So consumer trust needs to be at an all time high. You know people that are purchasing on TikTok need to understand that this is a legitimate platform. You are going to get what you order in a timely matter. It's going to be as advertised XY and Z. You know I I think all of those are going to.

**H:** Excuse me.

**H:** The tribute to the oncoming success and the ongoing success that TikTok Shop has.

**S:** Yeah, makes a lot of sense. Thank you. And as you mentioned that you also run while you run on different other pages, well, not pages but ecommerce sites. Let's say the platforms.

**S:**

**S:** Yeah.

**S:** Hey, do you mind sharing which other platforms do you have your brand on? And also how does your business approach differs from TikTok shop to these other e-commerce platforms?

**H:** Yeah. So our our main platform is TikTok Shop, our secondary platform, our, our second biggest platform is going to be Amazon.

**S:** And.

**H:** And and the great thing about TikTok shop that some people don't realize is that not everyone still trusts the TikTok shop platform. So in result you have what's called spill over

traffic to other platforms like Amazon. So something that we'll notice in buying patterns. is if we get a really viral video on TikTok, we can easily see the the Amazon spike on the day of, because people will be doing search find buys on Amazon. They'll look up, you know, they'll see the video on TikTok. They don't trust, you know, TikTok shop yet. So they're going to go open up their Amazon app, and they're going to search up my brand name and buy it off of Amazon. And so we see that pretty often and a lot of brands utilize that. And so that's our second biggest platform. And our third is Shopify, Shopify is typically most peoples you know one of their largest actually. But for us we just haven't leaned into it. I believe that in order to do like. Any platform? Well, you kind of need to be all in on the platform and and we don't have the bandwidth I think to really. I think scale like I would like to on Shopify, so we're kind of running things slowly, doing what we can, where we where there's an opportunity. But as time comes on or as time goes on, we will start transitioning into a more Shopify based business. But as of now it's mainly TikTok or Amazon.

**S:** That was great. Thank you for the answer and for the next one, it will be what you need, challenges and opportunities to stick up shop present for your supplement brand.

**H:** What challenges you're you? You asked those stuff.

**S:** Yeah, challenges and opportunities by running your shop on TikTok.

**H:** All right. So there's kind of two parts to the question and challenges and opportunities. OK, challenges. It's TikTok is not like other platforms where your SEO based and and if you're from I I don't know if you're with SEO but search engine optimization it's you know basically keywords and ranking on their algorithmic platform to to ensure your rank. At a higher. Position based on your relevancy to the search terms, the consumer purchase or like looked up and so. And in other words, TikTok does not have any sense of that into the platform. Usually found is based on videos that you've engaged with or videos that were made for your product. And so that presents a unique opportunity or unique, both opportunity and challenge because. And since the only way to grow on TikTok is to be posting more videos and so like one of our biggest KPI's that we track on our on in the business is videos posted, how many videos got posted this month and what was our value per video. So how many units or what was the dollar? Amount that on average every video we posted is and so. That value per video can range anywhere between \$30.00 on the low end to \$300.00 on the high end, and it it changes month by month is typically how you average it but but that's, you know, a very unique opportunity or really challenge that that TikTok. Presents. So that's probably the the big thing.

And violations of course, right. Like, TikTok is trying to be a fair platform for their consumers and which obviously comes with a catch 22 of like hurting the brand sometimes by giving out violation. But you know, without those violation systems and the point system and and what they've integrated, it would be the Wild West and it wouldn't be a trusted platform. So I get why they do it, but it's definitely a challenge when they falsely flag things or when they're maybe too strict on a certain category or or etcetera, etcetera.

**S:** Yeah, that's what makes a little sense.

**H:** Of. Yeah. For an opportunity, I'll. I'll kind of be brief on this one. I think it's it's double sided where the opportunity. Is also the challenge so because because it's a video based platform and you need to get videos to to to go viral. Rule. I also believe it's if you just focus on producing the most amount of videos as humanly possible that you will have success. And so that's the unique opportunity is like you can have a pretty in my opinion.

**H:** Oh.

**H:** Bad product, but if you have a great viral strategy and you can sell out and you can get lots of videos made then then you know then you can have some success.

**S:** Yep, makes a little sense. Great. Thank you. And we're actually going through well with the interview. It's only two more questions left. And for this one will be what advice would you give to businesses looking to take advantage of this affiliate marketing program effectively?

**H:** You said what would what be? I'm sorry you cut out.

**S:** Ohh yeah, no worries. What advice would you give to businesses so for example? Other shops that. Are also running their business.

**H:** Yes. Yeah, I would say. I would say the biggest piece of advice is you know inputs equals outputs. The the more work you do on the business, no matter how strenuous, no matter how. Annoying. It may feel that work is what builds the foundation of every business, and you can simply win by just out working you you know the there's. There's no easy way to win. And I think that when I was getting into this whole bills business realm, I was watching YouTube and Instagram and TikTok and seeing all of these, these creators. Post this lifestyle of an easy way to win an easy way to make money and and in my opinion I I don't think that's that's long term. I don't think that lasts. I think in order to have something great in order to build something that is of the upper echelon of businesses, that 8-9 figure businesses you have to do The Dirty work. You have to build. You have to do a lot of inputs which is like actions. You need to be

doing as much as humanly possible and I think that, you know, society has taught us. To be to not work as hard as we should, and I, I would challenge that I would tell any business, any young man, any young woman that wants to be successful and wants to be an entrepreneur to like, set that mindset aside and say, like, what more can I be doing? Like not what, like, where can I spend more of my time? Watching Netflix or whatever, like replace all of those those distractions with work and and you will see the fruits of your labor every time.

**S:** Thank you. It's great answer. And the last question will be where do you see Tiktok shop heading? Will creators and brand work differently in one or two years?

**H:** That's a good question.

**H:** Oh. Umm.

**H:** Man, I think I think. Platforms like TikTok are the future. I think micro influencers are the future. I think that the the big difference that maybe we'll see is. We will see a lot more live shopping. So I think we'll be seeing a lot more people doing live streams with videos. With products. I think. The idea of seamless integration shopping, whether it's on Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, Snapchat, YouTube, whatever the plate. Form is I think every. And we'll have some version of TikTok shop and I think that it's going to be the easiest way to make money online and the fastest way to make money online. And I think we'll honestly start to see commissions start going down. I think brands will start saying ohh, I'll pay 10% Commission like. You know, like you know, I'll I I think you'll start seeing a lot of changes here. In the next coming years, and we're still so early, it's only been out for like a year in a couple of months.

**S:** Yeah, absolutely. Great. That was, that was amazing. Thank you so much. And actually, I have just an extra question that just came to my mind and it was a bit related to the previous one.

**S:** Yeah.

**S:** And for the brands, do you consider or not considered, but do you think there is a way to better connect with Gen. Z consumers and maybe you have already tried since your customer base has mostly gen Z?

**H:** Do I think there's like a better way to connect with Gen Z you're saying?

**S:** Yeah. To connect or somewhere or somehow a way you could improve the connection with. Can see consumers on TikTok.

**H:** I would say if a brand is coming to me and saying I want to only hit Gen. Z customers, I would say only use Gen. Z creators and so yeah, I would say it's the best. Way like you know you think about, think about the things that you resonate with the most. It's typically the things that look like you act like you, you know, like behavioral insights. And so I I would say that's something that is like the best way to connect with an audience is just put yourself in the. The audience shoes. What? Who do they want to listen to? The odds are it's their friends, people that look like them, act like them. Talk like them. So yeah, I would say get younger creators.

**S:** Yeah, that's a great. Answer. Thank you so much you. Absolutely amazing and gave me a lot of insightful information, so I really appreciate it as well for your time. It was. It was very useful for sure. And I'll keep you updated on how it goes as well.

**H:** Of course, bro.

**Interview Transcript – Destiny**  
(Communication on the 25<sup>th</sup> of March 2025)

**Interviewer:** Juan Sebastian Rueda Velasco

**Interviewees:** Destiny

For practical reasons, each participant's initials are used to represent them in this transcript. Since the transcript is based on a Zoom recording and supported by word transcription tools, it may not begin or end precisely as the conversation did in real life.

**Sebastian:** As I mentioned is this is for like my thesis research and I'm conducting an interview with multiple. Phillips and I'm also contacting someone that has shop, you know, Hunter for the supplements. And I'm also conducting a questionnaire to understand pretty much like the topic is about like social commerce and this like affiliate marketing model.

**S:** And what I'm looking is to understand how is the consumer behaviour of Gen. C and how this new, let's say marketing model is changing. Let's say the traditional commerce. And for that I wanted to ask you, it will be 8 questions and we have like half an hour, if that's right for you, you can like see if you want to talk less or more depending on the questions. It is up to you. But we have half an hour. And yes, for the first question, I would like to ask you regarding just your journey, let's say so how like if you can describe your journey on TikTok Shop affiliate and what is your current strategy now that? You have, let's say experience after this time, what is your current strategy for promoting products?

**Destiny:** The experience almost a year ago today, it has been a full year since I've been doing Tiktok, I did not take it seriously until July, which started to learn about this new strategy and this. So. You know, this stuff is all about just understanding your consumers. And understanding you know. How can you talk to them in a way of where you're not selling for them so people don't like to be sold for the people like about things. So if you can find a way to sell to them without selling to them. So. Yeah, that's that's how like I just started doing that. I started learning the game slowly that you know, there are many different ways talking heads. Better. So yeah, and there will be other question I should ask as well. The last part of it.

