

Research on the Consumption Behavior of Gen Z within the Context of the Internet Celebrity Economy

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Abstract:

This paper delves into the consumer behaviour characteristics of the Generation Z group and its influencing factors in the context of the Internet celebrity economy. Through literature review and questionnaire survey, the study found that the Internet celebrity economy, with its low-cost and diversified features, has attracted a large number of fans through content creation and social interaction, forming a new economic model. As the aborigines of digital technology, Generation Z's consumption behaviour has been significantly influenced by the Internet celebrity economy, showing digital consumption trends, personalised and differentiated needs, increased environmental awareness and social responsibility, as well as the trend of linked consumption and experiential consumption. The paper further analyses eight major factors influencing the consumption behaviour of Generation Z, including the price of Internet celebrity-recommended goods, credibility, interaction rate, display method, social influence, content recognition, conformity to trendy consumption needs, and social platform promotion. The results of the study show that the quality of goods and preferential policies recommended by Internet celebrities are the key factors influencing the consumption behaviour of Generation Z. At the same time, the attitudes of other consumers and the intervention of third-party factors also have a significant impact on Generation Z's consumption behaviour. Based on the results of the study, this paper proposes countermeasures and recommendations for Internet celebrities, consumers, and relevant live-streaming platforms, as well as an outlook on the depth and breadth of future research.

Keywords: Generation Z; Internet celebrity economy; consumer behaviour.

1. Introduction

With the popularity of the Internet and the accelerated pace of life, online shopping has become a purchasing habit for people. In the era of big data, the continuous emergence of new technologies has given rise to various new business forms, and the Internet celebrity economy has emerged in the mobile Internet era.

Internet celebrity economy refers to a new type of economic model derived around Internet celebrity by relying on the Internet, especially mobile Internet communication and its social platform promotion, and by gathering social attention in large quantities to form a huge fan and targeted marketing market. The core of the Internet celebrity economy lies in the fact that Internet celebrity individuals or teams attract fans through content creation, social interaction, etc., and then achieve commercial realisation through advertising, e-commerce, brand cooperation, and

other means. In the context of the development of the Internet celebrity Economy, individuals or teams (i.e. Internet celebrities) accumulate a large number of fans and followers and develop a certain degree of social influence through the demonstration of their talent, knowledge, lifestyle, or other appealing qualities.

The rise of the Internet celebrity economy means that in the Internet age, people are more focused on the shopping experience and interaction. With more interaction and improved experience, sales behaviour naturally follows. In recent years, Internet celebrity, as a new group with strong realisation ability, has not only enhanced their popularity and influence but also brought trading opportunities for platforms and brands to cash in on their traffic through the live streaming marketing mode of online platforms. This e-commerce Internet celebrity live mode based on traffic realisation has become the focus of competition between major live platforms and e-commerce platforms.

This mode of live broadcasting is characterised by high interactivity and participation, which makes it difficult for consumers to resist its attraction and unconsciously immerse themselves in it, attracting more and more people to participate in consumption. Generation Z, the so-called “digital media natives”, have grown up in an environment where the Internet, smartphones, and social media are highly developed and are inevitably affected by the Internet celebrity economy, and their consumption decisions are greatly influenced by social media.

Therefore, this paper takes the Generation Z group as the research object, analyzes the current situation of contemporary young people’s consumption, explores the characteristics of the young group’s consumption behaviours under the influence of the fast-developing Internet celebrity economy, and puts forward suggestions on the establishment of a correct consumption viewpoint of the Generation Z group under the Internet celebrity economy to guide them to develop healthier consumption habits. This paper will focus on the consumer behaviour of Generation Z in the context of the Internet celebrity economy, and the research methods used are a literature review and a questionnaire survey.

