

The Impact of Short Videos on Overconsuming of Gen Z Undergraduates

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ABSTRACT

In the process of the popularity of short videos, the consumption concept and behavior of Gen Z college students have been greatly influenced, and the phenomenon of excessive consumption has become more and more. In this study, 127 Gen Z college students were investigated by questionnaire, and three important aspects were analyzed: the use of short videos, consumption behavior and the current state of excessive consumption. The mechanism and reasons why short videos affect these people's excessive consumption are being investigated. The survey results show that the longer you watch and the more times you use it, the greater the relationship with excessive consumption. The introduction of goods in short videos and the way to show a better life are the main opportunities for this action. Moreover, compared with people, the mood and easy-to-use credit tools are more over-consumed. Finally, the study puts forward the methods of teaching reasonable consumption at four levels: university, family, society and individual students.

Keywords: Short videos; Gen Z undergraduates; Overconsuming; Consumption behavior; Rational consumption

1. INTRODUCTION

With the rapid development of mobile Internet, short videos has become the primary source of entertainment and information for Gen Z college students. The short-video platform has many product recommendations, fashion modeling and life fun sharing, which makes them want to buy more and more. On the other hand, payment tools such as Huabei and Baitiao, as well as the service of buying now and paying later, have lowered the shopping threshold and become more and more common among college students.

As a generation growing up with the Internet, Gen Z college students have more free ideas about consumption, but they are easily influenced by the online environment. At present, there are few empirical studies on this generation's short videos and overconsuming methods. Therefore, this paper conducts a questionnaire survey, analyzes the mechanism behind it, and tries to get enlightenment to help college students consume rationally.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The Impact of Short Videos on Consumer Behavior

Short video has the characteristics of scene perception, deep experience, algorithm recommendation display and so on, which is convenient for users to shop on impulse. In previous studies, we found that watching short videos for a long time will make college students want to buy more, and the probability of buying them unconsciously will increase^{[1][2][3]}.

2.2 Causes of Overconsuming Among College Students

Excessive consumption of college students is mainly influenced by psychological factors, peer influence and convenience of consumption tools. The psychology of keeping up with others, following the fashion and not having enough living expenses are the important reasons for college students' excessive consumption^{[4][5][6]}.

2.3 Research Review and Research Hypotheses

Nowadays, research rarely treats Gen Z as a special group. In addition, in order to investigate the special impact of short videos on excessive consumption, there is no detailed analysis of data. In order to solve this blank part, this study conducted an actual investigation and put forward the following hypotheses:

(1) The frequency of short video usage and average daily viewing time show a significant positive correlation with the probability and frequency of overconsuming among Gen Z undergraduates.

(2) The consumption content in short videos has a good influence on the excessive consumption behavior of Gen Z college students.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1 Study Subjects

In this study, a questionnaire survey was conducted among full-time Gen Z college students. A total of 150 questionnaires were distributed and 127 valid answers were collected. The effective response rate was 84.67%.

3.2 Research Methods

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3.3 Data Processing

Descriptive statistics and correlation analyses were conducted using SPSS 26.0 to ensure the authenticity and reliability of the results.

4. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Experimental Results (Chart Presentation)

4.1.1 Distribution of Basic Sample Information

As shown in Table 1, the gender distribution of the sample includes 28.35% male, 66.14% female, and 5.51% who preferred not to disclose their gender.

Table 1. Gender Distribution of the Sample

Category	Number	Percentage
Male	36	28.35%
Female	84	66.14%
Prefer not to say	7	5.51%

As shown in Table 2, the grade distribution is relatively balanced, with juniors accounting for the largest proportion (36.22%), followed by sophomores (33.07%).

Table 2. Grade Distribution of the Sample

Category	Number	Percentage
Freshman	15	11.81%
Sophomore	42	33.07%
Junior	46	36.22%
Senior	24	18.90%

As shown in Table 3, most students have a monthly living expense between 1000 and 2000 yuan, accounting for 67.71% of the total sample.

