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A GEN Z STUDY: THE INFLUENCE OF SUSTAINABLE TIKTOK VIDEOS ON
CONSUMER'S ATTITUDE AND PURCHASE INTENTION IN GERMANY

SUSANNE XINTIAN PLÖTZ

Work project carried out under the supervision of:

Prof. Luis F. Martinez (Nova SBE)

and Prof. Luisa M. Martinez (IPAM Lisboa)

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Abstract

Recently, Gen Z has become the largest group of consumers worldwide and as they are being digitally driven by social media; this is the best way to reach them. One social media app has become popular for this generation – TikTok. Another characteristic most Gen Z individuals show is their cheerful outlook towards sustainability. That’s why this study investigates the influence of sustainable TikTok videos on Gen Z’s consumer attitude and purchase intentions. Primary data was collected using a self-administered online survey getting 241 valid responses from Gen Z TikTok users in Germany. The data was analyzed utilizing linear regression analyses, helping to answer the developed hypotheses. The research findings show that TikTok has an influence on Gen Z’s consumer behavior. Therefore, it is recommended that sustainable brands promote their products on TikTok. This study can aid marketers and researchers in comprehending the consumer’s attitude towards TikTok videos and understanding how to use it as a base for future studies and development of strategies that appeal to Gen Z’s demands.

Keywords: consumer behavior, consumer attitude, purchase intention, sustainability, sustainable brands, TikTok, social media, online advertisements, Germany

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1. Introduction

The group of people born between 1995 and 2010 is called Generation Z, or Gen Z for short (Cilliers, 2017). They are also called "digital natives" because they have grown up with technology and social media. Thus, they can search for anything on the internet and access tons of information (Seemiller & Grace, 2017). For them, the boundaries between the virtual and the real world are becoming increasingly blurred as they use social media apps daily. Along with popular apps like Snapchat, Facebook, and Instagram, Gen Z has been using TikTok more frequently (Dimock, 2019). Some reasons why young users are attracted to this app include its trendy content, the "swipe" interface, full-screen feeding, and the personalized "For You Page" (FYP) (Zhuang, 2021). Furthermore, with 41% of the users being between 16 and 24 years old, TikTok's community consists of teenagers and young adults, who, on average, spend 52 minutes per day on the app (Ma & Hu, 2021). Therefore, this app is a good platform for accessing Generation Z.

Another important characteristic of Generation Z is their awareness of sustainability. In 1987, the United Nations defined sustainability as "meeting the needs of the present without putting future generations' ability to meet their own needs at risk" (United Nations, 2021, p. 6). Other studies show that Gen Z cares more about the environment and is more aware of how to live in a sustainable way (Su, 2019). This generation feels a great responsibility to protect the environment and is more worried about global warming and worsening environmental issues. As a result, the desire to purchase eco-friendly goods is stronger which comes along with a higher willingness to pay for sustainability-related features (Brand et al., 2022).

Research confirms the importance of this study in that TikTok will become increasingly relevant for businesses since it is the most downloaded app worldwide in 2021 (Apptopia, 2021). Furthermore, according to a global survey in 2022, 37% of responding marketers announced an increase in the usage of TikTok for advertising issues (Stelzner, 2022). Moreover, according to

Fitch (2016), Gen Z has been the largest group of consumers worldwide since 2020, which further stresses the significant importance for companies and marketers to focus on this generation and understand how to best reach them. More than ever, businesses need to rethink how they provide value to Gen Z customers and put their words into action, especially, when it comes to being sustainable (Francis, 2018).

To date, there is only limited information available on TikTok and how short-form videos on this app can influence consumer behavior. This study further differs from earlier papers because the focus is specifically on TikTok. In contrast, past studies have considered social networks like Facebook, Instagram, and other platforms in general. Moreover, there has been little empirical research on the influence of social media platforms on consumers' attitudes and purchase intentions regarding sustainability, even though social media is the easiest way to reach Gen Z consumers. Given that sustainability plays a key role in their lives, this research seeks to identify if sustainable TikTok videos influence Generation Z consumers' attitudes and purchase intentions toward sustainable consumption and how Gen Z's sustainable consumers' attitudes influence their purchase intentions. Information, trust, and entertainment were additional variables examined, which affect people's plans to buy products from TikTok in the long run.

This study only includes German citizens as this country is one of the leaders in terms of the largest audiences per country in 2022, with approximately 19.51 million users interacting in the famous social video platform (Data Reportal, 2022). The stated objectives are described by the following research question which reflects the aim of this research: How do sustainable TikTok videos influence Gen Z in terms of consumer attitude and purchase intention?

The next section provides an overview of what has already been written about Generation Z, how they use TikTok, and how sustainability is shown on social media. Scientific information is present in how online advertisements affect people's buying plans and how Gen Z feels about

purchasing items. Based on this, hypotheses were developed by using the existing empirical research. This section is followed by data analysis. The results are interpreted using linear regression analyses. Finally, the discussion section extends the understanding about TikTok's influence on sustainable consumer behavior and gives managerial implications for sustainable brands.

2. Literature Review

Targeted searches in Google Scholar and academic databases led to the discovery of relevant articles, most of which were related to consumer behavior, sustainability, social media, and purchase intentions. Relevant journals for literature research include the Journal of Consumer Research, the Journal of Management, the Journal of Marketing, and the Journal of Consumer Research. Since TikTok is a comparatively new social media app and Generation Z has only recently become a large market force, most of the articles chosen were written in recent years.

2.1 Generation Z and TikTok

Bytedance's TikTok is meant to be a hub for short videos like lip-syncing, comedy, or music videos, and it also has social networking features. The videos posted on the app are 15 to 60 seconds long (Schwedel, 2018). Over 60 % of TikTok users on the platform are part of Generation Z (Doyle, 2020). According to Shatto & Erwin (2016) Gen Z individuals have an attention span of 8 seconds, which is noticeably shorter compared to other generations that came before. So, short-form videos are a smart way to excite and inspire these viewers. Also, Shatto & Erwin (2016) found that TikTok's short, powerful videos are a good format to reach audiences which marketers may not have been able to reach before. This becomes apparent in the high number of downloads of the app. TikTok was the most downloaded app in the world in 2021, with 656 million downloads overall (Apptopia, 2021).

