

The Impact of New Media Platform (Douyin) on Chinese Individuals' Consumption Intention and Negative Emotion Levels

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Abstract. With the rapid development of digital media technology, short-video platforms have become an important part of Chinese people's daily lives. Among them, Douyin has rapidly gained popularity thanks to its intelligent recommendation algorithm and interactive functions. This article explores the dual impact of Douyin on the consumption behavior and emotional health of Chinese users. The research adopted the literature review method to analyze how the Douyin platform enhances users' willingness to consume through means such as short video marketing, live-streaming shopping and personalized recommendations. At the same time, attention was also paid to the possible negative emotional problems brought about by long-term use of Douyin, such as anxiety, low self-esteem and emotional fatigue. Research has found that although Douyin's marketing methods have effectively promoted consumption, the idealized lifestyle and consumerism it presents have also caused emotional burdens on users, especially having a significant impact on teenage users. Therefore, this article suggests that marketers should use the marketing strategies of the platform in a more responsible way, and regulatory authorities should formulate relevant policies to protect the mental health of users. This study provides an important reference for further understanding the extensive influence of short-video platforms on individuals and society.

Keywords: New media platform, consumption intention, negative emotion.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

With the rapid growth of digital platforms, short video apps have become an important part of people's daily life. Douyin is the China's version of TikTok, has gained widespread popularity and attracting over 700 million monthly users [1]. Developed by ByteDance in 2016, Douyin's smart recommendation system and interactive features have changed the way people consume, shop, and engage with others [2]. Unlike traditional media, Douyin allows users to watch, create, and share videos that are specifically chosen for them by the platform's algorithm, making the user addict to it.

Douyin's impact is not limited to entertainment. It has also influenced people's purchasing decisions and emotional feelings. Studies suggest that platforms like Douyin use psychological and behavioral strategies to keep users engaged and increase their purchase intention [3]. For example, live stream shopping and influencer promotions encourage people buy things immediately [4]. Spending too much time on these apps has been linked to increased anxiety, lower self-confidence, and even depressive moods [5].

1.2. Research Significance

Since Douyin plays a growing role in China's digital economy, it is important to understand its effects on both consumer habits and mental well-being. On one side, Douyin has changed online marketing by helping brands and influencers reach potential buyers in more personal and engaging ways [4]. The platform's recommendation system ensures that ads and product promotions reach the right audience, making them more effective [2].

On the other side, concerns have been raised about the negative effects of Douyin on users' emotions. The app often shows idealized lifestyles, beauty filters, and luxury consumption, which

can lead users, especially young people, to compare themselves to unrealistic standards [6], which can trigger emotional and cognitive problems. Research has also found that spending too much time watching short videos can affect concentration and emotional stability [7]. Because of these mixed effects, it is necessary to study both the benefits and the risks of using Douyin.

1.3. Objectives and Research Questions

This study will focus on two key aspects of Douyin's influence:

Consumer Behavior – How Douyin's content and marketing techniques influence users' shopping decisions?

Emotional Well-Being – Will using Douyin for long periods cause stress, anxiety, or other negative emotions? By answering these questions, this research will help understand how Douyin affects people's choices and emotions, using existing studies and case analyses.

2. Overview of Douyin and its Features

2.1. Platform Introduction

In China, Douyin is a leading short video platform that combines AI recommendations, social engagement, and e-commerce functions to create an immersive experience. It is similar to TikTok but designed specifically for Chinese users. The app provides local trends, customized content, and built-in shopping features [1]. Its artificial intelligence algorithm tracks users' preferences and past interactions to suggest highly relevant videos [2].

2.2. Content Characteristics and Interaction Models

Douyin offers many contents, including lifestyle tips, educational videos, entertainment, and product advertisements. The platform's main features include:

Short-Video Clips: Creators can make quick videos, usually between 15 to 60 seconds. They use effects, background music, and visual filters to attract viewers.

Live Streaming & Online Shopping: Brands and influencers host live-streaming sessions to sell products in real time, allowing users to interact with sellers and make instant purchases [4].

User Interaction & Personalized Feeds: The app encourages users to engage by liking, commenting, sharing, and participating in trending challenges, which helps keep them active on the platform.

Douyin also uses intelligent algorithms to recommend content based on each user's viewing history and behavior. This recommendation system ensures that users see videos they are more likely to enjoy, which increases time spent on the app and overall engagement.

Douyin's combination of social networking and AI recommendations has made it one of the most influential digital platforms in China. It has reshaped consumer habits and social trends, but also leading to both positive impact and concerns.

3. Douyin's Influence on Consumption Intentions

3.1. Marketing Strategies on Douyin

Douyin has become one of the most popular short video platforms in China. Douyin has completely changed how companies promote and sell their products. Through short videos, live content, and personalized recommendations, Douyin creates a shopping environment that is fast, fun, and easy to engage with. Users often do not realize that they are being marketed to, which makes the influence more powerful.