Table 3. Distribution of Monthly Living Expenses

Category	Number	Percentage
Below 1,000 yuan	14	11.02%
1000–1500 yuan	37	29.13%
1500–2000 yuan	49	38.58%
Above 2,000 yuan	27	21.26%

4.1.2 Short Video Usage

As shown in Table 4, 39.37% of students use short videos every day or often, indicating a high penetration rate of short videos among Gen Z undergraduates.

Table 4. Frequency of Short Video Usage

Category	Number	Percentage
Use every day	19	14.96%
Often use	31	24.41%
Sometimes use	48	37.80%
Rarely used	29	22.83%

As shown in Table 5, nearly half of the students spend more than 1 hour per day on short videos, with 12.60% spending more than 2 hours.

Table 5. Daily Average Usage Duration

Category	Number	Percentage
Within 30 minutes	25	19.69%
Within 30 to 60 minutes	46	36.22%
1–2 hours	40	31.50%
More than 2 hours	16	12.60%

As shown in Table 6, the most popular content types are food and travel (66.14%), beauty and skincare (62.99%), and campus life (62.99%), with product recommendations also accounting for a high proportion (55.91%). As shown in Table 7, 77.95% of students have purchased products because of short videos, with 23.62% doing so often.

Table 6. Most Frequently Watched Content (Multiple Choice)

Content Type	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Food and travel	84	66.14%
Beauty and skincare	80	62.99%
Campus life	80	62.99%
Product recommendations	71	55.91%
Fashion outfits	63	49.61%

4.1.3 The Impact of Short Videos on Consumer Behavior

As shown in Table 7, 77.95% of students have purchased products because of short videos, with 23.62% doing so often.

Table 7. Whether to Purchase Products Due to Short Videos

Category	Number	Percentage
Never	23	18.11%
Occasionally	69	54.33%
often	30	23.62%
Every time	5	3.94%

As shown in Table 8, 54.33% of students feel interested but hold back when seeing influencers' recommendations, while 23.62% will buy directly or even buy products they do not need.

Table 8. Reactions to Influencers' Recommendations

Category	Number	Percentage
Not interested	28	22.05%
Interested but hold back	69	54.33%
Buy directly	19	14.96%
Buy even if not needed	11	8.66%

4.1.4 Current Status of Overconsuming

As shown in Table 9, 73.23% of students have used overconsuming tools, with 31.49% using them often or every month.

Table 9. Whether to Use Overconsuming Tools

Category	Number	Percentage
Never use	34	26.77%
Used once or twice	53	41.73%
Often use	30	23.62%
Use every month	10	7.87%

As shown in Table 10, the primary reason for overconsuming is wanting products seen in short videos (70.87%), followed by insufficient living expenses (46.46%).

Table 10. Main Reasons for Overconsuming (Multiple Choices)

Reason	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Want products in short videos	90	70.87%
Insufficient living expenses	59	46.46%
Easy and convenient to use	43	33.86%
Influenced by peers	32	25.20%

4.2 Result Analysis

Judging from the results of this study, the impact of short videos on excessive consumption of Gen Z college students is mainly reflected in three aspects. The influence of friends and the convenience of excessive consumption of tools are the reasons for the extra influence. This confirms that the research hypothesis is correct.

First of all, the frequency and time of using short videos are the basic influencing factors. From the experience of themselves and their friends around them, Z generation college students rely heavily on short videos. Because the platform algorithm constantly provides content for consumption, they are likely to be exposed to the constant information flow, leading to overuse. This result is the same as that of scholars such as Li ^[1].

Secondly, the content of promoting consumption in short videos will become a direct opportunity. Gen Z attaches importance to individuality and fashion, and it is easy to be influenced by the recommendation of cosmetics and good products, so they buy impulsively. When their money is not enough, they will spend too much unconsciously. 70.87% of the students surveyed admit this trend, which shows that the hypothesis is correct.

