The Impact of Influencers of Short Video Platforms on the Consumer Behaviour of Generation Z in China

Qi Yuan[1, *]

[1]Department of Materials, University of Manchester, Manchester, M3 9PL, United Kingdom

*Corresponding author: qi.yuan@ student.manchester.ac.uk

Abstract:

This study investigates the impact of influencers in short-form video platforms on the consumer behaviour of Generation Z in China, such as Douyin and Kuaishou. The differences between individual KOLs and MCN influencers are highlighted. As natives of the digital age, Generation Z is uniquely sceptical of traditional advertising and tends to rely on Social media Influencers to guide their purchasing decisions. Using a 6-point Likert scale questionnaire quantitative research methodology, this study evaluates how these influencer types influence consumer trust, brand loyalty, and impulsive buying behaviour. The findings suggest that while MCN's influencers use resource integration to rapidly increase brand exposure, individual KOLs can cultivate a deeper level of consumer trust. However, the impact of short-form content also raises concerns about overconsumption and impulse purchases driven by emotional appeals and algorithmic recommendations. To mitigate adverse effects, the study recommends interventions such as content censorship mechanisms and consumer education.

Keywords: Short Video Platforms; Consumer Behaviour; Influencer; MCN; Individual KOL

1. Introduction

Over the past decade, short videos have risen rapidly in China's digital ecosystem. From its entertainment-oriented beginnings, it has evolved into an important medium for business, social interaction, and cultural exchange. Companies have attempted to utilize short-video pan-entertainment content to connect with consumers and foster positive brand attitudes [1]. Consumer behavior in China is also undergoing a noticeable shift, with consumer behavior driven by the viral spread of short video content and the influence of content creators becoming mainstream. As of February 2024, the app had 755 million monthly active users in China [2]. Shakeology e-commerce had a gross merchandise volume (GMV) of approximately $2.7 trillion in 2023, and a GMV target of $4 trillion in 2024, a rise of nearly 50%, underscoring the economic potential of the medium. Social media Influencers are often the intermediaries between brands and consumers. Whether affiliated with large MCNs or independent individual KOLs, these con-

tent creators hold tremendous influence in setting trends and making purchasing decisions. Brands utilize their appeal to build trust with consumers to drive purchases and increase consumer loyalty.

Generation Z is the digital natives, a generation of young people who are becoming the new driving force in the marketplace. Generation Z was born between 1995 and the early 2010s. Generation Z is often described as a more educated generation who often have high expectations of themselves that are often not met. Generation Z uses social media to find inspiration, research products, and connect with their favorite brands [3]. Generation Z is highly skeptical, suspicious, and even resentful of corporate marketing strategies and dishonest behavior [4]. Generation Z tends to trust influencers with a large number of followers on short videos more than previous traditional brand advertising campaigns. They believe that ordinary people rather than celebrities can provide consumers with an unbiased viewpoint and show the strengths and weaknesses of a product [4].

The aim of this paper is to shed light on these analyses of the influence of Influencers (influencers) on Chinese short-form video platforms on the behavior of Generation Z consumers. Through an exhaustive review of the existing literature, it specifically analyzes the role played by different types of Influencers (large MCNs and individual KOLs) in the consumer decision-making process. The analysis of these two types of Influencers reveals the intrinsic mechanisms of Influencers in influencing purchasing behavior and assesses whether there is a significant difference in their effects.

One of the main focuses of this study is to explore the differences in "bandwagon" effects between large-scale MCNs and individual KOLs, as MCNs (Multi-Channel Networks) are organizations that specialize in providing comprehensive support and management for online content creators, and they help creators achieve better content development and commercialization by signing contracts with creators and providing professional support, resources, and partnership opportunities with brands. support, resources, and cooperation opportunities with brands including content production, brand cooperation, copyright management, data analysis, and a series of services to help creators achieve better content development and commercialization operations. However, their content may lack the intimacy and authenticity that individual KOLs have, whereas the latter have established closer ties with their follower through their own independent operations. This study will explore whether these structural differences lead to different effects on Generation Z's consumption behavior. It is highly worth investigating whether large MCNs (Multi-Channel Networks) achieve greater com-

mercial success through economies of scale, or if individual KOLs (Key Opinion Leaders) excel in fostering consumer loyalty through the development of personal branding. Furthermore, while Influencers have undoubtedly changed consumer behavior and marketing patterns, it remains to be further explored whether their impact on Gen Z consumer behavior has been entirely positive, which could lead to impulsive spending, especially among younger, more impressionable audiences. This study will examine whether influencer marketing fosters a healthy consumer culture or contributes to negative phenomena such as overconsumption or commoditization of personal identity, and provide recommendations for shaping the future of marketing.