Firstly, the article analyses the research background and research significance of this topic. Secondly, it outlines the definition and characteristics of the Internet celebrity economy as well as the Age Z group and also expands on the impact of the Internet celebrity economy on consumer behaviour and the consumer market. Once again, research on the current situation of consumer behaviour of the Z-era group under the role of the Internet celebrity economy and the analysis of influencing factors, as well as in-depth research on the size of the degree of influence on the target group. Finally, the data was analysed in depth based on the findings and elaborated using pre-tests, descriptive statistical analyses, inferential statistical analyses as well as parameter estimation to ensure the accuracy of the data. After concluding the study, countermeasures and recommendations are made to address the findings, and the shortcomings and outlook of the study are summarised.

Unique contributions and additional value generated through this study relative to existing literature or practice. Firstly, to deepen the understanding of Generation Z’s consumer psychology. Gain a deeper understanding of Gen Z’s values, consumption motivations, and behavioural patterns. Second, provide customised strategies for brands. Mastering the preferences of young people is mastering the future consumer trends. The research results can help companies and brands to develop products and services that are more in line with the preferences of Generation Z, as well as more effective market positioning and marketing strategies. Thirdly, it promotes the innovation

of the Internet celebrity economic model. Analysing Generation Z’s response to the Internet celebrity economy can promote the innovation and development of the Internet celebrity economic model, and provide diverse new ideas for Internet celebrity and brand cooperation. Fourthly, it promotes the formulation and improvement of consumer policies. It provides data support and policy recommendations for policymakers to help them better understand and serve Gen Z consumers and promote the healthy development of the consumer market. These marginal contributions are not only important for academic research but also provide practical value to a variety of fields, including business practice, marketing, and policy making.

2. Analysis of Consumption Behavior and Influencing Factors

2.1 Research on the Current Situation of Consumer Behaviour of Generation Z Groups

It has been found that when Generation Z spends money, they tend to prefer online channels such as e-commerce and sharing economy platforms. This trend stems from their proficiency in digital technology and their quest for convenience. Online shopping not only offers a rich selection of products but also provides convenient payment methods and fast logistics and distribution, meeting Generation Z’s needs for efficiency and convenience.

In addition, digital consumption is reflected in several areas such as entertainment and socialization. Generation Z is passionate about sharing their lives exchanging ideas through social media and using various digital platforms for entertainment and leisure. This trend offers companies the opportunity to connect with Gen Z and promote their brands through digital means.

It cannot be ignored that Generation Z has a high demand for personalized and differentiated consumption, which is closely related to their attitude of attaching importance to personal values and individual tastes. They are not satisfied with the uniformity of goods and services in the traditional market and prefer to choose those goods that can show their unique taste and personality. To meet this demand of Generation Z, companies need to continue to innovate and breakthrough, launching products and services with uniqueness and customization. At the same time, with the rapid development of industrialization and urbanization, environmental problems are becoming more and more serious, and Generation Z has expressed a high degree of concern and worry about them. They are more concerned about the environmental characteristics of products and corporate social responsibility and tend to choose those products and services that are in line with the concept of sustainable development, a trend that pro-

vides new market opportunities for enterprises.

Finally, Generation Z prefers participatory and experiential consumption activities to the previous single consumption pattern. They are willing to visit shopping centers or offline experience stores with friends to shop and enjoy socializing and interaction. They are willing to visit shopping centers or offline experience stores with friends to shop and enjoy socializing and interaction.

2.2 Analysis of Influencing Factors

After an in-depth analysis of big data, this paper reveals the key factors that are influencing the consumer behavior of Generation Z young people.

Among them, the price of goods recommended by Internet celebrities occupies a pivotal position as the primary factor. When the price of an item recommended by an online celebrity has a significant discount, Gen Z youngsters tend to be more easily attracted, thus triggering purchasing behavior. This is because price concessions directly lower the purchase threshold of consumers and increase their willingness to buy. Therefore, when brands cooperate with Internet celebrities, they should fully consider how to provide a more competitive pricing strategy to attract the favor of the Generation Z consumer group. Besides, the credibility factor of web celebrities working with brands is equally crucial. When online celebrities work hand-in-hand with well-known brands, the products or services they recommend often have a higher quality assurance and credibility because of the brand's endorsement. This collaboration definitely enhances the credibility of the product, making Gen Z youth more willing to pay for it. Therefore, when choosing partners, brands should pay extra attention to the credibility and reputation of Internet celebrities to ensure that the cooperation between the two sides can win the recognition and trust of consumers.

