

How user-generated content impacts the customer behavior of Generation Z: a systematic literature review for the last 5 years

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Abstract. User-generated content (UGC) has a significant impact on the decision-making behavior of Generation Z consumers. This article presents a literature review of 13 articles, summarizing how UGC influences the purchasing behavior of Generation Z consumers in the era of rapid network development. At the same time, the Stimulate-Organism-Response model is also used to analyze the behavioral response process of the Z-generation consumers when they receive user-generated content. Additionally, this article compared the process with the traditional 5A model to examine whether the conventional 5A model is followed in UGC marketing. For marketers, this article suggests that publishing authentic marketing content that fosters emotional connections with consumers and evokes positive emotions that enhance marketing effectiveness. However, there are some limitations in this paper. Later research will further segment the Z generation group and develop distinct marketing strategies tailored to individuals with varying personality traits within this generation.

Keywords: User-generated content, customer behaviour, Generation Z.

1. Introduction

In modern society, Generation Z is the most affected group by the Internet. Generation Z is a group that was born after 1995, and they are indigenous to the digital age of the internet. Most of the target groups of digital media marketing are Generation Z [1]. The Internet has a profound impact on almost every aspect of Generation Z, and social media is widely regarded as the most effective means of communication with these young people [2]. Generation Z is now the mainstream of online consumption. They consider social media platforms as essential sources of product information because these channels broadcast the most advertisements. Furthermore, 70% of Gen Z in China are induced to purchase from social media platforms [3]. In addition, most of the content that Gen Z encounters when shopping on online platforms is user-generated content, which significantly influences the decision-making behavior of consumers, including demand identification, information search, alternative evaluation, purchase decisions, and post-purchase behavior.

User-generated content (UGC) can be viewed as the aggregate of all ways in which people utilize social media [4]. And defined as content that is publicly available on the internet, reflecting some creative efforts, and the content created outside of professional practical experience [4]. UGC is a wide range of content, including text posts, video blogs, ratings and comments on e-commerce platforms [5]. And, the image hosting site Flickr provided access to over 3 billion photographs, making the world-famous Louvre Museum's collection of 300,000 objects seem tiny in comparison [4]. Research reports indicate that an increasing number of brands will partner with creators on their social media accounts to attract consumers [6].

Most of the articles cited in this paper focus on traditional Western social media, with relatively few interpretations of the Chinese platform mechanism. These studies generally identified and profiled audience motivations for using the medium in question, such as networking sites, social media, YouTube, and Instagram [7]. It is also found that there is a lack of a behavioral path model that integrates UGC characteristics, user psychology, and platform mechanisms. Moreover, different social media platforms employ various mechanisms, yet lack analysis of the psychological processes of Generation Z consumers.

This article employs a literature review format to analyze 13 related documents thoroughly. On the one hand, this article focuses on analyzing user-generated content and combines the SOR framework [8] to consider the stimulation, organism, and response of Z-generation consumers in the context of user-generated content. And then summarize why these contents have a particular influence on the Z generation, which could most directly lead to the consumer decision-making behavior of Gen Z. On the other hand, it will also summarize for marketers the type of content that is most likely to stimulate the purchasing behavior of Generation Z consumers, thereby improving marketing efficiency.

The problems solved within this article included: 1) Which UGC characteristics play a core role in Generation Z consumer decision-making; 2) How does the platform mechanism regulate the driving path of UGC for behavior; 3) Does the behavioral path of Generation Z under the influence of UGC follow the traditional 5A model? By solving these problems, marketers can utilize relevant marketing theories and combine psychological knowledge when creating marketing content, and tailor marketing plans to specific generations of Z consumers, thereby making marketing more accurate to a certain extent. The novelty of this article lies in its comparison of the operating mechanisms of different platforms, as well as its comparison of the traditional 5A model in consumer decision paths with a new 3A model in the UGC scenario.

