Exploring TikTok Affiliate Marketing: How Content Quality, Audience Engagement, and Influencer Credibility Shape Purchase Intention

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Abstract: - TikTok is one of the emerging social-commerce platforms that enables integration of product information, audience interaction and influencer endorsement in short-form video formats. This study investigated the influence of content quality, audience engagement and influencer credibility on purchase intention of 300 adult TikTok users from Naawan, Misamis Oriental, Philippines. A quantitative descriptive-correlational research design was employed. A four-point Likert-type questionnaire was used to gather data from the participants, which was analyzed using hierarchical multiple regression. Content quality was entered in the first stage followed by audience engagement and influencer credibility in the subsequent two stages. Results showed that while content quality explained 35.7% of the variance in purchase intention, audience engagement and influencer credibility explained additional 11.4% and 8.9% respectively. The final model explained 56.0% of variance ($F(3, 296) = 125.65$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .560$, adjusted $R^2 = .556$) with all predictors positively related to purchase intention. Influencer credibility, however, had the strongest positive relationship with purchase intention even when the effects of content quality and audience engagement were controlled. Diagnostic tests for multicollinearity and residual independency were minimal. Furthermore, the use of HC3 robust standard errors to test for heteroscedasticity supported the stability of findings despite the existence of said phenomenon. The study further highlighted the complementary roles of informative content, audience interaction and influencer endorsement in affiliate marketing via TikTok. It also provided evidence from a smaller community in the Philippines regarding social-commerce purchase intentions and distinguished between the explained variance that was incremental and the associations standardized in the multivariable regression model.

Key-Words: - TikTok Affiliate Marketing, Purchase Intention, Content Quality, Audience Engagement, Influencer Credibility.

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1 Introduction

Social media is evolving from simple communication tools to complex business models that enable users to move seamlessly from product discovery to peer-to-peer communication and brand endorsement, and to make purchases within platforms and applications. For example, TikTok, a platform of short-form videos, has become a commercially converged environment in which users can discover, engage with, and purchase products within a single feed of videos. Within such environments, consumers are not only exposed to promotional messages but also to indicators of the quality of the content being consumed, to expressions of support or abolishment of products and messages by other users, and to cues that signal the credibility of the sender of a message.

Influencer marketing has undergone significant changes and has become more complex and multifaceted as it evolves and becomes more ingrained in the digital environment. Large-scale meta-analyses on influencer marketing have consistently established that post characteristics, influencer attributes, and audience characteristics all have significant and variable effects on marketing outcomes [1], [2], [3], [4]. For example, the recent large-scale meta-analysis [3], based on a sample of 1,531 effect sizes from 251 studies found that informational value and hedonic value were two of the most salient antecedents to purchase intention, in addition to influencer characteristics and source credibility as key influence mechanisms. Another recent meta-analytic study [1] found that there were moderate to strong positive relationships between influencers' attributes and customers' engagement and purchase intention, with credibility being the strongest influence on purchase-related outcomes. Lastly, a recent review [2] identified Source Credibility Theory as one of the most supported theories to explain influencers' effectiveness.

The same trends have been found in studies of TikTok users. Studies of active users on TikTok found that perceived credibility and trust greatly influenced users' purchase intentions as well as their tendency to recommend a brand based on Affiliate Marketing messages [5]. Additional findings revealed that content, authenticity, homophily and parasocial interaction were to different degrees influential in determining brand credibility and purchase intentions by users [6]. Thus, it appears that consumers' behaviors in response to affiliate marketing messages on TikTok are influenced by three separate analytic factors: the message itself, audience reactions that are observable to the user, and the affiliate marketer.

Content quality constitutes the foundational message dimension in affiliate marketing contexts. High-quality affiliate content are characterized by relevance, clearness, information value, visual consistency and professional production enables to avoid ambiguity in information and to better inform consumers about the benefits of a product. Previous research showed that the informational value of content and several other content characteristics are determinants of great quality in influencer marketing and even predict its success [3], [4]. As product demonstrations on TikTok mostly are presented in short audiovisual clips, content quality most likely acts as a prior condition for paying attention to and evaluating affiliate marketing messages. Earlier research on social media in online shopping also situated digital promotional content within consumers' online purchasing decisions [7]. Cross-cultural evidence further distinguishes consumers' stated online purchase intention from their subsequent purchasing behavior, underscoring why the present study examines intention rather than completed transactions [8].

