The Study on the Influence of Evaluation-Based Short Videos on the Purchase Intention of Generation Z Consumers

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Abstract

This research examines how the characteristics of evaluation-based short videos can enhance Generation Z consumers' trust and investigates whether there are differences of trust-building between Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs) and Key Opinion Consumers (KOCs), which in turn affect consumers' purchase intentions. Based on S–O–R theory, this study employed a quantitative approach to analyze the effects of short-video information quality, evaluator credibility, interactivity, and perceived trust on the purchase intentions of Generation Z consumers. Data were collected via a questionnaire, yielding 348 valid responses. The findings indicate that information quality, evaluator credibility, interactivity, and consumers' perceived trust in evaluation-based short videos all have a significant positive impact on the purchase intentions of Generation Z consumers. It was also found that consumers' perceived trust plays a partially mediating role. Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs) exerted a stronger direct influence on Generation Z consumers' purchase intentions than Key Opinion Consumers (KOCs). However, KOLs influence Generation Z consumers' purchase intentions through the mediating effect of perceived trust more strongly than KOCs. The conclusions of this study provide a useful reference for brands and content creators seeking to optimize evaluation-based short-form video content and enhance user trust.

Keywords : Evaluation-based short videos, Generation Z, KOLs, KOCs, Perceived trust, Purchase intention

1. Introduction

The development of Internet technology has integrated social media into people's daily lives, bringing new platforms and opportunities for brand marketing and consumer interaction. In recent years, short video advertising has emerged as a new business model, and evaluation-based short video advertising is one of these formats. It has become one of the ways young consumers obtain product information due to its rapid dissemination, authenticity, and strong interactivity.

The data from the 2024 China Online Audio-Visual Report shows that the number of online audio-visual users exceeds 1 billion, and the industry's market size exceeds 1 trillion yuan. 71.2% of users purchase products and services by watching short videos or live streams. Additionally, 44.4% of users frequently watch short videos about travel or scenery, and 27.9% of these users choose to visit the destination after watching them or live streams. These data demonstrate that short videos have stimulated consumer purchasing behavior and have played a key role in the development of the digital economy.

In actual communication, brands no longer rely solely on traditional celebrity endorsements or official accounts; they have gradually evolved into diverse information publishers, such as Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs) and Key Opinion Consumers (KOCs). KOLs typically enhance the authority of information through their expertise and influence. In contrast, KOCs, due to their ordinary consumer identity, are more likely to resonate and enhance the authenticity and trust of information.

Generation Z, born between 2000 and 2010, grew up with the Internet, and their consumption patterns have been influenced by many factors, including short videos. There are diversified types of information publishers on the short video platform, including Key Opinion Leaders with professional backgrounds and experience, as well as Key Opinion Consumers adept at sharing their daily lives. These creators have gradually earned the trust of large audiences through these platforms.

Although scholars have introduced the mediating effects of perceived trust and value in the transmission of short videos, they have not analyzed these factors in combination with their characteristics. To address this issue, this paper develops a theoretical model to evaluate the characteristics of evaluation-based short videos, perceived trust, and Generation Z's purchase intentions.

2. Objectives

To overcome the limitations of existing research, this article raises the following questions:

1. Will the information quality, evaluator credibility, and interactivity of evaluation-based short videos directly affect the purchasing intention of Generation Z consumers?

2. Does perceived trust play a mediating role in the influence of the characteristics of evaluation-based short videos on the purchase intention of Generation Z consumers?

3. Are there differences in how different types of evaluators build trust?

To answer the above research questions, this study aims to identify the key features of evaluation-based short videos that affect the purchase intention of Generation Z consumers; to test the mediating role of perceived trust in the relationship between short video features and purchase intention; and to compare differences in how consumer trust is built among different types of evaluators.

This article argues that addressing these issues will help accurately understand the consumption preferences of Generation Z consumers. This study subdivides the content dimensions of evaluation-type short videos, constructs a psychological mediating mechanism, and extends the theoretical framework of their influence on the behavior of Generation Z consumers from multiple perspectives, including content structure and influence pathways.

3. Literature Review

The literature review includes conceptual definitions and a summary of research findings in related fields. It primarily focuses on assessment-based short videos, Generation Z consumers, information quality, evaluator credibility, interactivity, perceived trust, and purchase intention. Furthermore, this paper develops a theoretical framework grounded in S-O-R and trust theories.

3.1 Evaluation-Based Short Videos

Evaluation-based short videos are a type of short video in which creators record a product's functions through video and objectively evaluate it (Han & Wang, 2021). In a description of short videos, J. N. Zhang (2022) notes that the average playback time is usually 5 minutes (300 seconds). This type of short video covers multiple industries, such as beauty, skincare, technology, electronics, fitness, and fashion. It is also widely distributed through TikTok, Reddit, Facebook, YouTube, and other platforms. It has become a tool for major brands and merchants to sell products. Product evaluation videos are informational video content created by content creators who conduct in-depth testing and evaluation of product functionality, performance, usage processes, and other aspects (S. Zhang, 2022). Zhao & Qin (2023) define evaluation-based short videos as a form of short video content that helps potential consumers understand a product's features, advantages, and disadvantages, and experience it first-hand.