2. Methodology

2.1 PRISMA Process Screening Literature

This article is a systematic review. The articles cited in this paper were sourced from Web of Science (WOS) and SCOPUS, as these two databases are considered the most authoritative and comprehensive in the world. The included articles are of high quality, with transparent data and a logical approach, which can significantly enhance the credibility of this research.

The author of this article independently screens the cited literature in this article, but strictly adheres to the formulated procedures and standards to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the data in this article. For the literature search steps, the first step involves using Boolean operations to extract relevant keywords. Such as (“User-generated content” or “UGC”) AND (“Gen Z” or “Generation Z”) AND (“influence” or “impact” or “how influence”) AND (“purchase decision-making” or “purchase” or “decision-making” or “consumer behavior” or “customer behavior”) AND (“Xiaohongshu” or “RedBook” or “social media”). Secondly, this article mainly conducts literature search in Web of Science (WOS): search for keywords as “User-generated content*” or “UGC*” with 8,627 articles; Searching keywords like “Gen Z” or “Generation Z”, with 3286 results; information retrieval “purchase decision-making” or “purchase” or “decision-making” or “consumer behavior” or “customer behavior”, to get 712,909 related articles. Combining these three conditions, 38 results were retrieved. 11 papers that match the topic were selected from Scopus, and a total of 49 papers were included in the preliminary screening. Articles filtered from WOS and Scopus were compared, and 7 of them were found to be repeated and were therefore excluded. After an initial review of the ration, a total of 42 available documents were obtained. Three of the papers were written in languages other than English and were therefore excluded. A total of 39 papers were obtained following the initial screening.

After a preliminary review of the article, the standard period for selecting papers was nearly five years. It was found that three of the 39 articles were published before 2020, so these three articles were excluded. After preliminary screening, 36 available articles were identified; however, 5 of them could not be viewed in their entirety and were therefore excluded. Consequently, 31 articles remained available.

This study screened the literature according to pre-set inclusion and exclusion criteria. By reading the abstracts of each article, 13 available articles were obtained. Inclusion criteria include: 1) The research topic is the impact of UGC on the purchasing behavior of the z-generation; 2) The literature category is the original research paper, based on the data collected by its authors themselves; 3)

Articles whose publication time is 2020 and after, and which meet the above three criteria will be hired. Among them, there are two main reasons for the article being excluded: 1) The article topic does not match the research topic of this paper; 2) The selected article research object is inconsistent with the actual research object of this article. Figure 1 shows the process of screening and selecting 13 articles that were finally used.