The audience engagement dimension of affiliate persuasion comprises indicators of social interaction, i.e. the likes, comments, links, followers and bookmarks left by potential customers on online platforms. These salient social signals of collective interest, of online popularity and of online recommendation can be especially effective in raising the persuasive impact of content by providing social validation and by increasing the perceived level of engagement with online marketing messages. Meta-analytic findings have established substantial relationships between various influencer characteristics and customer engagement/purchase intention [1] as well as between platform interactivity and the effectiveness of marketing via influencers [9]. Additionally, a systematic review of social influence in consumer behavior likewise emphasizes that socially transmitted cues are important to understanding how consumers evaluate purchase-related information [10].

Influencer credibility represents the source dimension within the affiliate persuasion framework. According to Source Credibility Theory, the persuasiveness of a message is contingent upon audience perceptions of the communicator's trustworthiness and expertise [11], [12]. Within the context of influencer marketing, credibility is further conceptualized to encompass authenticity, congruence, reliability, and perceived expertise. Contemporary meta-analytic syntheses consistently demonstrate robust positive associations between credibility-related attributes and both purchase and engagement outcomes [1], [2], [4], with TikTok-specific studies reporting parallel findings [5]. Evidence from an emerging-market setting links influencer marketing with brand admiration and online purchase intentions, providing a useful contextual comparison for the present Philippine sample [13]. Research on peer endorsers also associates endorser credibility with advertising effectiveness, supporting the importance of credibility even beyond celebrity-driven promotions [14]. Studies of influencer endorsements further identify advertising disclosure and source credibility as relevant considerations in consumers' purchase intentions, suggesting that transparency should accompany persuasive affiliate content [15]. More specifically, research on TikTok Shop affiliate

promotions has examined how affiliate content type and source credibility relate to perceived trust and purchase intention, reinforcing the need to assess message and source factors together [16]. These results suggest that credibility exerts an independent effect on purchase intention, above and beyond the influences of content quality and audience engagement.

The growing commerce enabled by TikTok is a subject of increasing interest, but the existing empirical studies have been largely confined to big cities, young consumers, and online populations in general. Localities of smaller sizes and of semi-urban characters may differ greatly from each other and from the above settings in terms of exposure to media, purchasing power of consumers, local social structures, and the importance of interpersonal trust and of trust in creators as well as other information sources. Hence, there is a severe lack of studies conducted in Naawan, Misamis Oriental or similar places. In this study, we investigate the extent to which message, social and source factors influence purchase intention in a localized setting of a semi-urban Philippine setting.

This study examines the incremental value that content quality, audience engagement, and influencer credibility each add to explaining the purchase intentions of adult TikTok users residing in Naawan, Misamis Oriental, Philippines. A hierarchical modeling approach underpins the analysis, starting with the content quality variable that captures the core message. It is then supplemented by the audience engagement variable that captures the social interaction aspect of TikTok users' experience, and finally by the influencer credibility variable that captures a dimension unique to the influencer that adds value on top of the message and the social interaction.

2 Methodology

2.1 Research Design and Locale

The study employed quantitative descriptive-correlational research methodology in order to determine the correlation of several determinants of TikTok affiliate marketing such as content quality, audience engagement, and influencer credibility and the users' purchase intention. The method only quantifies the percentage of variance in the dependent variable (purchase intention) explained by the independent variables (content quality, audience engagement, and influencer credibility) and does not assert causality. The study was conducted on TikTok users in Naawan, Misamis Oriental, Philippines to make the study's analysis within a defined geographic context.

2.2 Respondents and Sampling

The study population consists of individuals residing in Naawan, Misamis Oriental, Philippines. The 300 participants were purposively selected from the study population as they met the following criteria: 18 years or older; currently reside in Naawan; regularly logs on to TikTok; and have been exposed to affiliate marketing content on the platform. The researcher specifically targeted these individuals as they would possess adequate knowledge of the studied phenomenon, thus enabling them to provide appropriate insights on affiliate-related content, influencer marketing, and purchasing intentions.

2.3 Research Instrument and Construct Scoring

Data collection was executed using a structured, self-administered questionnaire, systematically adapted from established instruments in the domains of TikTok affiliate marketing, influencer credibility, customer engagement, and purchase intention [17], [18], [19], [20]. The survey encompassed preliminary screening and demographic questions, followed by items operationalizing four central constructs: Content Quality (CQ), Audience Engagement (AE), Influencer Credibility (IC), and Purchase Intention (PI). All construct-specific items employed a four-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 4 (Strongly Agree). For each construct, composite scores were calculated as the arithmetic mean of their constituent items: five for CQ, seven for AE, nine for IC, and nine for PI. This scoring protocol preserved the original 1–4 scale metric, thereby facilitating the direct interpretation of unstandardized regression coefficients.