This article defines evaluation-based short videos as a type of short video content that objectively conveys product information and evaluates product features, usage processes, as well as advantages and disadvantages. Related studies have defined the content characteristics of evaluation-based short videos from multiple dimensions. Firstly, at the information level, informativeness is considered a core feature, emphasizing the provision of real, useful, and practical information to help consumers better understand products and solve practical problems (Tan & Wang, 2022). In addition, professionalism is also an important characteristic. Relevant research suggests that evaluation content should reflect the creator's professional level in terms of knowledge depth, logical expression, and evaluation ability, thereby helping users understand the full range of product attributes (Han & Wang, 2021).

Prior studies have also shown that demonstrating product effects through actual use and subjective experience can enhance the authenticity, reliability, and intuitiveness of content, thereby increasing consumers' trust in evaluation content (Han, 2024). In terms of interaction and dissemination, sharing behavior is considered an important form of engagement for short videos in the evaluation category. Users participate in content dissemination through likes, comments, and shares, which not only enhance the effectiveness

of information dissemination but also promote an interactive relationship between users and content (Chang & Guo, 2022; Zhao & Qin, 2023). Meanwhile, displays of daily life and the novelty of creators' content can stimulate users' curiosity and increase their willingness to continue following and sharing (Chang & Guo, 2022; Wu, 2025). Finally, at the level of creators and platforms, celebrity appeal is believed to help creators attract large numbers of loyal fans, thereby enhancing the influence of their content. Meanwhile, system usability is also an important factor affecting user experience. A platform environment that is easy to use and has low learning costs can enhance users' willingness to continue using short-form video content (Chang & Guo, 2022).

3.2 Generation Z Consumers

Different countries and institutions have different definitions of Generation Z. The study by Dimock (2019) uses the development timeline of the Internet as the primary standard for defining Generation Z, referring to the cohort of individuals born in the period 1997–2012. McKinsey (2024) indicates that Generation Z was born between 1996 and 2010, a generation situated between the millennial generation born between 1981 and 1996 and the Alpha generation born between 2010 and 2024. On the contrary, some Chinese scholars argue that Generation Z is commonly defined as the generation born between 1995 and 2009.

Because they grew up with the Internet, smartphones, computers, and other technological products, they are referred to as the "Internet Generation" and the "Digital Primitive Generation" (Chen, 2019; S. X. Wang, 2021). Generation Z excels in using social media and instant messaging, and their lifestyle and behavior are influenced by technology.

Yang and Chen (2022) compiled global data on Generation Z and found that it is the most populous generation in history, accounting for approximately 24% of the world's population. Li et al. (2022) argue that Generation Z not only uses social media to obtain various types of information but also enjoys sharing their opinions and preferences in cyberspace. Their way of receiving information is more fragmented, and they are easily influenced by various opinions online. The difference between this generation and other groups is that their consumption habits are closely related to social media. They tend to use the Internet to find and purchase what they want. Generation Z has adapted to the rapidly changing digital world and has also had a profound impact on social systems, cultural values, and consumption trends in distinctive ways.

Based on research by various scholars on Generation Z, this article defines Generation Z as the cohort born between 2000 and 2010. This group grew up in an environment of digital technology development and is good at obtaining information through electronic devices and social media.

3.3 Information Quality

Information quality was initially defined by Wang and Strong (1996) as information that is suitable for use. It emphasizes that the value of information is reflected in objective accuracy and authority, while also considering whether it meets users' actual needs in specific contexts. Information quality is reflected in users' effectiveness and applicability in obtaining information, making judgments, making decisions, and executing specific behaviors. If information supports users' cognitive processes and behavioral decisions, we can say it has high-quality characteristics.

Yang and Zhao (2021) argued that information quality primarily refers to the perceived value and persuasiveness of information provided by a platform, including the information's immersive experience and the extent to which user needs are satisfied. One key aspect is that the immersive experience of information emphasizes content authenticity. Another aspect is that users' perceived satisfaction focuses on whether their entertainment, social, and knowledge acquisition needs are met. As Xue et al. (2022) pointed out, information quality is a subjective process in which users make multidimensional, comprehensive judgments about the presented content in specific scenarios, driven by personal information needs.

On short video platforms, information quality is primarily reflected in the consistency, comprehensiveness, accuracy, and continuity of content, which are important standards for measuring the value of video information (Zhao, 2022). Information quality can help consumers make purchasing decisions, and users can judge the content and platform presentation of short videos based on their own shopping needs (Li, 2023). In summary, in the context of evaluation-based short videos, this article argues that information quality refers to the overall level of accuracy, comprehensiveness, authenticity, and clarity of information reflected in the presentation of product functions, the description of usage processes, and the evaluation of the advantages and disadvantages of the video content.

