

How Does Social Media Platforms Help to Improve Business Performances during the COVID-19 Pandemic? A Study of TikTok

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ABSTRACT

The study investigates to which extent social media platforms, specifically TikTok, have driven users' satisfaction and lead to business performance improvements. Entrepreneurs, such as small business owners, agents, and drop shippers were facing tremendous challenges to carry out their businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic. The existence of social media applications has allowed them to promote their products or services in various forms despite the failure to conduct businesses physically. However, they tend to use certain social media application only if it satisfies their business needs. This study employs 100 samples of data from students in Universiti Sains Malaysia collected through an online questionnaire. Subsequently, SPSS analysis was conducted and generated descriptive, Pearson correlation, and regression analysis to support the hypotheses. The findings of this study revealed that users' satisfaction towards social media, specifically TikTok, have led to customer engagement, personal branding, and effective promotion. Thus, entrepreneurs shall first adopt social media application that provides the highest level of satisfaction to motivate continuous usage of the application which then gradually improves their business performance.

Keywords: Business Performance, **JEL Classification:** M00, M10, M19
COVID-19, Entrepreneurs, Social Media,
TikTok

INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic, the present situation that has taken over most of the nations, has fundamentally disrupted entrepreneurial finance (Howell, Lerner, Nanda & Townsend, 2020). For instance, it had been continuously affecting restaurants through the shift in demand and revenue of fast-food restaurants such as KFC, McDonald's and Subway during the issuance of the Movement Control Order (MCO) (Kee, Mohd Nazr et al., 2021). It also has financially and economically affected Starbucks as it has shocked the global economy including the food and beverage industry (Sinha, 2021). Hence, if the entrepreneurs want customers to be attracted to local products and increase their purchasing power, they need to follow the mainstream by being innovative, understanding the characteristics of products and customers' preferences (Anwar, 2018). Hence, the right digitalization strategy is essential to achieve business goals and develop products or services to be more competitive (Fitriasari, 2020). On the other hand, businesses began to formulate their business performance to inspire their thinking (Mejri, MacVaugh & Tsagdis, 2018). Based on Mejri (2018), it is shown that the application of relevant knowledge in enterprises is beneficial to product output, increases the innovation and active market orientation of commodities and conducive to the sustainable development of businesses.

Since companies of all sizes are under threat due to COVID-19, social platforms are introducing new features specifically to help small businesses survive through the pandemic. For instance, Facebook has announced the launch of Shops, a new feature that will enable sellers to display and sell their products on the platform. The move comes as many retailers had to pack up bricks-and-mortar stores thanks to the COVID-19 pandemic, with many now looking to sell online. Meanwhile, Instagram also added a new feature to help small businesses make sales, which this time comes in the form of gift cards, food orders, and fundraiser stickers they can share via Stories. Following this, YouTube even launched its "Video Builder Tool", allowing small businesses to create video content for free. This tool had been in development for months; however, it was launched by YouTube quickly to assist businesses with their communication and content strategies in light of coronavirus (Gilliland, 2020).

According to Mullery (2021), another video-creating app that became particularly popular during these unprecedented times is TikTok. When people had to stay at home because they were unable to travel, and TikTok has become a great way for businesses and customers to trade and share their lives by posting short-interactive videos. It allows users to create, promote, and react to short-form music video content. TikTok users have been using the app to create videos of themselves dancing, acting, and exercising to audio clips and sharing them with their friends. In addition, users can watch other people's videos to thumb up or bookmark. Mullery (2021) further elaborated that TikTok has secured its spot as the second most downloaded iPhone app in 2020 and it functions to capture the imaginations of people and organizations despite age, locations, and gender boundaries. In addition to this, TikTok algorithm is what decides what type of content to be shown to which category of users.

