



## TikTok as a Catalyst for E-Business: A UTAUT2-Based Analysis of Consumer Adoption and Usage

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### Abstract

This study addresses the growing influence of social media on consumer behavior, focusing on TikTok's role in shaping the travel decisions of Filipino Millennials—a group highly active on the platform. Despite the widespread use of TikTok for travel content, there is limited empirical evidence on how its features drive both behavioral intention and actual travel behavior, leaving a theoretical and practical gap in understanding digital tourism adoption in emerging markets. To fill this gap, a quantitative, descriptive-correlational design was employed. Data were collected from 385 Filipino millennial TikTok users who engage with travel-related content. Using the UTAUT2 framework, the study examined seven constructs—Performance Expectancy, Effort Expectancy, Social Influence, Facilitating Conditions, Hedonic Motivation, Habit, and Perceived Trust—and their effects on behavioral intention and actual travel behavior. Results revealed that all constructs positively influenced behavioral intention, with Effort Expectancy, Habit, and Social Influence being the most significant. Habit was the strongest predictor of intention, which in turn strongly affected actual travel behavior. Although Perceived Trust scored lowest, all constructs had high mean values above 4.40, highlighting TikTok's potential as both a marketing and behavioral influence tool. These findings offer actionable insights for digital tourism strategies and extend theoretical understanding of social media-driven consumer behavior in emerging markets.

**Keywords:** *Social Media Content, Responsible Tourism, Theory Of Planned Behavior, Theory Of Reasoned Action, Digital Marketing*

### 1. Introduction

Digital technologies have transformed our lives significantly. In tourism, the role of digital technologies is very significant as well. To date, tourists may easily find information about tourist places and resources, make reservations, buy tickets, plan their trips, etc. (Abdurakhmanova et al., 2023). Moreover, in the digital age, social media platforms have become pivotal tools in the e-business landscape, transforming how tourism products and destinations are marketed and consumed. TikTok, with its immersive short-form video content, exemplifies this shift by enabling businesses and individual content creators to reach global audiences in real time. For tourism enterprises, this represents not only an innovative marketing avenue but also a sustainable strategy for promoting destinations with minimal environmental footprint compared to traditional advertising. By influencing Millennial travelers' decision-making through user-generated content and peer-driven trust, TikTok facilitates demand-driven tourism flows, supports local businesses, and fosters community-based experiences—all aligning with sustainable tourism goals. This study aims to examine how TikTok platform's dual role in e-business innovation while encouraging socially and environmentally responsible travel behaviors.

Social networks are characterized by their accessibility, global reach, and huge volume of information which play a central role in the dissemination of tourist information and influence tourists' travel decisions (Chu et al., 2020). With the rise of digital media platforms, TikTok has become one of the most influential in shaping consumer behavior, especially among millennials who are known for their tech-



savviness and love for travel. As a highly visual and algorithm-driven platform, TikTok offers short-form, engaging travel content that often goes viral, featuring destinations, itineraries, and experiences that inspire viewers to explore similar places (Sigala, 2020; Du and Wang, 2021). Indeed, such growing trend suggests that TikTok may play a significant role in influencing tourism destination choices, as users often rely on peer-generated content and influencer recommendations when planning their trips.

In the Philippines, short video platforms have gained immense popularity, with TikTok emerging as the leading platform among Millennials, who are at the forefront of the tourism market. TikTok has significantly contributed to the popularity of various tourist destinations, demonstrating its potential to convert online interest into actual visits. As of 2024, there are approximately 49.09 million active TikTok users in the country, representing 41% of the population who access the platform at least once a month (Chan, 2024).

Recent studies have explored TikTok's persuasive appeal in shaping digital destination branding and found that emotional engagement and viral trends significantly affect millennials' travel planning behaviors (Sharma & Nayak, 2022; Nguyen, 2023). Most literature either generalizes across social media platforms or prioritizes Gen Z, overlooking the financial agency and digital fluency of millennials. Furthermore, there is limited localized research addressing how TikTok influences destination preferences in emerging tourism markets, making this study essential to fill these gaps and contribute to a more nuanced understanding of digital tourism marketing. While there is extensive research on social media's impact on tourism behavior, there is a noticeable gap in studies that isolate TikTok's role, particularly in shaping millennial travelers' preferences in emerging markets like Southeast Asia.