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Impact of Short Videos on Consumer Behavior

In recent years, short-form video platforms have changed the way consumers interact with digital content. Algorithms have heavily influenced consumer behaviour, where consumers were passive recipients of videos, and these platforms have immersed consumers in tailored experiences through powerful algorithms. The system takes into account videos that the user has previously liked and commented on, the length of time watched accounts, and topic tags that the user follows, including regional and language choices [5]. Personalised recommendations based on user preferences and timely push of products that consumers need profoundly influence consumer behaviour. Through algorithmic recommendation, the diversity of algorithmic product recommendations can better encourage consumers to make impulse purchases and stimulate curiosity and exploration, thus promoting consumption. Through diverse recommendation algorithms, users can be exposed to different types of products, allowing them to discover more products that match their interests and needs, improving user experience and satisfaction [6]. Buttons (CTA) can also be used to capture and convert consumers. It includes an imperative verb to convey urgency, such as 'buy now', or 'click here'. According to TikTok, video adverts with a screen (CTA) are shown 55.7% more often than those without [6]. In addition to this, emotions also play a central role in adverts and are more helpful in helping brands connect with consumers [7]. The findings of Liu et al. [1] further suggest that only videos with emotional appeal will increase their willingness to buy, and also found that interactions positively affect their willingness to buy. Audience engagement with TikTok video adverts should be increased by liking, commenting, sharing, watching, and

clicking. Interaction will have a positive impact on their willingness to buy.

2.2 Relationship between Influencers and Consumer Behavior

Influencers are content creators who have accumulated a solid base of followers, individuals who have attracted a large number of followers through their expertise, charisma, etc. are perceived as approachable, credible, and intimate, and therefore easily resonate with fans [8]. This has the potential to create the illusion of a face-to-face relationship with influencers, making consumers more susceptible to their views and behaviours [9]. Influencers can be divided into two categories: influencers affiliated with Multi-Channel Networks (MCNs) and individual KOLs operating independently. MCNs are third-party companies or providers that work with netizens and manage large numbers of influencers, providing resource support, marketing strategies, and branding partnerships to expand their influence [10]. Individual KOLs refer to influencers who go it alone without a company or team to package them. Comparatively, individual KOLs usually cultivate a niche audience and maintain a more personal and direct connection with their followers.

The ability to persuade consumers stems from an influencer's ability to build an intimate relationship with their audience [11]. Social media influencers tend to be more authentic than traditional adverts, using the simplest of photography and sharing life's minutiae, opinions on events, etc. to build trust and connection with their followers. This authenticity can increase engagement and ultimately influence purchasing decisions. There are also Influencers who show authenticity by exposing themselves as working with advertisers. Previously, hidden advertising on short-form video platforms has caused resentment among some viewers. hidden advertising promotes products in an inconspicuous way through influencers or KOLs, allowing viewers to be influenced without realising it. Wellman et al. found that some influencers now proactively disclose collaborations with commercial brands to build credibility and gain positive feedback from consumers [11].

Emotionally driven and irrational consumption are important areas of Influencers' influence. Liu et al. found that in the context of Netflix marketing, functional and emotional value lead to impulsive buying behaviour [12]. Authenticity and influence all contribute to impulse buying behaviour. Social media influencers often buy the latest products to share the latest experiences, which creates a sense of social identity and encourages fliers to want what they have. This desire may lead consumers to pur-

chase items they may not have otherwise considered [13].

2.3 Generation Z Consumer Behavior

Generation Z is important because they were born in the digital age. Therefore, they are very good at coping with various digital environments and using new online applications. According to Kahawandala et al., social media platforms play a key role in shaping the spending habits of young Chinese consumers [14]. 80% of Gen Z say they use the social networking features on their mobile phones daily and 90% of Gen Z believe that social media has a strong influence on purchasing decisions and they believe that ordinary people can provide consumers with an unbiased viewpoint. It was also found that this generation strives to maintain and develop their self-esteem and individuality in the presence of social media and desperately craves the approval of their peers. Generation Z, unlike the millennials, most do not see celebrities as role models. Generation Z prefers to mimic the behaviours of their peers [4]. This is also confirmed in a study by Kahawandala et al. where 64.7% of Generation Z agreed that they receive more approval from their peers if they take advice from their friends when purchasing products [14]. In addition, Gen Z shoppers value and low cost more than fixating on well-known brands [15].

Influencers are not just marketers, but also lifestyle leaders. Generation Z likes influencers not just for what they wear, and beauty teaching, but for their lifestyle, and therefore, followers want to imitate them [16], thus playing a key role in their purchasing decisions. Generation Z shoppers are less likely to trust companies than older age groups. Instead, they choose to follow influencers on social media who have a large number of followers and influencers. Generation Z uses social media to find inspiration, research products and connect with their favorite brands. Influencers account for a large portion of purchase decisions [3].