From the perspective of brands, early entry into the world of TikTok can be an unknown territory. For most brands, it is not something they have ever considered, but this crazy

rise in popularity means it is important and advisable for brands to possess a presence on the TikTok platform. The brands new to TikTok are often to form the foremost of creators on it. These creators are masters at producing viral content that will assist them to gain huge impression numbers and locate their brand ahead of one of the foremost exciting, economically active audiences. A branded campaign with an influencer is often one of the simplest ways for entrepreneurs to dip their toes into the planet of TikTok. Since many entrepreneurs do not know where to start when it comes to creating TikTok content, working with an influencer is a great way to combat this (Jeffries, 2020). The main concern for consumers and businesses is the ability to sell and buy things on the platform. This way of selling and buying products through live streaming enables customers to see products from all over the world and get preferential prices without leaving their houses. Businesses are enabled to reduce expenses such as rent, publicity, advertising, and other consumption and TikTok provides tools for merchants for self-serve advertising. Hence, this app has led to more and more merchants selling through TikTok (TikTok algorithm for, 2020). Following this, the platform is adding 250 million unique users a day, and as many as 500 million users are active each month. This is because this app provides merchants with a large number of customers. Merchants can obtain cooperation with manufacturers through negotiation with Taobao, Tmall, Jingdong, and other platforms, and directly hang their commodity links in the commodity window of their TikTok for consumers to make a purchase (TikTok for business, 2020).

Although the impact of COVID-19 on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) is highly inadequate, it is undeniable that they are somehow still affected by the crisis. (Doshi, Kumar, & Yerramilli, 2018). According to Razavi and AbAziz (2017), SMEs account for a large proportion of developing countries. Doshi et al. (2018) mentioned that, before the COVID-19 explosion, e-commerce had already begun to take off by providing an effective way to sell products to certain developing countries or companies with weak markets. For emerging countries, in the short term, e-commerce has solved their current sales problems meanwhile, in the long run, these emerging countries have directly obtained the fruits of e-commerce development. Furthermore, SMEs are also developed through social media in addition to e-commerce and Internet technology. Hence, with the development of globalization, the scale of SMEs has gradually expanded, and they have obtained more development opportunities (Razavi & AbAziz, 2017). This point of view was further supported by Ha, Khapova, and Lysova (2018) by indicating that SMEs are more flexible, adaptable, and innovative, therefore, more suitable for using e-commerce. The prove of e-commerce trending during the COVID-19 pandemic was shown in Kee, Nasser et al. (2021) in which Pos Malaysia's mail carriers still need to work overtime even during the pandemic due to increasing demand, therefore having many parcels to deliver to customers.

Apart from that, many brands now have caught on to the importance of the TikTok platform and are using it to promote their brands. Brandastic (2020) revealed that Chipotle, a fast-food restaurant, momentarily creates promotional food videos, runs competitions for TikTok users, and submits fun videos at their locations. More examples were given on National Basketball Association (NBA) and National Football League (NFL) sharing highlights of their games and player cameos through TikTok. In addition, Elf Cosmetics also has started creating fun videos with a viral "#eyeslipsface" hashtag plus, together with Guess which has initiated posting high-quality promotional videos through TikTok.

Many companies raised brand awareness by taking the advantage of influencer marketing by acquiring popularity on TikTok. While the platform's popularity keeps growing, it is easy to seek out an influencer with a following almost like your audience. It

is worth noting that you simply cannot embed the link to your website within a video, so an influencer would wish to market your products or services within the video or post a link in their bio. It took TikTok a short time, but the platform finally created official ways for brands to advertise. For instance, TopView Ads are the videos that appear as soon as the user opens the app, In-Feed Native Ads are the videos that appear in the users' feed as they scroll, Branded Hashtag Challenges are the videos that inspire users to form submissions employing a specific hashtag, Branded Effects are the impact filters to use during a video to feature brand-specific information, and Brand Takeover which use these full-screen static or dynamic display ads to catch views (Flores, 2020).

This research paper investigates to which extent social media platforms, specifically TikTok, have helped to improve business performance during the COVID-19 pandemic. We aim to understand how TikTok provides satisfaction to the users and how this satisfaction drives the continuous usage of TikTok, which finally improves the user's business performance.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, social media became one of the most influencing marketing tools in boosting business performance. Coronavirus, the most infectious disease, has been evolving like a pandemic and causing a health crisis because of boundless spread within nations all over the world. According to Hasanat et al. (2020), the COVID-19 pandemic has a negative impact on e-business in Malaysia due to the presence of China's products lessening the product demand by lessening buyer's buying behavior. Apart from the increasing number of deaths, almost all the country's economy has been falling apart as many retailers have shuttered their business such as tourism, and hotel services, temporarily due to the downfall of sales (Hasanat et al., 2020).