The study used UTAUT2 model by incorporating Perceived Trust, acknowledging its critical role in shaping Millennials' confidence in TikTok as a travel planning tool. While prior research has primarily examined TikTok in terms of content consumption, the study positions the platform as a behavioral influencer, analyzing multiple decision-making factors. To address this research gap, the study investigated how TikTok affects the travel decision-making behavior of Filipino Millennials using the UTAUT2 framework. Specifically, the study examined seven key behavioral constructs—Performance Expectancy, Effort Expectancy, Social Influence, Facilitating Conditions, Habit, Hedonic Motivation, and Perceived Trust—to understand how the intention to use TikTok for travel planning translates from behavioral intention to actual travel behavior. Employing a quantitative approach, this study provides empirical insights into TikTok's role in shaping tourism decisions in the Philippines, offering valuable implications for destination marketers and tourism stakeholders in optimizing their digital strategies.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 *The Influence of social media on travel destination choices*

Social media permits many users to enter the Internet to share, cooperate, publish, change, inform, evaluate, and like various contents (Dramićanin et al., 2022). Recent studies emphasize that millennials, in particular, are highly susceptible to social media influence, using it for both inspiration and itinerary planning (Smith, 2018; Kapoor et al., 2022). The rise of short-form video platforms like TikTok further enhances this impact by providing quick, engaging content that promotes lesser-known destinations and unique travel experiences, often influencing spontaneous travel decisions (Zhou & Wang, 2021). As such, the role of social media has shifted from passive advertisement to an active agent in travel decision-making. To date around 36.5% of tourists use social media to discover travel inspiration or ideas (Statista, 2023).

### 2.2 *TikTok's E-Business Impact*

TikTok's massive popularity has profoundly reshaped the landscape of e-business, moving beyond mere social interaction to become a significant driver of discovery, sales, and brand building. Its unique algorithm and short-form video format have created new avenues for businesses to connect with consumers, turning casual scrolling into purchasing intent. The platform's success is largely attributed to its unique emphasis on brief, attention-grabbing content and its distinct algorithm, which promotes videos based on user interactions, content type, device usage, and account settings (Newsroom, 2020). Unlike traditional social



media platforms, TikTok provides users with a creative space to generate authentic content, enabling businesses to effectively engage with target audiences through organic and paid promotions (Vlačić et al., 2021). Notably, exposure to advertisements on TikTok can influence user behavior across other platforms, making it a strategic channel for cross-platform marketing. Audiences on TikTok tend to value authenticity over high production quality, reducing the need for expensive, heavily edited videos often associated with influencers (Tabaroši & Maljugić, 2022).

### **2.3 The Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology 2 (UTAUT2) Model**

The Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology 2 (UTAUT2) is an extended model of the original UTAUT developed by Venkatesh et al. (2012). It aims to explain user intentions and actual usage behavior of technology in a consumer context consisting of four constructs: Performance Expectancy, Effort Expectancy, Social Influence, and Facilitating Conditions. The Model expands by adding three more constructs namely: Hedonic Motivation, Habit, and Perceived Trust. This theory is particularly relevant in understanding the factors that influence the adoption and usage of digital platforms, such as TikTok, in the context of travel decision-making. The seven key constructs provide a comprehensive lens through which the behavioral dynamics of TikTok usage in tourism can be explored.

#### **2.3.1. Performance Expectancy (PE)**

Performance Expectancy refers to the degree to which an individual believes that using a specific technology will enhance their performance or help them achieve intended outcomes. In the tourism context, this implies how useful users perceive platforms like TikTok for making informed and efficient travel decisions. According to Venkatesh et al., 2003, 2012, users are likely to engage with TikTok more if they perceive it as a useful tool for discovering new travel destinations and obtaining travel-related information.