While existing research has highlighted the importance of Influencers in shaping the consumer behaviour of Generation Z, there are still some research gaps that need to be filled. For example, there is a dearth of comparisons on the long-term impact of MCNs versus individual KOLs on consumer trust and brand loyalty. In addition, the possible negative impact of influencers-driven consumption deserves further exploration.

3. Methodology

The main objective of this research is to analyse the impact of Influencers on short video platforms on the consumer behaviour of Generation Z. Further research explores whether the structural differences between large

MCNs and individual KOLs may have a different impact on the consumer behaviour of Generation Z. The research is also aimed at exploring whether the structural differences between large MCNs and individual KOLs have a different impact on the consumer behaviour of Generation Z. Therefore, in order to explore the target question in detail this thesis uses quantitative research analysis.

The design and participant data collection took place in September 2024. The questionnaire focused on respondents who met the following criteria: male and female, aged 15-28 years in the Generation Z cohort. In addition, respondents to the survey were asked to be Gen Z personalities, have used short-form video platforms, and be aware that Douyin, Kuaishou, is used as a marketing platform and that they have seen adverts on it in the last 6 months.

The survey was conducted using a 6-point scale Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (6) to eliminate neutral choice options in between, which can help researchers to collect more specific answers and draw direct results [17]. According to Chomeya's [18] study and Chang's [19] study proved that using 6-point Likert scale participants tend to take time to consider and decide more this can help researchers collect more reliable results for the study to reduce the business risks that may lead to the results of the study being ignored. The questionnaire was divided into three parts, the first part was to analyze the influence of influencers on short videos on the overall consumer behaviour of Generation Z. The second part was to analyse the difference between MCN and KOL influence on Generation Z consumers. The final part was the collection of demographic information about the participants. To ensure that the distribution process was ethical, participants were fully briefed about the study and informed about the purpose of the study before completing the questionnaire to ensure that they clearly understood the understanding of the purpose of the study. Responses to the questionnaire were in accordance with the American Sociological Association's code of ethics, with full consent from the participants [20].

The survey was posted on a public platform and a total of 114 respondents recruited from the internet participated in the survey, however, 75 respondents were eligible to proceed to complete the survey based on whether the answer choices were screened logically. Still, 75 respondents were eligible to complete the second part of the survey based on the screening of the first question in the second part.

4. Results

4.1 Reliability and Validity Analyses

This survey was tested for internal consistency using Cronbach's alpha coefficient and the alpha value of the survey was 0.884, which indicates that the data is valid for the next data analysis (see Table 1).

Table 1. Reliability statistics

Cronbach Alpha	Item
0.884	25

Secondly, the researcher also provided the results of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test and Bartlett's sphericity test for assessing the applicability and validity of principal component analysis. The KMO value of 0.808 indicated that the data was well suited for factor analysis. In Bartlett's Sphericity test, the approximate chi-square statistic was 888.696, degree of freedom was 276 and significance was 0.000. Since the significance value was less than 0.05, it indicated that the observed correlation matrix was not a unit matrix i.e., there was a correlation between the variables and hence it was suitable for factor analysis (see Table 2).

Table 2. KMO and Bartlett's test

KMO		0.808
Bartlett	Approximate chi square	888.696
	df	276
	p	0.000

4.2 Descriptive Analysis of Demographic Informatics

The results of the demographic information survey showed that 37.33% (28) of the respondents were male and 62.67% (47) were female. In terms of education level, 1.33% (1 person) were junior high school and below, 2.67% (2 persons) were high school graduates, 69.33% (52

persons) were college educated, and 29.67% (20 persons) were graduate students and above. In terms of monthly disposable income, 8% (6) of the respondents had less than 1,000 yuan, 8% (6) had 1,000-2,000 yuan, 16% (12) had 2001-3,000 yuan, and 68% (51) had more than 3,000 yuan. In terms of occupation type, the student group is the largest (65.33%, 49 people), followed by corporate em-ployees (14.67%, 11 people), freelancers (12%, 9 people), self-employed businessmen (2.67%, 2 people), and others (5.33%).

4.3 The Impact of Influencer as a Whole on the Consumer Behavior of Gen Z Consumers

4.3.1 Descriptive analysis

Table 3. Basic indicators

Name	N	Min	Max	M	SD	median
3. I would be more willing to watch videos from more well-known bloggers	75	1.000	6.000	4.280	1.429	5.000
4. Products recommended by more well-known bloggers will make me trust them more	75	1.000	6.000	4.040	1.428	4.000
5. The blogger is an authoritative expert in the field of recommended products, which is an important reason for my purchase intention	75	1.000	6.000	4.053	1.355	4.000
6. I hope to have the same product as my favorite blogger	75	1.000	6.000	3.613	1.559	4.000
7. I don't doubt the authenticity of products recommended by short video bloggers when purchasing them	75	1.000	6.000	2.960	1.672	3.000
8. The recommendations of short video bloggers have a significant impact on my purchase intention	75	1.000	6.000	3.827	1.519	4.000
9. After watching videos of products recommended by bloggers, I will actively search for related products	75	1.000	6.000	4.053	1.451	4.000
10. When all the bloggers in a short video are promoting the same product, I will have a herd mentality and have the intention to purchase	75	1.000	6.000	3.293	1.617	4.000