TikTok is popular with young people because it gives them a place to express themselves, pass the time when they have a few minutes to spare and learn about a wide range of topics (Ma & Hu, 2020). What differentiates TikTok from other social media apps is its unique artificial intelligence-based recommendation algorithm that automatically shows content based on the user's engagement (e.g., likes, shares, comments), audience breakdown (e.g., market segmentation, gender, age), or clicked hashtags. As a result, a key component of TikTok is that users are fed personal preference-based clips rather than having to search for and think about videos (Ma & Hu, 2021). This method makes the app more user-friendly than other social media networks such as Facebook or YouTube, where users must still choose the next video from an algorithm's recommended list (Ma & Hu, 2021). In other words, TikTok puts its idea into action by giving everyone personalized, positive content by constantly suggesting related, shareable, copyable, and expandable content and by managing the user's entertainment options while keeping track of how they reacted to previous videos. Eugene Wei (2020), who used to work for Amazon, called the app a "fast, hyper-efficient matchmaker" that puts users into personalized market segments based on their interests by looking at their online behavior. To illustrate, someone who watches many fashion and beauty videos will get comparable recommended videos when engaging with the app.

In contrast, videos will hardly appear for a user who watches lots of sports content. Another reason that makes TikTok interesting for Gen Z is that user-generated content is widespread alongside professionally generated content since there are almost no barriers to entry as the cost of production is low (Zhuang, 2021).

A study from McKinsey says that Generation Z is always looking for **authenticity, truth,** and the value of the individual expression, while rejecting stereotypes (Francis, 2018). That is why most TikTok creators who went viral or reached "influencer" status are those to whom the young audiences can relate to (Zhuang, 2021). Gen Z consumers will not simply buy a product without

learning about the brand. First, they will look up the social media accounts to learn what the company is truly about (Rickers, 2022). So, it should not be a surprise that people in Gen Z are driving the growth of personal brands and customized products. Because of this, businesses must stop putting people into groups based on their income and start coming up with creative ways to reach the unique traits of this generation. Meanwhile, TikTok is a good starting point for its diverse and authentic content (Muliadi, 2020).

2.2 Sustainability in Social Media (TikTok)

Social media apps are frequently used as communication tools, as they provide businesses and marketers with effective means of disseminating their messages and extending communities. They allow interaction between consumers and companies, which makes social media platforms the easiest way to get people interested in trends (Zhao et al., 2022). Furthermore, social networking platforms can influence and encourage group decision-making (Carpenter et al., 2016). Research shows that people who use social media to reach out to the public believe they have more ability to effect change than people who do not (Porter et al., 2007). However, thus far marketers have mainly focused their advertising efforts on Twitter and Facebook. These two platforms focus on written text and a few pictures (Zhao et al., 2022). With the rise of Instagram and TikTok, visuals have become more important in advertising (Zhao et al., 2022). To promote products and hence increase their values, it is helpful for businesses to use visuals in their advertisements, so consumers remember special products and brands better (Zhao et al., 2022).

Although most of the people have social media accounts, and sustainability is important nowadays, research examining the use of social media to draw attention to sustainability is minimal. Also, the few studies that have been done on how people use social media to discuss sustainability have focused on environmental activism (Carpenter et al., 2016). However, sustainability leaders think social media platforms are good for getting people to act and spreading

information (Carpenter, 2016). If Gen Z has easy access to information related to sustainability through social media, it may be possible for them to act and make changes in the future (Basch, 2021).

It is worth taking a closer look at the influence of TikTok on the sustainable thinking of Gen Z. To find out if there are sustainability-related videos on TikTok that can be shown to the users, an investigation was carried out on the app. In the search function, the keywords “sustainability,” “sustainable brands,” “sustainable lifestyle,” “zero waste,” and “ethical brands” were entered to gain an overview of the frequency and content of sustainable videos on TikTok. Overall, it can be stated that most of the videos with many likes on this topic were TikTok users trying to educate others on sustainable consumption, provide tips on how to live a more sustainable lifestyle, inform others about brands that are bad for the environment, and give sustainable alternatives to brands and products, especially in the fashion industry. This way of information sharing between two or more consumers regarding a brand or a product can also be described as electronic word of mouth, in short, eWOM (Tabassum et al., 2020). Moreover, it can be mentioned that there are not many large, famous companies trying to promote their sustainable missions through advertisements on TikTok. Instead, many TikTok videos stem from small businesses promoting sustainable products. Noting these aspects of existing videos and missing empirical research which investigates the influence of short-form videos on sustainable consumer attitude, the following Hypothesis was tested:

H1: Sustainable TikTok videos have a positive impact on Gen Z sustainable consumer's attitude.

2.3 Purchase Intentions throughout TikTok

A consumer's purchase intention is his or her plan to buy a good or service (Araujo et al., 2022). There are many ways to advertise and bring attention to products and brands on social media. Several studies have praised how useful and effective social media is for advertising

(Alalwan et al., 2017; Duffett, 2015; Jung, 2017). Advertising, e-commerce live streaming, and in-app purchases are the most common ways to get people to want to buy something on TikTok (Zhuang, 2021). As already stated, another strategy used nowadays to promote products is eWOM. Because digital customers have broader product knowledge and access more information, eWOM is a strong and effective advertising tool. Hence, many research worker have studied its effect on consumer decision-making (Tabassum et. al., 2020). According to previous research, eWOM plays a vital role when Gen Z individuals make purchasing decisions (Muddasar et al., 2020). Hussain et al. (2019) explored that customers often read online reviews and recommendations before deciding whether to buy something.

Based on the results of previous studies in how effective social media ads and eWOM are influencing purchasing intentions, this research study examines how sustainable TikTok videos affect people's desire to purchase products. The meaning of "sustainable" TikTok videos includes TikTok advertisements from sustainable brands and eWOM from other users related to sustainable products. To gain a better understanding, this study examines how much information, trust, and entertainment affect a person's decision to purchase a product.

2.3.1 Information

Information can be defined as a fact or circumstance of which one is informed (Madden, 2000). Marketers and advertisers use different social media platforms to spread information about various goods and brands that have grown significantly (Bucko et al., 2018). Djordjevic and Cotton (2011) suggest that spreading information widely is the first step to making people aware and changing their behaviors. Voorveld et al. (2018) found that consumers used seven of the eight social media sites in their survey because they helped them keep up with the latest news and gain other meaningful information from social media apps. Carpenter et al. (2016) concluded that social media platforms make it easier for sustainability leaders to spread information with their audiences,

especially among Gen Z, to bring more attention to regional projects and problems. While viewing content on TikTok, users like to use the app's powerful algorithm to gain information that is tailored to their preferences (Huang, 2022). TikTok also lets users search for hashtags or user accounts, in addition to the very personalized FYP. According to Google's internal studies, around 40% of Gen Z members prefer TikTok over Google for online searches. One reason is that they deliver information from real people rather than faceless websites. As was already said, Generation Z has a shorter attention span and prefers to gather information quickly. So, TikTok is a good format because it allows for a more complete and condensed search result (Huang, 2022). In consequence, the following hypothesis was created:

H2a: Information in sustainable TikTok videos have a positive impact on purchase intention.