The Purchase Intention (PI) scale includes several aspects of purchase orientation. Hence, dependent variable is measured as a composite indicator of purchase intention. The negatively worded item of AE was included in the analysis and scored as it was in the original dataset; future research should, however, check the appropriateness of the above scoring before further reproducing the present study.

2.4 Data Screening and Statistical Analysis

Descriptive statistics were first computed for the four construct scores. Then, hierarchical ordinary least squares (OLS) regression was used to assess the incremental explanatory power of each variable

above the others. In each step, R, R^2 (unadjusted), R^2 (adjusted), change in R^2 (ΔR^2), and F change statistics were reported. The coefficients from the final model (including unstandardized coefficients [B] and their corresponding errors, as well as the models' respective standardized coefficients [β], t values, p values, and 95% confidence intervals) provided a comprehensive means to compare the unique relations among the three endogenous variables. The hierarchical order of entry was theoretically grounded and thus also order-dependent, thereby providing the ΔR^2 values for what AE and IC added after CQ was entered in the first step, as opposed to the simultaneous model that was presented last, which assessed the unique, standardized relations among all three endogenous variables.

A full set of regression diagnostics was investigated. These included the Durbin–Watson statistic for the residuals, checks for multicollinearity (inflation factor and tolerance), a test for correct functional form (Ramsey RESET test), homoscedasticity (Breusch–Pagan test), normality (Shapiro–Wilk and Jarque–Bera tests), and leverage and influence (Cook's D). There was some indication of heteroscedasticity from the Breusch–Pagan test, but this was found to be only modest. The OLS standard errors would therefore not be entirely correct in situations of non-constant variance, but robust HC3 heteroscedasticity-consistent standard errors were available for use in such circumstances [21], [22]. As before, all tests were two-sided with a 5% alpha level.

3 Results

3.1 Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 presents the composite construct scores employed in the subsequent regression analyses. The highest average score was attributed to Content Quality with an average of M=3.352, followed by Influencer Credibility (M=3.309), Purchase Intention (M=3.288), and by a considerable margin, Audience Engagement (M=3.109). The average scores reported in Table 1 reflect the general positive perception of each of the analyzed dimensions by participants. However, it is crucial to recognize that the average scores provided in the table are not indicators of the predictive power of the analyzed dimensions, rather they reflect general perceptions. It is the regression coefficients that account for the shared variance between the predictors that best reflect unique predictive contributions of the individual predictors.

Table 1. Construct-level descriptive statistics

Construct	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Content Quality	3.352	0.371	2.200	4.000
Audience Engagement	3.109	0.438	1.714	4.000
Influencer Credibility	3.309	0.421	1.778	4.000
Purchase Intention	3.288	0.389	2.000	4.000

Source: created by the authors

3.2 Hierarchical Regression

As shown in Table 2, CQ entered in Step 1 and explained 35.7% of the variance in the scores for PI (R^2 = .357, $F(1, 298) = 165.77$, $p < .001$). Thus, content quality has a substantial direct relationship with purchase intention.

When adding AE in Step 2, R^2 increased by 11.4 percentage points to .472, $\Delta R^2 = .114$, $\Delta F(1, 297) = 64.13$, $p < .001$. This means that AE contributes relevant information on Purchase Intention above and beyond the impact of CQ.

IC entered in Step 3 of the equation accounted for 8.9% of the additional variance, $\Delta R^2 = .089$, $\Delta F(1,296) = 59.62$, $p < .001$. Thus, after controlling for CQ and AE, IC collectively with CQ and AE accounted for 56.0% of the variance in the scores of the sample of participants. The overall model was significant, $F(3,296) = 125.65$, $p < .001$; $R = .748$; $R^2 = .560$; adjusted $R^2 = .556$.