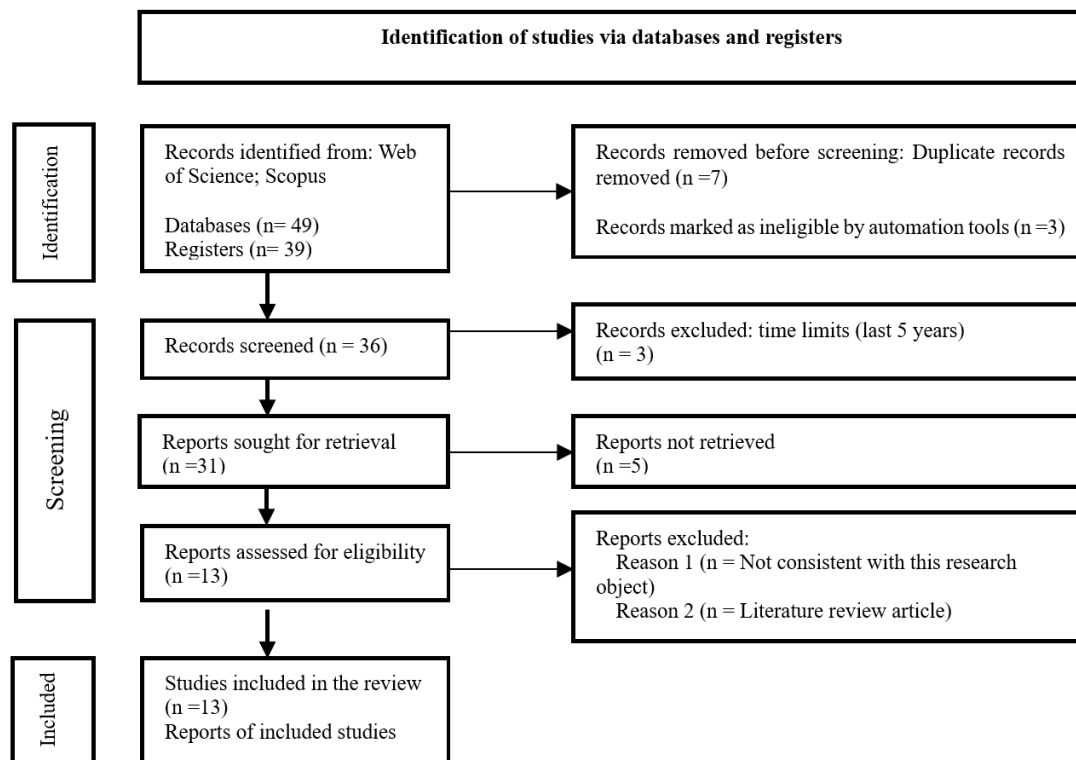


Figure 1. PRISMA Flow Diagram

2.2 Article initial screening record table

Table 1. Article Initial Screening Recording

No.	Title	Lead Author	Related?	Retain/Exclude	Note (if excluded)
1	User-generated content and micro-celebrity posts encourage Generation Z consumers to search social media for online purchase: A study on Dhaka City, Bangladesh	Shetu, 2024	Y	R	
2	User-generated content on Gen Z tourist visit intention: a stimulus-organism-response approach	Yamagishi, 2024	Y	R	
3	Influence of User-Generated Content (UGC) in Social Media on the Intangible Cultural Heritage Preservation of Gen Z Tourists in the Digital Economy Era	Hua, 2024	Y	R	
4	Building Trust in the Digital Age: Key Concepts	Ekström, 2024	Y	E	No viewing permission
5	Following mega sports events on social media impacts Gen Z travelers' sports tourism intentions: the case of the 2022 Winter Olympic Games	Jiang, 2023	N	E	Research topic is not related
6	What drives the travel switching behavior of Chinese Generation Z consumers	Tseng, 2024	Y	R	
7	Sang Culture: Social Comparisons of Generation Z Youths in China on Social Media	Yang, 2024	N	E	Research topic is not related
8	What people TikTok (Douyin) about influencer-endorsed short videos on wine? An exploration of gender and generational differences	Deng, 2022	Y	R	