**Sebastian:** Yeah, your current strategy for promoting products right now.

**Destiny:** For current studies. So my strategy is the very basic thing about pickup is products that she that she now that doesn't have to always be your strategy for for those who have success, that works with us. There is also that you can find which funding and. Those that we probably get a little profit off of the height, but the Golden Key is supplied autos that people having shoulders like that hasn't been too trendy like they'll say around. 2 to 3004. And then do you know the peace process, the good part of this, our product that helps applying the social problems and it's sometimes? Calculator and I'll check to see if the biggest performing video and see if they can cause that, but if I feel like I'm having. Yeah. I'm forcing myself to enjoy the product that I won't do it because then you're not likely to find the product that you really enjoy. People can connect. With you because they. Can truly see OK, this person enjoys this part of who now I want. To buy it. Too yeah, if you sell the feeling, then they'll want to buy it too. Like if I like, you know, bumping up Bluetooth sunglasses. And I'm telling you that you can make phone calls also the and listen to music off the glasses and I'll make it feel like it's all the way where it's not taken away from you. And then also say that they have sunglasses as well and not. Only blue light. You know, so yeah, that's my strategy. I look to see what is enjoyable, what's the way that I can find different angles to sell to them and I'll see how can I speak to them as like, you see how we're having the conversation now speak to them like that. But like with an extra bit of height, excitement to show them. Oh this product is so cool

**S:** Oh sorry I can. Hold on. Stop. Yeah, I cannot hear for a second. Stop the audio. I don't know. Yeah, I can hear. You now, yeah. Sure, no worries.

**D:** So that's how I. Like say like about if you find a way to stay with the bank and really. They need to your consumer.

**S:** Thank you so much. And also related to the first question that I forgot to mention at the beginning is that if you preferred also the, this can be anonymous like and I can hide your name and just write some information about you or if you want to share I can share the.

**D:** No problem.

**S:** You're like. OK.

**D:** I don't care about that. You're.

**S:** Yeah. the formalities. And and regarding your earning, you mentioned that you started a year ago and you like you started taking it like seriously in July and if you can share an approximate of the GMV that you have generated for brand, if you feel comfortable sharing, if not it's OK.

**D:** So. So over the same old I've been doing it for a year, right? Maybe like \$400.00 a month And yeah, and always like that night they September is my biggest month. So let me see if I can just share a little bit of my journey and see how far this will do that. One moment. I I try to do for the last three months, maybe we'll see what it is, only doing it for the money. So I can just show that you what? I've made this one, but let's say over over since. September, my first month, so now I have about 2 million GMV (Gross Merchandise Value)

**S:** 2 million GMV (Gross Merchandise Value)?.

**D:** yes

**S:** Impressive. That's interesting. Congratulations.

**D:** Yeah. On this one I will show you.

**S:** Yeah, you can see it..

**D:** 100,000\$ GMV

**S:** Congratulations..

**D:** Thank you so much.

**S:** Wow. And thank you for sharing. Us now, of course. And for the next question, it's about the content formats that compare. You mentioned multiple types in the previous question and what do you consider what type of videos work best for driving sales? So if it's

demonstrations or before and after? Or if there is any type of videos that you consider that drive the most sales, is there any and Why would that be?

**D:** So for me, I believe that we will live as the most is how our product. What about the product? But I feel like. Leo's along just have been very welcoming people right now. Have those like for me, because I've really found a way to keep in mind again. So once you understand, you understand the. Got it. If you understand every little key thing about it, you'll be able to find it. That's why even this thing. On it so that we can bring back and analyzing digital, then we need to be better to take away, you know. So when you want to be able to see the multiple times. Because there's a chance. So yes, that's. I enjoyed how it helps you feel about what it can do for you, where you can show the before. How the product works and the result of the duty afterwards, they actually want to buy because people like to see the proof. They're still going to give it a try because they saw the result

**D:** OK.

**S:** Thank you. So much. And actually for the question you just mentioned, authenticity in a moment and this question. Talks about authenticity and it's well, mostly about transparency and trust and is how do you approach transparency about the? Let's say the fact that you are an affiliate with the audience, do you ever mention it or you you think it's necessary and for example there is this label that I guess in most of the videos has that the creators and Commission and if you consider that that label. Changes something in terms of how the audience reacts.

**D:** Well, if people want to buy they buy, you know, but it depends on how you sell to them. Did you buy that? From me. The label I created any condition people don't care about that. Some people don't even leave because they don't even notice the video till the end of the week. And then like, wow, this is such a good video, this is such a good ad that I didn't even know and that's what you want to go for as well. People who are very well known and knowing that they. Like if I build a great relationship with your video and you just like how I'm funny and I made you laugh. You remember that? Everybody support everybody support because they love like they just generally don't mind watching the video and just support just so I feel like that later at the bottom. That doesn't matter. It's really how you say, you know, you just got to know. And honestly, we are authenticity. Yeah.

**S:** That's a good approach.

**D:** Yep.

**S:** Thank you. And for the next one? 1. So what do you think? What makes Genc actually buy from your videos? Is it your humor? If you're missing out the demonstration of the products or what is considered that and before you answer it, I wanted to ask you, like, just to test the audio for a second.

**D:** OK. Can you hear me?

**S:** Yeah, yeah. Because, yeah, the sound was just like a bit baffled.

**D:** We're good.

**S:** How do you do that?

**D:** I.

**S:** Oh. Say something again, sorry. Yeah, it's much wearier.

**D:** OK. OK. So essentially said yes. Let.

**S:** Sir. So yeah, what do you consider that makes you actually buy from your videos? Yeah.

**D:** Thank you. OK. Yeah. OK. So I think it's all of the above because they're missing out. Just going to see anything like that would.

**S:** Be.

**D:** Up and down, it depends. It doesn't. Like, why are you OK? So I have a lot of human, so I like to joke in my videos and that's what people really feel that like for jokes like, there's not too many jokes. Joke too much. It could stay away from you. Like people relate to more of my jokes. So instead of wanting to buy the product. Both. They worked out well, like. I can be as deeply as I want, and if people like the product itself, people want a body, you know? So it's just being yourself and seeing what. As soon as you the label like who's your order audience, you told them you know. So yeah, you just got to find somebody who's going through the same thing as you. You know, so that would be like it was very beneficial because. My phone won't see the feeling I would want to buy, so I said that imagine older older people that said that and that's what I just said. And find a way to have humor in it and then put them together and then the good law.

**S:** That's amazing. Great for the next one as well. Is about the TikTok and traditional shopping so. What's different about how people buy on? TikTok shops. Versus Amazon or eBay and yeah, what's your opinion on this difference between traditional commerce and now or the traditional commerce, but e-commerce?

**D:** So people are lazy. People go online to buy because they don't want to go outside and buy. So Amazon provides that to the shipping. That's how they still. You know the. So that's how the detail advantages, you know, everyone else in the company. That's because they have two day shipping shipping company. EBay they're OK because that's a week or two. TikTok Shop is not bad. They actually been doing better in a week and some people don't want to leave. Right.

**S:** This part is getting a bit harder. To understand, yeah.

**D:** I'm sorry.

**S:** Yeah, no, no worries.

**D:** Can you hear? Me now.

**S:** Yeah. Yeah. So good. Yeah, you mentioned eBay.

**D:** Can you hear me now? OK. OK.

**S:** Yeah, yeah, it's good. OK.

**D:** So yeah, so those things are getting much better with the shipping time. People don't really care. But like I said, if the product is well, they won't mind, specially if they can't find it on other websites. So like if they can find our website. And check on Amazon as well to. See what the price? But 3000 beat them because they make sure to pay lower prices, so if it's cheaper, why not buy it for cheaper? Just wait a week, they're paying over \$40 on Amazon and getting it tomorrow and like. Do you need? It right, right now, comparing prices will always win. There's always something cheaper. Someone will always want to get it from there as long as the website is secure and a lot of people know about things, so it's not about like, you know, scamming or anything like that. Security, security, security could not provide all of that. You know? So once they need that security that your information and everything is putting in one machine. So yeah, that's what it really comes to. Different different place things.

**S:** Are almost. Yeah, we have three more. And the next one is about the what do you think is the hardest part of promoting on TikTok shops and how do you work around that on your experience?

**D:** OK. OK, so for me my first time like doing 2 though I. Was hiding in. The back.

**S:** You were what, Sir?

**D:** I was hiding in the back. I was hiding in the bathroom.

**S:** OK. Yeah, I will.

**D:** Yeah. Yeah, I didn't know what to do and stuff like that. I. It was just like all over the place. It wasn't like confidence and. So it's definitely about confidence and knowing that you can sell that product knowing that you understand. So this you feel like like for me when my scared speaking from I was laughing so obviously so I needed to know more knowledge, find out more knowledge about find out more knowledge about so how can I sell to these people. Like obviously they're regularly wasn't working. Just like, hey, this is a great product. I can find a way to talk about. I'll just wanted to change your life and what we can do. It can save you time. Like, what is it you know? So once I figure out those things. I was able. To sell, but it is still very hard. Like, you know, I had my account like.