#### **2.3.2. Effort Expectancy (EE)**

Effort Expectancy is defined as the ease associated with the use of a system or technology. If individuals find a platform intuitive and user-friendly, they are more likely to adopt it. This is especially relevant for Millennials who prefer seamless digital interfaces (Venkatesh et al., 2012). This construct examines how easily Filipino millennials can navigate the platform and find relevant travel content.

#### **2.3.3. Social Influence (SI)**

Social Influence measures the extent to which users perceive those important others (e.g., friends, influencers, or peers) believe they should use a particular technology. It reflects how much external opinions shape a user's behavioral intentions. Influence from peers or social groups affects usage intentions (Venkatesh et al., 2003). In this context, it measures at how peers, influencers, and content creators on TikTok shape Filipino millennials' travel decisions.

#### **2.3.4. Facilitation Conditions (FC)**

Facilitating Conditions are the degree to which users believe that technical and organizational infrastructure exists to support the use of a technology. This includes device access, internet connectivity, and digital literacy. FC is a significant predictor of actual system usage, especially when resources and support are in place (Venkatesh et al., 2012).

#### **2.3.5. Hedonic Motivation (HM)**

Hedonic Motivation refers to the fun, pleasure, or enjoyment derived from using a technology. It is a critical factor in consumer settings, particularly for platforms like TikTok where entertainment value directly impacts continued use. Enjoyment significantly influences usage behavior in consumer contexts (Venkatesh et al., 2012).

#### **2.3.6. Habit (HA)**

Habit is the extent to which people tend to perform behaviors automatically due to learning. It is a strong predictor of both behavioral intention and actual behavior. Frequent, repeated use of platforms like TikTok for travel content forms digital habits. Past behavior and frequency predict future use through habit (Limayem et al., 2007; Venkatesh et al., 2012).

#### **2.3.7. Perceived Trust (PT)**

Perceived Trust is the confidence users have in the reliability, credibility, and integrity of the technology or the content it delivers. In social media tourism, trust in user-generated content and influencers is crucial

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for shaping destination choices. Trust significantly impacts behavioral intention and is crucial in online tourism (Kim & Kim, 2020). In this context, PT examines how much Filipino millennials trust the travel information they encounter on TikTok. This construct is crucial in understanding how users' trust in the content, creators, and recommendations influences their decisions to visit destinations featured on TikTok.

#### 2.3.8. Behavioral Intention (BI)

Behavioral Intention refers to the user's motivation or plan to use a specific technology in the future. It is the direct antecedent of actual system usage. A central construct predicting user adoption and continuation (Venkatesh et al., 2003).

#### 2.3.9. Actual Behavior (AB)

Actual Behavior refers to the observable use of a technology, such as visiting a destination after seeing it on TikTok. It is influenced by Behavioral Intention and Facilitating Conditions. This construct represents the real-world consequence of intention (Venkatesh et al., 2012).

### 3. Methodology

This study utilized a quantitative, explanatory research design to assess the relationships between multiple predictors and behavioral intention, and how behavioral intention subsequently affects actual behavior. The theoretical foundation was based on the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology 2 (UTAUT2), with the addition of perceived trust as an external construct. The measurement scale was developed by adapting propositions from previous study of Zhou et al. (2023), to align with the research's specific context and objectives.

The research was conducted between January to May 2025. A non-probability purposive sampling method was employed to recruit respondents who met the inclusion criteria. A total of 385 Filipino millennials aged 25 to 40 years participating in this study was active TikTok users and engaged specifically with travel-related content on the platform. The entire survey has high reliability with a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of 0.856.