Short video advertising plays a key role in Douyin's marketing model. According to Lu, Cui, He, and Sun, this model follows the S-O-R theory, which means Stimulus–Organism–Response [8]. The videos are the stimulus, which can trigger emotions in the viewer. These emotions then lead to a response, such as clicking a product or making a purchase. Creators use music, bright visuals, humor,

and storytelling to make videos more appealing. These emotional and sensory elements help attract attention and increase purchase interest.

Besides the video content itself, Douyin uses data and algorithms to deliver targeted advertisements to appropriate audiences. The app watches what each user does—what videos they like, how long they watch, what they comment on—and uses that to recommend products [9]. For example, if a person often watches videos about skincare, they will start seeing ads for face masks or makeup tutorials. This makes advertising more personal and more effective.

Consumer psychology also plays a very important part. Yang explained that many Douyin users buy things based on emotional impulses rather than rational deliberation. When users see a video that matches their lifestyle dreams or shows a trendy product, they feel the need to join the trend. This is often caused by FOMO, or the “fear of missing out.” Wang also pointed out that users often build emotional connections with influencers and brands. When users see these influencers more often and trust their opinions, they are more likely to accept the product suggestions shared by those influencers, especially among younger users.

Zhang adds that many small creators, or self-media users, play a key role in influencing consumer choices, especially because they interact closely with their followers and present themselves as authentic and relatable figures. These creators may not be famous, but they have loyal fans. Zhang further highlighted that self-media marketing strategies emphasizing authenticity and effectively encourage user engagement and purchasing behavior, particularly benefiting niche products and smaller enterprises [10]. They post regularly and often reply to comments, which helps build trust. They use a soft marketing style—less like ads, more like sharing life. Their influence is strong, especially for small businesses or niche products. Many people feel these creators are more real and honest than big celebrities.

In summary, Douyin’s marketing methods include short, eye-catching videos, smart recommendations, and emotional influence. It mixes entertainment and advertising so smoothly that users enjoy the process while being guided toward shopping. This new type of marketing is more flexible, personal, and effective than older forms of online ads.

3.2. Role of Live Streaming in Shaping Consumer Behavior

Live streaming is another major tool that helps Douyin influence people’s purchase intention. Unlike normal videos, live streams are real-time. They let users chat with the host, ask questions, and see the product in action. This makes the experience more interactive and convincing. Zhao found that viewers are more likely to buy from hosts who are confident, friendly, and well-spoken. Her research further emphasized that the emotional rapport built between hosts and viewers during live streams significantly enhances consumer trust and immediacy of purchasing decisions [11]. The way a host dresses or smiles can even affect trust. When people feel the host is honest and helpful, they are more open to buying.

Zhan focused on beauty products. Her study showed that when influencers try goods during live shows, people feel safer and more informed about the item. Similarly, Zhang also highlighted the importance of influencer interaction style during live-streamed beauty sessions, noting that hosts who are approachable and interactive significantly enhance consumers’ purchase intentions [12]. They can ask questions and get answers on the spot. This feels much better than just watching a recorded video or reading an ad. For young women, especially those who care a lot about appearance, this kind of live advice can have a strong effect.

Cao adopted a broader perspective. She said that live streaming is not just selling—it’s a mix of performance, conversation, and shopping. Many hosts offer special deals or free gifts to people who buy during the stream. This creates urgency and excitement. Viewers feel they are part of something, like a limited event. They also see others buying, which gives social proof.

Live streaming has changed digital shopping. It is no longer a one-way ad. Now, shopping feels like a two-way conversation. People enjoy watching, talking, and buying in one place. It also shortens

the time between wanting something and buying it. This fast process makes live commerce very effective.

3.3. Comparative Insights: Implications from TikTok

Although Douyin is used in China, its global version, TikTok, shares many of the same features. Studying TikTok helps people which parts of the Douyin model work well worldwide.

Blakely wrote that TikTok helps people see a positive side of Chinese culture. Videos about Chinese food, travel, and everyday life are popular. Many users who see these videos say they want to visit China or try Chinese brands. This kind of influence is not direct advertising, but it still shapes what people like and want to buy.

Hille reported that in Taiwan, many young people use TikTok to follow influencers from mainland China. They watch fashion trends, product reviews, and daily vlogs. This makes them more familiar with Chinese products and more willing to buy them. So, even entertainment content has a marketing effect.

Wang compared the shopping systems in both apps. He said TikTok focuses more on fun and less on buying, while Douyin builds shopping into the platform. Douyin has full shopping features, like product links and in-app payment. TikTok is now catching up with tools like TikTok Shop. This shows that Douyin's model may work well around the world.

In conclusion, TikTok gives us useful ideas about what parts of Douyin's strategy can be used globally. Both apps use short videos, emotional storytelling, and influencer power to guide what people buy. As TikTok adds more shopping features, it follows the path Douyin has already built. This proves that Douyin's way of mixing entertainment with shopping is not only successful in China but could influence how e-commerce works worldwide.

4. Douyin's Impact on Negative Emotion Levels

4.1. Psychological Effects of Short Video Consumption

As Douyin becomes part of daily life for millions of users, they have concerns about have its psychological effects, which is it link with negative emotions. Several studies have shown that using Douyin for long periods may increase anxiety, restlessness, and even depression.