**S:** Yep.

**D:** Oh, no. Come on. I want three months, you know, and that was a hard time for me because I'm going to have to start over, you know, for, like, crawling all over again. Imagine being on the top and then literally gave people. And now you gotta learn to work and you know, so I had to learn not even learn. I know the skill I have, which is still. I need some food, but it just sees how far like I work to where I. Was and how I have to? Right. So that was a hard time for me. I had to keep, but I kept pushing. I kept making the move every day because that's the thing I like. They like to see action. They like to see being consistent. And of course, if you know how, so hopefully the consumer books are very important, if you know how to cook in your consumer in the first 3 seconds of the video. That's very important. So that I knew how to do so wasn't too hard to get them to say. But just because of the mind that of knowing that my account was hacked and people were taking my money, you know it, it can be a mental value. But as you know that there's something balance to it. It's not going to always be 10 songs you're going to go really just like a roller coaster. One day you'll be up and down up again, you know? So I have set up interesting. Well, I'm not going. I'm not going to say I was encouraging

everything. I was like the best. I was happy. I wasn't. I wasn't really happy at all. I was. I was discovered because everything I was. No, no. Even though eventually I would get it. Back, but they were failing my money. So they they even. Everything I work for for thinking from my account and someone else you know. So yeah, it was hard, really hard for me. Think about everything that you're doing, like not even consistency if you understand how far you want to go and. You know that nothing can stop you from getting. There will be for me to get there. I certainly believe that as humans we need to get in our own way. We feel like we can't make it to something and it's because we said so, you know, so that if you truly believe that you can do it and you can overcome and you can overcome anything, you know, that's. So we we are creative ourselves, you know and we create this life for ourselves. So that's what it's about for me. It was all about just encouraging ourselves and my best foot forward even in those hard times. So, and then eventually I got my account back and guess what? I still wasn't invited to do the opening. I don't want to do videos anymore because like I find out how much money we're doing and it hurt me and I was like, damn, I'm really at the bottom because all my profit from January, they took it, they took it. So I was like, I was starting over. I had to work hard to get make money for February, you know, and then. I just mailed in my mind, I said for the month of March, which right now I'm not going to worry about anything. The only thing I'm going to focus on is putting my best, you know, my best everyday showing up every day and then that you'll see. So as you say, still doing that every day, every single day, every day and then boom. OK. Video viral overnight is and then when you get in 5-10 window and then six and the next day and it was useful for my personality because I decided to keep them. So the hardest part about to TikTok Shop is that people quit to people give up because they don't see the results and they are willing to just drop it knowing that this is a gold mine. And learn how much money you can. They they said about, you know, and me knowing that I made that much money. I'm like, I can do it again. I have the skills, you know, I'm not so you got. The skills to pay the. Bills. So I I did that and I just like I said, put my best foot forward and I knew that it would work out.

**S:** Yes. Congrats once again. And.

**D:** Then a little bit later.

**S:** Yeah, it's all good. Yeah, I was just saying, can you hear me? Can you hear me?

**D:** You're losing a little bit. OK, just a little bit. But.

**S:** Or might be my it's good now? Yeah, OK. Well, this is not related to the other questions, but this is just me. Curious how did? You manage to get your account back. Was it contacting Tiktok?

**D:** Yeah. So thankfully like I wasn't with other discourse and you guys who had direct contact with to talk like once we were behind the contacting. Yeah. So we gave you their number and I end up texting them. And they were able to get my account back right away. Like I said, for some time that they have to keep the people out. And like. Trying to restart my page. But they take them out, change the password and everything, and once they confirm that it was my account, they. Give it back.

**S:** That's crazy. I'm glad you had it back. Has been have been increasing in the fact that they even withdraw money. Like I didn't even know those who like. If you have your account. But isn't it supposed to be linked to your name and your bank account?

**D:** Yeah, we can do that. Yeah, but that's the thing with we don't have no security and they need to fix that because the first thing one thing that my account they were able. To just remove. My bank information and that's it. And now I was like, wow, you know, they need to set up the security to where, you know, they act like, hey, is this you? Did you change your banking account? You should have been acting. Of course. There's no way anyone should be able to enter your account for Even so, like if I had your account, if I sold your account today, I could just remove your information and put. Mine and I'll leave the money.

**S:** That is crazy. That is crazy.

**D:** But I believe everything happens for a reason. They told me a lot within that moment. They taught me patience. They told me that, like, even though I was humble, it taught me to humble myself even more because just as quick as God using something he. Could take it. Away you know, so like, it was all a lesson learned and everything so. Yes, it hurt in that moment, but now, like, I'm glad that it happened, because I feel like I'm even more better now.

**S:** OK. Going back to the other questions. So this is a bit related to the brands and. Is OK. Hold on. Wait. I think I changed it. Oh, yeah.

**D:** Yeah.

**S:** What advice would you give to businesses looking to optimize their TikTok shop strategy to better connect with Gen Z customers? So you, let's say you are in the middle of an affiliate. And I don't know if you I I guess you have some contact with some shops. So in the

case new brands are planning to come to TikTok. As an affiliate, what do you consider brands should be optimizing or doing so that they can deliver? Good products and also deliver a good relationship. With the affiliates. I don't know if I'm.

**D:** And.

**S:** Making sense with that question.

**D:** So. For me, you know, obviously I want to start a brand. So I'm thinking of, you know, what ways that I can obviously so for my customers, what product is the everything product that I know my system is needed right now, so. Well, with the other brands that I'm working with, honestly some of them, they know their stuff, they're really good at it, you know, but there's always something that can be fixed, whether it's better or shipping price or customer service or just the product itself. How can you make them better? So there and makes better for them better you know. So I think about all those things which. Some brands don't do so like they just slap a label on something like you're somebody something that's making. Millions. And it's like if I could do that same thing to just make his brand more better. Well put together, I know that I would convert better. So we always do the little thing with another major major thing sometimes like them. Of course, the biggest thing with the brand is content is the content of the product. So we have to learn the. Skill of selling and then understanding their product to be able to sell to them so. I feel like it's not really much to me. Like fill out my eyeballs coming to stop all those things, but. It's. Not that hard to maintain, honestly, social brand and bring other brands like if you're really doing well on another informal site, all you have to do is get concentration like like how to make it myself self host. On the brand and then we promote that power to you and then boom, with one video goes viral, you make almost 100,000 within that month, probably different ways on how good that be sold that product for you know. So it's really honestly baby the brands really that's why even when the government was. And then to shut down, take out like. Brand was going through other social platforms because and with able support creators, it looks like in in doing create on content creation you will never be out of a job, especially if you know what you're doing because they need you to sell their product or value for the year. You can make that AI video and digital problem with people like social people of real people like you know so. Moving into cell with a human being an AI, even though they are very intelligent, they still don't have the feeling they don't think like how humans think. They still think they really think how the boss, which I believe down. The road from. Event, but they still don't even do just as well because they when they can be operated, you know. So

that's what it's really about. It's all about how they feel is that's what makes your brain. And if you know how to sew. That's \$1,000,000 month like that.

**S:** Yes. And do you have any idea of what would you like to create for your shop, like which niche?

**D:** Yeah, I actually want to do supplements because it's an everyday part of, so I don't know what supplement yet, but once I started diving into that, like I'm going to go and get, like a whole coach for that as a mentor to understand it more and just like, because I'm in the front of the time, I need to be on the back end now. So, yeah. So I'm going to be. Yes. I don't know. There will be different ways for like of course, because I have the talent to be a perfect creator. I don't really need a startup of a whole bunch of things that will benefit me, but even if not, just say I don't have the funds to, you know, pay them. I can. I can do it for my own brand. And then once I get it to blow up other cities, we want to do is to just because the permission wise, because of how good the product is because of how quick it's going. That's how you have with the trend. If you see something going from 8:00 to 3:00, zero to 2000.

**S:** Yeah, for sure.

**D:** And it's going to go in and that's how you indicate. I would want to before they even like first started off and said once everyone felt popping on their function. It, you know, with the Gold Bond you know, because that's the same thing. Like even going back to the the tracking, the charger, everyone sees my video go over a minute in a day and everybody started doing it right after everybody started going on the products. Now they're trying to make. Vital as well, like that thought. So yeah, that's what it's all about. But yeah, it's not. It's hard not going to say nothing is going to be a challenge, but everything in life is hard. You know, it's all about what children need to be to get to.

**S:** Yep, absolutely and for. Last question, now we arrived to the last question. Is where do you see the bookshop is heading? Will creators and brands work differently differently in one or two years or how do you think is going to be later on?

**D:** I think that teaching shop isn't going anywhere. I think that they are. If they're not #1 already, they're #2, they're under Amazon. They are skyrocketing because a platform that people love to swear on now can buy from. Like, that's a two on one compilation and then you get entertainment on top of it, you know? So yeah, I don't think that they just pick up overall because they're, you know, there's another program, there's a lot of people just doing that. So

it's going to go pretty far. It's going to. These comments and things always so people will never stop buying online because it's more beneficial while you see what happened in the pandemic, it's skyrocketing over to what like 20 billion because, you know, it was beneficial. Everybody was buying online because they couldn't leave their. So these comments are definitely not going over there. Selling is never going anywhere, but that's part of our life. Everybody needs to buy something. Everything is always being told to you. So yeah, if someone is going to be on top of discounts as well, it's going to be right there with them because brands that are like.

**S:** Yeah.

**D:** Make your \$1,000,000 on their phone are now coming to take time because we see how beneficial and you don't have to spend no ads to run their product holding these conflicting years to promote their products and then boom that's profit. \$1,000,000 no spend on ads, anything like that. All that is pure profit that they take home , of course TAX goes for the government. But other than that it's pure profit. So it comes off and definitely our future. And I would say to anybody who wants to be able to hop on to it now while it's still it's still very new. So yes, it's a little harder now becomes a lot of committed trying to do it, but all you have to understand is that you're this and you're not that person and you can do that, you just have to find their style and you'll be able to sell them.

**S:** Yeah, absolutely. And. That's exactly actually what I chose this topic and it was. Like this is, very early to something very big, like the fact that it's so convenient as well for people to to buy things on a platform. Look, I think it's definitely if it's not already changing a lot of things, it will definitely change. Young game leader. And I'm glad we're here. And you're also doing great on that, so congratulations and.

**S:** Yeah. Yes, thank you. And I will stop the recording since we are done with the question if there is anything related to the interview that you want to mention before you can tell me,

**D:** OK., the only thing I would say is if you're thinking about being an entrepreneur, Do it. It will Change your life. So yeah, that's it.

