When TikTok Influences Brands: Understanding the Impact of Digital Attitudes on Consumption among Tunisian Gen Z

Quand TikTok influence les marques : Comprendre l'impact des attitudes digitales sur la consommation de la Génération Z tunisienne

NAJAR Manel

Assistant Professor of Marketing

Higher Institute of Technological Studies in Communications of Tunis, Tunisia

MAGHRAOUI Souad

Assistant Professor of Marketing

Higher Institute of Management of Sousse, Tunisia.

Research Unit on Marketing Methods

Abstract

This research investigates how the e-lifestyle of young Tunisians shapes their attitudes toward TikTok and how these attitudes translate into brand-related behavioral and attitudinal outcomes. Grounded in a consumer–brand relationship perspective, the study examines the influence of digital lifestyle on users' attitudes toward the platform, as well as the effects on brand attachment and purchase intention. The moderating role of self–platform congruence, reflecting the perceived alignment between users' identity and the identity conveyed by the platform and its promoted brands, is also assessed. The empirical study targets Tunisian Generation Z users aged 15 to 29. The data were collected using a non-probabilistic convenience sampling method through an online questionnaire distributed via social media, from a sample of 300 participants. The conceptual model was tested using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). The results show that positive attitudes toward TikTok encourage sustained platform use and strengthen brand attachment. This attachment significantly predicts purchase intention, confirming its key role in digital consumer behavior. Moreover, self–platform congruence amplifies the effect of positive attitudes on purchase intention. The study highlights the importance of integrating e-lifestyle and identity congruence when analyzing brand responses within social media environments.

Keywords: e-lifestyle, TikTok, Generation Z, attitude toward platform, brand attachment, purchase intention, self–platform congruence, PLS-SEM.

Résumé

Cette recherche étudie comment l'e-lifestyle des jeunes Tunisiens façonne leurs attitudes envers TikTok et comment ces attitudes se traduisent en résultats comportementaux et attitudinaux liés aux marques. S'appuyant sur une perspective de la relation consommateur–marque, l'étude analyse l'influence du style de vie digital sur l'attitude des utilisateurs envers la plateforme, ainsi que ses effets sur l'attachement à la marque et l'intention d'achat. Le rôle modérateur de la congruence soi–plateforme, reflétant l'alignement perçu entre l'identité de l'utilisateur et celle véhiculée par la plateforme et les marques qui y sont promues, est également évalué. L'étude empirique cible des utilisateurs tunisiens de la Génération Z âgés de 15 à 29 ans. Les données ont été collectées à l'aide d'un échantillonnage de commodité non probabiliste via un questionnaire en ligne diffusé sur les réseaux sociaux, auprès d'un échantillon de 300 participants. Le modèle conceptuel a été testé à l'aide de la modélisation par équations structurelles en moindres carrés partiels (PLS-SEM). Les résultats montrent que des attitudes positives envers TikTok encouragent une utilisation soutenue de la plateforme et renforcent l'attachement à la marque. Cet attachement prédit significativement l'intention d'achat, confirmant son rôle clé dans le comportement du consommateur digital. De plus, la congruence soi–plateforme amplifie l'effet des attitudes positives sur l'intention d'achat. L'étude met en évidence l'importance d'intégrer l'e-lifestyle et la congruence identitaire dans l'analyse des réactions aux marques au sein des environnements de réseaux sociaux.

Mots-clés : e-lifestyle, TikTok, Génération Z, attitude envers la plateforme, attachement à la marque, intention d'achat, congruence soi–plateforme, PLS-SEM.

Introduction

Since their emergence, social media platforms have become major interactive spaces that allow users to share their experiences, engage with diverse content, and connect with virtual communities centered around common interests. These digital environments go far beyond mere entertainment, playing a central role in brand communication strategies. Their ability to foster closeness, generate participatory content, and influence purchasing decisions has profoundly transformed consumer behavior (Chatterjee & Dsilva, 2021).

Among these platforms, TikTok stands out as a unique ecosystem, particularly favored by Generation Z, generally defined as individuals born between 1997 and 2012 (Reinikainen et al., 2020). This generation, truly "digital natives," seeks increased interactivity, enhanced authenticity, and personal expression in their relationships with brands (Sharabati et al., 2022). Some scholars even speak of a "TikTok generation" (Ebongué, 2021) to highlight how this platform shapes their digital daily lives, purchasing practices, modes of expression, and identity values (Xu et al., 2021).

In Tunisia, this phenomenon is particularly pronounced: TikTok is among the most downloaded apps, especially among youth aged 15 to 29. This popularity comes with a profound shift in communication and consumption patterns, where images, immediacy, and algorithms replace traditional advertising methods. TikTok thus becomes a true stage where young people showcase their digital lifestyle, expressing their preferences, values, and aspirations through short videos often linked to brands or sponsored trends.

Within this context, the concept of "e-lifestyle," defined as the set of habits, values, and preferences consumers manifest in their digital environment (Hoque, 2018), proves to be a major analytical lever. It sheds light on how individuals identify with a social platform like TikTok and develop positive or negative attitudes toward the brands present there. Numerous studies have demonstrated that perceived congruence between a user's digital lifestyle and the values conveyed by a platform plays a crucial role in shaping favorable attitudes, loyalty, and recommendation intentions (Barta et al., 2023).

However, several gaps remain in the literature. On one hand, although TikTok is massively adopted by Generation Z, most academic research still focuses on older platforms like Facebook

or Instagram, thus underestimating the unique formative and interactional features of TikTok. On the other hand, while digital lifestyle is recognized as a key factor in online behavior, it is rarely used as a direct explanatory variable for attitudes toward social platforms and their induced brand effects. Finally, the lack of empirical studies contextualized in emerging countries such as Tunisia — where cultural norms, technological usage, and social behaviors differ significantly from Western contexts — limits understanding of generational and digital dynamics specific to these markets. This lack of contextualization restricts the ability to fully grasp the attitudinal and behavioral mechanisms of young consumers in these environments.