9	Investigating Generation Z' Intention to Use Learners' Generated Content for Learning Activity: A Theory of Planned Behavior Approach	Persada, 2020	N	E	The research object does not match
10	Influencing Green Purchase Intention through Eco Labels and User-Generated Content	Panopoulos, 2023	Y	R	
11	Exploring the emergence of the 'incense-burning and Buddha-worshipping' phenomenon among China's generation Z: unveiling the role of healing experience	Ding, 2025	N	E	Research topic is not related
12	Airbnb on TikTok: Brand Perception Through User Engagement and Sentiment Trends	Marti-Ochoa, 2024	Y	R	
13	The impact of Social Media Marketing on the Travel Intention of Z Travelers	Bui, 2021	Y	R	
14	Motivations behind TikTok content creation among Gen Z expatriates	Lan, 2024	N	E	Research topic is not related
15	The Effects of Instagram as a Stimuli on the Purchasing Behavior of Generation Z and Millennials in Western Europe Fashion Industry	Annous, 2023	Y	E	No viewing permission
16	Perceived Popularity of TikTok among Gen-Z	Jain, 2022	N	E	Research topic is not related
17	Order effect of multi-touchpoints on Generation Z consumers	Fu, 2023	N	E	Research topic is not related
18	'Instagram made Me buy it': Generation Z impulse purchases in fashion industry	Djafarova, 2021	Y	R	
19	Gen Z's Self-Branding on Tiktok	Figueiredo, 2022	Y	E	No viewing permission
20	Social Media Influencers: An Examination of Influence Throughout the Customer Journey	Leggett, 2022	Y	E	No viewing permission
21	Deconstructing Social Television: Usage and Drivers of Social Media in Generation Z	de Freitas, 2021	Y	E	No viewing permission
22	Power Brand Defense Up, My Friend! Stimulating Brand Defense through Digital Content Marketing	Sawaftah, 2021	Y	R	
23	Effect of social-media message congruence and generational cohort on visual attention and information-processing in culinary tourism: An eye-tracking study	Garcia, 2023	Y	R	
24	Social Media and Consumer Behavior	Geurin, 2023	N	E	Research topic is not related
25	Exploring Symbolic Effect of New Media: The Impact of Bilibili on Gen Z's Cohort Identity and Aesthetic Choices in Fashion	Peng, 2023	N	E	Research topic is not related
26	Utilizing Q methodology to explore university students' perceptions of the organic food industry: the integral role of social media	Nayak, 2024	Y	R	
27	Social Media Marketing Strategy for an Online Italian Language School	Tabakova, 2022	N	E	Research topic is not related
28	Exploring the generational influence on social media-based tourist decision-making in India	Gulati, 2024	N	E	The research object does not match
29	Why do consumers buy sports NFTs? - decoding consumer values and needs driving purchase intention	Schlimm, 2024	N	E	Research topic is not related
30	Innovative Approaches to Wine Marketing: Applications of Influencers, VR Technology and Gender Cues	Deng, 2023	Y	R	
31	Influencing Travel Decisions: Social Media's Role in Destination Perception and Visit Intentions	Susantto, 2024	N	E	The research object does not match

2.3 Literature coding table

Table 2. Literature Coding

No.	Author (Year)	Variables	Theory/Model	Methodology	Sample
1	Shetu, Sabakun Naher (2024)	Online purchasing behaviour	SOR theory	Cross-sectional study approach	565 university students in Dhaka
2	Y, Kafferine; C, Danzel; D, Mariella; M, Kim Nieva; M, Angel; S, Arabelle (2024)	Trust in UGC, destination image (DI), tourist visit intention (VI)	SOR theory	Online and personal-administered surveys and randomized sampling	Images, videos or text posted through social media platforms
3	Jose A. Flecha Ortiz, María De Los M. Santos Corrada, Evelyn Lopez, Virgin Dones & Vivian Feliberty Lugo (2023)	Passive use of TikTok and its impact on Generation Z user media engagement	Least squares structural equations (PLS-SEM)	Electronic survey; ethnographic evaluation of the population	403 active users of TikTok
4	Hua, Yidi; Ding, Lei; Dong, Hongan; Lin, Zhixuan (2024)	UGC to tourists' intention	SOR model	Online survey	567 questionnaires
5	Deng, Demi Shenrui; Seo, Soobin; Li, Zhenmin; Austin, Erica Weintraub (2022)	Users' responses to the influencers-endorsed content	Message interpretation process framework	Modeling, content analysis and quantitative analysis	81 videos posted by 30 social media influencers
6	Djafarova, Elmira; Bowes, Tamar (2021)	Gen Z's impulse purchasing behaviour	SOR model	Qualitative analysis	16 semi-structured interviews
7	Lu, Wei; Lu, Yanping (2019)	Influence of social media opinion leaders	Two-factor theory	Regression analysis	325 valid questionnaires
8	Colliander, Jonas; Marder, Ben (2018)	Effect of disclosure type on influencer credibility	Attribution theory	Experimental design	240 participants in the study
9	Jin, S. Veil; Phua, Joe; Kim, Jaemin; Tamborini, Ron (2019)	Trust transfer, parasocial interaction	Source credibility theory	Survey method	420 U.S. adults
10	De Veirman, Marijke; Cauberghe, Veroline; Hudders, Liselot (2017)	Influencer popularity, brand attitudes	Signaling theory	Experimental research	300 Instagram users
11	Lou, Chen; Yuan, Shupeí (2019)	Consumer responses to sponsored content	Persuasion knowledge model (PKM)	Online experiment	389 U.S. participants
12	Schouten, Alexander P.; Janssen, Lonneke; Verspaget, Maartje (2020)	Influencer marketing strategies	Parasocial interaction theory	Structural equation modeling	482 social media users
13	Lim, Xinyi; Radzol, Azila Abdul; Cheah, Jun-Hwa; Wong, Mei-Ling (2017)	Purchase intention via Instagram influencers	Theory of planned behavior	SEM and mediation analysis	200 Malaysian Instagram users

