

Consumption Behavior Analysis of Generation Z on Chinese Sports Brand Apparel with TAM-TPB Model^{*}

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Abstract

Generation Z refers to those born between 1996 and 2010. Generation Z is entering the workforce and becoming the leading consumer market force. Studying the consumption intentions of Generation Z toward domestic sports brand apparel can significantly benefit the brand's future business development. This study employs a questionnaire survey and incorporates factors from the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) based on the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) to investigate the factors influencing Generation Z consumers' online purchasing intentions for Chinese sports brand apparel. The results indicate that the behavioral intentions of Generation Z towards domestic sports brands are significantly positively correlated with subjective norms, perceived behavioral norms, usefulness, and ease of use.

Keywords: Theory of Planned Behavior; Technology Acceptance Model; Generation Z; Domestic Sports Brand; Consumption Intention

1 Introduction

The consumption behavior of Generation Z is leading the market toward new trends. Hu Angang and Fang Xudong's (2016) study suggests that the national fitness strategy has significant connotations and is vital in strategically adjusting economic structures, possessing multiple functions and values [1]. Data from iResearch (2022) shows that younger Chinese consumers prefer domestic sports brands when purchasing sports equipment [2]. A report by QuestMobile (2022) reveals that as the purchasing power of Generation Z rises, the pursuit of diversity, national trends, and individualism shapes new consumption trends in the market [3]. With the internet deeply penetrating all industries, Generation Z is leading a new direction in consumer markets [4]. Hence, this research focuses on the consumption intentions of Generation Z toward domestic sports brand apparel.

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1.1 Theoretical Model and Research Hypothesis

Raised in the digital age, Generation Z infuses the marketplace with a unique youthful dynamism. The consumption patterns and preferences of this generation have garnered significant attention across diverse industries. Global studies on the purchasing behavior of Generation Z indicate that consumer attitudes exert a positive influence on the intention to procure sustainable sportswear. Furthermore, subjective norms favorably impact these consumer attitudes, and perceptual evaluations positively shape these same attitudes [5]. José Sandoval-díaz's study indicates that perceived behavioral control is the strongest predictor of purchasing intention, followed by attitude; dimensions of brand coolness significantly positively influence brand attitude [6]. In China, data from iResearch (2022) suggests that product efficacy and ingredients are primary considerations during purchase, while fashionable and attractive exterior designs are also driving purchase decisions, indicating diversified purchasing channels [7]. Zhang Jianing (2022) found that the usefulness, ease of use, and entertainment of "shopping inspiration" short videos significantly and positively affect the online impulsive buying intentions of Generation Z consumers, with a flow experience playing a mediating role [8]. Lu Shuang and Tian Shiyu (2020) believe that Generation Z's characteristics in video content consumption include easy and quick access, preference for entertainment, interest, circle consumption, enthusiasm for interaction, emphasis on participation, support for originality, and willingness to pay for content [9]. Ao Chengbing (2021) considers that Generation Z has unique consumption habits, methods, and concepts, for instance, valuing consumption experiences, rejecting extravagant consumption, caring about consumption taste, accepting consumption symbols, showing diverse consumption philosophies, and a more rational consumption pattern [10]. Wang Yongtao (2021) believes the main motivations for Generation Z's subcultural consumption include purchasing for love, pleasing oneself, seeking emotional sustenance, and satisfying social needs [11]. Lai Youwei, Zhou Haiwei, and Li Jiwei (2022) argue that Generation Z began enjoying consumer life earlier, fully embracing online consumption, willing to pay for innovation, keen on experience consumption, pursuing ultimate convenience, preferring national products and national trends, and actively engaging in circle consumption [12].

The Theory of Planned Behavior and the Technology Acceptance Model originate from the Theory of Rational Behavior. Compared to previous research [13], this study integrates the Technology Acceptance Model with the Theory of Planned Behavior to construct a more comprehensive theoretical model. This combined approach is designed to better explain and predict the willingness of Generation Z consumers to purchase domestic sportswear brands. In the context of consumption studies under the Theory of Planned Behavior and Technology Acceptance Model, Zhu Lianghao (2021) found that attitude has the most significant direct effect on the intention to consume online sports, and online sports consumption intention has the greatest direct effect on online sports consumption behavior [14]. Zhang Baofeng and Cai Linmei's research indicates that perceived usefulness not only has a direct positive effect on behavioral intention but also indirectly affects low-carbon consumption intention through behavioral attitude and perceived behavioral control. Meanwhile, perceived ease of use indirectly positively affects low-carbon consumption intention through behavioral attitude and perceived usefulness and negatively through perceived behavioral control [15]. Li Xiaolan (2015) found that behavioral attitude, perceived behavioral control, and subjective norms all have certain impacts on the behavioral intention to consume sportswear [16].