Moreover, short videos are good at taking advantage of people's feelings of wanting to buy, prompting people to buy too much unconsciously. The ideas of "refined lifestyle" and "internet-famous style items" appearing in these videos are easy to arouse people's feelings compared with others. In addition, fragmentary content will interfere with students' rational thinking ability and make students easy to buy on impulse. This result is the same as Wang's research ^[4], which shows that the hypothesis is correct.

Moreover, 25.2% students will overuse it unconsciously under the influence of friends. Because payment tools like Huabei and Baitiao are very easy to use, there will be more such behaviors ^[6]. This is the same as Liu's research ^[5]. It is worth mentioning that most college students in Gen Z think that overuse is not good. Their consumption concept is basically rational, but they are also easily influenced by the outside world and even make irrational behaviors.

4.3 Recommendations

Based on the research results written above and my own experience as undergraduate of Gen Z, I put forward correct suggestions from four aspects: university, family, society and students themselves. Through these suggestions, help all the same students spend money reasonably and reduce the risk of overuse.

4.3.1 University Level: Strengthen Rational Consumption Education and Promote Correct Consumption Concepts

Based on my own learning experience, I think universities should incorporate the education of reasonable consumption into the education mechanism. Set up relevant courses and lectures, spread consumption knowledge, make students aware of the risk of excessive consumption, and guide students to calmly receive the content of short video. In addition, through the campus WeChat WeChat official account and club activities, colleges and universities can also spread rational consumption patterns, enhance students' risk awareness, and help students correct their comparison and impulsive shopping behaviors.

4.3.2 Family Level: Strengthen Communication and Guidance to Cultivate Healthy Consumption Habits

Parents should talk to their children more on the basis of considering the family situation of themselves and their children's classmates. You should know what your child is buying and correct the use of bad money as soon as possible. We should reasonably divide the living expenses and educate students to spend with their own income. You should let yourself see the correct way to spend money and become an example. At the same time, students should be taught to use short videos correctly to avoid being influenced by bad content.

4.3.3 Social Level: Regulating Short Video Content to Foster a Rational Consumption Environment

Judging from the current social situation, relevant institutions must strengthen the supervision of short-video platforms, straighten out the content rules, limit the spread of content that promotes excessive consumption, and confront false advertising. The short-video platform must improve the algorithm and give priority to the content that promotes reasonable consumption. On the other hand, the society should create a frugal and reasonable shopping atmosphere and guide students not to be involved in the risk of excessive consumption.

4.3.4 At the Student Level: Enhance Self-Regulation Skills and Cultivate Rational Consumption Awareness

As a generation Z college student, from my own experience and the experience of my classmates, I think this generation of students should improve their media literacy. Be rational when watching short videos, and don't blindly follow the trend and compare with others. They should properly adjust the time of watching short videos, understand their own economic situation, plan their money wisely, and form a habit of frugality and living within their means.

5. SUMMARY AND OUTLOOK

5.1 Research Summary

The study will focus on college students in Gen Z and use questionnaire survey to investigate the influence of short videos on their overconsuming. The results show that there is a strong positive correlation between the frequency and time of using short video and overconsuming. Content and psychological guidance to promote consumption are the main influencing factors, while peer influence and tool convenience play a supplementary role. This research provides useful insights for guiding the rational consumption of Gen Z college students, and also provides creativity for similar study.

5.2 Research Limitations

Due to our limited research ability and resources, this study has some shortcomings: First, the number of sample is very small (only 127 students). Because it can't represent the rankings of various regions and universities, the known results can't be widely used. Second, the research method only relies on questionnaire survey, and does not deeply investigate the psychological role behind students over consuming behavior. Third, the investigation on the mechanism of impact is not sufficient.

5.3 Future Outlook

At present, there are still some shortcomings, so I will increase the number of samples in the future research. questionnaire survey and detailed in-depth interview will be used together to enrich the results. By carefully investigating the structure of the back, questionnaire survey can give more accurate suggestions, guide the students of Generation Z to spend reasonably, and convey ideas that are also helpful for the same research in the future.

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