Furthermore, the implementation of physical or social distancing during COVID-19 has implied shifting from conventional to online business activities (Patma, Wardana, Wibowo & Narmaditya, 2020). The pandemic has forced SMEs managers to adopt social media, which is cost-free, as they became aware of the cost during this crisis condition helping the managers to quickly reach their customers (Effendi, Sugandini & Istanto, 2020). According to Li, He, and Zhang (2019), social media is a cost-effective technology, for instance, providing space for SMEs to communicate with their consumers at a low cost.

Aifuwa et al. (2020) proved a negative and significant relation between the COVID-19 pandemic and both financial and non-financial performance of private businesses in Nigeria. Following this situation, Hidayati and Yansi (2020) underlined a decline in demands for goods and services together in sales of MSMEs in Jakarta. Since social media is widely accessed by everyone, they have used this opportunity by using social media applications such as TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp to carry out product marketing. This method is considered cheap, easy, and builds trust between producers and buyers as they can take a direct look at the products sold on the social media platform accompanied by truthful feedback or testimonies.

Besides, the result of the International Labour Organization (ILO) in 2020 reported over 60% of the surveyed enterprises reported insufficient cash flow to pay expenses such as staffs' salaries and other business expenses. MSMEs in Indonesia were also severely impacted by the existence of COVID-19 pandemic, thus, to overcome the problem, MSMEs were diversifying their sales or marketing channels using social media (Syaifullah, Syaifudin, Sukendar, & Junaedi 2021). Syaifullah et al. (2021) also indicated that social media for marketing has positively affected the sales, customer relationships, productivity, and creativity of MSMEs. Moreover, the relation between social media and

business performance is well-established through a meta-analysis by Tajvidi and Karami (2021) contending a positive and significant relationship between social media use and business performance where social media helps businesses to develop a strong network and relationship with the users. Moreover, Li et al. (2020) revealed that social media play an important role in sharing information such as government and industry policies to allow businesspeople to be more aware of the policy updates that significantly affect the business performances.

According to Yasa et al. (2020), social media has reached every tier of society and all human activities. Thus, it helps the business owners reach markets, communicate their products, and maintain good relations with the customers. Besides, using social media as marketing tools helps business owners develop marketing capabilities such as market-sensing, customer-linking capabilities, which may be keys to influencing business performance (Tarsakoo & Peerayuth, 2019). Business performances are significantly influenced by the quality of social media content; decisions regarding consistently active presence would best be considered on a platform-by-platform basis which helps to stimulate customer engagement in social media (Tafesse & Wien, 2018). It also helps businesses increase awareness and inquiries and enhance relationships with customers (Pourkhani, Abdipour, Baher, & Moslehpour, 2019). In addition, social media marketing activities significantly affect brand awareness, brand images, and brand loyalty, which has been proven using the structural equation model (Bilgin, 2018). This was also supported by Radhakrishnan, Ugalde, and Gutierrez (2019), where companies have seen that the use of social media has enhanced their brand awareness and brand image. Radhakrishnan and Ugalde (2019) mentioned that despite the disadvantages, there are advantages that shall be considered such as the company can use social media to provide a clear message and ensure online image matches with their brand image.