It should not be overlooked that the interaction rate between online celebrities and their fans is also one of the key factors influencing the consumer behavior of Gen Z. By interacting with fans through live broadcasts and comment replies, web celebrities are able to gain a deeper understanding of their needs and preferences, and in turn, provide more accurate recommendations. This increased interactivity not only helps to enhance the emotional connection between Internet celebrities and fans but also effectively boosts fans' loyalty and willingness to buy. At the same time, the unique display methods of web celebrities, such as trying on, trying out, and reviewing, can vividly show the features and advantages of the products and help young people of Generation Z to understand the products more comprehensively, so as to make purchasing decisions. Therefore, when recommending products or services, online celebrities should constantly innovate the

way of displaying them to attract more consumers' attention.

The social impact of Internet celebrities should not be underestimated as well. Internet celebrities with large fan bases tend to have a high degree of credibility, and their recommendations can often quickly trigger a buying frenzy among their fans. This credibility stems from web celebrity's professionalism, influence, and the trust of their fans. When choosing a partner, brands should fully assess the number of fans, activity, and influence of online celebrities and other indicators to ensure that the cooperation can achieve the expected results. Internet celebrities, as the leader of the new wave of consumption, their recommendations often represent the current trends and tendencies. Gen Z youth are watching and following these online celebrities while also accepting and identifying with these trends and fads. Therefore, when promoting their products or services, brands can make full use of the trendy influence of web celebrities and combine their products or services with trendy elements in order to attract more attention and purchases from Generation Z consumers.

Recognition of online celebrities' created content is also an important factor influencing Gen Z's consumer behavior. Novel and interesting content can quickly attract the attention of Gen Z youth and maintain their interest, making it easier for products or services recommended by internet celebrities to be accepted and recognized. Therefore, when creating content, web celebrities should focus on the creativity, fun, and practicality of the content to win more consumers.

Last but not least, social platform promotion factors also play an important role in influencing Gen Z's consumer behavior. Young people of Generation Z are frequently exposed to videos or live content posted by web celebrities on social media platforms, and this constant exposure makes it easier for products or services recommended by web celebrities to enter their field of vision. Brands can capitalize on the widespread nature of social media and collaborate with internet celebrities on various marketing campaigns to increase the exposure and visibility of their products or services.

3. Research Methods

3.1 Questionnaire Design

To explore the influence of different factors on the consumption behavior of Generation Z groups under the influence of the Internet celebrity economy, this paper distributes questionnaires to various enterprises colleges, and universities based on the research objects of Generation Z born from 1995 to 2009, and conducts questionnaires using a combination of online and offline methods.

The questionnaire is designed with a total of 20 questions. The survey samples are mainly divided into two parts: Generation Z's student group and non-student group. The content of the student group questionnaire sets four personal basic information-related questions: gender, grade, monthly living expenses, and sources of living expenses. The content of the non-student group questionnaire includes gender, age, education level, and monthly disposable income. The two-part questionnaire also asks about the probable probability of the Generation Z group's shopping intention on the eight factors spawned by the Internet celebrity economy.

3.2 Data Collection

The formal survey was mainly conducted with online electronic questionnaires, supplemented by paper questionnaires offline. A total of 112 questionnaires were distributed, 112 were recycled, and 98 were valid questionnaires. The basic information of the survey respondents is shown in Table 1 and Table 2. The male and female gender ratios of the survey respondents are 64% and 36% respectively. This ratio is balanced, and the gender difference will not affect the representativeness of the research results. Among them, the student group accounted for 68%, and the non-student group accounted for 32%. The age distribution was also roughly balanced, ensuring the comprehensive and scientific research subjects.