In light of these observations, the present research aims to fill these gaps by thoroughly exploring the influence of e-lifestyle on the attitude formation of young Tunisians toward TikTok, as well as the attitudinal and behavioral consequences toward brands promoted on this platform. Specifically, this study addresses the following research question: ***How does users' e-lifestyle influence their attitude toward TikTok, and what are the effects on brand attitudes, intentions, and behaviors, particularly under perceived self-congruence with the platform?***

To address this issue, the study adopts a quantitative approach to test the proposed model, examining the relationships among e-lifestyle, attitude toward TikTok, sustainable usage, brand attitude, and purchase intention, as well as the moderating role of self-congruence. By integrating the cultural and generational characteristics of the Tunisian context, the study also seeks to advance digital marketing literature and offer actionable insights for communication strategies targeting emerging consumers.

This paper first introduces the conceptual framework, then presents the research methodology, followed by the results and their discussion, and concludes with the key findings and their implications for practice and future research.

1. Conceptual Framework

This research draws on foundational theories including the Theory of Attitude (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) and Self-Congruence Theory (Sirgy, 1982) to explain how TikTok interactions shape Generation Z's perceptions and behaviors. Attitude theory posits that cognitive and affective evaluations of the platform influence usage intentions and brand engagement, while self-congruence theory emphasizes the role of alignment between users' e-lifestyle and

TikTok's values in reinforcing adherence and positive responses. Additionally, Uses and Gratifications Theory (Katz et al., 1974), adapted to social media (Pai & Arnott, 2013), provides insight into motivational drivers such as entertainment and self-expression. Integrating these perspectives facilitates a comprehensive examination of the antecedents and consequences of attitudes toward TikTok within the Tunisian cultural milieu.

1.1. Digital lifestyle and user attitude on TikTok

Generation Z, born after 1995 and also known as the i-Generation or Post-Millennials, is characterized by extensive engagement with digital technologies and online environments (Dolot, 2019). Lifestyle refers to the overall pattern of behaviors, activities, and interactions through which individuals engage with their surroundings. The concept of digital lifestyle, or e-lifestyle, encompasses the set of values, preferences, behaviors, and habits that individuals express within their digital environment (Hoque, 2018). It reflects how users integrate technologies and social networks into their daily lives, shaping their online interactions and media choices, particularly among Generation Z, for whom this digital lifestyle is pronounced and directly influences their perception and use of platforms such as TikTok.

According to Lee et al. (2009), e-lifestyle is based on activities, interests, values, and opinions related to technology. Arham (2017) identifies four main roles within this lifestyle: information seeker, electronic buyer, member of the cyber society, and entertainment enthusiast. Since Britt (1960), congruence between consumer interests and their perception of the marketing environment has been recognized as a central factor in decision-making. In the context of social networking, users may choose to avoid a platform if they perceive its content or operation as inconsistent with their lifestyle and technological interests (Hoque, 2018).

Self-congruence theory (Sirgy, 1982) reinforces this idea by stating that individuals tend to prefer environments and content that reflect their identity and lifestyle. Therefore, a strong alignment between a user's e-lifestyle and the values conveyed by TikTok fosters a more positive attitude, enhancing engagement and trust. Generation Z is distinguished by a unique digital lifestyle, strongly focused on new technologies and social platforms (Chang & Chang, 2023; Hoque, 2018), which validate their beliefs and interests. TikTok stands out as a particularly influential global medium for this generation (Dirir, 2022), offering content and

formats that closely match their expectations (Ebongué, 2021). Barta et al. (2023) highlight that TikTok inspires these young users to craft a singular digital lifestyle.

Furthermore, attitude theory (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) explains that attitude toward TikTok forms through a cognitive and affective evaluation of the user experience. E-lifestyle plays a major role by positively influencing this attitude when content is perceived as congruent with personal digital values. Since media technology has always been readily available and accessible for Generation Z, it is the most natural and comfortable method of communication for these individuals (Schwieger & Ladwig, 2018).

In summary, this research postulates that digital lifestyle significantly impacts Generation Z's attitude toward TikTok through perceived congruence between their personal values and those of the platform, thereby fostering more positive perceptions, increased engagement, and favorable behaviors.

H1. E-lifestyle adoption promotes a favorable attitude among Generation Z towards TikTok.

1.2. Attitude toward TikTok and its Impact on Sustainable Intention to Use

Attitude toward a digital platform such as TikTok is defined as a global, cognitive, and affective evaluation that users develop based on their experiences and perceptions of the platform (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). This attitude plays a central role in predicting future behaviors, particularly the intention to use the platform sustainably. Indeed, the more positive the attitude, the more likely users are to engage regularly, revisit the platform frequently, and recommend it within their network (Ki & Kim, 2019).

Among Generation Z, this favorable attitude is often linked to the perception of TikTok as an interactive, entertaining platform that aligns with their digital values and lifestyle (Barta et al., 2023). Such an attitude encourages not only continued use but also proactive behaviors like content sharing, loyalty, and engagement with brands present on TikTok (Yang, 2022).

Sustainable intention to use reflects users' willingness to maintain their engagement over the long term despite the constant emergence of new platforms or trends (Su et al., 2020). Understanding this process is crucial for brands aiming to build strong and lasting relationships with this digital target group.

Therefore, this research proposes the following hypothesis:

H2: A positive attitude toward TikTok positively influences the sustainable intention to use the platform.

1.3. From attitude toward TikTok to attitude toward the brand

Brand attitude is defined as a global, positive or negative evaluation that a consumer forms toward a specific brand, based on a combination of beliefs, emotions, and past experiences (Keller, 1993). This attitude plays a crucial role in consumer behavior, influencing not only purchase decisions but also brand loyalty and the likelihood of recommending the brand through word-of-mouth. In a dynamic digital context such as TikTok, brand attitude is especially important because online interactions are fast-paced, frequent, and often emotionally charged.