3.4 Evaluator Credibility (KOLs and KOCs)

The academic community uses the term 'information source' to describe information disseminators. It was first proposed by Hovland et al. (1953). S. Wang (2021) cited it in research on the credibility of Internet celebrity information sources on short video platforms and pointed out that the credibility of information sources is influenced by communicators' influence in the process of information persuasion. Information source credibility is commonly conceptualized as comprising two key aspects, namely professionalism and trustworthiness. Professionalism denotes the degree to which the information receiver recognizes the knowledge background, experience, ability, and logical expression possessed by the communicator. Trustworthiness refers to the subjective judgment of a communicator's motives and neutrality. According to K. L. Wang (2017), information source credibility refers to

the degree to which the information transmitted by the sender is trusted and recognized by the receiver. The effectiveness of information reception is largely influenced by the authenticity and objectivity of the information source, usually including the following three core dimensions. First, expertise refers to the recognition by consumers of the professionalism and objectivity of the content conveyed by the information source. Second, trustworthiness refers to the degree to which consumers trust the information provided by the information source. Third, attractiveness includes the influence of information sources on consumers' perceptions of appearance, familiarity, preference, and similarity.

Different types of communicators have emerged. Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs) and Key Opinion Consumers (KOCs) are typical examples of individuals with influence. According to Wang et al. (2021), Key Opinion Leaders are individuals with high influence and discourse power within specific fields or groups. Li (2022) states that KOLs typically refer to public persons, well-known individuals, or authoritative figures with widespread influence in a particular professional field. This group of people has knowledge reserves, information sources, and practical experience in a specific field, with professional backgrounds and strong communication skills that have earned them recognition and trust from the public, thus giving them a large fan base. According to Su's (2023) study, the concept of opinion leaders originated in the 1940s and was proposed by Lazarsfeld. Originally, the term referred to disseminators as individuals who provide information to others and serve as an important source of influence for individuals or teams seeking information. This provides the theoretical foundation for understanding KOLs in digital environments. Yu (2024) also pointed out that KOLs have strong professional knowledge, experience, and oral communication skills, enabling them to provide valuable opinions and suggestions on a product or topic.

KOLs not only serve as content creators but also as product experience providers and promoters. Wang et al. (2021) pointed out that KOCs are ordinary consumers, and that sharing their real experiences and consumption feelings on social platforms can influence the consumption behavior of their friends and fans. Zhu and Ratasuk (2024) argue that KOCs are ordinary users active on online platforms who are close to their audiences and use authentic, credible expressions to share their real-life experiences and opinions. YI and Xian (2025) pointed out that KOCs are seen as seemingly ordinary yet influential consumer representatives, with follower counts typically between 5,000 and 20,000. Le et al. (2025) define key opinion consumers as individuals who genuinely evaluate a product's characteristics, advantages, or services based on their own user experience from a consumer perspective.

There are two perspectives in the academic community regarding the selection of short video evaluators. W. Liu (2024) emphasizes that the authenticity and life-oriented content of key opinion consumers (KOCs) can enhance the purchasing intention of Generation Z. In

contrast, Gan and Zheng (2024) found that the professional and well-known interpersonal characteristics of key opinion leaders (KOLs) also have a positive impact on young consumers. It can therefore be seen that, although the types of evaluators differ, both credibility and attractiveness are key factors influencing consumer decision-making.

Although the academic community commonly uses "information source credibility" to assess the credibility of information providers in the dissemination process, in the context of evaluation-based short videos, video publishers or evaluators serve as the core information transmitters. Based on scholars' definitions and descriptions of KOLs and KOCs, this article defines Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs) as individuals with a specific professional background or social influence on short-video platforms. They are creators with large followings who publish product reviews with a professional perspective. The article also defines Key Opinion Consumers (KOCs) as ordinary consumers who genuinely share their personal experiences and subjective evaluations on short video platforms.

3.5 Interactivity

Saijilafu et al. (2016) argue that interactivity in e-commerce is reflected in communication and exchange behaviors among buyers, websites, and online merchants. S. X. Wang (2017) argues that interactivity refers to the degree of user participation and feedback behavior in the process of content dissemination, including interactions at the level of conventional behaviors such as liking, commenting, and sharing short videos. Liu and Zhang (2016) define platform interactivity as communication and feedback behaviors among platform users, between users and content publishers, and among users and platform systems. Tian (2024) states that interactivity refers to the degree of participation and feedback behavior shown by users when watching evaluation-type short videos, including liking, commenting, sending private messages, forwarding, and participating in topic discussions. Interactivity not only reflects the audience's transformation from an information "receiver" to a "participant" but also the users’ recognition of and interest in the content.

Interactivity is defined in this article as the degree to which viewers engage in information exchange, feedback, and participation with video publishers and other users while accessing and evaluating short video content.