Table 2. Hierarchical regression predicting purchase intention

Model	Predictors entered	R	R^2	Adj. R^2	ΔR^2	ΔF	p (ΔF)
Step 1	CQ	.598	.357	.355	.357	165.77	< .001
Step 2	CQ + AE	.687	.472	.468	.114	64.13	< .001
Step 3	CQ + AE + IC	.748	.560	.556	.089	59.62	< .001

Source: created by the authors

3.3 Final-Model Coefficients and Hypothesis Tests

As shown in Table 3, all three predictors were positive and significantly related to PI. The relations with CQ, AE and IC to PI were B = .263, B = .208 and B = .369 with respective β values of .251, .234 and .400 (all $p < .001$). Accordingly, H1, H2, and H3 were supported. The fitted equation was:

$$\hat{PI} = 0.540 + 0.263(CQ) + 0.208(AE) + 0.369(IC)$$

Because zero is outside the observed 1–4 construct scale, the intercept is a mathematical component of the equation rather than a substantively meaningful observed baseline. Holding the other variables constant, a one-point difference in CQ was associated with a .263-point difference in predicted PI; the corresponding conditional associations were .208 for AE and .369 for IC. For relative comparison across constructs,

the standardized coefficients are more appropriate. IC showed the largest unique standardized association (β = .400), followed by CQ (β = .251) and AE (β = .234). Therefore, the corrected data do not support describing content quality as the strongest determinant once all three predictors are entered simultaneously.

Table 3. Final hierarchical-regression coefficients

Predictor	B	SE	β	t	p	95% CI for B
Content Quality	.263	.051	.251	5.16	< .001	[.163, .363]
Audience Engagement	.208	.043	.234	4.81	< .001	[.123, .293]
Influencer Credibility	.369	.048	.400	7.72	< .001	[.275, .463]

Source: created by the authors

3.4 Regression Diagnostics and Robustness

The diagnostic results shown in Table 4 were generally favorable. The Durbin–Watson statistic was 1.890, indicating no material residual autocorrelation. VIF values ranged from 1.594 to 1.805 and tolerance values from .554 to .627, providing no evidence of problematic multicollinearity. The Ramsey RESET test was nonsignificant, F = 2.20, p = .139, indicating no evidence of major functional-form misspecification. The maximum Cook's distance was .084, far below 1, and the maximum leverage was .082; thus, no case exerted severe influence on the model.

The Breusch–Pagan test yielded a statistically significant result ($\chi^2 = 8.81$, p = .032), indicating the presence of modest heteroscedasticity in the regression residuals. Additionally, formal assessments of residual normality were significant (Shapiro–Wilk W = .964, p < .001; Jarque–Bera = 28.31, p < .001), suggesting some deviation from the assumption of strict normality.

Table 4. Regression diagnostics and robustness checks

Diagnostic	Result	Interpretation
Durbin–Watson	1.890	Residual independence satisfactory
VIF (CQ / AE / IC)	1.594 / 1.597 / 1.805	No problematic multicollinearity
Tolerance (CQ / AE / IC)	.627 / .626 / .554	Acceptable
Ramsey RESET	F = 2.20, p = .139	No major functional-form problem detected
Breusch–Pagan	$\chi^2 = 8.81$, p = .032	Modest heteroscedasticity
Shapiro–Wilk	W = .964, p < .001	Strict normality rejected
Jarque–Bera	28.31, p < .001	Some residual skew/kurtosis
Maximum Cook's D	.084	No severe influential case
Maximum leverage	.082	Elevated cases exist but are not extreme

Source: created by the authors

The HC3 sensitivity estimates are summarized in Table 5. To account for heteroscedasticity-induced distortion in standard error estimation, HC3 heteroscedasticity-consistent standard errors were employed. Under the HC3 adjustment, all focal predictors retained statistical significance: Content Quality (CQ) B = .263, robust SE = .059, p < .001; Audience Engagement (AE) B = .208, robust SE = .049, p < .001; and Influencer Credibility (IC) B = .369, robust SE = .068, p < .001. The robust 95% confidence intervals for each predictor did not include zero, affirming that the substantive inferences drawn from the model are robust to violations of the constant-variance assumption.

Table 5. HC3 heteroscedasticity-robust sensitivity analysis

Predictor	B	HC3 SE	Robust t	p	95% Robust CI
Content Quality	.263	.059	4.47	< .001	[.147, .379]
Audience Engagement	.208	.049	4.27	< .001	[.112, .304]
Influencer Credibility	.369	.068	5.45	< .001	[.236, .502]

Source: created by the authors

3.5 Influential Observations

The maximum Cook's distance is 0.084, substantially below the conventional value of 1. Four cases have externally studentized residuals slightly beyond |3|, but none has severe influence according to Cook's distance. These cases should be retained unless independent evidence shows that they are erroneous observations. Regression diagnostics should be used to detect data problems, not to justify removing valid respondents merely because they are unusual. Figure 3 displays Cook's distance for individual respondents and the 4/N screening reference.