**S:** thank you once again.

### **Interview Transcript – Rudy Cornejal**

(Communication on the 25<sup>th</sup> of March 2025)

**Interviewer:** Juan Sebastian Rueda Velasco

**Interviewees:** Rudy Cornejal

For practical reasons, each participant's initials are used to represent them in this transcript. Since the transcript is based on a Zoom recording and supported by word transcription tools, it may not begin or end precisely as the conversation did in real life.

**Sebastian:** So basically what I'm doing is a research to understand kind of like the consumer behavior of the Gen Z in this affiliate marketing model of TikTok shop right now. the first question is if you could describe your Tiktok Journey, let's say in the affiliate marketing program like how long have you been on that and if you feel comfortable to share if there is an approximate GMV that you have Generated across this time, if you don't feel comfortable. To share, it's alright. And so yeah, first, if you could share share a little bit more about your journey on this affiliate marketing program.

**Rudy:** Yeah, no problem, Sebastian. Ohh, do you want me to speak in Spanish or I can do it.

**S:** In English, English is better if it's right for you

**R:** Yeah, no worries. Well, thank you, Sebastian, for asking. I've been doing Tiktok for over a little over a year now. I started back in January of 2024 last year and yeah, it's been a roller coaster, man. There were no, there were times where the first three months were the hardest because I've never like you said, brand new. I've never sold anything on my phone I didn't have Tiktok installed on my phone before I found out about Tiktok shop. I never even posted a video on Tiktok before I Tiktok shock so I I came into this thing like brand new but when it's all on Matt's video on. To you said that you could start selling products on Tiktok or free. There was a way in back then to get a free account like you know the loophole method and you didn't even have to buy a product you could already. You probably already had a product at home that you could start selling right away. I'm like no way is this true? And then two hours I got my first account and I started. And yeah, like 5 accounts later, five of my accounts got banned because I'm brand new to selling. I've never done it before. 4. And yeah, eventually I hit it. Finally, on my last account. That was like, literally my last free account. Thank God it worked out. I knew what I had to do, how to do it, and how much I have to do it too, because it's not like you post one video and boom, you make a bunch of those. No, especially if you're not good at in front of the camera. People can sense people. And to ohh when you're timid when you're lying to them when you want them to buy from you or when you are trying to sell them something nobody likes that. So you kind of have to have find your

own way into, like putting yourself out. Here, while also trying to push a product, you know what I mean? It's like a lot of psychology going into it. But yeah, I've done it for. Over a year now. And yeah, it's beautiful. The beautiful experience. And for my GMV.

**R:**

**R:** I actually have.

**R:** One second right here. This was back in November. And I wish you were there, man.

**S:** Ohh you have the ohh yes, you really wanted to go first? Yeah. So it's no, no worries.

**R:** I have the word right. Here it's in reverse, but Oh my gosh. Let me take off the blur. One second. I'm so sorry. Ohh my gosh. How do I do this? Take off the blur?

**R:**

**R:** Yeah. There we go.

**R:** Know if we can see it for \$220,000.

**S:** Thank you. Yeah, \$220,000 thousand GMV congratulations.

**R:** Yeah, GMV , as in November. And it's kind of, I would say a minimum of another \$100,000.

**R:**

**R:** Well.

**R:** So around \$300,000 GMV, yeah.

**S:** Yeah, they've played it very well. That's impressive. That's impressive.

**R:** Thank you, Brother Destiny, over a million. Oh, my God.

**S:** OK. Yeah. So I took the thing I was like, wow, she told me the funny like, wow.

**R:** Ohh my gosh. Yeah. Bro. She she's killing it. I love her though. She's such a good positive.

**R:**

**R:** Crazy.

**R:** Yeah, yeah.

**S:** Congratulations. So in regards to this first part of the question as well, what's your current strategy for promoting products now after one year?

**R:** Ooh, I love that question. Current strategy. Now I feel as though I'm just. Getting honing my craft? Honing me. Selling products online but putting an aspect of me giving the viewer a problem, whether they knew they already had or didn't. Know they really had. For instance, let me see. If I can pull up right here. Like this one right here. I don't even know about beauty.

**S:** Yeah.

**R:** Yeah, they have beer bar. Yeah, they have these little video bombs that you just throw into a pot with the meat. Let it simmer for two.

**S:** They're very low. Wow.

**R:** To four hours. And boom, you get great tasting video. I made it yesterday with my family, so it's amazing. Like we wouldn't. We wouldn't do it on our own because we know how to make it my family's Mexican. But for the people that.

**S:** They think.

**R:** Don't they have these little peoples and it taste beautiful? Man, they've sold over half a million units on TikTok. So that like, that's a problem that a lot of people have. They want to make beat it at their house cause you get a lot more. My dad went to a restaurant to get media tacos or tacos, \$30 brother.

**S:** Where they're born. So. For that for \$30.

**R:** \$30 yeah, exactly. And.

**S:** A movie and how much is it relia. How much? Durable.

**R:** The period. For which one?

**S:** The variable the product.

**R:** Video bombs are like 15.20, right 15.20. And then for everything. It's like everything in total with like around, let's say 100 right 100. But we made over 30 tacos, well over 30. So imagine that. So like the, you're getting a lot more for it and people just want to know how to make it at home. Well, here you go. And that's a problem. A lot of people don't want cause making it. It can't seem complicated. You need like 13 different ingredients in it.

**R:**

**R:** Yeah.

**R:** This has all 13 in here. Just plop it in there and let it cook and perfectly. And then yeah, that's where I have my eye out for now. Yeah, I need products that solve people's problems or trying to find a creative way where I can bring a solution to a problem that people didn't even know they have or. That they know they have and haven't. Found a solution for it.

**S:** Amazing. Thank you. We appreciate it. So for the next question, we know is what type of videos work best for driving sales product demonstration or like before and after or any kind of?

**S:**

**S:** Yes.

**S:** Yeah. What kind of video do you consider in your experience, let's say?

**R:** To me, that's a very tricky question because it very much depends on the pain point that you hit on the video and what style of video you're going for, and who your target audience is. You know what I mean? Because I I've sold the I've sold a lot. Yeah, we we filled Easter eggs. Right. Easter. Yeah. So I've sold a good handful of them. Not that much, but the closer I get to Easter, I know I'll sell more, but the majority of them were women, right? If I promote that to men like.

**R:** Ohh yeah.

**R:** Men like in our age group from 18 to 25, they don't really care. Majority of them don't really care about Easter, so I'm always like, hey, moms or moms, stop. If your kids have cavities this Easter, I got beef filled Easter eggs with little toys inside of. Them, you know or. If you're, if you're the planner for your Easter party, here's something that will save you a lot of time and money. Always trying to find your target audience, but the best overall I've heard I've learned recently too is bottom of funnel. It's where you grab a product that a lot of people already know about that have over 100,000. Themselves and just sell the sell saying that, yeah, hey, the media bombs are half off right now, but it won't last forever. Here's a coupon code. I'll leave the link down there below for you. Go claim it before they run out. And that's like a 10 second video claiming the coupon code giving full attention to the discount and boom.

**S:** The cell.

**R:** The majority of people the conversion rates on those videos, even though they don't. Have a lot of. Views they convert like 10 to 20 per 100 views. Imagine that like 10 to 20% conversion rate. That's insanely.

**S:** Good. But for bottom of funnel to I guess you have to. Like post love more videos because I don't back. They go viral that often.

**R:** Exactly for them, every video is like between 1:00 to 300 views, but they post 30 of them. So imagine that's like 30,000 views a day, right? So 10 to everyone. So 10,000 to 30,000 views a day doing that and now imagine.

**S:** Yeah, yeah. Yeah, makes sense.

**S:** Oh, you're.

**R:** 5 minute to be conservative, 5% to if you want to get real. Give them a lot 25% conversion rate on that. That's insanely good. I I barely get that on my video. It's like 10 to 20%. I'm just starting to now like just because I'm trying to hone in on my skill. But yeah, that's a lot harder work. That's more quality based than no, not fault. That's more quantity based. In quality days, the videos that I do I post 3:00 to 5:00. Every day on 2. Accounts. And but that's more like quality. I try and make sure everybody always as best as I can make it. Those. I'm not saying that they're terrible. They do have skill to them, but. You sit down in front of a camera and sell to sell across five different products, 10 videos each.

**R:**

**R:** Oh.

**S:** 50 videos right there. Yeah. Yeah. Thank you.

**R:** Yeah, brother.

**S:** So for the next question we have. It's about transparency and trust, and if you feel that you have. Like done something related to that and it's like. How do you approach? Trust and transparency on your relationship with your audience. And if you consider that the. There's a label that says creator. Erins Commission if you consider that that one. Affects or like? Changes how your audience react or it doesn't matter. At all at all.

**R:** I would definitely agree. That it does affect it a ton because you know you've heard Matt say it and it's always been the point, like your hook your first three to five seconds of your

video are so important and you have to make it seem like it's not an ad because people will see that little orange cart and automatically, without even giving you a. Yeah, it doesn't matter if you can solve. If you found a cure to an illness. They do not care. They being sold through, they'll be like. Nope. Not even gonna give it a shot, right? That's not everybody but a good majority of people don't like being sold to at all. Like if somebody comes up to you and be like, hey, it's a Bastian. You should try this video bomb. It's the best thing in the world. Like, you know, it's like, hey, I'm just trying to walk. I'm just trying to chill. Right. That's the majority of people, even me. That's why. Now, though, when I go out and I hear people. Hey, do you have a minute? I give them a minute just to see what they're doing. Right. Just to see what could be doing better in person. Cause in person is a lot a lot in.

**S:** Yeah, sure. Yeah. All right there.

**R:** My opinion a lot hard. But that's why I I I give him my minute to see what they can do with that and if I find anything where I'm like, OK. This guy is not good. I'm. I'm gonna leave, you know? Yeah. But I keep that in back my mind to know, OK, what I should be looking for in my own videos. Like studying myself through them. But yeah, I feel like it does impact a lot and it very much depends, too on what type of creator you are. Like people like me. My whole account is just pure ads. Every every single video is you're like, here's a link. Go buy it.