The research Path Analysis diagram can be found in Figure 1

H1: Performance Expectancy has a significant positive influence on Behavioral Intention to transform into Actual Behavior

H2: Effort Expectancy has a significant positive influence on Behavioral Intention to use to transform into Actual Behavior

H3: Social Influence has a significant positive influence on Behavioral Intention to transform into Actual Behavior

H4: Facilitating Conditions have a significant positive influence on Behavioral Intention to transform into Actual Behavior

H5: Hedonic Motivation has a significant positive influence on Behavioral Intention to transform into Actual Behavior

H6: Habit has a significant positive influence on Behavioral Intention to transform into Actual Behavior

H7: Perceived Trust has a significant positive influence on Behavioral Intention to transform into Actual Behavior

### 4. Results

The present study provided insight into participants' perceptions of the UTAUT2 variables and aimed to examine the relationships between various UTAUT2 constructs—performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, facilitating conditions, hedonic motivation, habit, and perceived trust—and their effects on behavioral intention and actual behavior. The findings offer valuable insight into the factors driving behavioral intention, emphasizing the growing relevance of socio-psychological factors over functional expectations in technology adoption.

**Table 1:** Overall UTAUT2 Constructs on Millennials' usage of TikTok for Tourism Destination Choices



UTAUT2 Constructs	Overall Weighted Mean	Overall Std. Dev.	Overall Categorical Response	Rank
Performance Expectancy	4.46	0.60	Strongly Agree	4
Effort Expectancy	4.50	0.60	Strongly Agree	1
Social Influence	4.47	0.60	Strongly Agree	2
Facilitating Condition	4.47	0.61	Strongly Agree	2
Hedonic Motivation	4.46	0.59	Strongly Agree	4
Habit	4.46	0.61	Strongly Agree	4
Perceived Trust	4.43	0.61	Strongly Agree	7

Table 1 presents the overall weighted mean and standard deviations of the UTAUT2 constructs as rated by respondents. All constructs received average ratings above 4.40 on a 5-point Likert scale, indicating strong agreement across all factors. The overall mean of all constructs was 4.46, with a standard deviation of approximately 0.02, indicating minimal variance and consistent high agreement among participants. The findings resonate strongly with recent empirical studies that applied UTAUT2 in the context of TikTok and social commerce platforms. The consistently high ratings across all constructs confirm the validity of the model for studying user adoption behavior in emerging digital platforms, particularly in entertainment-driven, high-engagement environments like TikTok. Effort Expectancy ( $M = 4.50$ ) emerged as the strongest predictor, aligning with Wu et al. (2025) who found that intuitive UI/UX in platforms like TikTok enhances user subscription intention. Usability, especially in Gen Z-targeted apps, is essential to rapid adoption. Social Influence and Habit ( $M = 4.47$  and  $4.46$ ) such construct reflect social contagion and behavioral reinforcement on platforms like TikTok, where trends and peer usage drive adoption. The study of Christian et al. (2025) showed similar patterns among Indonesian youth using UTAUT2 to study purchasing behavior from social media ads. The high scores of Performance Expectancy and Facilitating Conditions ( $M = 4.46$ – $4.47$ ) suggest users believe the platform helps them achieve desired outcomes (e.g., discovery, shopping ease). The study of Hakim et al. (2024) observed similar utility-based motivations among TikTok users in social commerce contexts. While Hedonic Motivation ( $M = 4.46$ ) indicated users' enjoyment of the platform, this aligns with findings from Poureisa et al. (2024), who showed that entertainment value and gamified features on TikTok increase intention to purchase eco-friendly goods. Although Perceived Trust ( $M = 4.43$ ) was the lowest-rated construct, it implies a common user concern. Pham et al. (2023) emphasized the role of trust in e-business success across platforms like TikTok, noting that data privacy and review credibility impact consumer decisions.

Such findings reinforce the relevance of UTAUT2 in TikTok commerce by highlighting the platform's ease of use and entertaining nature as key adoption drivers, the importance of peer influence and habitual engagement in forming long-term usage behavior, and the potential for improving trust—especially in relation to product authenticity and data handling—to further boost user adoption and loyalty.