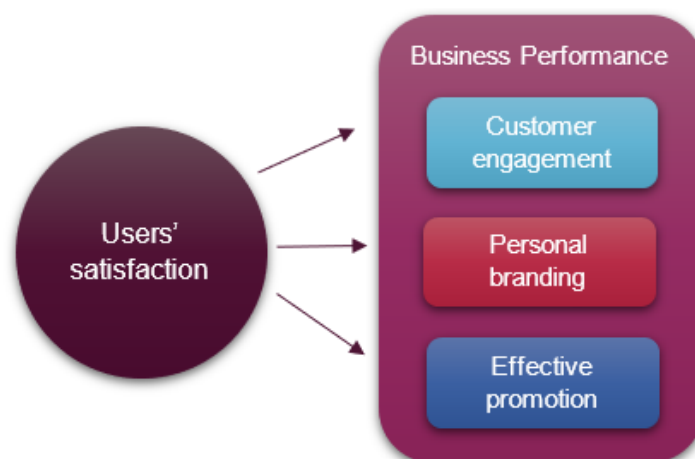
Moreover, Mohammedhussen and Abdulnasir (2019) listed down the major benefits of social media in business. Singh and Sinha in Mohammedhussen and AbdulNasir (2019) stated that social media improves customer insights as customers share their insights when they are aware the company is listening to them. In addition, it was also mentioned that social media also help businesses provide better customer services through instant responses to their questions. On the other hand, the results of the research on the role of social media marketing in value-co-creation and engagement among smartphone users in China and Hong Kong shows that social media marketing is highly effective in building value co-creation, engagement, repurchase, and future behavior (Cheung, Pires, Rosenberger, Leung, & Ting, 2020). Susanto et al. (2021) researched the relationship between social media and business during the COVID-19 pandemic. In this research, 66.7% of respondents agreed that social media usage had benefited their business to a degree due to the COVID-19 pandemic in terms of cost-effectiveness and improvement in overall performance. Social media allows businesses to collect feedback and suggestions from their customers easily, which then helps the business to improve and enhance its business performance.

Meanwhile, Xu, Yan, and Zhang (2019) have conducted a research on TikTok as their subject to figure out how this social media app became popular. It was because of the marketing promotion strategy diversity. In addition to the star promotion of using the celebrity effect, TikTok's popularity was contributed by its advertising marketing and various offline and online activities to expand the communication venue. Furthermore, it was proved that TikTok indeed has a significant effect on reaching its target audience successfully by generating sales through TikTok (Azpeitia, 2021). According to Weiss in (Su, Baker, Doyle, & Yan, 2020), the TikTok app added 12 million U.S. users in March 2020 and a total of 52.2 million users globally, making it the most downloaded non-

gaming app on the Apple app store in the first quarter of 2020. TikTok is enjoying phenomenal growth as most people are staying at home due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

One of the unique algorithm functions own by TikTok is that, for instance, if a user manages to watch a video in full, it is more likely to be appearing in other feeds compared to those who viewed only for a short period. In addition, it provides good editing skills that enable the users to use the video editing features including available filters, stickers, effects, and music to create their promotional videos (Memon, 2020). Therefore, we have come up with three hypotheses to examine throughout our discussion (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Research Framework



H1: There is a positive relationship between user satisfaction from using social media and customer engagement.

The law of reciprocity is a social norm of returning a positive action with another positive action (Memom, 2020). For instance, when a user likes, comments, and shares someone else's post, it would motivate the other users to return the same favor to that user. Mullery (2021) mentioned that TikTok is a community and supporting others can go a long way towards helping each other. McGlew (2021) contended that the frequent question a social media user may ask is whether they need a large number of followers to go viral or find customers. However, TikTok users have an opportunity for their videos to appear on "For You Page" despite having only a handful of followers. Plus, TikTok users can find trending hashtags and look at the hashtag's performance to view how far the hashtag has reached people and use them to appear in "For You Page". The TikTok application requires a consistent post of high-quality content (Riley, 2021). TikTok's algorithm provides a high level of satisfaction towards the users as it requires fewer efforts as it provides all the needed functions and assistance to connect with customers. This satisfaction motivates users to keep using TikTok and post content consistently which later on effectively engages with potential customers.

H2: There is a positive relationship between user satisfaction from using social media and personal branding.

Mullery (2020) also mentioned that publishing videos when our followers are the most active will help our video to generate engagement with other users in a short period. This increases the possibilities of our videos shown to more users. Personal branding is a strategic process of creating, positioning, and maintaining a positive impression of

oneself, based on unique individual characteristics, which assures the audiences (Gorbatov, Khapofa, & Lysova, 2018). TikTok provides access to Followers' Activity that allows one to plan the timing of posting. It is to be believed that, when one is satisfied with this feature, one may maintain the momentum of using this app and eventually create a strong personal branding.