2.3.2 Trust

Most economic and social relationships with uncertainty are based on trust (Pavlou, 2003), which Merriam-Webster (2022) defines as a sure reliance on the character, strength, ability, or truth of someone or something. Trust arises from accumulated information that enables one to make predictions with exceptional confidence regarding the possibility that the other party will fulfill its responsibilities (Johnson, 2003). Especially online, where customers cannot see their exchange partner or the product they want to buy, there are a lot of uncertainties and dependencies. It has been stated that a lack of trust is one of the main causes why people do not use e-commerce. Consequently, trust is a defining feature for customers' online behavioral intentions (Pavlou, 2003).

Liu et al. (2005) examined how individual consumers' expectations of trust are influenced by their intent to purchase online. The study found that consumers' level of trust greatly affected how likely they were to buy something online. Tabassum et al. (2020) have also shown that different types of eWOM positively affect the audience's trust and behavior intentions. TikTok provides various content, including videos from key opinion leaders (KOL), verified company

accounts, and experts in particular fields. These accounts are usually more credible when educating people about certain products, especially concerning sustainability (Bamakan, 2019). Consequently, as past literature agrees that trust in social media ads and eWOM are key factors in impacting purchase intention, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2b: Trust towards sustainable TikTok videos have a positive impact on purchase intention.

2.3.3 Entertainment

Dwivedi et al. (2020) concluded that entertainment is provided when an ad meets an audience's aesthetic and distraction needs while making them feel good. This helps people pay attention, have positive feelings, and have good attitudes. Entertainment also raises both advertising effectiveness and perceived value. A previous study by Van-Tien Dao et al. (2015) identified that entertaining advertisements are one of the key elements influencing effective advertising strategies in creating an emotional connection between customers and a brand message. It also shows how likable an ad is and how much pleasure and excitement it brings to the customer. Logan et al. (2012) performed a comparison study that demonstrated how entertainment affects TV commercials and the value of social media advertisements in a big way. Tabassum et al. (2020) concluded that it is important for digital commercials to have entertainment that people can relate to because social media platforms make it easy for Generation Z to ignore marketing messages that get in the way of their fun. Most of the commercial and user-made videos on TikTok are said to be entertaining or funny (Ma & Hu, 2021). However, due to the short length and mass of content, many entertaining videos can be shown to the user quickly, leading to addictive behavior (Araujo, 2022). Overall, considering the previous findings from the literature, the following hypothesis can be concluded:

H2c: Enjoyment in sustainable TikTok videos have a positive impact on purchase intention.

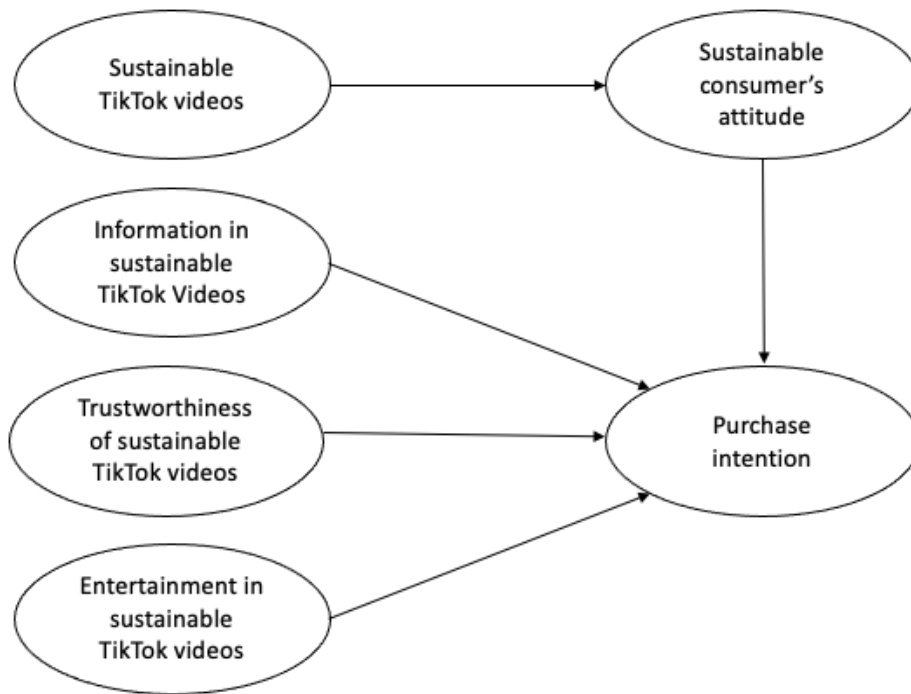
2.4 The influence of sustainable consumer's attitude on purchase intention

According to Vermeir et al. (2006), a positive attitude toward sustainable products and brands is a good way to get people to consume in a more sustainable fashion. However, even though the demand for sustainable products is increasing, and 50% of European consumer stated that they are willing to pay a higher price for them, the market share for sustainable goods is less than 1%, which makes it difficult for customers to switch to sustainable consumption in the long term (Zhao et al., 2022). Additionally, although a sustainable attitude is in a consumer's mind, numerous factors can still explain the inconsistency between consumers' positive attitude toward sustainable products and their actual purchasing behaviors. For example, habitual behavior or situational factors such as promotions or rebates on less sustainable products may contribute to lower use of sustainable goods. Furthermore, according to Vermeir et al. (2006), consumers can have varying reasons for purchasing a product, which makes it harder to understand specific situations. Nevertheless, other previous studies found that attitude influences sustainable consumption behavior, and overall, a positive attitude toward sustainability could be observed (Shamdasani et al., 1993; Tanner & Kast, 2003; ; Shrum et al., 1995). Therefore, to examine if Gen Z sustainable consumers not only have the attitude towards purchasing but also purchase sustainable products and brands, the following hypothesis is suggested:

H3: Sustainable consumer's attitude of Gen Z has a positive impact on purchase intention.

To get an overview and to better understand the connections, the following figure shows the conceptual framework. These serve as the theoretical foundation for this study.

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework



Note: The conceptual framework visualises the causal relationships of the variables to provide a better understanding of the hypotheses.