Based on these factors, this study focuses on Generation Z consumers and proposes the following hypotheses regarding the influencing factors of their purchase intentions for domestic sportswear

brands:

H1: There is a significant difference in the behavioral intention to consume domestic sportswear brands between genders within Generation Z.

H2: There is a significant difference in the behavioral intention to consume domestic sportswear brands based on the average after-tax monthly income within Generation Z.

H3: The frequency of sports participation within Generation Z significantly differs in its impact on the behavioral intention to consume domestic sportswear brands.

H4: The purchasing channels used by Generation Z significantly differ in their effect on the behavioral intention to consume domestic sportswear brands.

H5: The behavioral intention of Generation Z to consume domestic sportswear brands is positively related to attitude.

H6: The behavioral intention of Generation Z to consume domestic sportswear brands is positively related to subjective norms.

H7: The behavioral intention of Generation Z to consume domestic sportswear brands is positively related to perceived behavioral control.

H8: The behavioral intention of Generation Z to consume domestic sportswear brands is positively related to perceived usefulness.

H9: The behavioral intention of Generation Z to consume domestic sportswear brands is positively related to perceived ease of use.

2 Methods

2.1 Research Subjects and Methods

This study surveyed a random sample of the Generation Z population. Considering the diverse geographic distribution of respondents and the feasibility of questionnaire distribution, we investigated the consumption behavior of Generation Z towards domestic sports brands.

2.2 Contents of the Questionnaire

By research criteria and grounded in pertinent literature, a questionnaire was constructed with defined scales. This instrument comprises four distinct sections. The initial section solicits fundamental demographics of the respondents, encompassing gender, age, educational attainment, professional designation, post-tax monthly income, and regularity of physical exercise. The second section focuses on external factors influencing consumers, forming a variable measurement scale. The third section surveys their attitudes towards domestic sports brands, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, perceived usefulness, and perceived ease of use, thus forming another variable measurement scale. The fourth section probes into the behavioral intentions of consumers towards purchasing domestic sports brands.

2.3 Survey Results

To ensure the authenticity of the questionnaire, a pre-survey was conducted from July 25 to 27,

2023, collecting 99 questionnaires. Tests for reliability and validity were performed, showing high levels of both. Adjustments were made to the questionnaire items, leading to a further distribution of the questionnaire from July 28 to August 10. A total of 406 questionnaires were collected, 6 were deemed invalid, resulting in 400 valid responses—a validity rate of 98.52%. Invalidated questionnaires were primarily due to the respondents' age not fitting the Generation Z criteria.

3 Discussion and Results

3.1 Descriptive Analysis of the Sample

Data from the questionnaire shows that 57.5% of respondents were male and 42.5% were female. Regarding occupation, general staff in companies/corporations were the most common, accounting for 30.5%. In educational background, undergraduates comprised the largest proportion, at 30.2%. Regarding average post-tax monthly income, the 2001-5000 yuan range was most common, at 44.3%. For frequency of sports activities, occasional participation was the most frequent at 48.3%, rarely participating was 23.5%, regularly participating was 24%, and never participating was 4.2%. This suggests that the majority of Generation Z is quite active.

3.2 Reliability and Validity Analysis

3.2.1 Reliability Analysis

The study adopted the Cronbach Alpha coefficient and split-half reliability to examine the scale's reliability. Generally, a Cronbach Alpha coefficient or split-half reliability above 0.9 is considered excellent; between 0.8-0.9 is considered good; between 0.7-0.8 is acceptable; and below 0.7 indicates the scale needs revision. SPSS analysis yielded the following (Table 1).

Table 2 shows that the Cronbach Alpha coefficient is 0.930, and the split-half reliability is 0.891. Since both coefficients are above 0.7, the data's reliability is acceptable for further analysis.

3.2.2 Validity Analysis

Before using factor analysis, the data's suitability for factor modeling was first analyzed.