3.6 Consumer Purchase Intention

In the process of online shopping, consumers' purchase intentions are usually driven by demand. When consumers realize that they have a demand for a product or service, they will make purchasing decisions by searching, comparing, and evaluating product information (Zhang, 2024). Short video content can convey product information, and consumers form subjective perceptions of products by watching these videos and conducting a comprehensive

analysis of their advantages and disadvantages before deciding whether to purchase them. Therefore, short videos are not only a medium for disseminating product information, but also an important driver of consumer purchasing intentions. Xu and Wu (2024) state that various factors, such as product quality and performance, price, brand reputation, social influence, and promotional activities, also influence consumers' purchase intention.

By integrating concepts from different scholars, this article defines consumer purchasing intention as the direct manifestation of consumer demand for a product, influenced by the social media environment, information dissemination methods, psychological factors, and other factors.

3.7 Perceived Trust

Yin et al. (2020) noted that perceived trust can be described as consumers' judgment of the credibility of product and service information, based on their own experience and others' recommendations, in a socialized business environment. Lv and Zhu (2021) also indicate that information, social interaction, and contextualization are important factors that affect consumers' perceived value and trust in short video marketing. Liu and Zhang (2023) believe that perceived trust is the trust and affirmation formed by the degree of matching between the professionalism of Internet celebrities and the products they recommend after browsing short videos. The professionalism demonstrated by Internet celebrities as content creators also affects consumers' perceived trust.

In addition, Feng et al. (2025) believe that the level of trust in products from acquaintances, friends, classmates, or colleagues around offline shopping will affect consumers' purchasing decisions. On the contrary, on short video platforms, creators and strangers can post videos about product use and provide authentic product information, thereby reducing consumers' doubts about the product and building trust.

In this study, perceived trust reflects how consumers perceive the authenticity and reliability of products or services displayed in evaluation-based short videos. This perception is based on the trust generated by the professional ability, authentic attitude, and consistency in the conveyed content.

3.8 Trust Theory

Dong (2010) outlined the core viewpoint of Giddens' trust theory in "Giddens' Trust Theory". Initially, trust stems from ontological security, which refers to the need for a sense of safety. The basic trust established between young children and their mothers in the early stages can affect their trust in different people and things as adults. This trust helps individuals cope with uncertainty and anxiety, enabling them to make decisions in complex social environments.

Giddens divides trust into two types: interpersonal trust and systemic trust. Interpersonal trust refers to interactions between people, manifested as trust in others' integrity, motivation, and abilities. Systemic trust is an abstract system, including trust in experts, technology, social institutions, etc. Interpersonal trust mainly depends on the understanding of the stability and reliability of system operation.

Sun et al. (2024) pointed out that trust has transitivity. Trust transmission refers to the trust placed by the trustor in the trusted person, based on the interaction experience between the third party and the trusted person. Consumers are more inclined to choose products and services with higher scores or better ratings when shopping online, reflecting the transmission of trust between unfamiliar parties on the Internet. The theory of trust transmission has been widely used in management, economics, and other fields. In the Internet environment, trust transmission is a critical mechanism shaping individual trust and purchase intention.

3.9 S-O-R Theory

The S-O-R theory originated from the research of Mehrabian and Russell in 1974. To explain user behavior, this theoretical framework proposes that external stimuli influence behavioral outcomes by triggering individuals' internal psychological processes. Stimulus (S) represents external environmental stimulus variables; Organism (O) represents internal variables; and Response (R) refers to the consumers' behavioral responses.

Zhao and Qin (2023) state that when consumers are influenced by external factors such as the environment, product, and service quality, their psychological changes lead to trust in the product, ultimately shaping attitudes towards it and triggering feedback on purchasing behavior.

Luo and Chen (2023) identified some of the main features of short videos, such as social interaction, interest, quality, and comprehensive information, as external stimuli, and examined consumers' perceived hedonic and trust values as internal psychological state changes, ultimately assessing consumers' willingness to purchase. Zhang et al. (2024) noted that when viewers can see the real-life use of these products and resonate with them, and when product information is richer and more visible, consumers can gain valuable insights, increase their trust in and perceived value of the products, and ultimately enhance their purchase intention. Liu and Tian (2024) conducted an in-depth study of the mechanism through which anchor characteristics influence consumers' purchase intention in TikTok live-streaming e-commerce, in which the popularity, responsibility, affinity, and interaction of the anchor are taken as external stimuli to affect consumers' perceived risk and perceived trust, and further affect consumers' purchase intention. The research results indicate that consumers do not make purchasing decisions solely on livestreamers' recommendations but are also influenced by livestreamers' individual characteristics at the perceptual and cognitive levels.

The S-O-R framework has been extensively applied to examine how consumers' perceptions translate into behavioral outcomes in new media contexts.

Based on the literature reviewed above, we formulate the theoretical framework and hypotheses shown in Figure 1.