3. Method

The following section explains the research design, data collection and sample, as well as the questionnaire design and scale development to evaluate the research hypotheses and answer the research question on whether sustainable TikTok videos influence sustainable consumer attitudes and purchase intentions.

3.1 Research Design

To execute the study, a significant amount of primary data were required. As a result, a quantitative method was used, which allows for the easy collection of primary data. A large national sample was collected to conduct a self-administered online survey utilizing Google Forms. Online surveys present several advantages. For example, missing data can be avoided by having

the option to require responses to every question (Hair et al., 2020). Online surveys further enable respondents to express their opinions anonymously, which boosts sincerity as inquiries concerning personal consumer behavior may be viewed as a sensitive topic. Furthermore, because the data collection period was limited to one month, an online survey approach was appropriate since this method allowed for the collection of a larger amount of data in a short period of time. Additionally, prior studies followed a similar approach, further validating the selected methods. Choosing an online survey reduced the likelihood of non-response errors because respondents were allowed to complete it anywhere at any time. Linear regressions were used to examine the survey results and draw conclusions related to the analyses, which helps to explain the relationships between the observed dependent variables and the independent variables (Hair et al., 2013).

3.2 Data Collection and Sample

Since the study is about Generation Z, people born between 1995 and 2010 were chosen as the target group (Cilliers, 2017). However, because people under the age of 18 need permission from their parents to take part in a survey, this survey only had people from 18 to 27 years old. Further, to be considered, the participant needed to use TikTok and live in Germany. The online survey was distributed mostly through social media channels like Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, and TikTok and was active from October 25th to November 7th, 2022. A non-probability sampling method called "snowball sampling" and "convenience sampling" were used to reach the target audience. These methods enable more respondents to reach in a shorter time than probability sample techniques (Hair et. al., 2020). All respondents provided their responses voluntarily and without compensation. A total of 293 respondents participated in the study, which helped to prevent the occurrence of nonnormal distribution (Hair et al., 2013). Nevertheless, the limited generalizability of the research findings must be kept in mind because the sample's

representativeness to the target population cannot be determined (Hair et al., 2020). Although the target audience in this study was small, the limited generalizability was acceptable.

3.3 Questionnaire Design and Scale Development

The survey was divided into four sections. The first section began with general questions such as "When were you born?" or "Do you watch TikTok videos?" to ensure that the participants fit into the target audience. Next, a short introductory text regarding sustainable TikTok videos was given to ensure that participants understood the topic correctly and could answer the remaining questions. Two sustainable TikTok videos were also shown to refresh the participants' memory. It further gave those who saw little to no sustainable TikTok videos on their FYP the opportunity to rate the content. The third section was divided into five sub-sections with 43 questions in total to test the five developed hypotheses.

The measured items were revalidated for this research after they were changed from existing scales to fit the research topic. The questionnaire was created utilizing a 5-point Likert scale from "1" – I strongly disagree to "5" - I strongly agree. An exception was made to determine the purchase intention of informative, trustful, and entertaining TikTok videos. Here, the five-point Likert scale was labeled as unlikely/likely, impossible/possible, and unlikely/likely (Freling et al., 2011). A metric interval scale, as the one used for this section, is one of the most common scales used in self-administered surveys (Hair et. al., 2020). The measured items are fully listed in Appendix A. To complete the survey, the fourth and last section asked the participants to answer demographic questions such as age, gender, nationality, and education.

3.4 Sample Characteristics

A total of 293 respondents responded to the survey. However, after screening for reliability and usability, not all of them could be used as only participants belonging to Generation Z, who are watching TikTok videos, and living in Germany, were considered. Overall, 241 responses met

the criteria of the survey. An approximate balance between genders (106 males and 133 females) was achieved. Most of these individuals were university students at 73.9% (n = 178) and had a mean age of 23.3 years (SD = 2.30). Having a look at TikTok and when asked how often they use the app, more than half of the participants said daily, while 29% stated weekly. Lastly, when asked how long they use TikTok on an average day, 71.4% stated that they use the app for less than an hour. A total overview of the demographic characteristics can be viewed below (Table 1).

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

<i>Items</i>	<i>Categories</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
Gender	Male	106	44.0
	Female	133	55.2
	Gender Diverse	2	0.8
Age Groups	18-21	43	17.8
	22-27	198	82.2
Education	High school	24	10.0
	University	178	73.9
TikTok Use Frequency	Currently working	39	16.2
	Other	3	1.2
	Quarterly	4	1.7
	Monthly	7	2.9
	Twice a month	12	5.0
	Weekly	70	29.0
Average TikTok Use Per Day	Daily	145	60.2
	Less than 1 hour	172	71.4
	2-3 hours	64	26.6
	4-5 hours	3	1.2
	5+ hours	2	0.8

Note: The respondent's gender, age group, education, and TikTok use are described by frequency and percent of the total sample.

4. Results

All survey data were collected and uploaded in Microsoft Excel format and exported into IBM SPSS 28, where analyses took place. The construct questions were used to create new continuous variables. Histograms were examined visually to ensure the sample population was

normally distributed, and Shapiro-Wilks scores were calculated. A Spearman's rank-order correlation was run to assess the relationship between the different variables. Regression analyses were performed to confirm the relationship between the different constructs. According to Schmid et. al. (2016), there are five assumptions that needed to be verified to ensure the models are well made: linearity, independence of observations, absence of outliers, homoscedasticity, and residual error distribution. The analyses were deemed statistically significant with a confidence interval of 95 percent, $p < .05$.

4.1 Scale Reliability and Validity

Before the analysis was carried out, scale reliability and validity were tested. First, Cronbach's Alpha (CA) was used to measure scale reliability. According to Hair et al. (2013), the coefficient value should be greater than 0.7 for internal consistency to be taken seriously. After looking at the construct CA values, the scales had a good to a high level of internal consistency, as determined by a Cronbach's alpha score ranging from 0.749 to 0.937. In addition, each construct's composite reliability factor (CR) was computed. To confirm the reliability, values should be greater than 0.7 (Hair et. al., 2013). In this study, CR values ranged from 0.85 to 0.96, also demonstrating high internal consistency. Lastly, the average variance extracted (AVE) was utilized to measure how well the individual constructs fit together. The AVE values should start from 0.5, which applies to the study constructs and therefore approves convergence validity (Hair et. al., 2013). All factors considered, the mean values, standard deviation, and the frequency of items of each construct can be viewed in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Internal Consistency of the Study's Constructs