H3: There is a positive relationship between user satisfaction from using social media and effective promotion.

Relevant hashtags, trending music, etc allow videos to get featured and gain more likes and followers. Widen (2020) mentioned that the more TikTok videos are created and posted, the more the possibility of the videos to get into FYP or "For You Page", the first feed someone gets to see right after opening the app. Besides, Instagram has the same function called Instagram Explore Page (Widen, 2020). Why would someone use an application if they are not satisfied? Social media users tend to get satisfied if only they find it easy and worth it to invest their time in the particular application. Numerous literature reviews and facts were discussed previously to address TikTok's advantages that ease a user's intention to conduct his or her business. Therefore, TikTok provides a high level of satisfaction that allows users to continue using TikTok. The consistent usage of this application will then lead to effective promotion as the videos and contents are consistently reaching customers.

RESEARCH METHOD

Sample and procedure

We distributed a Google form containing 22 questions among students in University of Science, Malaysia and random participants to explore how social media, particularly TikTok, helps business performance during the COVID-19 pandemic. Out of 102 respondents, about 100 samples of data were used to conduct the SPSS analysis. Besides, we managed to collect data about the respondents' behavior on the usage of social media (TikTok). This set consists of 5 items that inquire regarding their personal experience using TikTok on a daily basis.

Measures

We employed a four-section questionnaire: demographic, personal experience, satisfaction of TikTok usage, and the impact on business performance. All the sections, excluding demography information, employed a 5 points Likert scale. We have asked the respondent to specify (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree) the level of their agreement with every statement provided.

Section 1 (Demographic Information) contains 6 items to access the respondents' personal information such as gender, age, race, country, occupation and entrepreneurship. Section 2 (Personal Experience using TikTok) contains 5 questions on user experience using the TikTok app, if they have installed the application, duration of using the application, etc. Section 3 (Impact on Satisfaction using TikTok) contains 5 items questioning the effect of using TikTok and how it influences user behaviors. The technology and internal functions of the application have led to involuntary behaviors that we consider to represent the satisfaction and after-effect of TikTok usage. Section 4 (Impact on Business Performance) measures the impact on business performance following the satisfaction from using the TikTok application. This section employed 6 questions, every 2 questions stand for each variable: customer engagement, personal branding, and effective promotion. Both section 3 and 4 have been used to carry out the descriptive analysis, Pearson correlation, and regression analysis.

RESULTS

Our respondents were mainly in the age range of 20-23 years old (82%) and the majority were female (79%). Also, 63% of the respondents were entrepreneurs of small business owners, product agents, drop shippers, and resellers (see Table 1).

Table 1. Descriptive Analysis of Respondents' Demography (N = 100)

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	21	21
Female	79	79
Age		
18 – 19 years old	2	2
20 – 21 years old	49	49
22 – 23 years old	33	33
24 – 25 years old	10	10
26 – 27 years old	2	2
28 – 29 years old	3	3
Above 30 years old	1	1
Race		
Malay	53	53
Chinese	26	26
Indian	20	20
Kadazan	1	1
Country		
Malaysia	100	100
Occupation		
Student	85	85
Working Professional	14	14
Housewife	1	1
Entrepreneur		
Small business owner	20	20
Product agent	18	18
Dropship	11	11
Reseller	13	13
None of these	38	38

Table 2 shows the summary of the data of respondent personal experience using TikTok

Table 2. Descriptive Analysis of Tiktok Users' Behaviour (N = 100)

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Is TikTok installed on your smartphone?		
Yes	92	92
No	8	8
What is your purpose for using TikTok?		
Business	53	53
Education	11	11
Entertainment	36	36

Have you used TikTok to promote your products?		
Yes	51	51
No	49	49
What kind of TikTok are you using?		
Personal	59	59
Creator	8	8
Business	33	33
I used TikTok for ____ hours.		
Less than 1 hours	26	26
1 – 2 hours	51	51
3 – 4 hours	17	17
5 – 6 hours	6	6
Above 6 hours	0	0

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics, Cronbach's Coefficients Alpha, and Zero-Order Correlations of All Variables

Variables	1	2	3	4
1. User satisfaction	0.895			
2. Customer Engagement	0.646**	0.848		
3. Personal Branding	0.664**	0.512**	0.859	
4. Effective Promotion	0.658**	0.686**	0.527**	0.679
M	4.13	3.79	4.12	3.96
SD	0.78	0.91	0.80	0.83

Note: N = 100; *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001. Diagonal entries in bold indicate Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha; M = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation.