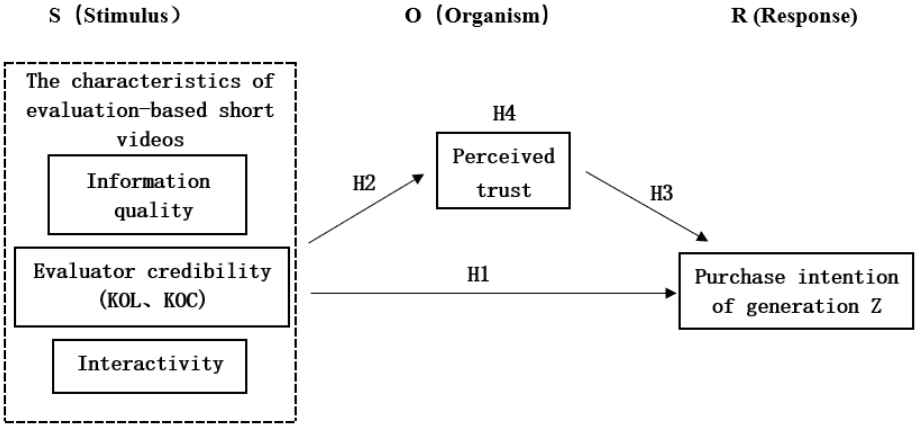


Figure 1 Theoretical Framework

Guided by the S-O-R model and trust theory, this study examines the effects of evaluation-based short-video characteristics on purchase intention, with perceived trust serving as a mediator. The research hypotheses are as follows:

H1: The characteristics of evaluation-based short videos significantly enhance Generation Z consumers' purchase intention.

- H1a: Information quality of evaluation-based short videos significantly enhances Generation Z consumers' purchase intention.
- H1b: Evaluator credibility in evaluation-based short videos significantly enhances Generation Z consumers' purchase intention.
    - H1b-1: KOLs' credibility significantly enhances Generation Z consumers' purchase intention.
    - H1b-2: KOCs' credibility significantly enhances Generation Z consumers' purchase intention.
    - H1c: Interactivity in evaluation-based short videos contributes to stronger purchase intention among Generation Z consumers.

H2: The characteristics of evaluation-based short videos positively influence Generation Z consumers' perceived trust.

- H2a: The information quality of evaluation-based short videos positively affects Generation Z consumers' perceived trust.

- H2b: The credibility of evaluators in evaluation-based short videos positively influences Generation Z consumers' perceived trust.
    - H2b-1: The credibility of Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs) positively affects Generation Z consumers' perceived trust.
    - H2b-2: The credibility of Key Opinion Consumers (KOCs) positively impacts Generation Z consumers' perceived trust.
- H2c: The interactivity of evaluation-based short videos positively contributes to Generation Z consumers' perceived trust.

H3: The perceived trust of Generation Z consumers has a significant impact on purchase intention.

H4: Perceived trust serves as a mediating variable linking the characteristics of evaluation-based short videos and the purchase intention of Generation Z consumers.

- H4a: Information quality has an indirect effect on Generation Z consumers' purchase intention through perceived trust.
- H4b: Evaluator credibility has an indirect effect on Generation Z consumers' purchase intention through perceived trust.
    - H4b-1 KOL credibility has an indirect effect on Generation Z consumers' purchase intention through perceived trust.
    - H4b-2: KOC credibility has an indirect effect on Generation Z consumers' purchase intention through perceived trust.
- H4c: Interactivity has an indirect effect on Generation Z consumers' purchase intention through perceived trust.

4. Research Methodology

The data were collected through an online survey conducted from August 16 to September 25, 2025, and a total of 348 valid questionnaires were obtained. During the sample screening process, the study set the year of birth as 2000-2010 as the screening criterion. This study used a convenience sampling method, and respondents primarily completed the questionnaire via social media platforms.

The questionnaire is divided into two parts. The first part collects basic information about the respondents. The second part measures the characteristic variables of evaluation-based short videos, consumer perceived trust, and purchase intention, and consists of 24 questions. The questionnaire uses a five-point Likert scale, and all measurement items are based on established scales previously used or researched by scholars. It includes five variables: information quality, evaluator credibility, interactivity, perceived trust, and purchase intention.

Interactivity, perceived trust, and purchase intention were measured using scales adapted from Guo et al. (2019). Information quality was measured using a scale adapted from Lu et al. (2023). Evaluator credibility was measured using a scale integrated and adapted from Pan and Sun (2022) and Jiang (2023). Statistical analyses were performed using SPSS, including descriptive statistics, reliability and validity assessments, ridge regression analyses, and mediation analysis.

5. Results

5.1 Descriptive Statistical Analysis

The analysis yielded the following results:

Table 1 Demographic Characteristics of the respondents (N = 348)

Category	Option	Frequency	Percentage
Age	Born in 2000-2005	145	41.7%
	Born in 2006-2010	203	58.3%
Gender	Male	162	46.6%
	Female	186	53.4%
Daily social media usage time	≤ 1 hour	36	10.3%
	1-3 hours	155	44.5%
	3-5 hours	106	30.5%
	≥ 5 hours	51	14.7%
Primary short-video platform	TikTok	100	28.7%
	RedNote	67	19.3%
	Bilibili	66	19.0%
	Others (Instagram, YouTube, WeChat)	115	33.0%
Main purchase influence	KOLs	78	22.4%
	KOCs	65	18.7%
	Others (Family, friends, Price discount)	205	58.9%