<i>Construct</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Number of Items</i>	<i>CA</i>	<i>CR</i>	<i>AVE</i>
Sustainability in TikTok Videos	2,76	0,771	6	0,793	0,85	0,49
Attitude in Sustainability	3,21	0,822	5	0,866	0,90	0,65
Information Sustainability	3,52	0,886	3	0,749	0,86	0,67
Purchase Intention for Information Sustainability	3,39	1,036	3	0,918	0,95	0,86
Trust	3,05	0,888	5	0,916	0,94	0,75
Purchase Intention for Trust	3,39	1,009	3	0,915	0,95	0,86
Entertainment	3,26	0,894	5	0,880	0,91	0,68
Purchase Intention for Entertainment	3,30	1,008	3	0,931	0,96	0,88
Gen Z Sustainable Consumer's Attitude	3,68	0,808	7	0,890	0,91	0,61
Gen Z Sustainable Consumer's Attitude Purchase Intention	4,00	0,944	3	0,937	0,96	0,89

Note: All of the constructs demonstrated good to high internal consistency.

4.2 Measurement Model

Consumer's sustainable attitude: $r_s(239) = .699, p < .001$, there was a statistically significant, strong positive correlation between the variables. A linear regression revealed that sustainability in TikTok videos could statistically significantly influence consumer's sustainable attitude, $F(1, 239) = 225.564, p < .001$ (Appendix B). Informational content on TikTok: a statistically significant, strong positive correlation between the variables, $r_s(239) = .623, p < .001$, was observed. A linear regression validated that information sustainability could statistically significantly predict purchase intentions, $F(1, 239) = 163.604, p < .001$ (Appendix C). Trustworthiness of TikTok: here, a statistically significant, strong positive correlation between the variables, $r_s(239) = .649, p < .001$, was noted, and the linear regression confirmed that trust could statistically significantly predict purchase intentions, $F(1, 239) = 202.838, p < .001$ (Appendix D). There was a statistically significant, strong positive correlation between the variables in TikTok, $r_s(239) = .536, p < .001$. Linear regression revealed that entertainment could predict purchase intentions statistically significantly: $F(1, 239) = 112.509, p < .001$ (Appendix E). A statistically significant positive correlation between the variables, $r_s(239) = .704, p < .001$, can be stated for Gen

Z's sustainable purchase intention. Furthermore, the linear regression confirmed that Generation Z consumer attitudes could predict purchase intentions statistically significantly: $F(1, 239) = 326.570, p < .001$ (Appendix F). The following table summarizes the hypotheses, the associated variables, and the conclusions. Moreover, a graphical representation can be viewed in the scatterplots in the respective Appendixes.

Table 3. Study Hypothesis Conclusions

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Hypothesis</i>	<i>Sign</i>	<i>Conclusion</i>
Sustainability in TikTok Videos Attitude in Sustainability	H1: Sustainable TikTok videos have a positive impact on sustainable consumer's attitude	+	Supported
Informative Sustainability Purchase Intention for Informative Sustainability	H2a: Informative sustainable TikTok videos have a positive impact on purchase intention.	+	Supported
Trust Purchase Intention for Trust	H2b: Trust towards sustainable TikTok videos have a positive impact on purchase intention.	+	Supported
Entertainment Purchase Intention for Entertainment	H2c: Entertainment in sustainable TikTok videos have a positive impact on purchase intention.	+	Supported
Gen Z Sustainable Consumer's Attitude Gen Z Sustainable Consumer's Attitude Purchase Intention	H3: Sustainable consumer's attitude of Gen Z have a positive impact on purchase intention.	+	Supported

Note: All five of the hypotheses were supported, $p < .50$.

5. Discussion

5.1 Theoretical Implications

The study's theoretical motivation was to extend the knowledge of TikTok's influence on sustainable consumer behavior in Germany. TikTok as an e-commerce channel is increasingly significant (Zhuang, 2021), and sustainable production is important more than ever for successful organizations (Balice et al., 2009). This study makes a notable theoretical contribution to research

in this area by examining many important factors. To begin with, a lack of scientific findings on the impact of TikTok videos on consumer behavior was identified in a search of empirical evidence. The published references mostly refer to other social media networks such as Instagram, Facebook, or social media in general, as the hype related to TikTok was quite recent (Zhuang, 2021). Because of this, this study adds to what has already been written by demonstrating how existing factors can be used to test new ideas related to TikTok. For an in-depth examination of informativeness, trustfulness, and entertainment in sustainable TikTok videos, two factors were extracted from Jain et al. (2018) and one factor from Pavlou (2003). Their studies have been related to online advertisements, while this paper solely focused on TikTok.

Moreover, only very few articles deal with the influence of digital ads or eWOM on consumer behaviors in relation to sustainability; social media is the best way to reach new customers in these digital-driven days, especially to catch Gen Z individuals who grew up in times of digitalization. That's why this research introduced hypotheses with influences for sustainability on consumer's attitudes and purchase intentions. The results show that the importance of sustainability for Generation Z is also a topic that finds acknowledgment and relevance on TikTok. The results of this research align with past empirical studies that investigated the influence of social media on consumer attitudes or purchase intention in diverse contexts.

5.2 Practical Implications

The results of this study provide essential implications for managers of sustainable brands and can be used in developing future e-commerce strategies on TikTok. The findings not only show that TikTok is an efficient way to influence a consumer's attitude towards sustainable brands but also recommend that the content of the videos can influence their purchase intention. Therefore, the following recommendations can be implemented by marketers, advertisers, and TikTok users who want to educate about sustainable brands and products.

As mentioned in the literature review and through examining the outcomes of TikTok's frequency of use, more than half of the participants use the app daily. This shows us that the app is established in the everyday routine of Gen Z; hence TikTok is a good platform to reach them. According to this study, sustainable TikTok videos positively impact Gen Z's sustainable consumer attitude, supporting past studies which investigated the influence of social media advertisements on consumer attitude (Daugherty & Hoffmann, 2014; Zhao et al., 2022; Forbes, L. P., 2013). Thus, the study's first hypothesis is accepted. Consequently, short videos on TikTok, which include content on sustainability or the promotion of sustainable products, help Gen Z users become more aware of this topic and increase their perceptions. This can lead to users searching for, sharing, and commenting on sustainable videos and recommending the products in the videos to others. As a result, sustainable content on TikTok is widely disseminated and, at best, also influences other users in their attitudes toward sustainability.