Table 3 shows the descriptive statistics, Cronbach alpha and correlations of all the study variables. Variables 2 to 3 employed 2 items each, while the first variable (User satisfaction) consists of a set of 5 items, and all the items in all the four variables were presented in a 5 points Likert scale in the questionnaire. The Cronbach alpha for user satisfaction ($\alpha = 0.895$), customer engagement ($\alpha = 0.848$) and personal branding ($\alpha = 0.859$) denoting a strong relationship between the set of items in each variable as the value of α is in the range of 0.8 to 0.9. Meanwhile, the Cronbach alpha for effective promotion ($\alpha = 0.679$) also indicates that the relationship among the set of items inside this component is strong enough to be accepted as the value of α is almost 0.7. Besides, the correlation coefficient for all the relationships is positively related. In fact, the coefficients within the range of 0.512 to 0.686 indicate a strong positive relationship between the variables. These positive values mean that when the value of one variable increases, then the value of another variable increases as well.

Firstly, the coefficient value ($\beta = 0.512$) tells us that there is a moderate positive relationship between customer engagement and personal branding. According to Tafesse & Wien (2017), customers engage more actively in interesting, innovative, and transformative content and experiences. For example, creating videos based on a

trending hashtag, music, and video effect on Tik Tok enables users to interact with customers on a personal level and respond to their comments and questions, which may boost customer engagement. When customer engagement increases, involuntarily the users will be able to create their personal brand, which is why we call it personal branding.

The coefficient value ($\beta = 0.686$) shows that there is a stronger relationship between customer engagement and effective promotion. Engaging with targeted audiences through the functions of trending hashtags, music, and effect creates a popularity wave in TikTok. It means that a large number of audiences get to watch the videos and react towards them, particularly advertisement-like or soft selling promotion videos. This process describes how customer engagement leads to an effective promotion effect. A personal brand is the unique blend of skills and experiences that make a person who they are and exceptional at what they do (Geyser, 2020). Effective personal branding differentiates someone from other professionals in their field through strategic self-marketing and self-promotion. If you have a strong personal brand, you may make most consumers like, comment, and give their opinions. Satisfied consumers will not only continue to support it but also help to promote the brand to people around them. Besides, they might also boost some promotion campaigns on brand pages frequently, to increase engagement and increase the number of audiences. Hence, it can be concluded that there is a significant positive between personal branding and effective promotion.

Table 4. Summary of Regression Analysis

Customer Engagement		Personal Branding		Effective Promotion
Variable entered	Beta	Variable entered	Beta	Variable entered Beta
$(R^2 \text{ Changes} = 0.417)$ Satisfaction		$(R^2 \text{ Changes} = 0.441)$ Satisfaction		$(R^2 \text{ Changes} = 0.432)$ Satisfaction
0.646**		0.664**		0.658**

Note: N = 100; *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

As evident in Table 4, user's satisfaction was entered as the independent variable to see each relationship with customer engagement, personal branding, and effective promotion as the dependent variable. Therefore, we have tested all three hypotheses using regression analysis. All three aspects of business performances (customer engagement, personal branding, and effective promotion) were found to be significantly related to the satisfaction of using TikTok. Thus, H1, H2 and H3 are accepted.

DISCUSSION

The first hypothesis (H1) indicates a positive relationship between satisfaction of using social media (TikTok) and customer engagement. The β value of 0.646** implies that the user's satisfaction significantly impacts the process of engaging with customers, the targeted audiences. Unlike other social media, TikTok does not require pre-building an audience base. By creating unique content, the video will automatically pick the pace in the algorithm. To create content, users firstly must be satisfied with the features provided to create the short, trendy, and engaging videos to promote their business. In fact, every effect such as hashtags, music, and filters helps users to make their video appear in others' feeds, building engagement with the targeted audiences. Subsequently, it has increased the number of views and followers, especially during the pandemic. Apparently, many had to work from home, unable to travel to the workplace unless the

job required them to attend the job directly. Following this, social media has been working as a platform to carry out their job, particularly, online business. Hence, hypothesis (H1) is accepted.