2.4 Critical Appraisal Skills Program (CASP)

To ensure the reliability and scientific validity of the article, in conjunction with the actual needs of the research, this paper constructs a scoring table that encompasses several key dimensions [9-13]. The dimensions of this score table are divided into the following aspects: literature research design, data integrity, analysis methods, and rationality of conclusions. The specific scoring criteria are whether the research purpose is clear, whether the research design is reasonable and applicable to research issues, whether the data collection method is clear and sufficient, whether the data analysis is reasonable and logically rigorous, whether the results support the conclusion, and whether potential bias is considered. Each indicator is assigned a score as follows: "Yes" scores 1 point, "Partly Yes"

scores 0.5 points, and "No" scores 0 points. Setting 4 points as the inclusion citation criteria. Literature with scores greater than or equal to 4 points in the above 6 criteria will be considered as qualified documents and will be included in the citation, as shown in Table.3.

Table 3. Literature Quality Assessment

No.	Is the purpose clear?	Is the research design sound?	Is the data collection method clear or adequate?	Is the data analysis logical or appropriate?	Are the conclusions supported by the results?	Is potential bias considered?	Total score
1	1	1	1	1	1	0.5	5.5
2	1	1	0.5	1	1	1	5.5
3	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
4	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
5	1	1	0.5	1	1	1	5.5
6	1	1	0.5	1	1	1	5.5
7	1	1	0.5	1	1	1	5.5
8	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
9	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
10	1	1	0.5	1	1	1	5.5
11	1	1	0.5	1	1	1	5.5
12	1	1	0.5	1	1	1	5.5
13	1	1	1	1	1	1	6

Note: The data of the cited literature in this article are first-hand data of the author.

3. Content analysis

The Stimulus-Organism-Response Module included three aspects: stimulus, organism, and response, as perceived by the customers. The Stimulus consists of the environment as encountered by the individual at a particular moment in time. This includes all things that could be generally understood of external products, brands, logos, ads, packages, prices, stores, store environments, word-of-mouth communications, newspapers, television, and countless other impinging factors [14]. The organism is essentially the storehouse of the individual's emotive and cognitive systems, including all retained prior experiences, and is generally referred to as "long-term memory". This includes prior experiences, knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, predispositions, intentions, values, cognitive networks, schema, scripts, motives, the individual's personality, feelings, impressions, images, expectations, involving brands, companies, services, logos [14]. A response consists of nonverbal, verbal, and behavioral components.

The paper classification standards are combined with the SOR framework for analysis. Some of the included articles use the SOR framework directly. However, this paper also utilizes the model for articles that do not directly employ the SOR model to analyze and presents a table that summarizes the SOR [15-19].

The above table is a summary of the SOR framework of each document. Although some articles do not combine the SOR model, the discussion points of each article can be roughly divided into the following paths according to the SOR framework: the user-generated content studied stimulates consumer emotions. It reacts to consumer behavior through consumer emotional perception. The following articles are classified and discussed according to their respective topics. Articles 1-4 are categorized together according to their role in stimulating consumer sentiment and are discussed comprehensively. Articles 5-6 focus on consumer gender, whereas articles 7-9 fall into one classification based on whether the UGC is officially published by the brand or by amateur bloggers. Articles 10-13 focus on the importance of user-generated content presenting visual effects.