The study also revealed that information, trust, and entertainment in sustainable TikTok videos positively influence Gen Z's purchase intention, supporting hypotheses 2a, 2b, and 2c. Thus, the results align with past empirical studies about the influence of informative, trustful and entertaining online advertisements on a consumer's purchase intention (Jain et. al., 2018; Ventre & Kolbe, 2020).

As the survey demonstrated, providing information about the sustainable products shown in the TikTok video is essential. Although offering information is crucial to promoting sustainable consumption on social media platforms, marketers should not fill TikTok videos with a string of facts about sustainable products in general. Especially when it comes to sustainability, the subject is transformed into a scientific explanation based on studies and statistics. However, this is not the best strategy to attract Gen Z's attention. Keeping the videos simple helps Gen Z users to understand the meaning while giving details about the product. Thus, it is more effective to use TikTok as a

jumping-off point by introducing key facts to motivate consumers to research sustainable products or brands. Furthermore, marketers can provide further information on their profile in the info box via a link or newly uploaded videos to allow interested users to find out more about the sustainable product or brand.

Concerning the trustworthiness of TikTok, it is often difficult to give credibility to TikTok videos that inform about sustainable brands. Just because a company asserts to produce sustainably does not necessarily mean it is true. Further, users can easily make claims in TikTok videos about sustainable brands, either to destroy their reputation or to support them. Thus, when it comes to creating trustworthy TikTok videos, it can be helpful to include key opinion leaders on sustainable topics since they are a reliable and well-respected influence with a proven expertise (Bamakan, 2019). Including them is a third opinion from a distinct perspective related to the sustainable brand, which helps TikTok users give more credibility to the videos and consider buying the product sooner. Another opportunity to make a TikTok video more trustworthy is to include evidence of sustainability. This means giving users the opportunity to look into certain areas of the company and showing what makes the company sustainable. To give an example, insights into the sustainable production of products and the recycling of materials can be given, or the sustainable corporate culture can be shown.

TikTok is an entertainment platform most users use to relax. Having a look at how to create sustainable videos entertaining for Gen Z users, marketers have a wide range of musical sounds and filters that they can apply to their videos to entertain users. Utilizing them and connecting a link to the sustainable product or brand they want to promote is an effective way to raise attention. Using trending hashtags and sounds, the video automatically achieves more reach and ends up on the FYP for more people. In addition, sustainable products can be promoted and inform users about products without lavish marketing campaigns and much effort, as Gen Z likes to watch TikTok

videos that are authentic and simple. Another approach is to create your own challenge related to a sustainable brand message, which motivates other users to recreate it and thus indirectly draws attention to the brand or products. However, what must be considered is that trends on this platform can rapidly change. Viral sounds, dances or challenges can become irrelevant again after just a few weeks. That is why staying updated and keeping up with the latest trends are important. Given this study's findings, creating informative, trustworthy, entertaining, and sustainable TikTok videos in makes sense from a marketing perspective.

Lastly, the results show that the third hypothesis is accepted, demonstrating that Gen Z individuals are conscious of the importance of sustainability and implement this in their purchasing decisions. Gen Z individuals deal with many negative external influences when buying sustainable products. Most of them are currently at a young age, not yet mentally mature and even the Gen Z cohort is concerned about climate change and sustainability, they also have other problems on their minds. Furthermore, most of the Gen Z cohort does not have a high income yet. Because sustainable products are usually more expensive, there is a risk that Gen Z individuals will have the tendency to purchase cheap non-sustainable products. However, this study demonstrates that despite external negative influences, Gen Z is aware and actively tries to buy sustainable products. Relating this to the findings from our other hypothesis, TikTok is a useful source to reinforce Gen Z's sustainable attitudes and purchase intention. For instance, there are sustainable brands that offer products at fair prices. These companies can use TikTok to draw attention to themselves and win over Gen Z consumers since there are still videos on the app promoting cheap, unsustainable products and fast fashion brands. Creating sustainable TikTok videos is an effective way to give Gen Z information about sustainable products in an entertaining way without making them feel like they are being forcefully lectured on the subject.

Consequently, with the findings of this research, advertisers can consider the recommendations above in their marketing strategies. Publishing sustainability reports on company websites is no longer sufficient for digitally promoting sustainability initiatives. Businesses must diversify their communication channels to demonstrate the sustainability-related initiatives they have adopted (Rickers, 2022). Gen Z consumers choose sustainable consumption, requiring businesses to promote their sustainability strategy in a meaningful and straightforward way that appeals to possible customers (Rickers, 2022). Moreover, Gen Z is the next generation of consumers with great purchasing power (Fitch, 2016), so brands should listen to their needs and wants to win them over as faithful consumers. This means being present online and sharing commitment on social media platforms like TikTok because this is what Gen Z is comfortable with; their expressive personalities can further help sustainable organizations target their sustainable brand and products (Rickers, 2022).

5.3 Limitations and Future Research

Even though this research uncovered much about how TikTok affects sustainable consumer attitudes and purchase intentions, some things should be kept in mind when understanding the results. The following limitations are the base for future research proposals. First of all, this study is restricted in the generalizability of the collected results because of the chosen sampling method. Due to budget and time constraints, non-probability sampling was the better option for this study. However, probability sampling would have made the results more generalizable. Also, the scales used were adapted from other past studies. Because of limited time, a pre-test was not performed to ensure the constructs were reliable and valid. Lastly, this research study solely focused on different business areas of TikTok regarding sustainability.

Future studies may consider concentrating on one specific industry and investigating the influence of sustainable TikTok videos in one field. For example, the fashion industry is very

strongly represented on TikTok. Therefore, it would be interesting to test whether TikTok videos promoting sustainable fashion brands have further insights into consumer attitudes or purchase intention, as a lot of fast fashion is advertised on TikTok. Additionally, this study was only designed for Generation Z members living in Germany, between the ages of 18 to 27 years. This allows for reproducing this research with a larger age range or a different generation as well as a larger geographical location. It may be useful to compare two generations to see if the same patterns of behaviors and opinions toward TikTok videos can be reproduced. Finally, since the TikTok app is continuously growing and being used for marketing purposes, more dimensions and aspects should be considered in further studies to increase this platform's effectiveness in attracting consumers' attention and recognition in terms of sustainability.

6. Conclusion

The aim of this study was to investigate if sustainable TikTok videos influence Gen Z in terms of consumer attitude and purchase intention. The research has examined that TikTok can be a useful platform for raising awareness of sustainable brands and products. The app helps enhancing positive consumer behavior towards sustainability which can be advantageous for both sustainable businesses and Gen Z consumers. Promoting a sustainable brand successfully on TikTok requires some key elements. The results recommend sustainable businesses to use TikTok for marketing reasons and increase this opportunity to draw attention to their sustainable products through informative, trustful, and entertaining short-form videos. Some sustainable brands, such as Patagonia or Veja, as well as sustainable startups, have already discovered the usefulness of TikTok and advertise by communicating information about their sustainable and fair-trade products (Zhao et al., 2022). Therefore, it can be highly recommended that other brands take an example of these brands and join them in their marketing success.