The survey results show that the popularity of a webstar, having the same model as a favorite webstar and being recommended by a favorite webstar all have a significant positive impact on consumers' purchase intentions. In addition, when multiple netizens promote the same product, consumers tend to exhibit herd behavior, which can increase their likelihood of purchasing. The means of these factors are all higher than the theoretical median, suggest-ing that Netflix has a positive impact on consumer behavior. However, when it comes to trust in the authenticity of products recommended by Netflix, the mean is below the theoretical midpoint. This suggests that modern consumers have become more critical and skeptical, showing greater resistance to potential fraud or deception in online product endorsements (see Table 3)

4.3.2 Correlation analysis

Table 4. Pearson Correlation - Standard Format

	1. I often use short video platforms	2. I often make purchases on short video platforms	11. When watching short videos, I tend to impulsively purchase many products that I don't need	12. I will purchase immediately after watching short videos instead of considering it for a few days before making a purchase
3. I would be more willing to watch videos from more well-known bloggers	0.535**	0.417**	0.394**	0.315**

4. Products recommended by more well-known bloggers will make me trust them more	0.488**	0.376**	0.443**	0.302**
5. The blogger is an authoritative expert in the field of recommended products, which is an important reason for my purchase intention	0.461**	0.553**	0.399**	0.582**
6. I hope to have the same product as my favorite blogger	0.227*	0.332**	0.495**	0.300**
7. I don't doubt the authenticity of products recommended by short video bloggers when purchasing them	-0.062	0.183	0.481**	0.336**
8. The recommendations of short video bloggers have a significant impact on my purchase intention	0.438**	0.448**	0.468**	0.417**
9. After watching videos of products recommended by bloggers, I will actively search for related products	0.356**	0.480**	0.367**	0.323**
10. When all the bloggers in a short video are promoting the same product, I will have a herd mentality and have the intention to purchase	0.244*	0.347**	0.632**	0.428**
* p<0.05 ** p<0.01				

Correlation analysis shows that questions 1, 2, 11, and 12 show significant positive correlation with other indicators, indicating that the overall influence of influencer on consumers' consumer behavior increases significantly with the increase in the frequency of use of short video platforms, the number of times of consumption, the number of times of impulsive consumption, and immediate purchasing behavior(see Table 4).

4.3.3 Regression analysis

Table 5. Linear regression analysis results (n=75)

	Non standardized coefficient		standardized coefficient	t	p	collinearity diagnosis	
	B	standard error	Beta			VIF	Tolerance
Name	-0.316	0.472	-	-0.669	0.506	-	-
1. I often use short video platforms	0.209	0.096	0.225	2.183	0.033*	1.854	0.539
2. I often make purchases on short video platforms	-0.031	0.099	-0.031	-0.308	0.759	1.760	0.568
3. I would be more willing to watch videos from more well-known bloggers	-0.101	0.135	-0.095	-0.752	0.455	2.805	0.357
4. Products recommended by more well-known bloggers will make me trust them more	0.028	0.135	0.026	0.204	0.839	2.802	0.357
5. The blogger is an authoritative expert in the field of recommended products, which is an important reason for my purchase intention	0.026	0.145	0.023	0.177	0.860	2.924	0.342

6. I hope to have the same product as my favorite blogger	0.145	0.105	0.149	1.385	0.171	2.010	0.497
7. I don't doubt the authenticity of products recommended by short video bloggers when purchasing them	0.039	0.084	0.043	0.465	0.643	1.473	0.679
9. After watching videos of products recommended by bloggers, I will actively search for related products	0.521	0.113	0.498	4.631	0.000**	2.011	0.497
10. When all the bloggers in a short video are promoting the same product, I will have a herd mentality and have the intention to purchase	0.036	0.107	0.038	0.338	0.736	2.249	0.445
11. When watching short videos, I tend to impulsively purchase many products that I don't need	0.118	0.109	0.126	1.080	0.284	2.360	0.424
12. I will purchase immediately after watching short videos instead of considering it for a few days before making a purchase	0.069	0.098	0.075	0.698	0.488	1.983	0.504
R 2	0.638						
Adjust R 2	0.575						
F	F (11,63)=10.092,p=0.000						
D-W	1.796						

The researchers then conducted a regression analysis of several factors that affect the overall influence of influencers on the consumer behavior of Generation Z consumers The summary analysis shows that when consumers like influencers more, the products recommended by influencers tend to be more likely to gain the trust of consumers, and the more they are able to change the consumer behavior of consumers (see Table 5).