**Table 2:** Significant Relationship between constructs and Millennials' Behavioral Intention (BI) to transform into Actual Behavior

Path	Coefficient $\beta$	SE	p-Value	F <sup>2</sup>	Hypothesis	Effect Size
H1. PE $\rightarrow$ BI	0.05	0.05	0.15	0.041	Not Rejected	-

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H2. EE → BI	0.10	0.05	0.03	0.077	Rejected	Small
H3. SI → BI	0.25	0.049	<0.01	0.206	Rejected	Moderate
H4. FC → BI	0.08	0.05	0.06	0.062	Not Rejected	-
H5. HM → BI	0.011	0.025	0.02	0.086	Rejected	Small
H6. H → BI	0.40	0.48	<0.01	0.336	Rejected	Moderate
H7. PT → BI	-0.40	0.05	0.21	0.32	Not Rejected	-
H8. BI → AB	0.78	0.45	<0.01	0.615	Rejected	Large

Legend: PE – Performance Expectancy; EE – Effort Expectancy; SI – Social Influence; FC – Facilitating Conditions; HM – Hedonic Motivations; H – Habit; PT – Perceived Trust; BI – Behavioral Intention

Table 2 shows the relationships between various UTAUT2 constructs—performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, facilitating conditions, hedonic motivation, habit, and perceived trust—and their effects on behavioral intention and actual behavior. Among all predictors, habit emerged as the strongest determinant of behavioral intention ( $\beta = 0.40$ ,  $p < .01$ ). This supports the theoretical perspective that habitual behavior forms through repeated use and positively reinforces future usage intentions (Venkatesh et al., 2012). The result aligns with recent empirical evidence from Alshurideh et al. (2022), who found habit to be a critical predictor in mobile banking adoption, and Rahi et al. (2023), who emphasized its dominance over other predictors in mobile commerce settings. These findings suggest that in environments where users have prior exposure to technology, their intentions are increasingly automated and less reliant on conscious deliberation. Social influence significantly affected behavioral intention ( $\beta = 0.25$ ,  $p < .01$ ), highlighting the importance of peer dynamics, community norms, and perceived expectations from others. This is consistent with the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (Venkatesh et al., 2003) and reinforced by Nguyen and Dinh (2023), who observed similar effects in e-wallet adoption in Vietnam. Additionally, Khan and Ghouri (2022) showed that in gamified education systems, peer validation and recommendations strongly sway usage decisions. In social and public digital contexts, this influence may be even more amplified. Hedonic motivation was another significant predictor ( $\beta = 0.011$ ,  $p = .02$ ), indicating that users are influenced by the enjoyment and pleasure derived from using the technology. This confirms earlier findings in UTAUT2 (Venkatesh et al., 2012) and recent work by Fang and Liang (2024), who highlighted the role of entertainment value in the re-use of mobile apps. When technology offers emotional or psychological satisfaction, users are more inclined to continue using it, especially in leisure or lifestyle-related contexts. Effort expectancy was positively related to behavioral intention ( $\beta = 0.10$ ,  $p = .03$ ), although the effect size was relatively modest. This suggests that users still value ease of use but may not consider it the most critical factor in familiar technological settings. This result is consistent with Slade et al. (2022), who argued that while usability is important in early stages of adoption, its influence diminishes as users develop familiarity and habit. Fang and Liang (2024) also noted that effort expectancy is most influential during initial use phases. Contrary to UTAUT2 expectations, performance expectancy ( $\beta = 0.05$ ,  $p = .15$ ) and facilitating conditions ( $\beta = 0.08$ ,  $p = .06$ ) did not significantly predict behavioral intention. This may indicate a shift in user priorities from functional benefits and technical support to social, emotional, or habitual motivations. A similar trend was observed by Mourya and Ghosh (2021), who noted that when technology becomes mainstream, users no longer base their intentions solely on performance benefits or support infrastructure. Interestingly, perceived trust exhibited a negative but non-significant influence on behavioral intention ( $\beta = -0.40$ ,  $p = .21$ ). This contradicts findings in earlier studies (Alalwan et al., 2017) but aligns with more recent insights from Herrero and San Martín (2021), who found that trust becomes less influential in familiar or low-risk digital contexts. It's possible that participants in this study were already well-acquainted with the technology and thus did not rely on trust as a determining factor. Finally, behavioral intention strongly predicted actual behavior ( $\beta = 0.78$ ,  $p < .01$ ), reaffirming the central premise of behavioral models like UTAUT and the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991). This robust relationship mirrors findings by Rahman and Hussain (2023), who confirmed that intention is the primary gateway to action in smart home adoption.