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Appendix A: Measurement Scale Items

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Survey Questions</i>	<i>Source</i>
Sustainability in TikTok Videos	<p>I see TikTok videos which promote sustainable products as trustworthy</p> <p>I find sustainable TikTok videos informational and effective</p> <p>I use TikTok to find authentic sustainable product reviews</p> <p>I look for sustainable product recommendations on TikTok</p> <p>I believe sustainable product reviews from people who share their opinion on TikTok more than actual ads from brands.</p> <p>When I see user showing sustainable products on TikTok, it immediately catches my attention</p>	Araujo et al., (2022)
Attitude in Sustainability	<p>Sustainable TikTok videos are favorable</p> <p>Sustainable TikTok videos are pleasant</p> <p>Sustainable TikTok videos are convincing</p> <p>Sustainable TikTok videos are believable</p> <p>Sustainable TikTok videos are good</p>	Jain et al., (2018)
Informative Sustainability	<p>Sustainable TikTok videos are a valuable source of product information</p> <p>Sustainable TikTok videos are a convenient source of product information</p> <p>Sustainable TikTok videos help to keep me up to date</p>	Jain et al., (2018)
Purchase Intention for Informative Sustainability	<p>Please rate your intention to purchase a sustainable product after watching an informative sustainable TikTok video.</p> <p>unlikely to likely</p> <p>impossible to possible</p> <p>improbably to probably</p>	Freling et al., (2011)
Trust	<p>Sustainable TikTok videos are reliable</p> <p>I have confidence in watching sustainable TikTok videos</p> <p>Watching sustainable TikTok videos is a trustworthy experience</p> <p>Sustainable TikTok videos are believable</p> <p>I believe that what is told in sustainable TikTok videos is true</p>	Jani et. al., (2011); Pavlou (2003)
Purchase Intention for Trust	<p>Please rate your intention to purchase a sustainable product after watching an trustful sustainable TikTok video.</p> <p>unlikely to likely</p> <p>impossible to possible</p> <p>improbably to probably</p>	Freling et al., (2011)
Entertainment	<p>Sustainable TikTok videos are fun to watch</p> <p>Sustainable TikTok videos are clever and quite entertaining</p> <p>Sustainable TikTok videos do not just sell – they also entertain me</p> <p>Sustainable TikTok videos are often amusing.</p> <p>Watching sustainable TikTok videos fulfill me</p>	Jain et. al., (2018)

Purchase Intention for Entertainment	Please rate your intention to purchase a sustainable product after watching an entertaining sustainable TikTok video. unlikely to likely impossible to possible improbably to probably	Freling et al., (2011)
Gen Z Sustainable Consumer's Attitude	I consider purchasing sustainable brands because in the coming days they are less polluting The use of sustainable goods makes me feel happy I make a concerted effort to buy products made from recycled materials. I buy sustainably produced products I choose sustainable products over conventional ones I buy sustainable products to do something good for the environment. I buy sustainable products because I am convinced of the quality.	Lavuri et. al., (2020); Klug et. al., (2020); Choi et. al., (2021)
Gen Z Sustainable Consumer's Attitude Purchase Intention	Please rate your intention to purchase a sustainable product in general unlikely to likely impossible to possible improbably to probably	Freling et al., (2011)

Appendix B: Sustainable Consumer's Attitude

Linear Regression Analysis

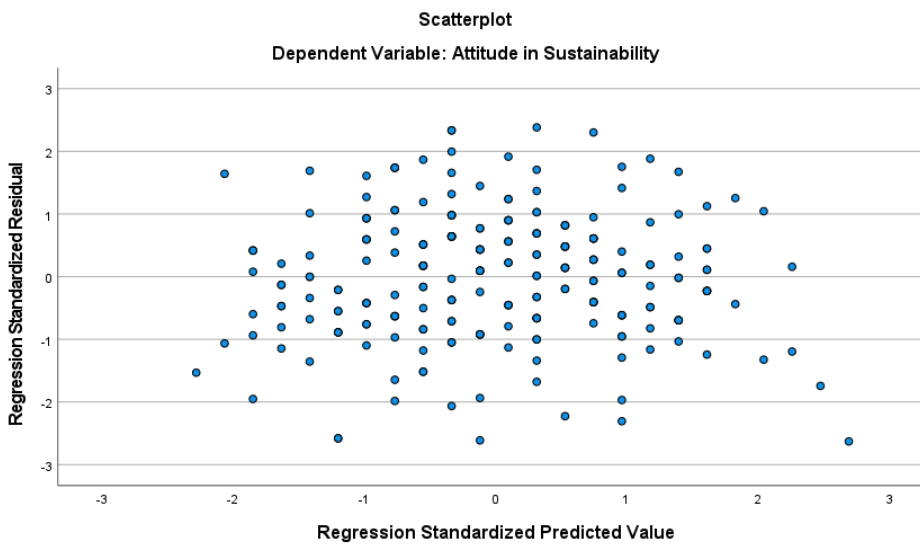
Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	SE of the estimate
1	.697 ^a	0.486	0.483	0.59104

- a. Predictors: (Constant), Sustainability in TikTok Videos
 b. Dependent Variable: Attitude in Sustainability

Regression Coefficients

Model	Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients			
		B	SE	t	p
1	Variables	1.162	0.142	8.205	< 0.001
	Sustainability in TikTok Videos	0.743	0.049	15.019	< 0.001

- a. Dependent Variable: Attitude in Sustainability



Appendix C: Informational Content on TikTok

Linear Regression Analysis

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	SE of the estimate
1	.637 ^a	0.406	0.404	0.79983