Sustainable intention to use TikTok refers to the user's long-term, deliberate willingness to continue using the platform beyond a temporary trend or fad (Bhattacherjee, 2001). This form of intention reflects deep and sustained engagement that shapes not only usage frequency but also the quality of interactions with content and brands on the platform.

In our study, we posit that the intention to continue using TikTok can influence users' attitudes toward the brands present on the platform. This hypothesis is grounded in the mere exposure effect, which suggests that repeated use of a media or platform increases familiarity, thereby enhancing positive attitudes toward associated elements, such as brands. Prior research in digital marketing and consumer psychology supports this reversed causal pathway, showing that repeated engagement or behavioral experience can feed back into perceptions and attitudes (e.g., Lee et al., 2009; Malär et al., 2011).

This sustainable intention is likely to act as a catalyst for strengthening a positive attitude toward brands promoted on TikTok. Indeed, prolonged and regular use encourages repeated exposure to brand messages, which increases familiarity, trust, and perceived authenticity—key factors in building favorable attitudes in a digital environment (Muntinga et al., 2011). Moreover, TikTok's interactive and community-based nature allows engaged users to share, comment, and co-create brand-related content, further enhancing their attachment and positive perception.

In a social networking context, the perception users develop toward a platform shapes their attitude toward it (Ngo et al., 2022). This attitude toward the social network directly influences the attitude toward the brands promoted on it. Indeed, although brand attitude has sometimes been considered a unidimensional construct (Mitchell et al., 1981), it corresponds to a relatively enduring internal evaluation that assesses the degree of consumer attachment to the brand (Spears & Singh, 2004). This attitude can be amplified by favorable beliefs toward the communication medium through source-to-brand transfer effects (MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989). On TikTok, the quality of shared visual content reinforces these beliefs, contributing to brand recognition and attachment. Ngo et al. (2022) show that the more users develop favorable beliefs about TikTok and regard it as a reference point, the more positive their attitude toward the brands featured on the platform. Moreover, a favorable attitude toward the social network often translates into greater appreciation for the brands it hosts, particularly because social media strengthen brand image through communication (Zouaoui & Maghraoui, 2021). Conversely, rejection of the platform can also transfer to the brand, constituting a negative control mechanism (Speck & Elliott, 1997). Thus, attitude acts as a key driver conditioning the relationship with the brand, especially in a digital environment (Goodrich et al., 2015).

In summary, it is expected that the stronger the sustainable intention to use TikTok, the more favorable users' attitudes toward brands on the platform will be, which in turn will encourage engagement, loyalty, and purchase behaviors.

H3. Sustainable intention to use TikTok positively influences users' attitudes toward brands promoted on the platform.

In the context of social networking, the managerial interest in analyzing purchase intention lies in the fact that consumers who express positive purchase intentions generally exhibit higher conversion rates (Bigné et al., 2012). Purchase intention often considered a unidimensional concept (Moon & Kim, 2001), refers to the plans or decisions made by users to acquire a product or service (Goyal, 2014). It represents a subjective psychological state in which users are more likely to complete a purchase on an online platform, influenced by their past experiences, needs, and desires (Cyr, 2008; Abumalloh et al., 2018).

Within TikTok's environment, where interaction with branded content is rapid, immersive, and often emotionally engaging, a positive brand attitude plays a fundamental role in shaping purchase intention. Lim et al. (2017) highlight a significant link between a favorable attitude toward a website and users' purchase intention on that site. Furthermore, Generation Z, who are heavily exposed to TikTok content, tend to develop positive beliefs toward brands present on the platform, which strengthens their likelihood to form higher purchase intentions on TikTok (Lesmana, 2025).

In summary, it appears that a favorable brand attitude on TikTok is a key predictor of purchase intention. Thus, we propose the following hypothesis:

H4. A favorable attitude toward the brand positively influences purchase intention on TikTok.

The concept of self-congruence (personal fit) refers to the alignment between a consumer's self-image and the image conveyed by the brand (Sirgy, 1982). This alignment influences the strength and direction of the relationship between brand attitude and purchase behavior. Thus, high self-congruence acts as a moderator that strengthens the positive effect of favorable brand attitude on purchase intention. Indeed, when consumers perceive a strong similarity between their personal values and those expressed by the brand, they are more likely to translate their positive attitudes into actual purchase intentions (Sirgy, 1982; Spears & Singh, 2004). Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis :

H5. Self-congruence positively moderates the relationship between favorable brand attitude and purchase intention on TikTok, such that this relationship is stronger when self-congruence is high.

The hypotheses propose that e-lifestyle strongly influences Generation Z's positive attitude toward TikTok. This attitude affects both the sustainable intention to use the platform and the attitude toward brands. Personal congruence moderates the relationship between brand attitude and purchase intention. This framework sheds light on the behaviors of young Tunisian consumers in a digital context and supports the development of the following research models.
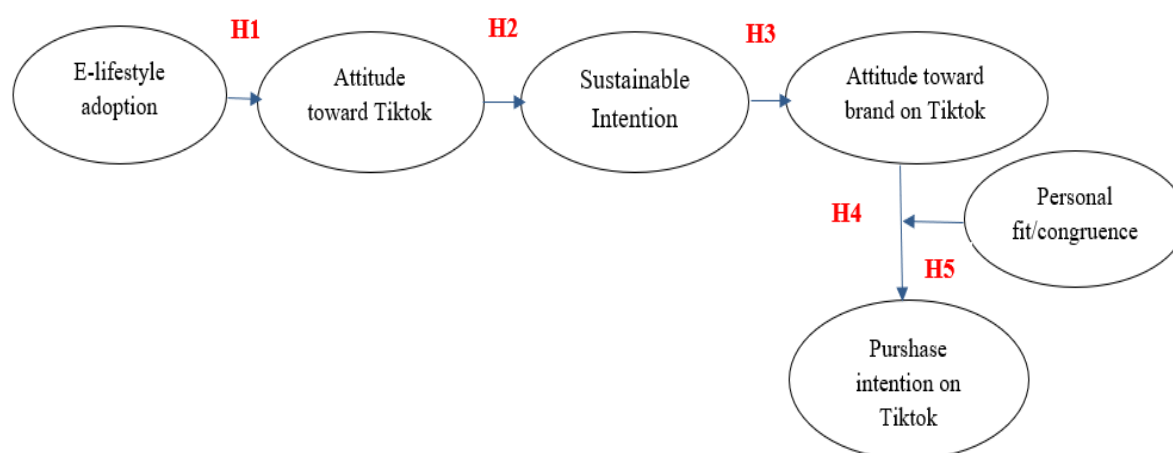
Figure 1: Conceptual Research Model