**S:** Yeah.

**R:** Me promoting a product, but if you're like an influencer with over 100,000 or 1,000,000 followers, right? And like post content regularly about whatever it is that's either informative, entertaining or just a distraction and people follow you for that. And then you have like 123 videos out of the week that you promote a product that you genuinely like and that you know your audience will value, you will have a higher conversion there than any of us people. Why? Because now you have a fan base. Now you have a following of people who already trust you. And if they trust your word when they see that. Link a majority of them a good handful of them will support you, but maybe it won't be all of them. We'll give them 10%, right. If you have 10% of 1,000,000 followers, that's 100,000 people right? Maybe 100,000. People will will watch that video all the way through and now maybe, let's say another 10% of people might buy. That's another 10,000 people who buy from that one video. Imagine that I'm just being like real conservative, just like 10, maybe even 1%. That's still 1000 people off that one video. There's very few videos that reach 1000 sales.

**S:** Yeah.

**R:** Per video, you know what? So it depends on. Who the creator is, if all their account is just pure uh selling products, or if they already have an established following and then promote like one to three videos a week of them promoting a product. In my personal opinion.

**S:** Yep. Have you seen accounts like that? Most like from?

**R:** Oh, yeah, yeah. I I've when all my free time, I like to study other creators. Yeah. So when I go through the shop page, I like going through people who are promoting too learning and and just, you know, learning off other creators. What's working, what's not. And then I see creators that have, like, 1.5 million followers. Right.

**R:**

**R:** Forward. Well.

**R:** And then I they they they don't post shot videos often, but when they do. I can see how much they sell. You can go by their showcase and then scroll like all the way down and it'll tell you how much they've sold. And they sold over 30,000 units, minimum. Yeah, all of them. Over 30,000, sometimes 50,000. And then imagine that you do like \$1.00. That's \$30,000 right there times that like minimum 5. We'll do median of \$5.

**R:**

**R:** Alright.

**S:** Crazy.

**R:** That's like over 100,000 right there, nearly 200.

**S:** Yeah. Crazy. Thank you. So for the next question, we know is what?

**R:** Crazy brother.

**R:**

**R:** Yeah.

**S:** What we consider that makes Genc buy from your videos, so yeah, basically which aspect of your content do you believe most influence them?

**R:** Influenced people to buy from me.

**S:** Yeah, their purchase decisions.

**R:** Hmm. I feel like my ability to really hit home the pain point and more importantly to since I like I told you in the beginning, I started working with my aunt and implementing like authentic. Scenery like I remember when my aunt first came to like, talk to me about TikTok shop. I told her I yeah, since we had a whole bunch of food around the table, we're all gathered like me and my whole family. Me and my parents and my tianxia and I'm like alright, let's make a quick video right now. I'll show you how to do it right and then we did it right there on the spot with all the food right there. And as they're talking in the background. Yeah, I know you're listening to music on your, on, on your phone, right. You need a speaker. Oh, I don't have one. I. Got you. Look. Boom and then.

**S:** Thank you.

**R:** Yeah. And then put the product there and then the scenery in the background, it's just my family talking. And then me and her are like conversing and I show her how to how to use the product. And she's like, oh, my gosh, that's so cool. Where'd you get it? Oh, God shot. Yeah. She's like, oh, my. God, beto. She called. My deal and. It's like what they look at this right here. Look at this party really showing me like.

**S:** It was amazing.

**R:** Oh my gosh, where you buy all better off. Tick tock. Send me the link. I'm gonna tell you to buy me one. I'm like, OK, but I'll leave the link down here below. And it's just the ability to one hit that pain point of her not having a speaker or not being able to to, to connect to Bluetooth or have something practical right there. And the fact that I try and make it as authentic as possible, like Matt, how he would say trying not to make it seem like an ad right away that way it gives me more time for people to stay around. This product and then see how it's used practically, yeah.

**S:** You you are great for this kind of special.

**S:**

**S:** Appreciate it, right.

**R:** Thank you, brother.

**S:** You're making my whole research right here. That's that's the way we. I love your. Insights. So moving on, what's different about how people buy on TikTok shop versus

traditional? E-commerce platforms like Amazon or eBay, so I don't think the difference now. The TikTok shows here.

**R:** Beautiful question, brother. For me personally, I believe that the Influencer style and not even influencer that too. That is extremely profitable and. Can work a ton because a lot of companies pay creators thousands of dollars, but that have like over 100,000 followers or over a million followers a month. Imagine that I know creator that has like a three quarter million. Followers and he get he gets paid almost 10 grand per post on Instagram and that that is lucrative. Like per one post or per three that is crazy my man. So it is lucrative and they know if they knew it wouldn't work they wouldn't be spending that much money on it. Right. But what with TikTok shop.

**S:** That is crazy.

**R:** And more importantly, affiliates like me and. You. We're everyday people. Where ever TikTok is a platform where I realized anyone and anything can go viral. You know you see things go viral all the time. These new challenges pop up all the time from regular people who don't have a following who are not big or you hear people complain and event about what's going on in the world and how it's affecting them. Right. Because they they don't show that in the news. They don't show that on Instagram. They don't show that on Facebook. Maybe you get Facebook groups of like your local community, but that's pretty much it. But if you have like somebody in California, you know, having trouble finding a job. And he posted he posts. He will post it on TikTok and now people all across the United States are having trouble that's in trouble too and it brings something out in them and that's like a whole community right there. And that's for me. What makes TikTok so impactful. And when I saw the opportunity last year, brother, I, I hopped on it. I jumped on it. I dove in it. Why? Because I knew 8090, I would say 90% of the people in my family and friends that I had had all had TikTok and they all are on it every single day. And it's because of that. It makes people feel like. They are friends that a lot tighter knit than Amazon, right? I know they have Amazon influencers. It's not as big yet, and I don't think it'll ever be because that's not what Amazon is. It's not a social media platform, it's an e-commerce platform where people go there to buy and TikTok. People go there to be entertained, to be distracted, to be. How do I say? Just enjoy themselves, right? And then people on the platform provide that and then when they're scrolling, TikTok will feed them an ad. And if you're good at your job and know how to not make it seem like an ad like people like destiny. And I'm starting to do with my idea, then you can take advantage of that. And that's not even taking advantage. It's more like.

**S:** Yes, I think.

**R:** Seize the opportunity that it is, you know, cause there's no there's no other platform doing what TikTok shop is doing right now. And for good reason. Because TikTok is a platform where anyone and anything can go viral and can blow up overnight.

**S:** Yeah, absolutely. And actually it was. I I think one of the reasons why I chose this topic is because it's super crazy how like this platform. Like just I don't like before like how they build the platform where everyone was like comfortable, just like with entertaining content and just like for fun and.

**R:** Yeah, but.

**S:** I think back. Like two years ago, like when it started, you never see an add-on picked up or like at all. And then they introduced this. Very like seamlessly but you. But even though it's an ad, sometimes you don't realize an ad, for example on YouTube like you open a video and that as you like, try to skip it right away.

**R:** Yeah.

**S:** So I I think they really did a great job on like including this kind of. Commercial. Functions exactly reading the entertainment. So I I think it was like genius. So I I consider it was. Great introduction of that. So for this one is. What do you think is the hardest part of promoting on TikTok Shop as an affiliate and how do you address those challenges that? You you face.

**R:** Wow. That's a heavy question, cause for me personally, there's a there's a lot. There is a lot with anything with whether it be school, whether it be your job, career of business, you want to start up anything in life is hard and tick Tock shop affiliate. It's no different. You know when you give it your all, when you spend all this time on like three to five videos for the day. You post them just for them to have no sales and low views, right? You get discouraged. A lot of people do. And that's what even though it's a beautiful opportunity, that's what. Helps the people who are winners stay winners and the people who can't achieve it don't think they can achieve it and they won't. Me at least. And for practically almost anything in my life, it's about repetition. It's about how good.

**S:** No.

**R:** Going right in. Cause imagine me. Last year I had never posted a video when I uh I had. So I had you back in the bed. And but I hadn't done it. In like over a year. So I had to relearn all these skills and I knew that in my head going in. I'm like, OK, if I'm going to do this, I'm going to learn and grow as much as I can. But a lot of the challenges pretty much come to that. A lot of them are mental. The fact that you don't know what to post, you don't know how to post, you don't know what products you should promote. There's thousands of products that you could promote, but you're you're not promoting, but then you know there, there's, like, practically a lot of it is just mental. And overthinking and making things more complicated than they should be, right? Because let's be honest, I can be promoting clothing, right? But what? I promote women's clothing. I don't think so. Yeah, I don't think so. So there's a whole like, I can cut down. I could really sit down for like 1/2 hour and analyze it instead of having those thoughts consume me, I can really just sit down and analyze, OK, what can I do with what I have? Right. What can I do in my? Position. Right. And a lot of people will say they don't have time. They have a full time job, they're going to school, they're going to whatever the excuse may be, and that may be true, right. But at least you can have one day where you have a good chunk of your day where you have a lot of free time, use that chunk of your day, use what you have and don't complain of what you. Don't have. Don't be envious of other people. What you don't have focus on you and a lot of those trials. Are very are really just temporary you. Know. Because it's all mental. At the end of the day and. None. None of them are true. The only thing that is true is what you do about it. You know, if I if I make 10 videos and all of them get 100 views zeroes out. I can. I can stay there and blame TikTok. I can stay there and blame, I don't know, whoever. Whoever's Tommy. Right for not teaching me the right way. But that's not going to fix anything that's not going to make my next videos better. What is going to make my next video? It's better. Who can I learn from what videos are going viral? What products should I be promoting that are trending right now this week? No. Those are the better questions. I should ask whether than. Why not me? Or why is this happening to me? That's the way that I view.