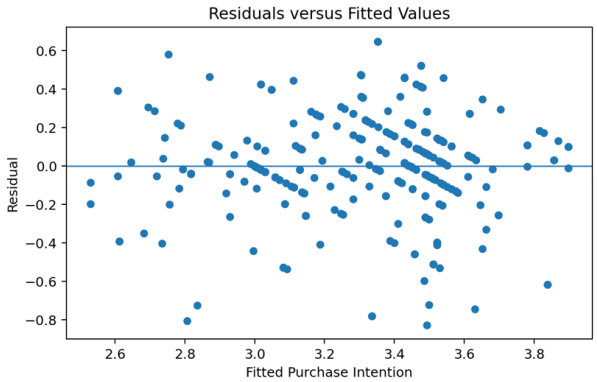

Fig. 1: Residuals versus fitted values for the final model

Source: created by the authors

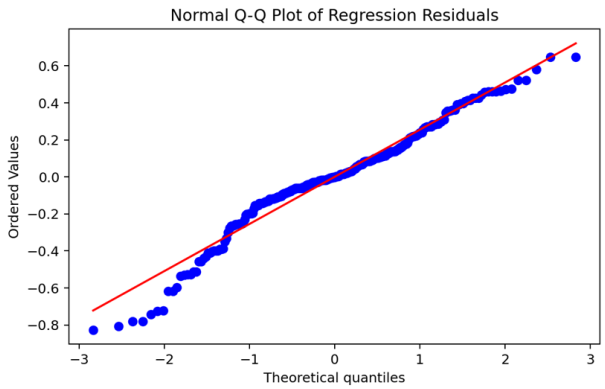

Fig. 2: Normal Q-Q plot of final-model residuals.

Source: created by the authors

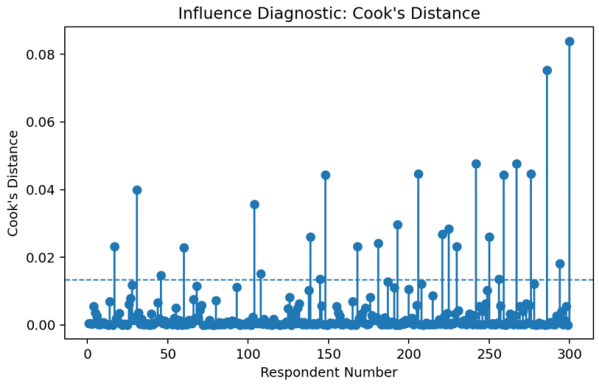

Fig. 3: Cook's distance across respondents; dashed line indicates 4/N as a screening reference, not an automatic deletion criterion.
Source: created by the authors

Figure 1 illustrates the residuals-versus-fitted pattern, while Figure 2 presents the normal Q-Q plot used to assess departures from residual normality. On the other hand, Figure 3 illustrates Cooks distance.

4 Discussion

The findings of this study found that content quality, audience engagement, and influencer credibility all contained unique and independent explanatory power for purchase intention in the context of TikTok affiliate marketing. More specifically, hierarchical modeling allowed us to assess the incremental amount of variance explained by each variable beyond the other variables, including the baseline. Content quality as the first variable in the model explained a large proportion of variance. However, when we added the variables for audience engagement and influencer credibility, one by one, the change in model fit was significant in both cases. Importantly, when all three variables were included simultaneously as predictors of purchase intention, influencer credibility contained the largest unique proportion of variance.

4.1 Content Quality as a Strong Baseline Predictor

Content Quality independently accounted for 35.7% of the variance in Purchase Intention (PI), providing robust empirical support for the centrality of clear, relevant, informative, visually coherent, and professionally executed affiliate content in shaping consumer evaluative processes. This finding aligns with recent meta-analytic syntheses, which establish post informational and hedonic value as key antecedents of purchase intention [3], [23]. Similarly, [4] reaffirms that content-related attributes are among the most consistent predictors of influencer marketing effectiveness. The distinct affordances of TikTok's short-form video environment likely amplify the importance of content quality, as consumers frequently formulate rapid assessments based on product demonstrations, comparisons, captions, audiovisual clarity, and perceived utility prior to seeking further product information.