2. Research Methodology

This study employs a quantitative, descriptive, and explanatory research design to empirically test the hypotheses proposed in the conceptual framework. Its primary objective is to examine the relationships among e-lifestyle, attitude toward TikTok, sustainable usage intention, brand attitude, and purchase intention, while also investigating the moderating role of self-congruence in these relationships.

The target population comprises Tunisian youth from Generation Z, aged 15 to 29, who are active users of TikTok. Data were collected through a non-probabilistic convenience sampling method using an online questionnaire disseminated via social media platforms. The study collected data from a sample of 300 participants, providing sufficient statistical power for robust analysis (Hair et al., 2010). Parental consent was obtained for participants under 18, and all procedures adhered to ethical standards in accordance with social science research guidelines.

A structured questionnaire was employed, incorporating validated scales widely recognized in the literature for their reliability and psychometric rigor. The questionnaire was designed to accurately capture participants' digital lifestyle, attitudes toward TikTok, behavioral intentions,

and perceptions of brand congruence. The measurement scales selected for this research are all unidimensional and have been validated according to previous literature (see Appendix 1).

To ensure linguistic and conceptual validity, the questionnaire was translated and back-translated following the procedure recommended by Urien (2000). A qualitative pretest was conducted with twenty Tunisian Generation Z TikTok users to evaluate the clarity, comprehensibility, and relevance of the items. Necessary adjustments were made prior to the final distribution of the questionnaire.

The collected data were analyzed using statistical software such as SPSS and SmartPLS. A descriptive analysis was conducted to characterize the sample. Reliability analysis (Cronbach's Alpha) and validity analysis (confirmatory factor analysis) were performed. The hypothesized relationships were tested using structural equation modeling (SEM). Specifically, the Partial Least Squares SEM (PLS-SEM) method was employed due to its ability to handle complex models with multiple latent variables, even with moderate sample sizes. Additionally, PLS-SEM does not require strict normality of the data, which is often the case in social science research. This approach is particularly suited for exploratory or predictive research like this study, which aims to test an innovative conceptual framework including moderating relationships.

3. Results

To validate the conceptual model, we employed the Partial Least Squares (PLS) method using SmartPLS4 software, a structural equation modeling technique particularly suitable for testing extensions of models and theories (Hair et al., 2019). The model we tested focuses on assessing the relationships between e-lifestyle, attitude toward TikTok, sustainable intention to use, brand attitude, and purchase intention, while also examining the moderating effect of personal congruence.

Since the data were collected from a single source, it was crucial to evaluate the potential impact of common method bias (CMB). To mitigate this risk, the questionnaire was administered anonymously, following the guidelines of Podsakoff et al. (2003). Furthermore, Harman's single-factor test (Harman, 1976) was conducted on all measured constructs. The principal

component analysis identified multiple factors, suggesting that CMB did not pose a significant threat to the validity of the findings.

The measurement models estimated by PLS demonstrated robust psychometric properties for all concepts related to e-lifestyle adoption and attitude towards TikTok. (see Table 1). Composite reliability values consistently exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.7 (Hair et al., 2014), confirming strong internal consistency. Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values were above 0.5 for all constructs, indicating satisfactory convergent validity (Hair et al., 2010). Discriminant validity was also established: the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT) values were all below 0.85 (Hair et al., 2019), and the square roots of AVE surpassed the inter-construct correlations (Henseler, 2017). These results confirm that the measurement instruments capturing the adoption of e-lifestyle, as well as users' attitudes toward TikTok, sustainable usage intention, brand attitude, purchase intention, and self-congruence, are both reliable and valid, providing a solid foundation for proceeding to the evaluation of the structural model.

Table 1. Measurement Model Assessment

Construct	Indicators	Factor Loading	Composite Reliability (CR)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
E-lifestyle	EL1–EL4	0.76–0.89	0.89	0.67
Attitude toward TikTok	ATT1–ATT4	0.78–0.91	0.91	0.72
Sustainable intention	CI1-TT CI3-TT	0.81–0.90	0,89	0,72
Brand Attitude	BA1–BA4	0.75–0.89	0.90	0.70
Purchase Intention	PI1–PI3	0.82–0.90	0.89	0.73
Personal Congruence (Modérateur)	PC1–PC3	0.77–0.88	0.88	0.66

The structural model was assessed using a bootstrap procedure with 5,000 resamples, in accordance with the recommendations of Hair et al. (2014). The results indicate a satisfactory overall model fit (see Table 2). Specifically, all R^2 values exceed the 0.1 threshold suggested

by Sánchez-Franco (2009), Q^2 values are positive across constructs, and the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) is below the recommended cutoff of 0.08 (Hair et al., 2019).

Table 2: Structural Model Fit Quality

Indicator	Obtained Value	Recommended Threshold	Reference
R^2 (Attitude TikTok)	0.42	> 0.10	Sánchez-Franco (2009)
R^2 (Sustainable Intention)	0.47	> 0.10	
R^2 (Purchase Intention)	0.52	> 0.10	
Q^2 (Predictive Relevance)	0.25–0.38	> 0	Hair et al. (2019)
SRMR	0.061	< 0.08	Hair et al. (2019)

The analysis of the structural relationships reveals that all tested effects are statistically significant, thereby supporting all the proposed hypotheses based on the corresponding indicators.