The results showed that the respondents were mainly born between 2000 and 2005 (41.7%) and between 2006 and 2010 (58.3%). Female respondents were slightly more numerous than male respondents, with the overall sample consisting entirely of Generation Z. In terms of social media usage duration, 44.5% of respondents used it for 1–3 hours per day, 30.5% used it for 3–5 hours every day, only 10.3% used it for less than 1 hour per day, and 14.7% used it for more than 5 hours per day. Most respondents used social media frequently. The majority of respondents used TikTok (28.7%), followed by RedNote and Bilibili,

with an additional 33.0% using other platforms, reflecting the diversity of respondents' short-video platform use. Regarding the main sources of influence on purchasing decisions, 58.9% indicated that factors other than KOLs and KOCs were the main influence, while 22.4% were clearly influenced by KOLs and 18.7% by KOCs.

5.2 Reliability Assessment

The reliability of each construct was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha, as follows:

Table 2 Results of Cronbach's α coefficient analysis

Dimension	Measurement Items	Cronbach's α
Information Quality	4	0.904
Evaluator Credibility	8	0.939
Interactivity	4	0.886
Perceived Trust	4	0.864
Purchase Intention	4	0.875
Overall Scale	24	0.975

Cronbach's alpha results showed that all constructs had coefficients greater than 0.80, while the overall scale reached 0.975, indicating robust internal consistency.

5.3 Validity Analysis

The results of the validity tests for each variable are as follows:

Table 3 KMO and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity

Dimension	KMO	X^2	df	p-value
Information Quality	0.847	881.352	6	0.000
Evaluator Credibility	0.954	2036.436	28	0.000
Interactivity	0.829	637.817	6	0.000
Perceived Trust	0.825	635.342	6	0.000
Purchase Intention	0.834	686.553	6	0.000

The table shows that the KMO values of these variables were all greater than 0.6. In addition, the Bartlett's sphericity test results indicated significant results ($p < 0.05$), suggesting a high correlation among the variables and supporting the construct validity of the measurement scale used in this study.

5.4 Regression Analysis

This study uses the ridge regression model to analyse the data, which can effectively handle the multicollinearity problem that may exist among independent variables and enhance the stability of regression coefficients.

Table 4 Ridge Regression analysis results of evaluation-based short videos

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	*t*	*p*	VIF
	B	Standard error	Beta			
Constant	0.164	0.094	-	1.732	0.084	-
Information Quality	0.354	0.047	0.374	7.503	0.000**	4.620
Evaluator Credibility	0.356	0.053	0.341	6.679	0.000**	4.837
Interactivity	0.233	0.047	0.227	4.968	0.000**	3.873
R^2	0.815					
Adjusted R^2	0.813					
F	F (3,344) = 505.256, p = 0.000					

Note. * $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$

In this regression analysis, the K value was set to 0.010. The regression analysis yielded an $R^2 = 0.815$ and an adjusted $R^2 = 0.813$, indicating that information quality, evaluator credibility, and interactivity jointly explained approximately 81.3% of the variance in purchase intention. The model passed the F-test ($F = 505.256$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$). As the VIF for each independent variable was below 5, there was no multicollinearity problem. The overall model was statistically significant, supporting Hypothesis H1.

Specifically, information quality showed a positive and significant effect on purchase intention ($\beta = 0.374$, $t = 7.503$, $p < 0.01$), supporting H1a. Evaluator credibility was also found to have a significant positive effect on purchase intention ($\beta = 0.341$, $t = 6.679$, $p < 0.01$), supporting H1b.

In addition, interactivity exhibited a significant positive association with purchase intention ($\beta = 0.227$, $t = 4.968$, $p < 0.01$), supporting H1c.

Table 5 Ridge Regression analysis results of evaluator credibility (KOLs and KOCs)

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	*t*	*p*	VIF
	B	Standard error	Beta			
Constant	0.271	0.107	-	2.535	0.012*	-
KOL	0.541	0.045	0.526	11.908	0.000**	2.756
KOC	0.363	0.042	0.379	8.579	0.000**	2.756
R^2	0.756					
Adjusted R^2	0.754					
F	F (2,345) = 533.351, p = 0.000					

Note. * $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$

In this regression analysis, the K value was set to 0.010. The model's adjusted R^2 = 0.754, meaning that KOLs and KOCs explained 75.4% of the variation in purchase intention. This model passed the F-test (F = 533.351, p = 0.000 < 0.05).

The regression analysis results for KOLs and KOCs show that the regression coefficient for KOLs was 0.541, the t-value was 11.908, and the p-value was 0.000 (<0.01). The results indicated that KOLs significantly and positively influenced the purchase intention of Generation Z consumers. At the same time, the regression coefficient for KOCs was 0.363 (t=8.579, p<0.01), indicating a significant positive effect of KOCs on Generation Z's purchase intention.