Based on the empirical findings of this study, a revised conceptual framework as shown in Figure 1 is proposed to better capture the behavioral dynamics of TikTok-driven e-business interactions in the tourism sector.

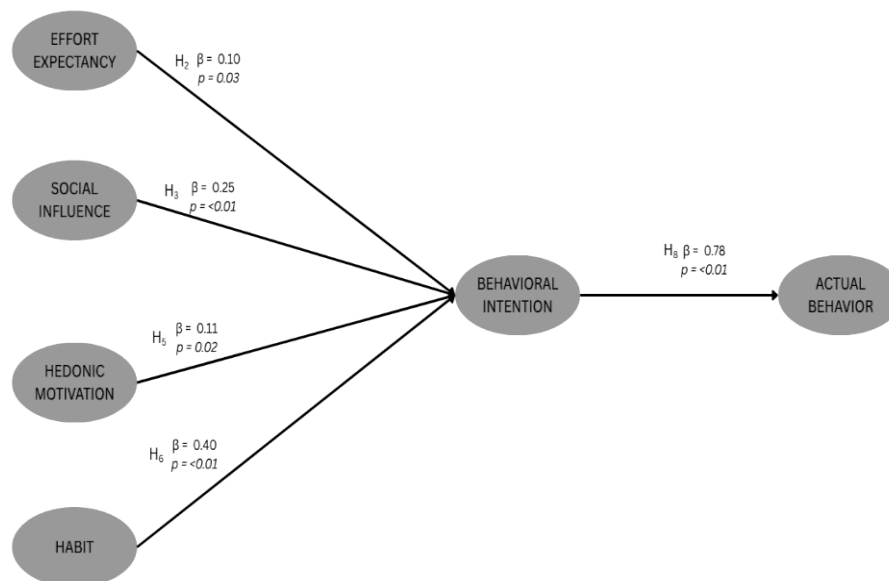


Figure 1. Revised Conceptual Framework of the Study

## 5. Conclusion

This study reveals critical insights that tourism marketers, digital strategists, and e-business platforms can leverage to enhance engagement and influence consumer travel behavior. The results affirm that behavioral intention strongly predicts actual behavior, emphasizing the platform's substantial impact on real-world travel actions. Among all UTAUT2 constructs, Habit emerged as the most dominant factor driving behavioral intention, followed by Social Influence, Hedonic Motivation, and Effort Expectancy. This indicates a shift in user behavior from utilitarian motivations to more emotionally and socially driven dynamics in adopting digital platforms for travel planning. Interestingly, Performance Expectancy, Facilitating Conditions, and Perceived Trust did not significantly influence behavioral intention, suggesting that as users become more familiar with a technology, functional and infrastructural factors lose prominence compared to habitual use and peer influence. While trust remains important in early adoption phases, its impact diminishes in well-established, low-risk digital environments like TikTok. Overall, the study validates the UTAUT2 model's relevance in explaining consumer behavior in emerging digital tourism platforms, particularly within Southeast Asia's growing Millennial travel market. It offers a nuanced understanding of how user-generated content, entertainment, and social interaction foster travel-related behaviors.

The study proposed some recommendation that those in travel and hospitality should develop platform-native marketing strategies that align with TikTok's content structure—short, authentic, and emotionally engaging. Campaigns should focus on storytelling rather than hard selling, using local influencers and relatable narratives to build trust and convert interest into bookings. Since TikTok influences not just behavior but values, e-businesses can integrate eco-tourism and community-based travel themes into



campaigns. This reinforces responsible consumer behavior while differentiating the brand in a competitive market.

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