Table 1. Basic personal information of the sample group of middle school students

Item	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Sex	Male	23	30.26%
	Female	53	69.74%
Junior	Senior high school	1	1.32%
	Freshman	8	10.53%
	Sophomore year	39	51.32%
	Junior	15	19.74%
	Senior	9	11.84%
	Master's degree or above	4	5.26%
Average monthly cost of living	Within 1500 yuan	18	23.68%
	1500~3000 yuan	44	57.89%
	3000~5000 yuan	12	15.79%
	More than 5000 yuan	2	2.63%
The main source of living expenses	Parental giving	70	92.11%
	Internship or part-time income	4	5.26%
	Bursary	2	2.63%
	Other	0	0%

Table 2. Basic personal information of non-students in the survey sample

Item	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Sex	Male	17	47.22%
	Female	19	52.78%
Age	Under 20 years old	2	5.56%
	21-25 years old	15	41.67%
	26-29 years old	19	52.78%

Educational level	High school and below	7	19.44%
	Junior college	15	41.67%
	Undergraduate course	12	33.33%
	Postgraduate	2	5.56%
	Doctoral candidate	0	0%
Monthly disposable income	Less than 1500 yuan	0	0%
	1500~3000 yuan	2	5.56%
	3000~5000 yuan	15	41.67%
	More than 5000 yuan	19	52.78%

4. Analysis of Research Results

According to the regression results, the regression coefficient of “Internet celebrities’ recommendations of an item will prompt to make consumption decisions even if have no intention of buying it” was 0.120, and was significant at a 5% level of significance, which indicates that this variable has a significant positive effect on “Purchase of products or services due to the recommendations of online celebrities”; Other variables may have an effect, but not significant. As shown in Table 3, Table 4 and Table 5.

In this research study, 58.1% of consumers agree that Internet celebrities’ live streaming more intuitively and effectively demonstrates the functions and values of the relevant goods; 52.7% of consumers agree that spending money on Internet celebrities’ live streaming room can enjoy more preferential policies. From this, it can be seen that the Gen Z group considers more about the quality of the commodity when engaging in consumer behaviours. The two variables “Internet celebrities’ videos or live streams effectively display the goods” and “the Internet celebrities’ hands-on testing of products provides references for consumers” significantly impact consumer behaviours.

On the other side, Internet celebrities’ introductions of preferential policies in their live streaming room are attractive to consumers, and large price discounts may directly influence GenZ group’s consumption choice.

39.19% of consumers agree with the opinion that “Internet celebrities represent a current trend”, 36.49% of consumers maintain a neutral stance, and 40.54% of consumers agree that Internet celebrities’ large fan base will give them a sense of identity when they make consumption decisions. From this, one can tell that the attitudes of other consumers have a significant impact on the consumer behaviours of the Gen Z group. When buying items recommended by Internet celebrities, they tend to go to other consumers for psychological recognition and may blindly follow the purchasing trend in the meantime. 54.05% of consumers said that frequent promotions of Internet celebrities’ videos and live streams on various platforms have influenced their consuming choices, and 52.7% of consumers believe that Internet celebrities will collaborate with varieties of well-known brands. Therefore, it is known that promotion on third-party social media platforms has fueled the rise of the Internet celebrities economy among the Gen Z community, and Internet celebrities’ collaboration with popular brands indirectly changes consumers’ attitudes and influences consumption choices.

In consequence, the quality of goods and the preferential policies are the main factors affecting the consumption behaviour of Gen Z. Attitudes of other consumers have a significant impact on the consumption behaviour of Gen Z. Involvement of the third-party platforms is another important reason why the Internet celebrity economy has an impact on the consumption behavior of Gen Z.

Table 3. Summary Statistics

VarName	Obs	Mean	SD	Min	Median	Max
Purchase of products or services due to the recommendations of online celebrities	98	0.66	0.475	0.00	1.00	1.00
What the Internet celebrities state is consistent with the actual usage results	98	1.98	0.320	1.00	2.00	3.00
Have a willingness to buy products as long as your favorite celebrity recommends it	98	2.67	1.003	1.00	3.00	5.00