**S:** That's beautiful. Thank you.

**R:** Thank you.

**S:** For the last two questions, we have one and this one is a bit more related to the brands and is what advice would you give to businesses looking to optimize their TikTok shop strategy to better connect with PNC consumers? So you have the affiliate side and I don't know if you have contact with some shops, but if they do that, what do you consider they should improve in

order to help? Like for other new shops, maybe, or if you ever plan to. Create your own shop. What do you consider? It will be something to optimize or to prioritize.

**R:** Beautiful. Thank you, brother. By the way, I have more time than 630. I can do another half hour. So because I love explaining these two. So if you have the time I have that time Brother.

**S:** Yeah. Yeah, I do have the time. The only thing the zoom meeting is like 40 minutes like.

**R:** What?

**S:** How do you say it the the timer? But if it finishes we can just reenter. Yeah, exactly. So ohh yeah, it just pop out the. Yeah. Yeah, 10 minutes. So yeah, as soon as it finishes, we hope. And then just don't worry.

**R:** All the time. We'll do another one. Yeah. OK. Bet. Thank you for. The message. OK. OK, got it.

**S:** Feel free to talk then.

**R:** Gotcha, brother. But yeah, I spread TikTok shop and what the the sellers and what I recommend for them to optimize and prioritize. I highly, highly, highly recommend they prioritize creators, right. Because imagine this, the creators are going to be your your. AD. Your ad spend your ad creatives you know before back in the day with Google ads, Facebook ads. You would have to make the ads yourself, and then you would have to optimize it. You would have to go in there and and try and figure out what works and what doesn't work. The beautiful thing about the Affiliates, they do that all for you. And then you promote the ones that are working, the ones that are going viral, let's say I have. A brush that I want to sell. Right. I'm gonna send it out to 100 qualified creators and then pay them each what, 5 between 1:00 to 500 for 10 post of my. Of my brush right now, let's. That is a little a little. Bit. Pricey 1000 to \$5000 right? But imagine that imagine me spending that on TikTok ads, right? And trying to figure out what that one thousand \$5000 can get me and me getting like maybe 100 ad creatives to run and test before I can truly find out. OK, what is working what? Is not working. For them right 100 creators creating 10 videos for me, that's 1000 posts. Whereas for me alone, I probably could have run like maybe 100 to 150 with that money with that same money. And probably got like two or three. Could they have converted better? Maybe? Who knows? But I I'm always in in the thought process of the more the better the more data I have the better. So if all those

100 qualified creators and keyword qualified meaning they have made a lot of sales the past month they are. Targeting my target audience who I think this brush would be for right? Then I pay them between 50 to 100, maybe 500 for the top top 1% create. For 10 videos, imagine that like you have 1000 videos to work off and the beautiful thing about TikTok is that TikTok wants to push these videos. Why? Because they get a cut of the pie too. They make money too off every sale, so it's like a win win win for everybody. A win for me, win for the.

**S:** Yeah.

**R:** The seller, no one for TikTok cause they get money too. And it's all that it's like TikTok wants to push these videos it, but it will only push the good videos. So tick Tock will do that for you organically. And then you with the rest of the money that you have or that you're making, reinvest it into the good videos that are popping up, right. Like we heard with Matt out of every 100 videos, depending on the creator, one to five of them will blow up. Or one of a 100 videos. My bad. Yeah. One to five of those videos will go viral, will blow up. It's just the numbers game. So the more numbers we have, the more tries we have, the more swing of the bat we have, the more shots we. Like. It's only inevitable that we have a larger amount of successful videos that we can push.

**S:** Well, yeah, I'm glad you touched that point because I didn't even think about it before and it is it. It's a great strategy actually, yeah.

**R:** Thank you, brother.

**S:** And four. OK, let's see. OK, we have 6 minutes minutes of this one before we join to the other one. So I think we can. Finish this question before we join again. And is where. Do you see TikTok shop heading and will creators and brands work differently in one or two years or what do you think it will be the future of TikTok Shop?

**R:** Wow, that's a deep question. I haven't fully thought about it, but thinking about it now, TikTok shop has changed completely the past year. I can only imagine a year later I just realized they they made a a feature where you could subscribe to TikTok products like no gum right here, like this gum or any supplement like Amazon subscribes. You can do that now on TikTok too, so imagine that you can make reoccurring revenue. Every month, meaning that from the product that you sold three months months ago, it's still paying you because they bought it from your link and they're subscribed. So me, as the creator, I can earn from that too.

**S:** OK.

**S:**

**S:** Yeah.

**R:** Every month, so I feel like it's only going to get bigger the more. That. Bigger brands too start to come into TikTok Shop. TikTok shop is not going to be. Something that can one day compete with Amazon. I truly believe that a lot of these big companies are starting to see the power of TikTok and starting to see the power of us, the affiliates of being able to create videos for them that will go viral organically because we can relate to the audience. If you look at a lot of these corporate. Companies that have over \$100 million in you know, value. If you look at their ads, me personally, I'm not looking at that. I'm bored. I'm like, OK, it's another ad I'm scrolling right. But if I look at this girl saying, Oh my gosh, you will not believe the how I made this high protein ice cream from this ninja Creamer. I love it and I'm going to show you how you can make it too. And then she goes over how she can. She'll walk me through it. And now she's like tasting it. Oh my gosh, it tastes beautiful. If you wanna grab your own for you and your family, I'll leave. The link down there below, it's so. It's so relatable. It's so relatable to me as a consumer, right? It's not like this corporate you people forget about the corporate right or the the big company, but they go to that, they associate the the big company with that creator with that person, right. That everyday person like they can see their neighbor doing it and it's like, Oh my gosh, you know, I don't know. Sell products and that looks pretty good I might. Buy it for myself too. You know, instead of, it's like recommending a product to a friend. Yeah, right. You're not going to. Like this easy bomb has over 13 different ingredients. You're going to like Sebastian brothers. You've got to try this. If you've never tried video tacos, man. Oh, my gosh, you are missing out. Let me see here. Bro. Here is the video of me making it with the easy bomb, bro. It took me like 3 seconds, man. And they're only like \$15. Are you kidding me? You see, like the the. The way you go about selling a product. It's way different and I feel like that's why it's so powerful and it's only going to continue to grow.

**R:**

**R:** Yep.

**R:** And yeah, that's my take on that.

**S:** That's great. You're you're in good and you're really good at this. For real? Like the information you're giving me is gold.

**R:** Thank you, brother. I appreciate you.

**S:** So let me pause the recording. Yeah, so. Yeah, recording progress right now.

**R:** That's all.

**S:** Alright. So. This one is for like the metrics and. Is if you. Like what specific metrics do you track to measure the success you have on the book shop and? For example, on your videos, how do you? Like if you have any specific let's say strategy or if you analyze any of the data you have from your videos or I don't know your conversions from. Yeah, like, do you? Utilize any of the data that they took provided you. Or you just. Mostly post or if you have any strategy in terms of. Data. If you have any.

**R:** Yeah, actually I want to pull up one video from one of my other accounts right now to show you.

**R:**

**R:** The.

**R:** And I kind of don't really track my my data too much too much recently. The reason being is because I believe too. Like I said, the more videos I make the the more opportunities I get to make a shot or to get a Viber video. And and I know how because I'm doing it. I've been doing it for a while now. I know how to style my content to the point where. I can I have a higher chance of hitting that with every video that I post? It won't be every video, but I know if I increase, if I keep increasing my my skill set, if I keep increasing the the quality of every video, then over time it's inevitable I'm going to have a viral one and one that I had a viral about a week ago now. It's. I don't know if you can. See it right here and. It's on the left right here. I don't know. So so kids.

**S:** Already. Quite bright.

**R:** Well, Oh yeah, it might be. Too bright, too? Not bad.

**S:** Hi.

**S:**

**S:** Oh yes.

**R:** This thing right here has like 200,000. Which one was it?

**S:** Oh yeah, I can see.

**R:** Yeah, but that one has 200. 1000 viewers. I posted it a week ago. I've made over 1/4 for this one right now. It's still counting, but I've made over close to \$250 on that.

**S:** Comma.

**R:** Commission Commission to. Me right off.

**S:** Nice.

**R:** Of 100,000, which is a really great conversion that's on track to making well over 1000. Once I get to 1,000,000 so I'm hyped about that. But if you look at my, if you look at these two numbers, right, the average watch time and the percentage fully watched, meaning the people who watched all the way average watch time is 4 1/2. And if I go to my video 4 and 1/2. It's about here when I'm describing the product now. Yeah. In the beginning I let me see if I can wait. Oh, man, that likes to cut his hair at home. Get him a 360 mirror with the. That's where they stopped watching. Right, so I I called out my audience. If you know a man that cuts his hair at home, right, the majority of these people, this product isn't generally for a man like cause who cut their hair at home. So I'm. I'm always like, if you know a man, because if it's a woman, she's probably gonna think about her boyfriend, her husband, her children, her son, her nephew, whoever, right. That's why we say if. If you know a man, and if it's a man, then hey, I know a man. I'm a. What about it that cuts their hair at home? Right. I'm calling them out already. Then the ones that who who relate to that will stay. The ones who don't care about that will leave. And that's what I want. In my opinion, that's who I want to keep watching my videos. The ones who will relate and who want my product because TikTok won't. It's not 100%, it won't show your video to 100% of a certain demographic, like even for women's products that I do with my girlfriend, sometimes there will be like 50% females 50. Listen, man and it's like, come on, I want, I want 100% female, but you can't get that. They. But they push it to males too, right? That's why if I know that. And then in my titles I always put like when your girlfriend bothers you when your girlfriend is complaining about her hair or the OR I'll put like. POV Your boyfriend was prepared for your time of the month, right? And it's like a a heating. Yeah, but it's like I'm trying to convey to both both sides or as many people as I can. But at the end of the day, I want people who are going to buy it. And if I, the metric I track lately, a lot is my viewers actually who is watching my video, right. And for this one, it's 95%.