Table 3. Hypothesis Testing of the Proposed Model

Hypothese	Tested Relationship	Coefficient β	t-value	p-value	Results
H1	E-lifestyle → Attitude toward TikTok	0.41	7.12	< 0.001	Supported
H2	Attitude toward TikTok → Sustainable Intention to Use	0.36	6.45	< 0.001	Supported
H3	Sustainable Intention → Brand Attitude	0.39	5.82	< 0.001	Supported
H4	Brand Attitude → Purchase Intention	0.44	8.10	< 0.001	Supported
H5	Personal Congruence × Attitude → Purchase Intention	0.18	3.27	0.001	Supported

4. Discussion of Results

The results of **H1**(E-lifestyle → Attitude toward TikTok: β = 0.41, p < 0.001) confirm that e-lifestyle exerts a positive and significant influence on users' attitudes toward TikTok. In other words, individuals with a more digitally oriented lifestyle perceive TikTok more favorably. This finding aligns with the studies of Park et al. (2021) and Lim et al. (2020), which suggest that digitally active consumers tend to display a more open attitude toward innovative social media platforms. A strong e-lifestyle fosters greater familiarity with online social interactions, content creation, and visual media consumption, which enhances the perception of TikTok as a fun, interactive, and socially rewarding platform. Brands should target consumers with a high e-lifestyle profile to strengthen their attitudinal capital on TikTok, using interactive and immersive campaigns tailored to their digital behavior. According to Putra & Kurniasari (2025), in a study conducted on the TikTok Shop, online lifestyle and the online shopping experience influence consumer behavior via TikTok Shop. In the same vein, the work of Maharani (2023) shows that digital lifestyle influences the intention to purchase beauty products, via digital communication on TikTok.

H2 (Attitude toward TikTok → Sustainable Intention to Use: β = 0.36, p < 0.001) confirm that a positive attitude toward TikTok leads to a sustained intention to use the platform. This result supports the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), which posits that attitude is a key antecedent of behavioral intention. Users who perceive TikTok as entertaining, useful, and credible are more likely to continue using it in the long term. This finding is consistent with Alalwan et al. (2017), who showed that favorable attitudes toward social media foster continuous engagement. A coherent and authentic content strategy on TikTok can reinforce sustainable usage intentions, particularly when perceived as genuine and aligned with users' values. As for Sharabati et al. (2022), their study explored how TikTok user satisfaction influences their intention to continue using the platform. The results show that satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on the intention to continue using the platform. On the other hand, Lu et al. (2024) confirm that technological affordances stimulate the flow experience in Generation Z users, which in turn reinforces satisfaction and the intention to continue using TikTok.

H3 (Sustainable Intention → Brand Attitude; β = 0.39, p < 0.001) confirm that a sustained intention to use TikTok enhances users' attitudes toward brands active on the platform. These results align with the work of Sharabati et al., (2022) which confirm that satisfaction and intention to continue using TikTok promote engagement with content and brands, suggesting a positive influence on attitude towards these brands. Continuously engaged users are more frequently exposed to brand content, leading to greater familiarity and, consequently, a more positive perception. This relationship can be explained through the mere exposure effect (Zajonc, 1968): the more users repeatedly interact with the platform, the more favorable their attitude becomes toward the brands that maintain a consistent presence. Brands that invest in a regular and coherent presence on TikTok benefit from a cumulative positive effect on users' attitudes toward them. Thus, users with a lasting intention to continue using TikTok are considered more satisfied overall, which promotes a favorable attitude towards brands present on the platform (Lu et al., 2024).

H4 (Brand Attitude → Purchase Intention; β = 0.44, p < 0.001), this strongly supported hypothesis confirms that brand attitude directly influences purchase intention. Consumers who develop a positive attitude toward a brand on TikTok are more inclined to consider purchasing its products or services. This result is consistent with previous studies in digital marketing (Ebrahim, 2020) emphasizing the central role of brand attitude in the decision-making process. On TikTok, where communication relies heavily on creativity and authenticity, building an engaging brand image has a direct impact on converting positive attitudes into purchase behavior. Indeed, Pramesti & Alversia (2023) emphasize that the attitude of TikTok users towards user-generated content (UGC) affects purchase intention, through brand engagement and source credibility. Furthermore, the results of Wang's (2024) study on the factors influencing the purchase intention of TikTok users in the context of e-commerce show that the positive attitude of users towards the brands presented during the live streams has a significant and favorable effect on their purchase intention. Moreover, Authentic storytelling and brand content strategies on TikTok are essential to transforming favorable attitudes into actual purchase intentions.

H5 (Personal Congruence × Attitude → Purchase Intention; β = 0.18, p = 0.001), The moderating effect of personal congruence is also confirmed. The results show that when the perceived personality of a brand or TikTok content aligns with that of the user (self-

congruence), the relationship between attitude and purchase intention is strengthened. This finding supports the self-congruence theory proposed by Sirgy (1982) and Malär et al. (2011), which posits that consumers prefer brands reflecting their own identity. Koay, Lim and Lim (2024) show that when the congruence between the consumer and the influencer is high, the consumer develops a more positive attitude towards the brand, which increases their intention to make impulsive online purchases. In the same context, Heigl et al., (2024), prove that the congruence between the TikTok influencer, the brand and the consumers strongly influence perceived credibility, authenticity, user attitude and their purchase intention. In other words, the more a brand is perceived as consistent with the user's values and lifestyle, the more effectively a favorable attitude translates into purchase intention. Brands should ensure that their TikTok communication reflects values and tones consistent with their target audience's personality in order to maximize the conversion of positive attitudes into purchasing behavior.

Conclusion

This study provided an in-depth examination of how Generation Z's e-lifestyle influences their attitudes toward TikTok, as well as the subsequent effects on sustainable usage intention, brand attitude, and purchase intention. The results obtained through the PLS method confirm the validity of the proposed conceptual model and highlight significant relationships among all the variables studied.