Table 4. Stimulus- Organism- Response Module

No.	S	O	R
1	UGC+ Micro-celebrity posts	Intention to Search	Online Purchase Behavior
2	Emotion UGC+ Factual UGC	Trust in UGC+ Destination Image	Visit Intention
3	Passive Use of TickTock	Media Engagement	Brand Engagement+ Purchase Intention
4	Emotion UGC+ Factual UGC	Authenticity Perception+ Destination Image+ Perceived Value	Intention of Intangible Cultural Heritage Preservation
5	Ticktock Short Videos, Endorsed on Wine	Affective Response+ Logical Processing+ Internalization+ Skepticism	Drinking Intention+ Purchase Intention+ Actual Purchase
6	BGC Advertisements+ Influencer+ UGC	Positive Emotions Arousal (Pleasure, Yearning, Desire)	Impulsive Buying Behavior
7	TickTock (Official+ UGC)	Users perceived (happiness/ surprise)	User behavior (Like, comment, share)
8	UGC+ Factual UGC	Behavioral Engagement	Brand Defense
9	Professionalism of Amateur Information Publishers+ In-app interactive atmosphere+ Information Quality	Expectation confirmation+ Perceived Trust+ Experience Satisfaction	Switch Intent
10	Visual content+ User Comments	User visual attention + Information processing intensity, Emotional reaction	Behavior intention and content attitude: Likes to destination, Expression feedback, Decision-making attitude (implicit)
11	Five dimensions of social media marketing	User mental state: Emotional arousal, Perceived Trust and Value, Content resonance and memory activation	Travel Intention
12	Social Media Content (Instagram/ YouTube): UGC, brand posts, blogger content	Inner psychological perceptions of consumers: Trust judgment, Content processing method, Perceived Value, Emotional attitude	Behavioral intentions and tendencies, Content participation (like, forward), Real behavior
13	Environmental Concerns+ Influencer Content+ Social Platform Content	Attitudes of consumers related to ecological labels and UGC	Green Purchase Intention

Papers 1-4 all utilize the Stimulus-Organism-Response model framework, which spans content published by users, the stimulation of emotions, and the reactions made by consumers. It is primarily manifested in the fact that if the content posted by the user can evoke positive feelings in the viewer (such as happiness or surprise), this indicates that these positive emotions will influence consumer purchasing decisions. Among them, Paper 3 mentioned that users participate in brand interactions because of social needs, information acquisition and emotional expression [20]. Once an emotional connection is formed with the brand through user-generated content, subsequent interactions with the brand will play a significant role in influencing user purchasing decision-making behavior. Paper 4 emphasizes that if the content published by users consists solely of factual information, it cannot directly influence customer purchasing behavior [13]. On this basis, the emotional expression of the content needs to be increased, which means that if consumers feel that this product is worth buying, it will truly stimulate the willingness to purchase. However, transparency, honesty, and personalized expectations and experiences are crucial for attracting users to engage with content. This is also the reason why Gen Z prefers user-made content, because users believe that UGC is neutral, non-commercial, and a reliable source of information that is easy to handle [21,22].

Papers 5 and 6 focus on different consumer genders being influenced by UGC on social networks; female consumers are more willing to participate in topics related to internet celebrities and emotions, while males are more concerned about the product itself [23-26]. User-generated content that can

make female consumers feel more likely to lead to their purchasing behavior [11]. The results reveal that the effect of brand-directed social media marketing on customer engagement is higher than influencer-directed social media marketing [27].