**S:** Hello.

**R:** Male and 5% women. So which is perfect? That's what I want. I want the men. Well, I wish I had a little bit more women cause they're more imposed by it. But it is what it is. Another one too. The viewer type right here on the viewer type. It'll show you how either old or new or returning viewers or new or returning viewers. Meaning returning viewers are people who watch your videos. Before who? It appeared on the on the for you page before, but are just watching it again like they they came across your account again, but the new viewers have never seen your video. Never watch your content, never looked you up anything, right. And then for that one it's eighty 7980%. Right. And then 20% overturn or new, yeah. Or new 80 or new. So that's good for me. That's what I want is I want new people who have never heard about me because I know that my style of content fits best with people who don't know nothing about.

**S:** For. One years. OK.

**R:** And for me, that's what I want. And then the more important factor in. My opinion right?

**R:**

**R:** Here.

**R:** The age group. Who is Tik Toks in sending my videos out to 18 to 24 and my personal opinion, depending on the product and depending on who you are as a creator, one of the worst age groups you can be pushed out. To the most. Why? Because a lot of a lot of kids lie about their age. Because TikTok is now fully available. If you're not 18. So if my my 15 year old brother has an 18 year old account like he's not 15, I mean he's not.

**R:**

**R:** Yeah.

**R:** 18 right, and neither is my little sister. And they both have 18 year old accounts because you can lie on that easily. So from 18 to 24, in my personal opinion and one of the worst age groups, you can be pushed out to because they have no money. They're little kids and then they comment on your videos a bunch of like a bunch of nonsense, basically. And they don't add anything to your video. They can't buy it.

**R:**

**R:** Yeah.

**R:** Depending on the product, majority of the products they can't even buy it. Right. So my personal opinion and what I've told my aunt to the one of the best age groups you can be pushed out to is actually 24 to 34 and 45 to 55.

**S:** 24 to 34.

**R:** Uh, and then 35 to 44, alright, because those are the older age group. They're not gonna lie about their age. They're already old enough to, like, create a tick. Tock accounts go on there and guess what? They have the money. They have the ability to buy.

**S:** 3544.

**R:** And depending on the product, that is what you want, right? Depending on what type of product it is, I called out men in that video and for me I have 42% of 24 to 34 aged men, which is exactly what I want. Perfect age group. Now the reason why I say posting is more important, if I have another video. Right here. Hold on. Let me try. By the way, I'm sorry if I'm talking too fast.

**S:** No, it's great. It's great. Don't worry.

**R:** Are you sure you my man?

**S:** This information is great golden.

**R:** Beautiful. All right, beautiful explanation right here. So holy \*\*\*\*. Look like this video. 80,000 views, 83,000 views I made with my dad of him using the actual mirror. Here's how he used to cut his hair before.

**S:** Uh-huh.

**R:** And here's how he used to cut it after, and I showed up after with him using the 360 mirror. Right, 80,000 views, right? Let's look at the analytics 12:12 second watch time. Right average watch time. Hmm. That's like nearly three times as the other one. Yeah, right. How much people for 6 1/2 percent only. Watch the video nearly three times. The other one. But look how much money it made.

**R:**

**R:** Yeah.

**S:** OK.

**R:** \$0.00.

**S:** No way.

**R:** Zero dot? Well, that's what it's saying, right? I don't think it's zero. It might be like for sure, less than 50, in my opinion, but sometimes it's not fully accurate. But in my opinion, less than 50 for sure. Right. And then I go and check why. Like it had. A 58% new viewers and then 42% returning viewers or like it was about 5050. For new and old beers, and I don't like that, I'd much rather have like a 70% and more and new viewers than than returning cause like I said, I want people who have never heard about me watching my videos, but majority of the time it might not be. The bigger you get, the more viral videos you have that new viewer. Range will shrink smaller and smaller. I don't know why that is but. Depending on your account, cause that's what's happening on my primary account right now and I feel like that's why that account is a bit stagnant. This new account I have on my second phone.

**R:**

**R:** Yeah.

**R:** It's way better. And then when I looked at the viewers, most important metric in my opinion, like I said 96% male, but look at the age group. 18 to 24 the majority.

**S:** Like 40 something percent 47.

**R:** 47% right. 24 to 3423 barely any, and then the rest. Practically less than 10%. And that's not what I want. I want as you can see in the.

**S:** Yep.

**R:** Other. Video 24 the same. Correct. Same style of two, right? But the only difference I made. Was showing my dad in the beginning just to cut his hair at home. He would hold up that little mirror to try and get a good view on the back like he messed up the back of his head. Oh my God, I felt bad that he didn't have the right equipment, so I got him a 360 mirror that way. When did they stop bashing? Yeah, they stopped watching around right here, and he's actually using the main. Which is amazing. Watch time. Amazing people who finished watching the video, just not the right audience. And that for me recently is my change in mindset is not really. How long and how much the people are watching your video? But who is watching your video? What age group is watching your video? How many of those people are new viewers? For me, that has what's been calling my eye because that video that I showed you at 200,000,

it's growing slow a little bit, little by little, right it was at like 100 and. 60,000 yesterday it went up another 40,000 viewers today and I feel like it's only going to keep going up more and more. Because that is converting extremely well right now and I feel like. It it won't stop for a while. But it's because TikTok is picking those the right people, the that age group male, and they're brand new to my content too and. And on top of that? I made my video in a way where I'm targeting them. If you know a man who cuts their hair at home, you should get them a 360 mirror. Calling on my audience. Showing them the the product right away and then showing them why they should. Because a lot of the time, people don't have a back mirror to cut their hair at home, they just have a mirror in the bathroom and then they have to hold another mirror behind them and then do all this like I did when with my dad. How he used to cut his hair, he would hold the mirror and try and do that. It's not gonna work. That's why he picked up the back of his head and I showed a picture of that. And you told me.

**S:** Yeah.

**R:** But yeah, bro, for me that's been my my shift in mindset recently. My shift in like videos recently.

**R:**

**R:** Words.

**R:** Who was watching my videos? And how can I target the the right audience? And. For me that that's the main thing. Like I showed you right there a video with 200,000 and another video with close to 100,000 with 0 sales. And I have another one. Boom. I have another one right here. Beautiful. I think one of the first videos I did with that product. 76,000 views my first ever video. With that product. OK. Right. If you know a man that cuts. His own heart.

**R:**

**R:** Hmm.

**R:** 76,000 views. Look at the watch down again. 4 1/2 percent watch. What is that two, 2% fully watched the look at the revenue \$180? And revenue and like profit mean Commission.

**S:** Yep.

**R:** And it's still going up, as you can see the trend, but I don't really rely on that too much, not really reliable as much anymore as it was back then. But it's still getting pushed almost every day a a couple of 1000 views a day. Great. That's good and boom. Brother, it's just

proving my point even more. Look, one last time. Third times the charm. 94% new viewers. Because that was the first time I did it with that product. The first video I uploaded 94% new viewers. How many men? 95% men and then 5% women. And then look at the age. Look at the age group, brother.

**S:** Uh, yeah, they did. You mentioned.

**R:** The age grew grow 28 percent, 24 to 3438 percent, 34 to 4435.

**R:**

**R:** To 44. Ohh.

**R:** Perfect man. How many, 8%? Eighteen or 24? Perfect.

**S:** Mm-hmm.

**R:** Perfect. Why? Because I don't want those children watching my videos. They're not going to make me money. They're bored. Or if they do, I'll tell them. Go tell your mom to give me her credit card and buy it. But that age group, that's beautiful. That is what I want to see. Who is watching my videos? Yeah, these numbers matter.

**S:** Infection.

**R:** But like you like you saw on that other video, bro, I'll pull it up again. I'll even send you the screenshot on it. That way you can use it in your in your paper. Double, almost triple the watch time. The other one was 4 seconds 12 1/2 on this one. Three times the watch them and then three times comes finishing four watching 0 practically 0. And then the age group. 18 to 20. Like for me that just proves my point.

**S:** That's pretty neat.

**R:** Of like watching the same product, the same points, the same practically like 80% the same video. I just changed up my wording a little bit that way I'm not copying every video. Or where I'm going at. But if I showed you the full videos. If you cut your if you know a man that cuts their hair at home. Get them a 360 mirror. That's like a four and a 5 second hook. And the majority of them leave after that. Perfect. Why? Because I don't want them there. The ones that don't cut their hair at home, the ones that do stay and watch until the end. And there was 2% of people. That. Stay and watch until the end 1% of them the. Other half percent of them will go and buy. And for me, that's how I view it. And if I can hit the right audience, even

better. Right. Like I like. I just showed you two different videos I made. Yeah, a good amount of money. Because they hit the right.

**S:** Damn, man, you're into something there. That's good.

**R:** That's actually bro. Thank you for pointing that out. Was a beautiful question. I never. It was a thought in. My head right. But looking at the analytics now, yeah, it just confirmed it for me. Oh, thank you, Sebastian, for making me look through that cause I didn't think about that. I didn't look through them before today. So thank you.

**S:** Thank you too as well. And now that you mentioned, I I don't think that's possible only for the shops, for the server side. But can you see the audience? That buys from your videos, or you can only see who watches your videos. Or is there also like for example? Like if they're analytics from the people you. Like buy from you if if they can you see that?

**R:** The the only thing with TikTok shop though, like as an affiliate you can only look at that information if you have more than 1000 products sold.