The second hypothesis (H2) was formulated to indicate the positive relationship between user's satisfaction of using social media (TikTok) and personal branding. The β value of 0.664** underlined that the satisfaction of using TikTok has a significant impact on the users' personal branding. Ever since the pandemic has impacted the economy, resulting from the loss of the businesses, some brands and even businesses have gone into bankruptcy. Nevertheless, TikTok provides the pathway for business owners to create, maintain and re-build personal branding. TikTok builds a large audience base in a quick time compared to other social media. TikTok allows users to enable download and duet options, allowing the videos to be shared around continuously from one another, among all the social media. The best part of TikTok is that non-followers can reach the businesses through the features allowed by TikTok. For instance, a business owner could have posted a packing video and mentioned the buyer in their videos. Following this, the buyer can download the video and share it with their friends via other social media, such as WhatsApp, Instagram, and Facebook. Other potential customers will begin to follow, reach, and connect with the business upon getting interested in the product. Hence, the second hypothesis (H2) is accepted.

The final hypothesis (H3) denotes a positive relationship between user's satisfaction of using social media (TikTok) and effective promotion. The β value of 0.658** shows the user's satisfaction of using TikTok has a significant impact on the effective promotion. Previously, we have explained how TikTok's algorithm works, uniquely from other social media platforms. When users begin to get consistent with the satisfaction, they enjoyed from using the app, TikTok involuntarily acts as a promotion tool without the users themselves working hard for it. For instance, we have heard about direct selling, broadcasting, and personal approach as forms of promotion. Nevertheless, TikTok users are not required to do so, in fact, their videos might get shadow-banned by doing so. The only efforts the TikTok users have to put in is their content, a unique one, and add some additional effects which are all provided by TikTok itself. The next thing we know, the videos have been appearing in numerous people's feeds, the effortless promotion we say. Hence, the third hypothesis is accepted.

Overall, the results and discussion that we have conducted emphasize that social media itself does not impact the business performance, the users themselves should be satisfied with the services and features available. This feeling of satisfaction brings to the consistent use of social media and in the meantime, it develops the process of users carrying out their business activities, resulting in improved business performance. This function is essential to the present situation, where e-commerce has been drastically developing in Malaysia.

CONCLUSION

Our analysis leads to a conclusion that TikTok user's satisfaction is significantly related to all three dimensions of business performance (customer engagement, personal branding, and effective promotion). Thus, it is proven that social media does help business performance during the COVID-19 pandemic. The number of social media users reported a sharp increase shortly after the COVID-19 pandemic began, mainly due to movement restrictions. TikTok also has recorded significant growth by adding 500 million active users monthly and 250 million unique users a day. The positive conclusion concluded withinside the result analysis, adding with the significant growth in social

media usage, the users are encouraged to utilize social media as one of the tools to enhance overall business performance. The most important is that the satisfaction provided by TikTok has encouraged the users to consistently use the application, which is why business performances were improved.

Our findings showed that TikTok started to gain popularity as a marketing tool to promote products/businesses in Malaysia. In another word, the future of promoting one's brand or business lies through social media. The trend for video marketing is not departing anytime soon. Research has shown that 86% of individuals would like to ascertain more videos from brands. Since our research shows more than 67% might think of promoting their brand through TikTok, there is much scope for growth in the number of subscribers of users who will use TikTok for business purposes. The surge in the number of new users during the coronavirus that lies outside the usual demographic of teenagers has helped boost the level of reach and engagement the app has received.

To conclude, entrepreneurs can use TikTok as a tool for publicity to gain customer engagement. TikTok is also an effective marketing tool to boost personal branding. The importance of social media in business is now more prominent than ever. Thus, the growing importance of social media marketing since the COVID-19 pandemic can be seen through our findings. Given that the pandemic is a global phenomenon, the findings likely can be applicable across many countries.

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