The analyses show that e-lifestyle is a key determinant in the formation of positive attitudes toward TikTok. These attitudes, in turn, foster a sustainable intention to use the platform and strengthen users' attitudes toward brands active on it. Brand attitude directly influences purchase intention, confirming the central role of brand attachment and perception in shaping digital purchasing behavior. Finally, personal congruence acts as a significant moderator: the more users perceive a match between their own identity and that of the brand, the more likely their positive attitude is to translate into purchase intention.

By focusing on Tunisian youth, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of digital behaviors within a culturally distinct and rapidly evolving context. It highlights TikTok's potential not only as a platform for entertainment but also as a strategic tool for building brand–

consumer relationships—provided that content remains authentic, engaging, and aligned with the audience's identity values.

Managerial Implications and Limitations

This study offers several practical insights for marketers and brand managers seeking to effectively engage Generation Z on TikTok and similar social media platforms. First, understanding that e-lifestyle strongly shapes users' attitudes toward TikTok highlights the need for brands to design communication strategies aligned with the digital habits, values, and content consumption patterns of their target audiences. Campaigns that authentically reflect users' digital lifestyles are more likely to generate positive attitudes, enhance engagement, and foster long-term platform use. For example, brands could develop TikTok content strategies tailored to different e-lifestyle profiles.

Second, the confirmation of the moderating role of personal congruence between users and brands underscores the importance of identity alignment in digital marketing. Brands that successfully mirror the self-concept, values, and lifestyle of Generation Z consumers can transform favorable attitudes into actual purchase intentions more effectively. This can be achieved by working on brand image, storytelling, and values to enhance self-congruence. This finding encourages marketers to prioritize personalized, relatable, and value-driven brand communication that resonates with the self-identity of their audience.

Finally, given the cultural specificity of the Tunisian context, both local and global brands should adapt their digital marketing approaches to account for regional norms, social values, and behavioral patterns. By integrating cultural nuances into digital campaigns, brands can increase their relevance and emotional resonance, ultimately strengthening consumer trust, loyalty, and advocacy in emerging markets.

Despite its theoretical and practical contributions, this study is not without limitations. First, the use of a non-probabilistic convenience sampling method limits the generalizability of the findings beyond the sample studied. Additionally, the presence of participants under 18 raises potential ethical concerns. Future research should employ more representative sampling techniques to enhance external validity.

Second, the cross-sectional design restricts the ability to infer causal relationships. Longitudinal studies would provide deeper insights into how e-lifestyle and attitudes evolve over time in response to technological and cultural changes.

Third, the study focuses exclusively on TikTok and Tunisian Generation Z users, which may limit the applicability of the results to other social media platforms, age groups, or cultural contexts. Comparative studies across different platforms (e.g., Instagram, Snapchat) or generations could reveal interesting variations in digital engagement patterns.

Finally, since the data were collected through self-reported questionnaires, potential biases such as social desirability, response consistency, and self-selection of respondents cannot be entirely ruled out. The use of a single analytical tool (PLS-SEM) also represents a limitation. Future research could complement quantitative findings with qualitative approaches—such as interviews or focus groups—to gain a deeper understanding of users' motivations, perceptions of self-congruence, and emotional attachment to brands.

Appendices

Appendix 1

Table 1 : Measurement Scales

Construct	Items label
Purchase Intention on TikTok **Moon et Kim (2001)**	PI1 – I would definitely buy products from TikTok in the near future. PI2 – I intend to buy on TikTok in the near future. PI3 – It is likely that I will buy on TikTok in the near future. PI4 – I plan to buy on TikTok in the near future.
Self-Congruence **Xu and Pratt (2018)**	C1_This brand suits me very well. C2_The compatibility between me and this brand is high. C3_The alignment between me and this brand is high. C4 –The congruence between me and this brand is high.
Attitude toward TikTok **Ellisson et al (2007)**	Att1 – TikTok is part of my daily activities. Att2 – I am proud to tell people that I am on TikTok. Att3 – TikTok has now become part of my daily life. Att4 – I feel disconnected when I have not logged into TikTok for some time.
Attitude toward the brand **Chattopadhyay et Basu (1990)**	Ab1-Brands promoted on Tiktok are good. Ab2- I like brands proted on Tiktok. Ab3- Brands promoted on Tiktok are nice.

Sustainable Intention to use Tiktok **Bhattacherjee (2001)**	CI1-TT – I intend to continue using TikTok in the future. CI2-TT – I will continue using TikTok rather than stop using it. CI3-TT – My intention is to continue using TikTok.
E-Lifestyle **(Yu, 2011)**	ELS1 – I often spend a lot of time examining ICT-based products and services. ELS2 – I keep myself informed about the latest developments in ICT-based products and services. ELS3 – I am very interested in discovering how to use ICT-based products and services. ELS4 – I am very happy to learn about new ICT-based products and services. ELS5 – I enjoy acquiring knowledge about ICT. ELS6 – Keeping up with the latest ICT trends is very important to me.

Appendix 2

Table 2 : Sample Description

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	140	46.7%
	Female	155	51.7%
	Other / Prefer not to say	5	1.6%
Age	16–18 years	60	20%
	19–21 years	150	50%
	22–24 years	90	30%
Education Level	High school / Secondary	70	23.3%
	Currently in higher education	180	60%
	University graduate	50	16.7%
Employment Status	Student	200	66.7%
	Employed	70	23.3%
	Unemployed / Other	30	10%
Geographical Location	Major city (e.g., Tunis)	180	60%
	Other city	90	30%
	Rural area	30	10%
Daily Social Media Usage	<1 hour	15	5%
	1–3 hours	90	30%
	3–5 hours	120	40%
	>5 hours	75	25%

References

Abumalloh, R. A., Ibrahim, O. B., Nilashi, M., & Abu-Ulbeh, W. (2018). A literature review on purchase intention factors in e-commerce. *Dans M. I. Qureshi (Éd.), Technology & Society: A Multidisciplinary Pathway for Sustainable Development* (vol. 40, pp. 386–398). Future Academy. https://doi.org/10.15405/epsbs.2018.05.31

Ajzen, I. (1991), "The theory of planned behavior", Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, Vol. 50 No. 2, pp. 179-211.