4.4 Differences in Consumer Influence between Individual Influencers and MC Influencers

4.4.1 Descriptive Analysis

Table 6. Basic indicators

Name	N	Min	Max	M
13. I was able to distinguish between individual bloggers on short video platforms and those with MCN companies	75	1.000	1.000	1.000
14. Compared to the recommendations of MCN company bloggers, I believe more in the recommendations of individual bloggers	75	1.000	6.000	4.013
15. MCN company bloggers have professional backgrounds and higher credibility	75	1.000	6.000	3.200
16. The content posted by individual bloggers is more authentic and relevant than the content posted by MCN company bloggers	75	1.000	6.000	3.720
17. The high-quality content provided by MCN company bloggers is more in line with my interests	75	1.000	6.000	3.280

18. The words of individual bloggers seem to be more honest than MCN bloggers, and I trust individual bloggers more	75	1.000	6.000	4.013
19. Compared to MCN company bloggers, my emotional connection with personal bloggers is stronger	75	1.000	6.000	4.040
20. The content provided by MCN company bloggers is more exquisite, which makes me have more desire to buy	75	1.000	6.000	3.227
21. MCN bloggers recommend products with better quality and better quality control	75	1.000	6.000	3.187

The survey shows that all respondents are able to differentiate between personal and MCN webstars. While consumers recognize the professionalism, sophisticated content and perceived higher quality of products recommended by MCN netizens, they show stronger trust and emotional connection to personal netizens. Individual web celebrities have higher average ratings than MCN web celebrities in terms of trustworthiness, perceived authenticity, and content relevance. This suggests that although consumers recognize the credibility of MCN webstars, consumers perceive personal webstars to be more honest, approachable, and in line with their values (see Table 6).

In Summary, the overall results of the survey show that short video platforms have a significant impact on the consumer behavior of Generation Z. Generation Z consumers are able to clearly distinguish between individual KOLs and MCNs through the platform interface. Although consumers generally recognize the advantages of MCN Netstars in terms of quality control, professionalism, and video quality, they are more inclined to trust individual KOLs, believing that their recommendations are not controlled by the company, and are therefore more authentic and reliable.

5. Discussion

5.1 The Impact of Short Video Influencers on Generation Z Consumer Behavior

The influence of the short video platform Influencer on the consumer behaviour of Generation Z is very strong. This means that fans who are dependent or even addicted to short-video platform bloggers are more likely to make purchases than those who are less dependent [21]. Studies have shown that bloggers with a large social media presence are effective in swaying consumer behaviour and making their product recommendations more credible, with high-profile influencers playing a crucial role in shaping consumer perceptions. Their recommendations are often seen as more trustworthy due to their established credibility and follower engagement [22]. Their follower base also becomes an endorsement of the product, which tends to make the recommendation more trustworthy. Secondly, consumers tend to have the same style as their favorite blogger. For most Gen Z, shared values are certainly important when deciding to follow bloggers on a regular basis, rather than the anchor's attractiveness [21]. Gen Z is more inclined to follow influencers who share their personality, appearance, and values. Consumers will follow these influencers and try to imitate their lifestyle and appearance by having the same style [23].

5.2 Difference of the Impact of Individual Influencers and MCN's Influencers on Generation Z Consumer Behavior

There is a significant difference in marketing effectiveness between MCNs and individual KOLs. Due to the size and specialised facilities of MCNs, they are usually able to provide higher exposure to brands. As MCNs have multiple channels and KOL resources, they can push adverts simultaneously, thus rapidly attracting large-scale audiences in a short period of time and enhancing the brand's market penetration. This results in consumers having a herd mentality and thus purchasing behaviour toward the product. According to Phạm et al, it was shown that herd behaviour is considered to be the most influential behavioural tendency in an individual's purchasing decision-making process [24]. For the promotion of Fad products, MCN has a great advantage. He can popularise the whole short video platform for a product in a short period of time and get great sales in a short period of time. Brands can reduce their costs by partnering with MCNs, who usually have traffic package deals with social platforms. In most cases, MCNs know more about their KOL types and fan bases than brands do, and they can quickly match KOLs to brands [25]. In addition to this, MCN companies can help bloggers produce higher-quality videos despite frequent updates, which provides more traffic and exposure for product videos. The core of short video content quality lies in creativity. KOLs need to think, plan and create personalised content, but individual creators often face bottlenecks and commercial realisation is a distraction. In contrast, MCN organisations integrate planning, photography, operation, and other teams through the PUGC

model, pay attention to hotspots and platform dynamics, and produce content in series. This resource integration helps save time and trial-and-error costs and improves the production efficiency of quality content [26]. However, the personal connection with fans is often not as strong as that of individual KOLs, which is crucial for fostering brand loyalty. Conversely, individual KOLs are more loyal and highly engaged, despite having smaller audiences. While MCNs specialise in large-scale promotional campaigns, individual KOLs may be more effective in niche markets or areas where consumer trust and engagement are critical. Additionally, individual KOLs are more likely to influence consumer perceptions of brand authenticity as they are perceived to provide more unbiased and truthful product opinions [4].