Therefore, for marketers, if the primary consumer group is women, they should pay closer attention to the emotions expressed in posts or videos when publishing relevant brand content to effectively resonate with female consumers and enhance marketing efficiency. However, when the author investigated the samples, they found that the group consisted of Z-generation individuals who used the Internet daily. These groups are inherently sensitive to user-generated content. Therefore, there are certain objections to the women studied in the article who are prone to impulsive consumption and purchase behaviors, which should be specifically verified in future research directions. To improve the accuracy of experimental results, the "Gender Role Scale" can be used to distinguish between masculinity and femininity in subsequent studies, rather than categorizing participants as male or female. Additionally, it is possible to control variables such as content type, media environment, and emotional load to explore differences in gender.

Papers 7, 8, 9 talks about the content released by the brand and the content released by unofficially (such as amateur bloggers), pointing out that the content released by amateur bloggers is more real with higher interaction rate for the consumers of the Z generation, which is easier to make consumers of the Z generation to trust. The article mentions that Gen Z consumers have characteristics such as they like to share the same UGC content as ordinary consumers, actively interact on social media, and are not easily persuaded by commercial advertisements for discussion [23]. According to Zheng et al. (2024)[24], the sense of distance given to fans by traditional celebrities is compared with that of. The Internet celebrities will give fans a sense of intimacy, which will lead to the perception of fan consumers that is an illusion of intimacy between them and the Internet celebrities. And the consumption decision-making behavior of such consumers is more likely to be influenced by Internet celebrities who form a secondary social relationship with them [18], so emotional connections are easily formed between Internet celebrities and consumers. This suggests that if the content posted by users can build trust with consumers, it means the brand can enhance its position in the hearts of consumers, thereby increasing user loyalty. Paper 8 writes that the higher the number of brand interactions users participate in in the early stage, when the brand suffers negative remarks, these users are more willing to actively maintain the image of the brand [22].

Paper 9 also notes that even if the published content is non-professional, as long as it appears professional and encourages interaction with consumers, it can also foster trust with customers and influence consumer purchasing decisions [23]. However, the travel APP mentioned in Article 9 does not point to a specific one on the market. Since each software has different operating mechanisms, the paths generated by users may affect their consumption decisions differently. Therefore, the data collected in the article may have limitations and only represent the ideas and opinions of the sample group. Moreover, the research background of the article was in China. So, the research conclusions may be one-sided due to certain differences in Chinese and Western thinking and culture. Furthermore, because information on real social media changes rapidly, consumers are often subject to multitasking parallelism, such as comments and private messages. Therefore, the reactions of users in the experiment may not truly reflect the complex behavior in actual applications. Although this fictional APP has rich brand content and controllable comment screenshots, it lacks the consistency of brand history, real interactive data, and user comments, which will affect the accuracy of experimental results. In future research, platform behavior data, multimodal tracking, and other methods can be introduced to enhance the realistic mapping capabilities.

Papers 10-13 emphasize the visual effect of user-posted content. Generation Z consumers pay more attention to visual content, such as the release of pictures and videos. It is worth noting that paper 10 also highlights that comments with low information consistency for the Z generation are more likely to capture their attention and stimulate thought [12]. For marketers, creating remarks that effectively address brand contradictions can capture the attention of Z-generation netizens and drive more traffic to the brand. Although the psychological simulation process is reflected in the article,

the purpose of research is virtual. If the destination is a real place, then the purchasing behavior of consumers may also be affected by its original favorability, so the psychological modeling in the article is not complete to a certain extent. Additionally, the results of the study show that Generation Z consumers use social media platforms to follow both traditional and micro-celebrities online. In their opinion, social media profiles that appeal to followers should have attractive photos and interactive language. The respondents addressed the fact that social media platforms serve as a forum for current trends, emphasizing customer behavior changes [28]. However, people from different eras have different opinions on content posted on social platforms. Therefore, for marketers, consumers of the Z generation can be visually stimulated through pictures or videos to influence their purchasing behavior. Article 11 focuses more on consumer participation and demonstrates that creating thoughtful remarks about brand contradictions can effectively capture the attention of Generation Z netizens and increase brand exposure.