Guo, Li, Lin, and Liu explored how short videos impact young people's mental states. They found that high frequency users reported more negative emotions and lower self-control. Similarly, Wu and Zhang (2023) pointed out that university students who watch Douyin for entertainment often feel emotional exhaustion, especially when they use it late at night or during study breaks. These emotional effects are subtle at first but can build over time. Moreover, the CSSN (n.d.) article also revealed that university students who engage excessively in short-video consumption frequently experience anxiety and emotional instability [13].

Yang added that users often fall into a habit of emotional shopping or mindless scrolling, which is not only a waste of time but also contributes to mental fatigue. Wang explained this through the lens of emotional attachment. He noted that while users feel connected to the content or influencers, the constant comparison and content overload can increase internal stress.

In short, although Douyin brings fun and connection, its overuse may harm emotional balance. This is especially true among youth, who are more sensitive to content stimulation and social pressure.

4.2. Content Influence on Emotional States

Besides the amount of time spent, the type of content on Douyin also plays a key role in shaping emotional responses. Certain content types such as videos that promote unrealistic beauty standards, wealth display, or extreme lifestyles. These can trigger feelings of inadequacy, envy, and low self-esteem, which is bad for the users.

Wang and Liu showed that content focusing on appearance or status symbols affects teenagers' value systems. Young users often compare themselves to online personalities and feel left behind.

Further, Wang found that continuous exposure to Douyin content significantly impacts youth's value judgments, intensifying their sense of inadequacy and distortion of self-worth [14].

Li and Jiang discussed how emotional marketing, such as sentimental storytelling or patriotic themes, can trigger deep emotional reactions—sometimes leading to fatigue or confusion when overused.

Cao (2020) also noted that influencers often use emotional hooks to keep audiences engaged. While this boosts sales, it may also cause viewers to make impulsive decisions and feel regret afterwards. Wang confirmed that frequent exposure to such content reduces emotional resilience, especially when users cannot tell reality from exaggerated online images.

Thus, Douyin content doesn't just entertain—it shapes how people see themselves and others. Over time, this can impact mood, self-worth, and emotional health.

5. Discussion and Suggestions

5.1. Synthesis of Findings

This study has examined how Douyin influences consumer behavior and emotional well-being. Findings from different sources point to two key effects.

First, Douyin's marketing tools—like algorithmic ads, influencer content, and live streaming—successfully raise consumer interest and encourage purchase behavior. Studies by Wang and Lu et al. confirm that users are guided by emotional appeal rather than logic.

Second, extended use of Douyin can lead to negative emotional outcomes, such as anxiety, pressure, or fatigue. Wu and Zhang and the CSSN article both reveal links between video exposure and emotional imbalance.

Interestingly, while Douyin increases emotional connection with content and products, this connection also drains users mentally. Blakely and Hille showed similar results in TikTok users, suggesting that emotional overload is a global issue, not just a Chinese problem.

In summary, Douyin has both positive and negative impacts. It helps brands grow but may harm users' mental health if overused.

5.2. Practical Implications for Marketers and Policymakers

For marketers, the results suggest that personalized, emotionally appealing content is highly effective—but it must be used responsibly. Overloading users with exaggerated promotions or beauty-filtered content may bring short-term success but could hurt long-term trust.

Policymakers should consider regulating the frequency and type of content shown, especially to minors. Wu and Zhang suggested time reminders, content filters, and platform usage reports as helpful tools. Zhao emphasized the importance of ethical influencer behavior. Influencers should be transparent about sponsored content and avoid emotional manipulation.

Cao proposed platform-level strategies like algorithm adjustments and content warnings. Wang also argued that users need more education about digital platform so they can think critically about what they see online.

Combining these ideas can let Douyin become a safer, more balanced space for both online shopping and entertainment.

5.3. Limitations and Future Research Directions

Although this research brings together many studies, it has some limitations. First, most findings are based on qualitative or case study methods. More large-scale, quantitative data would make the results stronger. Lu et al. suggested using user behavior tracking combined with emotional surveys.

Second, emotional impact is complex and affected by many factors like age, gender, and digital habits. Future research could explore differences between user groups—for example, comparing high school students to working adults.

Also, studies on long-term effects are still few. Yang (2018) and Guo et al. highlighted short-term changes, but we still don't fully understand how Douyin shapes users over time.

Lastly, most research is focused on China. Future studies should compare Douyin with platforms like TikTok in different countries, to explore global patterns and cultural differences.

6. Conclusion

This paper explores how the short video platform Douyin affects user behavior and emotional well-being. By analyzing academic studies and real-life examples, it shows that Douyin has a strong influence on consumer intentions. Especially through short-form videos, influencers, and live streaming.

At the same time, the platform can negatively affect users' mental health. Long-term exposure to highly stimulating or idealized content may increase stress, emotional fatigue, and low self-worth, particularly among young users.

The present study also offers suggestions for marketers and platform managers to create a healthier digital space. These suggestions include improving content design, educating users, and enforcing platform responsibility.

In conclusion, while Douyin has changed how people shop and interact, its double-edged impact calls for careful management. Understanding these effects helps ensure that use new media wisely, benefiting users, businesses, and society as a whole.

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