However, the Beta value for KOL credibility was 0.526, slightly higher than that for KOC credibility (0.379), indicating that KOL credibility has a stronger impact on Generation Z's purchasing intention than KOC credibility. The variance inflation factor (VIF) values for both KOLs and KOCs were 2.756, indicating no serious multicollinearity issues in the model. This also supports research hypotheses H1b-1 and H1b-2.

Table 6 Ridge Regression analysis results of evaluation-based short video features and perceived trust.

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	*t*	*p*	VIF
	B	Standard error	Beta			
Constant	0.180	0.087	-	2.074	0.039*	-

Table 6 Ridge Regression analysis results of evaluation-based short video features and perceived trust. (continue)

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	*t*	*p*	VIF
	B	Standard error	Beta			
Information Quality	0.302	0.043	0.329	6.959	0.000**	4.620
Evaluator Credibility	0.441	0.049	0.435	8.996	0.000**	4.837
Interactivity	0.185	0.043	0.185	4.286	0.000**	3.873
R^2	0.834					
Adjusted R^2	0.832					
F	F (3,344) = 574.550, p = 0.000					

Note: * $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$

In this regression analysis, the K value was set to 0.010. The above table shows that $R^2 = 0.834$ and the adjusted $R^2 = 0.832$, indicating an 83.2% variance in Generation Z consumers' perceived trust is explained by information quality, evaluator credibility, and interactivity. The F-test results further confirm that the model is statistically significant ($F = 574.550$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$), supporting the overall research hypothesis (H2).

The variance inflation factor (VIF) of all independent variables were below 5 indicating that multicollinearity is within an acceptable range.

The regression coefficient for information quality was 0.302 ($t = 6.959$, $p < 0.01$). The research hypothesis H2a was therefore accepted; it indicates that information quality had a significant positive impact on perceived trust. An unstandardized coefficient B value of evaluator credibility was 0.441 ($t = 8.996$, $p < 0.01$). This data shows that evaluator credibility is significantly associated with higher perceived trust; therefore, hypothesis H2b was accepted. In addition, the unstandardized coefficient (B) for interactivity was 0.185, the t-value was 4.286, and the p-value was 0.000 (< 0.01), indicating that interactivity enhances perceived trust. Therefore, the research hypothesis H2c was accepted.

Table 7 Ridge Regression analysis results of KOLs, KOCs, and perceived trust.

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	*t*	*p*	VIF
	B	Standard error	Beta			
Constant	0.263	0.096	-	2.744	0.006**	-
KOL	0.552	0.041	0.554	13.561	0.000**	2.756
KOC	0.345	0.038	0.372	9.110	0.000**	2.756
R^2	0.791					
Adjusted R^2	0.790					
F	F (2,345) = 654.037, p = 0.000					

Note: * p<0.05 ** p<0.01

In this regression analysis, the K value is set to 0.010. The regression analysis showed R^2 = 0.791 and adjusted R^2 = 0.790, meaning that KOLs and KOCs explained 79% of the variance in perceived trust among Generation Z consumers. In the F-test, F = 654.037, and the p = 0.000 (< 0.05), confirming the model was statistically significant.

The table shows that the B value for KOL = 0.552 (t = 13.561, p = 0.000 < 0.01). The result indicates that KOLs have a significant positive impact on perceived trust. On the other hand, the B value of KOC is 0.345 (t = 9.110, p = 0.000 < 0.01). It also indicates that KOC has a significant positive impact on perceived trust.

The table also shows that the standardized regression coefficient (Beta) for KOL credibility was 0.554, which is higher than that for KOC (0.372). This means that both factors have a greater impact on Generation Z's perceived trust, but KOL credibility plays a more important role in the trust mechanism.

The variance inflation factor (VIF) values for both KOL and KOC are 2.756, indicating no serious multicollinearity issue in the model. This model also validates research hypotheses H2b-1 and H2b-2.

Table 8 Ridge Regression analysis results of perceived trust

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	*t*	*p*	VIF
	B	Standard error	Beta			
Constant	0.442	0.102	-	4.324	0.000**	-
Perceived Trust	0.887	0.027	0.859	32.501	0.000**	1.000

Table 8 Ridge Regression analysis results of perceived trust (continue)

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	*t*	*p*	VIF
	B	Standard error	Beta			
R^2	0.753					
Adjusted R^2	0.753					
F	F (1,346) = 1056.232, p = 0.000					

Note. * $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$

In this regression analysis, the K value was set to 0.010. The regression analysis showed that R^2 = 0.753, and adjusted R^2 = 0.753. It indicates that 75.3% of the variance in purchase intention was explained by perceived trust. In the F-test, F = 1056.232, and p = 0.000 (< 0.05). The model contains only one independent variable and the VIF value was less than 5, indicating no multicollinearity. Perceived trust was strongly and significantly associated with Generation Z consumers' purchase intention (β = 0.859, t = 32.501, p < 0.01). Therefore, the research hypothesis H3 was supported.