Internet celebrities' recommendations for your tangled item will increase interest in purchasing it	98	3.55	0.863	1.00	4.00	5.00
Internet celebrities' recommendations of an item will prompt you to make consumption decisions even if you have no intention of buying it	98	3.20	1.035	1.00	3.00	5.00
Internet celebrities represent a current trend	98	3.14	1.035	1.00	3.00	5.00
The content and live streaming that internet celebrities create are interesting	98	3.24	1.085	1.00	3.00	5.00
Internet celebrities have large fan bases and make you feel a sense of belonging	98	3.14	1.094	1.00	3.00	5.00
Internet celebrities' videos or live streams effectively display the goods	98	3.59	0.883	1.00	4.00	5.00

Table 4. Correlation Coefficient

	Purchase of products or services due to the recommendations of online celebrities	What the Internet celebrities state is consistent with the actual usage results	Have a willingness to buy products as long as your favorite celebrity recommends it	Internet celebrities' recommendations for your tangled item will increase interest in purchasing it	Internet celebrities' recommendations of an item will prompt you to make consumption decisions even if you have no intention of buying it	Internet celebrities represent a current trend	The content and live streaming that internet celebrities create are interesting	Internet celebrities have large fan bases and make you feel a sense of belonging	Internet celebrities' videos or live streams effectively display the goods
Purchase of products or services due to the recommendations of online celebrities	1								
What the Internet celebrities state is consistent with the actual usage results	0.16	1							
Have willingness to buy products as long as your favourite celebrity recommend it	0.37***	0.24**	1						
Internet celebrities' recommendations for your tangled item will increase interest in purchasing it	0.16	0.23**	0.39***	1					

Internet celebrities' recommendations of an item will prompt you to make consumption decisions even if you have no intention of buying it	0.39***	0.11	0.55***	0.36***	1				
Internet celebrities represent a current trend	0.16	0.16	0.37***	0.31***	0.38***	1			
The content and live streaming that internet celebrities create are interesting	0.26***	0.22**	0.37***	0.24**	0.34***	0.26***	1		
Internet celebrities have large fan bases and make you feel a sense of belonging	0.29***	0.27***	0.49***	0.25**	0.29***	0.25**	0.40***	1	
Internet celebrities' videos or live streams effectively display the goods	0.23**	-0.03	0.16	0.04	0.17*	0.12	0.20**	0.17*	1

Table 5. OLS regression results

	(1)
	Purchase of products or services due to the recommendations of online celebrities
What the Internet celebrities state is consistent with the actual usage results	0.115 (0.783)
Have willingness to buy products as long as your favourite celebrity recommend it	0.073 (1.218)
Internet celebrities' recommendations for your tangled item will increase interest in purchasing it	-0.024 (-0.415)
Internet celebrities' recommendations of an item will prompt you to make consumption decisions even if you have no intention of buying it	0.120** (2.235)
Internet celebrities represent a current trend	-0.022 (-0.467)
The contents and live streaming that internet celebrities create are interesting	0.024 (0.507)

Internet celebrities have large fan bases and make you feel a sense of belonging	0.041 (0.841)
Internet celebrities' videos or live streams effectively display the goods	0.079 (1.531)
_cons	-0.481 (-1.343)
N	98
r2	0.234
r2_a	0.166

5. Countermeasures and Suggestions

5.1 Suggestions for Internet Celebrities

Adhere to your professional ethics and improve the quality of content in the live room. According to the study results, Internet celebrities' live-streaming content has a significant impact on the consumption behaviour of Gen Z. Therefore, Internet celebrities should abide by their own professional ethics, be practical and realistic about the products they recommend, avoid false advertising, being responsible for themselves as well as the business and the consumers. In addition, they should also improve their professional skills and attract consumers by improving the quality of content in their live-streaming, rather than take advantage of the consumer herd mentality and lead them into irrational consumer behaviours.

Improve product selection criteria to ensure the quality of recommended goods. As the Internet celebrities economy continues to develop, the types of Internet celebrities' live streams are gradually increasing in the meantime. The selection of products for influencers to choose from increases too. Research shows that the quality of products recommended by Internet celebrities is one of the most important factors that the Gen Z group considers when carrying out consumption behaviors. Thus, influencers must improve product selection criteria. Besides, they should have a more comprehensive understanding of the relevant goods to avoid quality problems of the recommended goods.