5.3 Side Effects

The impact of short-video influencers on consumer behaviour is two-sided; while it promotes the marketing effectiveness of the brand, the side effects such as overconsumption and irrational purchases should not be ignored. The ideal lifestyle and consumption standards portrayed by influencers lead followers to compare their own lives with those depicted online, which may exacerbate feelings of inadequacy and drive consumption behaviours aimed at acquiring a similar status, which in turn generates the purchase of unnecessary luxuries or followership [27]. Secondly, through Influencers' constant promotion of new trends and products, Influencers may exacerbate their followers' anxiety or 'fear of missing out' (FOMO) mentality [28]. Continued exposure to idealised content may also lead to Gen Z's feelings of dissatisfaction and unrealistic expectations in life. In addition to this, influencer on short-form video platforms guides consumers to make frequent purchases through strong product recommendations in conjunction with platform algorithms. Driven by algorithmic recommendation, it analyses the user's historical behaviour, personal preferences, and other factors to recommend products that users often see as highly relevant to their preferences, thus forming 'precision marketing' [6]. Algorithmic obfuscation can lead to a narrow range of choices, reinforcing existing preferences and increasing consumption of familiar products, prompting repeated exposure to the same or similar goods [29]. Thus, consumers are induced to buy more products that they do not actually need. This type of marketing may lead to consumers losing control over their purchases and increasing unnecessary consumer spending. Influencer's recommendation tends to create strong trust and reliance on certain brands, ignoring the actual value for money of the product. Consumers tend to make emotional and hasty purchase decisions when they receive a large amount of

attractive promotional information or limited-time discounts within a short period of time, without giving due consideration to the actual needs and uses of the products. Studies have shown that conditional promotions, such as discounts linked to minimum spending, induce consumers to overspend in order to get a discount [30]. Such irrational purchasing behaviour may have negative consequences such as purchase regret and increased financial burden.

5.4 Interventions and Constraints on Short Video Platforms

In response to the negative impact of short video platform influencers on consumer consumption behaviour, platforms should formulate corresponding regulations and countermeasures to promote the construction of a healthy consumption environment under the short video ecology. Firstly, platforms should guide consumers to establish rational consumption concepts through education and publicity, and deliver rational consumption information to consumers through public service advertisements, short video content, and other forms to help them recognise the potential risks of overconsumption and impulsive shopping. A cooling-off period can also be provided for consumers through mechanisms such as pay-before-use and 7-day no-excuse refunds. Second, short video platforms should strengthen the regulation of influencer and brand promotion content to avoid exaggerated or false propaganda and reduce the spread of inflammatory content [31]. Platforms can set up a content review mechanism to review the authenticity, applicability, and legality of content involving consumption to ensure that the content complies with legal and ethical standards before it reaches consumers [32]. In addition, short video platforms should increase the transparency of promotional content by clearly labeling the nature of the advertisement or promotion. Adding advertising cues to videos proactively disclosing partnerships with commercial brands helps consumers to recognise promotional content, thus helping them to make more rational choices [33]. This ensures that consumers can differentiate between personal recommendations and commercial partnership content and avoid having their consumer judgement influenced by excessive marketing.

6. Conclusion

Today, companies are gradually transitioning to digital communication methods to enhance the promotion of their products and brands. When developing marketing strategies, more and more companies are combining social media platforms with influencer marketing to enhance brand credibility and consumers' emotional connection, thus promoting sales and brand loyalty. This study provides in-

sights into the influence of short-video influencers on the consumer behavior of Generation Z consumers through a quantitative research method by means of a questionnaire. It also further explores the difference between the influence of individual KOLs and MCN companies' influencers on consumer behavior to fill the RESEARCH GAP in this field on individual KOLs and MCN companies' influencers. The results of this study may be beneficial to brands and help them build alliances based on influencers of different identities. It may also be useful for bloggers who wish to employ more persuasive strategies when working with brands. For Gen Z digital age natives, short video platforms have become an integral part of life. A large portion of consumer behavior is dominated by short-video influencers. Firstly, studies have shown that recommendations from more recognizable influencers build credibility and influence while being widely accepted by consumers. Especially when the influencers are consistent with consumers' perceptions, consumers tend to imitate the lifestyles and outfits of the influencers they follow and own the same style. MCN's powerful resource integration and marketing capabilities can rapidly expand brand exposure. It arouses consumers' herd mentality and 'fear of missing out' (FOMO) mentality so that they will pay for the products. However, individual KOLs gain an advantage in fostering brand loyalty as consumers trust them more due to their close connection with their fans. However, this kind of consumer behavior also brings side effects, especially over-consumption and irrational purchasing; the ideal standard of living set by influencers may exacerbate followers' sense of inadequacy and lead to a "lack of ideal" mentality, which in turn drives impulsive consumption. This phenomenon is further amplified by short-video platform algorithms, which unconsciously trap consumers in a cycle of repeated product exposure, leading to irrational consumer behavior. In order to counter these adverse effects, short video platforms need to implement interventions, such as establishing a content review mechanism, clearly labeling the nature of advertisements, and guiding consumers to establish a consumption perspective through education. In summary, building a healthy consumer environment relies on the joint efforts of platforms and influencers to ensure that branding campaigns are both effective and do not jeopardize consumer rights.