5.5 Mediation effect test of perceived trust

This study examined the mediating role of perceived trust in the relationship between evaluation-based short videos and consumers' purchase intention, and yielded the following results:

Table 9 Test of the mediating effect of perceived trust

Independent Variable	Indirect Effect	Boot SE	95%Bootstrap CI	Mediation Type
Information Quality	0.083	0.023	0.042 ~ 0.132	Partial
Evaluator Credibility	0.125	0.035	0.063 ~ 0.198	Partial
KOL Credibility	0.262	0.040	0.188 ~ 0.345	Partial
KOC Credibility	0.161	0.033	0.102 ~ 0.231	Partial
Interactivity	0.049	0.017	0.019 ~ 0.088	Partial

The mediation effect test was conducted using the bias-corrected percentile bootstrap method proposed by Hayes. Across 5,000 repeated samples, the 95% confidence intervals for the indirect effect were calculated, and none included zero. Perceived trust played a partial role in the mechanism linking the characteristics of evaluation-based short videos to Generation Z consumers' purchase intention.

The indirect effects indicated that information quality (0.083), evaluator credibility (0.125), and interactivity (0.049) influenced purchase intention through perceived trust. These findings highlighted the central role of perceived trust in linking short video attributes to consumers' behavioral intentions. Consequently, Hypotheses H4a, H4b, and H4c were supported.

Moreover, a comparative analysis across evaluator types demonstrated that the indirect influence of KOL credibility (0.262) through perceived trust was stronger than that of KOC credibility (0.161). This result further supported Hypotheses H4b-1 and H4b-2.

6. Discussion

The research results of this paper reflect three characteristics of evaluation-based short videos: information quality, evaluator credibility, and perceived trust, which directly influence Generation Z consumers' purchase intention. The accuracy and completeness of short-video information influence consumer purchasing behavior. This is consistent with the work of Tan and Wang (2022) and Zhao (2022), who note that high information quality can reduce consumer uncertainty. Moreover, the importance of consumers' trust in video creators within the context of digital consumption aligns with Hovland et al.'s (1953) research on the trustworthiness of information sources. In the research by Yin et al. (2020) and Lv and Zhu (2021), trust was identified as a key psychological mechanism in the context of short video marketing. This paper confirms that the characteristics of evaluation-based short videos indirectly affect Generation Z's purchase intention through perceived trust.

Chang and Guo (2022) and Zhao and Qin (2023) argue that the interactive features of short videos can transform consumers from passive information receivers into participants, thereby strengthening their identification with the content and its evaluators. Similarly, this study also found that interactivity can increase consumer engagement and thus influence their purchase intention. In addition, Zhu and Ratasuk (2024) and Yi and Xian (2025) believe that KOCs are more likely to establish trust relationships through real experiences and shared values. Based on this study, it has also been demonstrated that different types of evaluators exhibit functional differences in their impact mechanisms within the consumption context of Generation Z.

In summary, this study, by integrating the S-O-R model with existing research, found that information quality, evaluator types, and interactivity are factors influencing Generation Z's purchase intention, and that perceived trust can also indirectly affect this intention.

7. Conclusion

This article presents a comprehensive conclusion based on empirical research and data analysis to help businesses, short video creators, and short video platforms understand the characteristics and purchasing decisions of potential Generation Z consumers. This study also draws the following conclusions:

The quality of information, the credibility of evaluators, and interactivity are all key factors influencing Generation Z's consumption decisions in evaluation-based short videos. The direct impact of KOL credibility on the purchase intention of Generation Z was higher than that of KOC credibility (β=0.526, p<0.01). It can be seen that Generation Z still relies on professional evaluations from KOLs in certain fields.

The three characteristics of evaluation-based short videos each influence perceived trust. Among them, KOL credibility had a greater impact on consumers' perceived trust, with a beta of 0.554, whereas KOC credibility was 0.372. This explains that although KOC content often appears more authentic and natural, Generation Z consumers still perceive KOLs as more trustworthy in the context of evaluation-based short videos. Moreover, perceived trust not only directly affects the final purchasing behavior, but also plays an intermediary role.

This study also has the following limitations: First, the sample was limited. The research participants were all members of Generation Z during a specific time period in China. This approach does not fully account for variations across different regions, cultures, or income levels. Therefore, the findings may apply only to certain developmental stages of the studied platforms and may change over time. Second, there were limitations in the choice of variables. The model was based on SOR theory and highlights the influence of some features, but it may neglect factors such as emotional resonance and other sensory drivers. This simplification might not capture the full complexity of Generation Z consumers' psychological decision-making processes.

In response to the above limitations, future research could be developed in the following directions: First, the sample dimension should be expanded by conducting cross-cultural and cross-regional comparative studies, and by incorporating demographic variables such as education level for stratified sampling. Second, data and models should be enriched by introducing platform interaction behavior data and consumer emotion data. This would allow the construction of a comprehensive analytical framework that includes both cognitive and emotional pathways. Third, data quality should be improved by verifying the robustness of conclusions through multiple data sources. This would enhance the scientific rigor and generalizability of the research findings.

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