Importantly, the strong Step 1 R^2 should not be interpreted as evidence that CQ is the strongest predictor in the final model. Hierarchical R^2 at an early step includes variance that may later be shared with variables subsequently entered. The final standardized coefficient, $\beta = .251$, represents CQ's unique association after AE and IC are controlled. This distinction resolves the earlier manuscript interpretation that content quality was necessarily the strongest determinant.

4.2 Audience Engagement Adds Social Validation

Audience Engagement accounted for an additional 11.4% of the variance in Purchase Intention above that explained by the variable of Content Quality. As well as being significant in the model of Content and Engagement, Audience Engagement was also significant in the fully specified model of all three variables ($\beta = .234$). This finding, therefore, reveals that consumers' purchase intentions are influenced not only by the attributes of affiliate content but also by the ways in which engagement with that content is expressed by others. In this study, therefore, such behavioral measures of engagement as likes, comments, shares, follows and bookmarks by others on social media represent indicators of social validation of content. Other studies have already established a positive association between influencers' characteristics, audiences' engagement with affiliate marketing content and purchase intentions by consumers [1], [9].

Although the effect of Audience Engagement has the lowest standardized coefficient, the additional explained variance (ΔR^2) of 11.4% still has high meaning. This means that even a very good affiliate content will not be very persuasive if there is no audience interaction at all. On the other hand, content that triggers visible participation by the affiliate such as asking a question, writing comments or sharing content with others will have a stronger drive on consumers' intent to purchase.

4.3 Influencer Credibility as the Strongest Unique Predictor

Influencer Credibility accounted for an additional 8.9% of explained variance in Purchase Intention beyond the effects of Content Quality and Audience Engagement and exhibited the largest standardized coefficient in the final regression model ($\beta = .400$). This empirical result accords closely with the tenets of Source Credibility Theory [11], [12], which posits that the persuasiveness of a message is contingent upon the perceived trustworthiness and expertise of its source. These findings collectively indicate that the impact of high-quality content and robust audience engagement is not sufficient to compensate for a lack of confidence in the individual making the recommendation; source-based evaluations remain integral to consumer decision-making within the affiliate marketing context.

This study's findings were also supported by the prior research. A meta-analytic study [1] revealed that among the various influencer attributes, influencer credibility had the strongest correlation with customers' purchase intentions. Additional studies [2], [5] identified several influencer attributes that affected customers' attitudes and behaviors, including their credibility, trustworthiness, and expertise. These attributes were examined through the well-established Source Credibility Theory. In relation to Influencer Credibility, there was a high correlation in the full model of this study with unique values. The correlation between Influencer Credibility and other variables, such as trust, purchase intentions, and customer loyalty, was examined through empirical studies conducted on TikTok users [5]. Informative value and authenticity of influencers' content could generate favorable perceptions among customers towards specific brands [6]. These perceptions could stem from various sources including the formation of parasocial relationships with influencers and consumers' perceptions regarding the brands' credibility.

4.4 Integrated Theoretical Interpretation

Hierarchical regression was used to examine persuasion in affiliate marketing within a multi-dimensional framework. Message level factors examined were content quality (i.e., information that was relevant, clear, and useful to the viewer). Social influence examined were audience engagement (i.e., cues to collective interest, acceptance and endorsement of a product). Source factors that were examined were influencer credibility (i.e., perceived trustworthiness, expertise, authenticity and alignment with a promoted product). The increase in explained variance, ΔR^2, between each subsequent model was statistically significant. Therefore, content quality, audience engagement and influencer credibility are all distinct factors that contribute to persuasion of the consumer in affiliate marketing.

This layered interpretation also clarifies the contribution of the study. Recent meta-analytic research calls for models that integrate post, follower, and influencer characteristics instead of relying on a single explanatory category [3], [4]. The present evidence provides a localized application of that logic to adult TikTok users in a smaller Philippine municipality. The results show that message-, social-, and source-level factors each contribute to purchase intention, while source credibility has the largest unique standardized association after the other two dimensions are controlled.