5.2 Suggestions for Consumers

Establish a correct consumption concept. Purchase products rationally rather than blindly follow the trend. Research reveals that the reason why some consumers choose to shop in online celebrity studios is that they're following the trend and they believe that online celebrities represent a trend in today's society. The result of blindly following the crowd is that consumers are prone to irrational consumption behaviors such as impulsive consumption. Therefore, consumers should establish a correct

consumption concept and calmly think about their real needs before carrying out consuming behaviors. Make it clear why buy relevant online celebrity products and try to avoid irrational consumption behaviour.

Before making consumption decisions, it should have a comprehensive and multi-dimensional understanding of the relevant goods. Studies have shown that some consumers may purchase related goods or services without fully understanding the efficacy of products. Methods should be taken to solve this problem. Before making consumption decisions, consumers should not only fully consider their own needs, but also have a correct understanding of related products either by comparing the introduction of the same product by different influencers or referring to the real reviews of consumers who have purchased in order to establish the right multi-dimensional understanding of the products recommended by Internet celebrities.

5.3 Suggestions for Relevant Live Streaming Platforms

Strengthen supervision and create a favourable consumption environment. Most Internet celebrities guide consumers to carry out consumption behaviors through live-streaming sales. This leads to higher requirements for relevant live-streaming platforms. The relevant platforms should strengthen supervision to ensure that the contents in the live streaming room are good and consistent with the right values. What else, it's also essential to create a good consumption environment and live streaming atmosphere and protect the legitimate rights and interests of high-quality influencers and consumers.

Improve relevant regulations and increase incentives and penalties. For the time being, the regulations of relevant live-streaming platforms for the management of online celebrities' live streaming rooms need to be improved. The penalty system for Internet celebrities' live streaming is yet unclear. So, the top priority for the platform is to improve the relevant regulations. The offending live-streaming rooms should be banned promptly and the relevant influencers should be reasonably punished. For those of

high quality, appropriate rewards should be given. And for those who touch the “red line”, penalties and warnings should be given.

6. Conclusion

With the continuous development of e-commerce platforms and the rise of live-streaming business models, the impact of the Internet celebrity economy on the consumption behavior of Generation Z groups has also increased significantly. This paper mainly studies the influencing factors of the consumption behavior of Generation Z groups under the background of the Internet celebrity economy through a literature review and questionnaire survey and conducts descriptive statistical analysis, pre-test, and inferential statistical analysis of the research results. The main conclusions shown by the survey data are: First, consumers in Generation Z groups are confident about the future and are more inclined to spend impulsively or even over budget. Second, influenced by social media, Generation Z groups cannot leave social media, which is the main channel for them to obtain product information judgment. Third, Generation Z group consumers show a mature attitude in consumption, they are more inclined to research and compare before consumption, looking for cost-effective products. Fourth, the video quality and live display products of Internet celebrities are more able to attract the consumption desire of Generation Z groups, the pursuit of personalization and customization, and the preference for personalized and customized products and services.

In the process of data analysis, this paper mainly adopts the method of questionnaire survey. Since Generation Z groups refer to the generation born between 1995 and 2009, considering that there may be some differences in consumption views between groups at different ages, this study distinguishes between students and people who have entered the workplace in the questionnaire, but the number of samples collected for people who have entered the workplace is small. This paper believes that future research can be more perfect in the design of questionnaires and the collection of sample size so that the analysis of each data will be more rigorous and scientific. This paper mainly studies the consumption behavior of Generation Z groups under the background of the Internet celebrity economy, analyzes the consumption status of Generation Z groups under the background of the Internet celebrity economy and its impact on it, and puts forward relevant countermeasures and suggestions according to the research results. However, the depth and breadth of the research still need to be improved, and the application of real cases should be paid attention to in future relevant

research. The research results are further analyzed through the relevant cases that have occurred in reality.

Authors Contribution

All the authors contributed equally and their names were listed in alphabetical order.

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