The study has some limitations because it focuses only on short-form video platforms in China. The influencers studied in this paper appear on multiple platforms, such as Bilibili, Little Red Book. and these platforms are also popular and have a strong influence on Gen Z consumer behavior. Therefore, future research can consider the characteristics of each platform and explore the influence of different types of platforms on consumer behavior separately. This study investigates consumption behavior through quantitative research. online surveys rely on audience willingness, which may lead to sample bias. And it is not possible to gain insight into specific consumption behaviors. Future research could address this topic using a qualitative or mixed research design to explore more emerging insights in greater depth.

In addition, future research could further explore the impact of influencer-focused content creation styles on consumer trust, and examine the impact of different types of content on consumer sentiment and brand loyalty. Comparative analyses can be used to identify which content types are effective in enhancing consumer brand loyalty.

References

[1] Liu, G., Gao, P., Li, Y., & Zhang, Z. Research on the Influence of Social Media Short Video Marketing on Consumer Brand Attitude. Proceedings of the 2019 5th International Conference on Social Science and Higher Education, 2019, 336. Atlantis Press. https://doi.org/10.2991/icsshe-19.2019.192

[2] Statista. The Statistics Portal. Statista, 2024. Retrieved from https://www.statista.com/search/?q=consumption+douyin&Search=&p=1

[3] Bhuwaneshwari, M. & Hemasuruthi S. A Study on Social Media Influences on Generation Z Buying Behaviour. International Journal of Advanced Research in Science, Communication and Technology, 2023, 3(3), 89–95. https://doi.org/10.48175/ijarsct-11413

[4] Topalova, N. The impact of marketing through Instagram influencers on consumer behavior in the fashion industry: Comparison of millennials and generation Z in Russia. 2021. Retrieved from https://gbsge.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/topalova-natalia-2020-the-impact-of-marketing-through-instagram-influencers-consumer-behavior-in-the-fashion-industry.pdf

[5] Duah, C. The Influence of TikTok Videos on Consumer Behaviour, 2021, Retrieved from https://www.theseus.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/792956/Duah_Christian.pdf?sequence=2

[6] Song, M. The Impact of Algorithmic Product Recommendation on Consumers' Impulse Purchase Intention. Frontiers in Business. Economics and Management, 2023, 11(3), 107–111. https://doi.org/10.54097/fbem.v11i3.13197

[7] Poels, K., and Dewitte, S. The Role of Emotions in Advertising: A Call to Action. Journal of Advertising, 2019, 48(1), 81–90. https://doi.org/10.1080/00913367.2019.1579688

[8] De Veirman, M., Cauberghe, V., and Hudders, L. Marketing Through Instagram Influencers: The Impact of Number of Followers and Product Divergence on Brand Attitude. International Journal of Advertising, 2017, 36(5), 798–828. https://doi.org/10.1080/02650487.2017.1348035

[9] Jin, S. V., Muqaddam, A., and Ryu, E. Instafamous and Social Media Influencer Marketing. Marketing Intelligence & Planning, 2019, 37(5), 567–579. https://doi.org/10.1108/MIP-09-2018-0375

[10] Liang, F., and Ji, L. Manufacturing influencers: the gatekeeping roles of MCNs (Multi-channel networks) in cultural production. Information, Communication & Society, 2024, 1–17. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2024.2396614

[11] Wellman, M. L., Stoldt, R., Tully, M., and Ekdale, B. Ethics of Authenticity: Social Media Influencers and the Production of Sponsored Content. Journal of Media Ethics, 2020, 35(2), 68–82. https://doi.org/10.1080/23736992.2020.1736078

[12] Liu, H., Mohd, Yasin, M., and Ruan, Q. A study on how social media influences on impulsive buying. Expert Systems, 2023. https://doi.org/10.1111/exsy.13448

[13] Reach influencers. Understanding the Impact of Reach and Influencers. Reach Influencers, 2023. Retrieved from https://reach-influencers.com/how-influencers-shape-consumer-behavior/

[14] Kahawandala, N., Peter, S., and Niwunhella, H. Profiling purchasing behavior of Generation Z. ResearchGate, 2020. https://doi.org/10.1109/SCSE49731.2020.9313038

[15] Bowo, F. A., Anisah, and Marthalia, L. View of Meme Marketing: Generation Z Consumer Behavior on Social Media. Jurnal Indonesia Sosial Sains, 2024, 5(02). https://doi.org/10.59141/jiss.v5i02.995. http://jiss.publikasiindonesia.id/.