**S:** Ah.

**R:** Like meaning like within 30 days. So you have to sell 1000 products in 30 days?

**S:** Have some products.

**R:** Which? Yeah, a majority of people are not going to hit that. So you can't really tell who's buying from you until you hit that. I remember I hit that. Last summer, I think, and the majority of people for me were was between 18 and 24, but only by 5%, followed by 24 to 34. Right. And then I'll tell you. Oh, I'm sorry. Yeah.

**S:** Sorry, you meant you said. Which audience was it? I couldn't hear you.

**R:** Oh, 18 to 24 for last year on my primary account. That's who bought for me a lot because that was making a lot of sense, was back then and yeah.

**S:** Uh-huh. Love you.

**R:** I saw too that they were from California. Of them. And I figure out what else. What other information will give you. I'm actually going with my aunt tonight. Right after this call. And she's had a viral video. Like I told you, made over 1000 sales, and I'm gonna go over that with her. Thank you for reminding me.

**R:**

**R:** Yeah.

**R:** Thank you. But thank you reminding me so much. I'm so glad to have.

**S:** This call for sure and and. OK, so you said I will I guess it also depends on the products you you promote I guess because you cannot, I don't know target the.

**R:** Exactly.

**R:**

**R:** Yep.

**S:** For example, last summer you you you said 18 to 24, you can sell them, I don't know.

**R:** In that park. Plane. I don't know if you remember the car. Play screen that was selling.

**S:** Ah, yeah. OK, that makes sense.

**R:** So majority of them young people want that, right? If they have an older looking car, they want car plate but don't want to spend a couple 100 boom, get this little car, place clean \$40 and it'll fit almost. Any. Car. Right. And then that's why the majority of people then were younger. And that's what I wanted was the younger audience right or like 18, like Real 18? 24 yeah.

**S:** OK.

**S:**

**S:** Right.

**S:** And I give to your aunt. She mostly targets other people her age, I guess.

**S:**

**S:** Like.

**R:** Yeah. Hurt. Exactly. Yeah, exactly. And that's why I feel like people who think that they're older, they can't succeed with no. If anything, they have an advantage.

**S:** Yeah, for sure.

**R:** For people like me, over kids, cause like you're a kid. What the \*\*\*\*? You know, right. And then as an adult, that's why the videos with my with my dad, with my mom, with my aunt, because they're older and I can tap into that older. Right. And and she knows struggled

with her kids, right? People who have kids. Oh my gosh. If you have kids like me and you can hear my little niece, my little cousin, screaming in the background. You know, you don't have time to fill up Easter eggs for Easter. And that's why I bought 120 green filled Easter eggs. You know what I mean?

**S:** That's for real. That's good. Yeah, that's good.

**R:** Well, there's pain points that I don't even know about or I don't fully understand and people can tell that I don't fully understand because I don't look old enough to have a kid.

**S:** Yeah, absolutely.

**R:** That. So that that's the other point too, though. It's just like if you're older, you're I feel like you even have an edge against people like you. You just gotta put yourself out there. And I've seen older people succeed with it. Well, it it's so crazy.

## ANNEX 2 – Survey responses and questions

The research consisted of 18 questions and had 5 main sections.

**Demographic:** Questions about age, gender and country of residence to create a segmentation of respondents based on their basic characteristics.

**TikTok Usage:** Frequency of what the participants use TikTok, type of content they consume and their interaction with TikTok Shop

**Purchase Behaviour:** Methods for product discovery, impulse versus planned purchasing habits, and general consumption patterns in TikTok Shop.

**Trust Factors:** Impact of transparency on relationships with creators, importance of follower count of the affiliates and perception of the app security concerns.

**Comparative analysis:** Perceived differences between the experience on TikTok shop and other traditional platforms of e-commerce such as Amazon or eBay, as well as their perception on the integration of shopping features in entertainment platforms.

The questionnaire primarily included close ended questions with predefined options that reflect the most common and popular behaviours among young consumers. On some questions the option “Other” was included to allow respondents to share their additional answers, if the available options did not describe their preferences or viewpoints with enough accuracy, as well as using those extra answers to understand new viewpoints that were not previously established leading to new research paths.

## **QUESTIONNAIRE**

### **1. Age**

- 15-17
- 18-20
- 21-23
- 24-26
- 27-29

### **2. In which country do you currently reside?**

- 

### **3. What is your gender?**

- Male
- Female
- Non-binary
- Prefer not to say

### **4. How frequently do you use TikTok?**

- Multiple times a day
- Once a day
- Several times a week
- Once a week or less
- I don't use TikTok

**5. Have you ever purchased a product through TikTok Shop after seeing it promoted by a creator?**

- Yes, multiple times
- Yes, once or twice
- No, but I've considered it
- No, I have seen it but never considered it
- No, I've never seen TikTok Shop products

**Section 2 of 2**

*On the following questions "Content Creators" is anyone who publishes a piece of content on TikTok regardless of their following base.*

**6. How aware are you that content creators can earn commission from products they promote on TikTok Shop (affiliate marketing)?**

- Very aware and understand how it works
- Somewhat aware of this practice
- Not aware until now

**7. When you see the 'creator earns commission' label on TikTok Shop product videos, how does this affect your trust in the recommendation?**

- Significantly increases my trust
- Somewhat increases my trust
- Somewhat decreases my trust
- Significantly decreases my trust

**8. How important is a creator's follower count when deciding whether to trust their product recommendations on TikTok Shop?**

- Extremely important - I only trust creators with large followings (Influencers)
- Important - follower count is a major factor in my trust
- Slightly important - I notice it but it's not a deciding factor

- Not important at all - I focus on content quality rather than follower count

**9. Which aspects of creator content MOST influence your decision to purchase a product on TikTok Shop? (Select up to 2)**

- Authentic demonstration of the product in use
- Creator's personal testimonial/experience
- Before and after results
- Promotional discounts or affiliate codes
- Detailed explanation of benefits
- Direct comparison with other products

**10. How do TikTok's in-app shopping features affect your purchasing behavior?**

- Makes me much more likely to make impulse purchases
- Makes it convenient to buy things I was already considering
- Helps me discover products I wouldn't find elsewhere
- Creates pressure to buy quickly, which I dislike
- Has no significant effect on my purchasing behavior

**11. How would you rate your trust in products promoted through TikTok Shop's affiliate marketing compared to traditional advertising?**

- Much more trustworthy
- Somewhat more trustworthy
- Somewhat less trustworthy
- Much less trustworthy

**12. Which statement BEST describes your typical purchase behavior on TikTok Shop?**

- Mostly planned purchases of items I was already looking for
- Mostly impulse purchases of items I wasn't specifically seeking

- An even mix of planned and impulse purchases
- I browse but rarely complete a purchase
- I've never completed a purchase on TikTok Shop

**13. What is your biggest concern when purchasing through TikTok Shop?**

- Product quality/authenticity
- Shipping/delivery issues
- Privacy/data security
- Payment security
- Misleading product information from creators
- Pressure to make quick decisions
- I have no major concerns
- Other...

**14. When you see multiple creators promoting the same product on TikTok Shop, how does this affect your purchasing decision?**

- Much more likely to purchase
- Somewhat more likely to purchase
- Somewhat less likely to purchase (makes me suspicious)
- Much less likely to purchase (seems overly promotional)

**15. How does your shopping experience through TikTok Shop compare to traditional e-commerce platforms (like Amazon, eBay, AliExpress, etc.)?**

- Much more engaging
- Somewhat more engaging
- About the same
- Somewhat less engaging
- Much less engaging

**16. After purchasing a product through a TikTok Shop affiliate video, how likely are you to:**

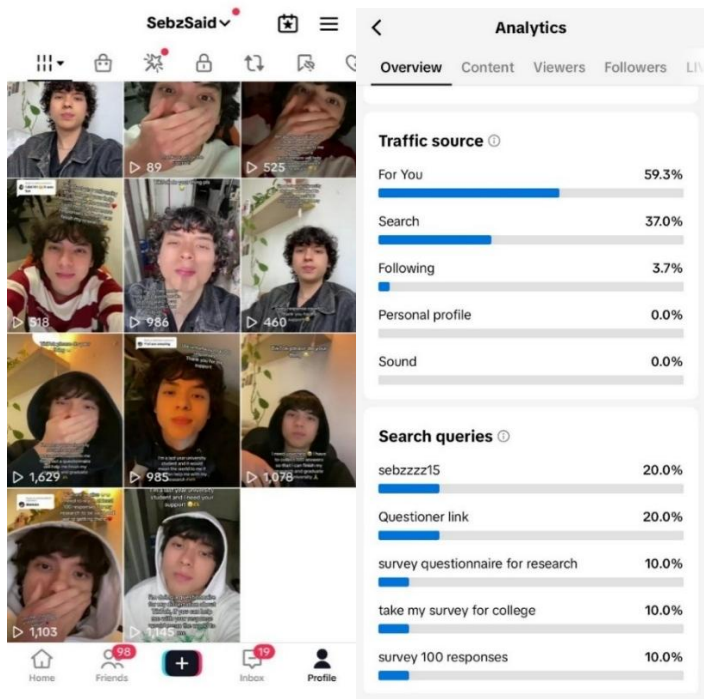
	Very Likely	Somewhat Likely	Somewhat Unlikely	Very Unlikely
Purchase other products recommended by the same creator				
Continue following the creator who recommended it				
Recommend TikTok Shop to friends/family				

**17. What do you find MOST valuable about the integration of content and shopping through TikTok Shop?**

- Seeing authentic product demonstrations
- Entertainment value while shopping
- Discovering unique/trendy products
- Community engagement and discussion
- Supporting creators I enjoy following
- Nothing, I prefer traditional e-commerce

**18. What would make your experience with TikTok Shop better?**

-



Interview Collection Method Data

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