Al-Menayes, J. (2015). Motivations for using social media: An exploratory factor analysis. *International Journal of Psychological Studies*, *7*(1), 1–43. https://doi.org/10.5539/ijps.v7n1p43

Alalwan, A. A., Rana, N. P., Dwivedi, Y. K., & Algharabat, R. (2017). Social media in marketing: A review and analysis of the existing literature. Telematics and Informatics, 34(7), 1177–1190. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tele.2017.05.008

Arham, A. (2017). E-lifestyles: A literature analysis, relevance for marketers and future research directions. *AIMA Journal of Management & Research, 11(3/4)*, 1–15.

Assaker, G., Hallak, R., & El-Haddad, R. (2019). Consumer usage of online travel reviews: Expanding the unified theory of acceptance and use of technology 2 model. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, *26*(2), 149–165. https://doi.org/10.1177/1356766719867370

Barta, S., Belanche, D., Fernández, A., & Flavián, M. (2023). Influencer marketing on TikTok: The effectiveness of humor and followers' hedonic experience. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, *70*, 1–12. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2023.103165

Bhattacherjee, A. (2001). "Understanding Information Systems Continuance: An Expectation-Confirmation Model." MIS Quarterly, 25(3), 351–370

Bigné, E., Currás-Pérez, R., & Aldás-Manzano, J. (2012). Dual nature of cause-brand fit: Influence on corporate social responsibility consumer perception. *European Journal of Marketing, 46, 575-594*, doi: https://doi.org/10.1108/03090561211202620

Britt, S. H. (1960). The Spenders. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.

Chatterjee, J., & Dsilva, N. R. (2021). A study on the role of social media in promoting sustainable tourism in the states of Assam and Odisha. *Tourism Critiques: Practice and Theory, 2(1)*, 74–90 https://doi.org/10.1108/trc-09-2020-0017

Chang, C.-W., & Chang, S.-H. (2023). The impact of digital disruption: Influences of digital media and social networks on forming digital natives' attitudes. *SAGE Open*, *13*(3), 1–10. https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440231183537

Cyr, D. (2008). Modeling Web Site Design across Cultures: Relationships to Trust, Satisfaction, and E-Loyalty. Journal of Management Information Systems, 24(4), 47–72. https://doi.org/10.2753/MIS0742-1222240402

Dirir, S. A. (2022). Investigating the impact of TikTok on Generation Z buying behavior and their insight of selecting brands. *Market Research Society Journal*, Conference Paper.

Dolot, A. (2019). The characteristics of Generation Z. *E-Mentor*, *2*(74). https://doi.org/10.15219/em74.1421

Ebongué, A. (2021). *Génération TikTok : Un nouvel eldorado pour les marques*. Dunod. ISBN: 978-2-10-082755-8

Ebrahim, R. S. (2020). The role of trust in understanding the impact of social media marketing on brand equity and brand loyalty. *Journal of Relationship Marketing*, 19(4), 287–308. https://doi.org/10.1080/15332667.2019.1705742

Fishbein, M., & Ajzen, I. (1975). *Belief, attitude, intention, and behavior: An introduction to theory and research.* Addison-Wesley.

Goodrich, K., Schiller, S. Z., & Galletta, D. (2015). Consumer reactions to intrusiveness of online-video advertisements: Do length, informativeness, and humor help or hinder marketing outcomes? *Journal of Advertising Research*, 55(1), 37-50.

Hair, J. F., Jr., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., & Anderson, R. E. (2019). *Multivariate data analysis* (8e éd.). Cengage Learning.

Hair, J.F., Hult, G.T.M., Ringle, C.M. and Sarstedt, M. (2014), *A Primer on Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM),* Sage, Thousand Oaks.

Hair, J. F., Anderson, R. E., Tatham, R. L., & Black, W. C. (2010). *Multivariate data analysis* (7e éd.). Pearson.

Harman, H. H. (1976). *Modern factor analysis* (3e éd.). University of Chicago Press.

Heigl, R. M., Weber, P., & Hinz, O. (2024). The TikTok equation: How congruence drives influencer marketing success — A mixed-methods study. *Proceedings of the 2024 European Conference on Information Systems (ECIS)*. Retrieved from AIS eLibrary.

Henseler, J. (2017). *Partial least squares path modeling: Updated guidelines. Dans H. Latan & R. Noonan (Éds.)*, Partial least squares path modeling: Basic concepts, methodological issues and applications (pp. 19–39). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-64069-3_2

Hoque, A. S. M. M. (2018). Digital device addiction effect on lifestyle of Generation Z in Bangladesh. *Asian People Journal (APJ)*, *1*(2), 21–44.

Katz, E., Blumler, J. G., & Gurevitch, M. (1974). Utilization of mass communication by the individual. In J. G. Blumler & E. Katz (Eds.), *The uses of mass communications: Current perspectives on gratifications research* (pp. 19–32). Sage.

Keller, K. L. (1993). Conceptualizing, measuring, and managing customer-based brand equity. *Journal of Marketing, 57(1),* 1–22. https://doi.org/10.2307/1252054

Ki, C. W. C., & Kim, Y. K. (2019). The mechanism by which social media influencers persuade consumers: The role of consumers' desire to mimic. *Psychology & Marketing, 36(10),* 905–922. https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.21244

Koay, K. Y., Lim, W. M., & Lim, W. M. (2024). Congruence effects in social media influencer marketing: The moderating role of wishful identification in online impulse buying intentions. *Journal of Product & Brand Management, 34(10),* 1225–1242. https://doi.org/10.1108/JPBM-09-2023-4709

Lee, S.-H. (2009). How do online reviews affect purchasing intention? *African Journal of Business Management, 3(10)*, 576–581.