4. Results

Regarding the questions raised by the article in the introduction section, 1) Which UGC characteristics play a central role in the purchasing decisions of Gen Z consumers? According to the above literature review, the characteristics that influence consumer decision-making are divided into three categories: one is user-generated content that stimulates positive emotions of consumers, the second is content that builds trust with consumers, and the third is content that causes consumer participation and discussion. Among them, being able to build trust with customers is the core, because once the brand establishes trust, consumers are more likely to voluntarily maintain the brand image when it is attacked by negative publicity.

For question 2, social platforms can enhance the credibility of user-posted content in the minds of consumers through author authentication, thereby increasing their willingness to purchase. According to papers 7, 8, and 10, the platform settings, such as forward and comment functions, can directly improve interaction between users. For brands, real-time interaction with users could greatly increase emotional links between users. According to paper 11, the platform can set up a "friend recommendation" mechanism because this can enhance the trust in the content that the user publishes.

For question 3), the path of the traditional 5A model is aware → appeal → ask → act → advocate, which is specifically reflected in the fact that customers know or understand the brand or product before purchasing, and then become interested or favorable to the product. On this basis, consumers are more willing to actively seek out additional information about the product and make informed purchasing decisions, and then recommend it to others after purchasing the product or service.



Figure 2. Traditional 5A model by Philip Kotler (Kotler, 2017)

However, in the context of user-generated content on the internet. It is easy for Generation Z to ignore the "Ask" stage in the traditional 5A model. According to Paper 8, consumers often feel emotionally driven when they encounter content posted by bloggers or amateurs, which leads to them being directly attracted to the product and then skipping the consultation stage. "Ask" in the traditional 5A model refers to consumers actively understanding product-related information. However, on online platforms, consumers often make consumption decisions within a short period based on the content posted by users and the comments. According to paper 12, user-generated content has limited professional requirements. Even if the content published by the user is not truly professional, if it looks credible, it can gain consumer trust. In the aware phase, customers are passively exposed to a long list of brands from experience, marketing communications, and the advocacy of others. This is the gateway to the entire customer path (Kotler, P. et al. 2017). The ask is further complicated by the integration of the digital (online) and physical (offline) worlds. As customers browse products in-

store, they may also search for information on their mobile devices in the digital era (Kotler, P. et al., 2017). When they receive positive feedback from the “ask” stage, customers will make a purchase decision directly.

Overall, user-generated content is consistent with the traditional 5A mode, but not exactly the same. Compared with the conventional 5A mode, user-generated content has a more direct and faster impact on consumers, which is equivalent to compressing "Appeal" and "Ask" in the traditional 5A mode. As shown in the figure:



Figure 3. New 3A model in user-generated content

The new 3A model in the Internet age appears more direct and quicker throughout the entire process. Consumers will respond quickly after seeing user-generated content and recommend it to people they know through the efficient operating mechanism of the platform. In the text, this is why consumers often have impulsive spending when shopping online. Therefore, for marketers, accurate marketing content is particularly crucial in the new 3A model, as it enables consumers to make informed decisions more easily within a short timeframe.

5. Conclusion

Through an in-depth analysis of 13 articles, this paper found that Generation Z consumers prefer authentic user-generated content and content that evokes positive emotions. For marketers, the more realistic the content is, the more likely it is to build trust with the Z-generation consumers. However, due to the rapid spread of the information age, the personality characteristics and consumption habits of Z-generations at each age will differ to a certain extent. Most articles only regard Z-generation consumers as a whole and do not make more detailed distinctions. Moreover, different social media platforms employ various mechanisms, and these articles lack an analysis of the psychological processes of Generation Z consumers. Further research will divide the consumer group of Generation Z more specifically and analyze the impact of user-generated content on them in greater detail, according to the distinctive personality characteristics of Generation Z. It will also focus on studying different platform mechanisms using various methods to stimulate consumer purchasing behavior. Additionally, increasing sample diversity and further expanding platform mechanism research will supplement the existing research. The content generated by visual types also needs to be further subdivided, such as examining the impact of video and images on consumer purchasing behavior.

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