[16] Pérez-Cabañero, C., Veas-González, I., Navarro-Cisternas, C., Zuleta-Cortés, H., and Urizar-Urizar, C. Management Letters / Cuadernos de Gestión. Cuadernos de Gestión, 2023, 23(2). https://doi.org/10.5295/cdg.221863cp

[17] Bucko, J., Kakalejčík, L., and Ferencová, M.Online shopping: Factors that affect consumer purchasing behaviour. Cogent Business & Management, 2018, 5(1). Tandfonline. https://doi.org/10.1080/23311975.2018.1535751

[18] Chomeya, R. Quality of Psychology Test Between Likert Scale 5 and 6 Points. Journal of Social Sciences, 2010, 6(3), 399–403. https://doi.org/10.3844/jssp.2010.399.403

[19] Chang, L. Using Confirmatory Factor Analysis of Multitrait-Multimethod Data To Assess the Psychometrical Equivalence of 4-Point and 6-Point Likert-Type Scales. Applied Psychology Measurement, 1993, 18(3), 1–47.

[20] American Sociological Association. American Sociological Association Code of Ethics and Policies and Procedures of the ASA Committee on Professional Ethics, 1999. Retrieved from https://www.asanet.org/wp-content/uploads/savvy/images/asa/docs/pdf/CodeofEthics.pdf

[21] Sokolova, K., and Kefi, H. Instagram and YouTube bloggers promote it, why should I buy? How credibility and parasocial interaction influence purchase intentions. Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, 2020, 53(1). https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2019.01.011

[22] Choi, S. M., and Han, Y. S. Representative reviewers for Internet social media. Expert Systems with Applications. 2023. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eswa.2012.08.063

[23] Peltola, L. Making sense of the relationship between social media influencers on Instagram and the consumers who follow them, 2019. Retrieved from https://helda.helsinki.fi/server/api/core/bitstreams/ba188d6d-ab99-40e6-99af-448b4569e5ae/content

[24] Phạm, M., Vo, T., To, H., Lam, B., and Tran, S. V. How does herd behaviour impact the purchase intention? Explore the moderating effect of risk aversion in the context of Vietnamese consumers. Acta Psychologica, 2023, 241, 104096–104096. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actpsy.2023.104096

[25] Launchmetrics. How Do Multi Channel Networks (MCNs) Work in China? Launchmetrics, 2021. Retrieved from https://www.launchmetrics.com/resources/blog/how-do-multi-channel-networks-work-in-china

[26] Zhang, X. An Analysis of the Development of Netflix Economic Industry Chain--Taking MCN Organisations as an Example. Information Technology - News & Media, 2019, 10, pp.234-235.

[27] Koay, K. Y., Cheung, M. L., Soh, P. C. H., and Teoh, C. W. Social media influencer marketing: the moderating role of materialism. European Business Review, 2021, 34(2), 224–243. https://doi.org/10.1108/ebr-02-2021-0032

[28] Lira, M. How Does Social Media Consumption Relate to a College Student's Mental Health and Body Image. Undergraduate Theses, 2023. Retrieved from https://scholarworks.bellarmine.edu/ugrad_theses/124/

[29] Chaney, A. J. B., Stewart, B. M., and Engelhardt, B. E. How algorithmic confounding in recommendation systems increases homogeneity and decreases utility. Proceedings of the 12th ACM Conference on Recommender Systems - RecSys '18, 2018. https://doi.org/10.1145/3240323.3240370

[30] Amornpetchkul, T. B., Ahn, H. S., & Şahin, Ö. Conditional Promotions and Consumer Overspending. Production and Operations Management, 2018, 27(8), 1455–1475. https://doi.org/10.1111/poms.12877

[31] Christopoulou, A. The Information disorder Ecosystem: A study on the role of Social Media, the Initiatives to tackle disinformation and a Systematic Literature Review of False Information Taxonomies, 2018. Retrieved from https://repository.ihu.edu.gr/xmlui/bitstream/handle/11544/29381/a.christopoulou_ebdm_16-04-2019.pdf?sequence=1

[32] Adams, W. Method and system for checking content before dissemination. Google Patents, 2005. Retrieved from https://patents.google.com/patent/US20050235199A1/en

[33] Webster, J. Building Trust: The Importance of Transparency in Brand Marketing. Revity Marketing, 2024. Retrieved from https://gorevity.com/building-trust-the-importance-of-transparency-in-brand-marketing/