4.5 Practical Implications

From a managerial perspective, these findings underscore the necessity of an integrative approach to TikTok affiliate marketing strategy. An integrated approach to affiliate marketing on the platform is recommended, incorporating content, audience and influencer. In terms of the content, value should be communicated through the provision of relevant information, product demonstration, use of visual elements and clear message. Additionally, creators should engage with their audience and provide opportunities for conversation, replies to questions, discussions about products related to the content and shared content that can reinforce social validation of the creator. Manager also need to focus on the credibility of the affiliate influencers and choose them based on more than just their number of followers. Variables such as the influencer's expertise in relation to the creator's products, their authenticity, trustworthiness and creator–product fit all demonstrate an incremental association with purchase intention above and beyond the effects of content and audience.

We must note, however, that the results presented here only express statistical associations. Therefore, platform data as well as data on campaigns and users will have to be analyzed, too. Moreover, more sophisticated segmentation as well as even experimental research might be required to develop even more specific affiliate marketing strategies.

5 Conclusion

This study investigated the relationship of content quality, audience engagement and influencer credibility and the consumers' purchase intention of 300 affine adults using Hierarchical Regression Analysis. First, the three independent variables of content quality, audience engagement and influencer credibility explained the respective variances of 35.7%, 11.4% and 8.9% on top of each other on the dependent variable of purchase intention. The final model explained a total of 56% of the variance of purchase intention ($R^2 = .560$). Importantly, all three independent variables are significant using both regular SE and HC3 heteroscedasticity-robust SE.

In the final model, the variable with the strongest association with purchase intention is influencer credibility ($\beta = .400$) followed by content quality ($\beta = .251$) and then by audience engagement ($\beta = .234$). It is worth noting that although content quality explained the largest amount of variance at the initial stage of the model, it was not the strongest predictor in the final model. This reflects an important distinction between the amount of explained variance that a variable adds at a particular stage of a model and its association with the outcome variable in the final model. Results of this study support an integrated view of affiliate marketing on TikTok and note that while content and audience interaction are crucial for affiliate marketing on TikTok, consumers' perceptions of an endorser's credibility play a significant role as well. Associations reported here are associative in nature and thus not necessarily causal.

The study's empirical findings support the Source Credibility Theory and add further evidence to the complex structure of persuasive processes in affiliate marketing on TikTok. The optimal effectiveness of a campaign is achieved through the combination of credible creators, excellent content and sufficient audience interaction. As a result, message excellence, social validation and credible source endorsement have to be fostered simultaneously in an Affiliate Marketing Campaign on TikTok by adopting a holistic marketing approach.

6 Limitations and Future Research

Several limitations inherent to this study need to be highlighted. For one, since it's a cross-sectional study, we can only make predictions based on statistics and find correlations - but we can't really say what causes what. This is a problem because it doesn't let us figure out which things actually lead to others. Second, the use of a purposive sampling method is limited to the constraints in the external validity of the findings. This means that the generalizability of the results to other individuals, in other places, is limited. Third, the study relied on self-reported measures. As such, it is susceptible to common-method variance and various types of response biases. In addition, the purchase intention construct, as used in this study, is a composite that comprises not only future purchase intention but also several related constructs, i.e. recommendation propensity, prior decision, decision-ease, and advocacy. Future research should try to validate a more narrowly defined future intention construct. Fourth, the hierarchical entry of the predictor variables was based on theoretical reasons and is therefore order dependent. Thus, entry in a different order would, probably, result in different allocations of explained variance (ΔR^2) but the final model, entered simultaneously, would be the same in any case.

Future studies could also consider replicating the study in other urban and rural settings within the Philippines and across product categories using both TikTok Shop video and livestream features. Other variables such as trust, perceived value, parasocial interaction and perceived risk could also be included as possible mediating variables in future studies. Using experimental or longitudinal research designs could also help in establishing causality. Structural equation modeling could also be used to correct for measurement error while testing for indirect effects. Finally, multi-group analyses could be conducted to test for possible moderating effects of demographics (age and gender), platform use intensity and prior purchasing experience on TikTok Shop.

Declaration of Generative AI and AI-assisted Technologies in the Writing Process

During the preparation of this work, the author(s) utilized artificial intelligence (AI) technologies solely for the purpose of linguistic refinement and grammatical correction. Following the application of these tools, the author(s) comprehensively reviewed, verified, and edited the resulting text. The author(s) maintain full accountability and responsibility for the accuracy, integrity, and final content of the publication.

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- Albert A. Alonzo: Contributed to the methodology, conceptualization, data analysis, initial draft preparation, conceptual framework, and writing of the final manuscript.
- Maria Leah E. Suazo: Contributed to the conceptualization, initial draft preparation and review of the manuscript.
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