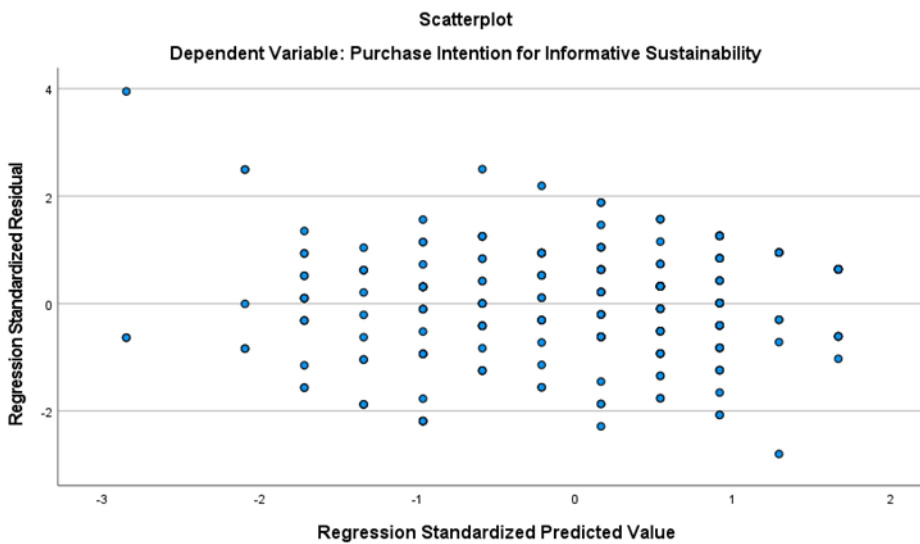
a. Predictors: (Constant), Informative Sustainability

b. Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention for Information Sustainability

Regression Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		t	p
		B	SE		
1	Variables	0.762	0.212	3.603	0.000
	Attitude in Sustainability	0.745	0.058	12.791	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention for Informative Sustainability



Appendix D: Trustworthiness of TikTok

Linear Regression Results

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	SE of the estimate
1	.678 ^a	0.459	0.457	0.74392

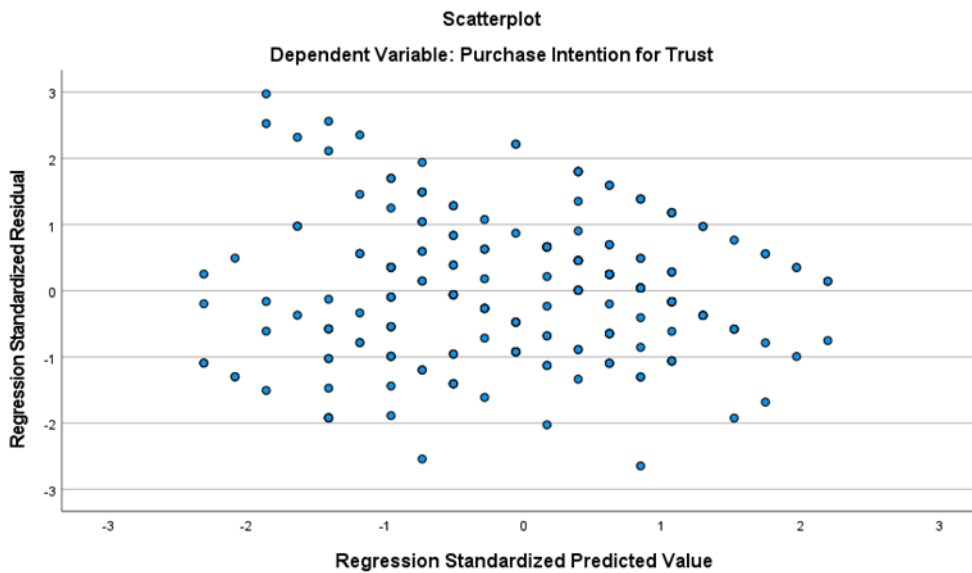
a. Predictors: (Constant), Trust

b. Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention for Trust

Regression Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients			
		B	SE	t	p
1	Variable	1.042	0.172	6.066	0.000
	Trust	0.770	0.054	14.242	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention for Trust



Appendix E: Entertainment in TikTok

Linear Regression Results

<i>Model</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> ²	<i>Adjusted R</i> ²	<i>SE of the estimate</i>
1	.566 ^a	0.320	0.317	0.83262

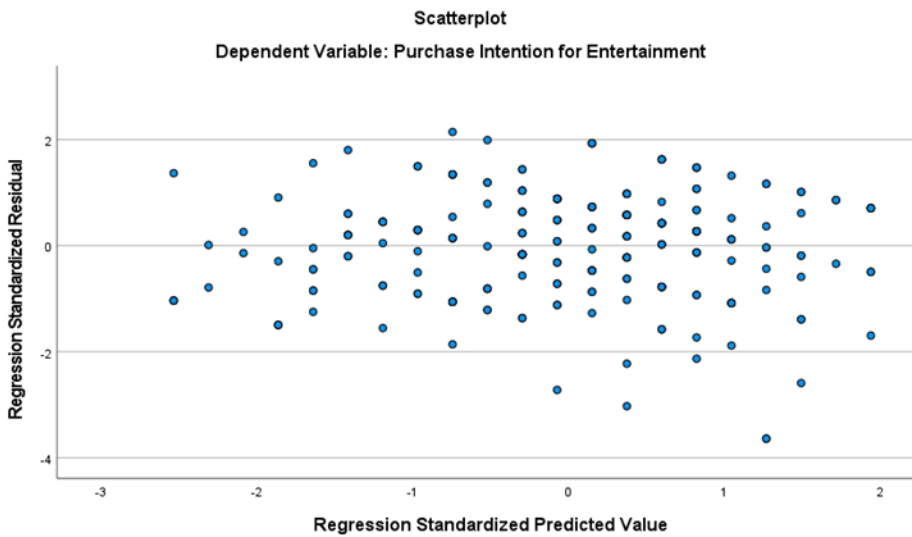
a. Predictors: (Constant), Entertainment

b. Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention for Entertainment

Regression Coefficients

<i>Model</i>	<i>Unstandardized Coefficients</i>			
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
1 (Constant)	1.225	0.203	6.024	0.000
Entertainment	0.637	0.060	10.607	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention for Entertainment



Appendix F: Gen Z Sustainable Purchase Intentions

Linear Regression Results

<i>Model</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> ²	<i>Adjusted R</i> ²	<i>SE of the estimate</i>
1	.760 ^a	0.577	0.576	0.61496

a. Predictors: (Constant), Gen Z Sustainable Consumer's Attitude

b. Dependent Variable: Gen Z Sustainable Consumer's Attitude Purchase Intention

Regression Coefficients

<i>Model</i>		<i>Unstandardized Coefficients</i>			
		<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
1	Variable	0.731	0.185	3.952	0.000
	Gen Z Sustainable Consumer's Attitude	0.888	0.049	18.071	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: Gen Z Sustainable Consumer's Attitude Purchase Intention