Lesmana, A. (2025). The role of TikTok content virality in shaping Gen Z's purchase intentions. *Jurnal Informatika Ekonomi Bisnis,* 7(4), 893–897. https://doi.org/10.37034/infeb.v7i4.1301

Lim, Y. J. (2020). The PESTEL Model Application to OK Boomer and TikTok from a Public Relations Perspective. *Journal of Media Research, 13(37)*, 94–110. https://doi.org/10.24193/jmr.37.6

Lu, X., Inthawadee, S., Wang, W., & Shinasharkey, T. (2024). The technology affordance for enhancing Gen Zs' flow experience, satisfaction and continuance usage of TikTok in Thailand. *AU-GSB e-Journal*, 17(2), 1–10. https://doi.org/10.14456/augsbejr.2024.23

Maharani, A., & Sumadi, S. (2023). The influence of digital marketing communication on TikTok social media and lifestyle on beauty product purchase intention: A case study of the Somethinc brand. *Journal Ekonomi & Riset (JER), 6(2)*, 688. https://doi.org/10.57178/jer.v6i2.688

Malär, L., Krohmer, H., Hoyer, W. D., & Nyffenegger, B. (2011). Emotional brand attachment and brand personality: The relative importance of the actual and the ideal self. *Journal of Marketing,* 75(4), 35–52. https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkg.75.4.35

Muntinga, D. G., Moorman, M., & Smit, E. G. (2011). Introducing COBRAs: Exploring motivations for brand-related social media use. *International Journal of Advertising, 30*(1), 13–46. https://doi.org/10.2501/IJA-30-1-013-046

Pai, P., & Arnott, D. C. (2013). User adoption of social networking sites: Eliciting uses and gratifications through a means-end approach. *Computers in Human Behavior, 29(3),* 1039-1053. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2012.06.025

Park, J., Lee, J. M., Xiong, V. Y., Septianto, F., & Seo, Y. (2021). David and Goliath: When and why micro-influencers are more persuasive than mega-influencers. *Journal of Advertising, 50(5)*, 584–602. https://doi.org/10.1080/00913367.2021.1936986

Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B., Lee, J.-Y., & Podsakoff, N. P. (2003). Common method biases in behavioral research: A critical review of the literature and recommended remedies. *Journal of Applied Psychology,* 88(5), 879–903. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.88.5.879

Pramesti, K. D., & Alversia, Y. (2023). *The influence of attitude toward user generated content (UGC) in TikTok on purchase intention. In Proceedings of the 7th Global Conference on Business, Management, and Entrepreneurship* (pp. 630–639). Atlantis Press. https://doi.org/10.2991/978-94-6463-234-7_66

Putra, A., & Kurniasari, F. (2024). The influence of online shopping experience and lifestyle on the consumptive behavior of students at Universitas Muhammadiyah Pontianak using the TikTok Shop application. *Electronic Journal of Education, Social Economics and Technology (eJESET), 6(2)*, Article 919. https://doi.org/10.33122/ejeset.v6i2.919

Reinikainen, H., Kari, J. T., & Luoma-Aho, V. (2020). Generation Z and organizational listening on social media. *Media and Communication*, *8*(2), 185–196. https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.v8i2.2767

Sánchez-Franco, M. J. (2009). The moderating effects of involvement on the relationships between satisfaction, trust and commitment in e-banking. *Journal of Interactive Marketing, 23(3)*, 247–258. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.intmar.2009.04.007

Schwieger, D., & Ladwig, C. (2018). Reaching and retaining the next generation: Adapting to the expectations of Gen Z in the classroom. *Information Systems Education Journal*, *16*(3), 45–54.

Sharabati, A. A. A., Al-Haddad, S., Al-Khasawneh, M., Nababteh, N., Mohammad, M., & Abu Ghoush, Q. (2022). The impact of TikTok user satisfaction on continuous intention to use the application. *Journal of Open Innovation: Technology, Market, and Complexity*, *8*(3), 125–144. https://doi.org/10.3390/joitmc8030125

Sirgy, M. J. (1982). Measuring corporate performance by building on the stakeholders' model of business ethics. *Journal of Business Ethics, 1(4)*, 241–251. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00383666

Spears, N., & Singh, S. N. (2004). Measuring attitude toward the brand and purchase intentions. *Journal of Current Issues & Research in Advertising*, 26(2), 53–66. https://doi.org/10.1080/10641734.2004.10505164

Su, Y., Bradley, J., Baker Jason, P., Doyle and Meimei, Y. (2020), "Fan engagement in 15 seconds: athletes' relationship marketing during a pandemic via TikTok", *International Journal of Sport Communication,* Vol. 13 No. 3, pp. 436-446.

Wang, T. (2024). Research on the Influencing Factors of TikTok Users' Purchase Intention Under the Background of E-Commerce Live Broadcast. In Proceedings of the 2023 5th *International Conference on Economic Management and Cultural Industry (ICEMCI 2023*) (pp. 264–271). Atlantis Press. https://doi.org/10.2991/978-94-6463-368-9_31

Xu, Z., Islam, T., Liang, X., Akhtar, N. and Shahzad, M. (2021), "I'm like you, and I like what you like' sustainable food purchase influenced by vloggers: a moderated serial-mediation model", Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, Vol. 63 No. 102737, pp. 1-11.

Xu, X. and Pratt, S. (2018), "Social media influencers as endorsers to promote travel destinations: an application of self-congruence theory to the Chinese generation Y", Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing, Vol. 35No.7,pp.958-972.

Yang, S. (2022, May). Creating a popular video—The case study of the influencer blogger "Jia Jia" on TikTok. In *2022 International Conference on Comprehensive Art and Cultural Communication (CACC 2022)* (pp. 129–133). Atlantis Press. https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.220502.027

Zajonc, R. B. (1968). Attitudinal effects of mere exposure. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 9(2, Pt.2), 1–27. https://doi.org/10.1037/h0025848