The KMO test investigates partial correlations among variables. Results from Table 3 show that the KMO values of the study variables exceed the threshold level of 0.7, with an overall KMO value of 0.935. A significance level in statistics is typically set at 0.05. In Table 3, Bartlett's test of sphericity is significant at 0.000, less than 0.05, concluding that there is a significant correlation among the test items of study variables. This demonstrates good validity of the research data.

3.3 Analysis of Influencing Relationships

From the computational results of the above table, it can be seen:

The model fit is quite good, with an adjusted R-squared of 0.645, indicating that the 11 independent variables in this regression analysis account for 64.5% of the influence on the dependent

Table 1: The demographic characteristics of the respondents to the questionnaire

	category	quantity	proportion (%)
gender	man	230	57.5
	woman	170	42.5
occupation	student	40	10.0
	liberal professions	119	29.8
	Corporate/company general staff	122	30.5
	Enterprise/company managers	63	15.8
	Professionals (lawyer/reporter/teacher/doctor, etc.)	21	5.2
	General staff of Party and govern- ment organs/public institutions	6	1.5
	Administrative staff of Party and gov- ernment organs/public institutions	3	0.7
	else	26	6.5
educational background	primary school	13	3.3
	junior middle school	58	14.5
	senior middle school	94	23.5
	junior college education	91	22.8
	undergraduate college	121	30.2
	Master	19	4.7
	doctor	4	1.0
Average monthly income after tax	RMB 2,000 yuan and less	60	15.0
	2,001-5,000 yuan	177	44.3
	5,001-10,000 yuan	130	32.5
	RMB 10,001 yuan and above	33	8.2
Exercise frequency	Regular exercise (more than 3 times a week)	96	24
	Never luck	193	48.3
	Very little exercise (1-2 times a month)	94	23.5
	Occasional exercise (1-2 times a week)	17	4.2

Table 2: Reliability test

Number of questions	Cronbach Alpha	half reliability
21	0.930	0.891

Table 3: Adaptability test

KMO and Bartlett tests		
Number of KMO sampling suitability quantities		0.935
Bartlett sphericity test	Approximate chi-square	3966.956
	free degree	210
	significance	0.000

variable. This suggests that 64.5% of the variance in the dependent variable (behavioral intention) is explained by the 11 independent variables. This demonstrates that this regression model effectively identifies the factors influencing Gen Z's consumption behavior toward domestic sportswear brands.

The linear regression model of this study is significant, with $F = 66.771$ and $P < 0.001$, implying that at least one of the 11 independent variables significantly affects the dependent variable (behavioral intention). Further, combined with the regression coefficient test for the 11 independent variables, it can be concluded:

Subjective norms (SN) exert a notable positive effect on behavioral intention, as evidenced by an impact coefficient of 0.179 ($T = 2.932$, $P = 0.004 < 0.05$). This suggests that as subjective norms intensify among Generation Z consumers, their purchase intentions correspondingly amplify. To quantify, a 1-point ascent in subjective norms leads to an enhancement in behavioral intention by 0.179 points. Perceived behavioral control (PBC) significantly positively affects behavioral intention, with an impact coefficient of 0.384 ($T = 9.781$, $P = 0.000 < 0.05$). Thus, the higher the perceived behavioral control among Gen Z consumers, the higher their purchasing behavioral intentions. Quantitatively, for every 1-point increase in perceived behavioral control, the behavioral intention increases by 0.384 points. Perceived usefulness (PU) positively impacts behavioral intention, with an impact coefficient of 0.174 ($T = 3.54$, $P = 0.000 < 0.05$). Therefore, the higher the perceived usefulness, the higher the buying behavioral intentions of Gen Z consumers. Quantitatively, for every 1-point increase in perceived usefulness, the behavioral intention increases by 0.174 points. Perceived ease of use (PEOU) positively impacts behavioral intention, with an impact coefficient of 0.206 ($T = 3.902$, $P = 0.000 < 0.05$). This means the higher the perceived ease of use, the higher the purchasing behavioral intentions of Gen Z consumers. Quantitatively, for every 1-point increase in perceived ease of use, the behavioral intention increases by 0.206 points. Additionally, gender (G), occupation (O), an education level (E), post-tax monthly income (P), exercise frequency (S), purchasing channels (C), and behavioral attitudes (BA) are not influential factors for Gen Z's purchasing intentions towards domestic sportswear brands, as their regression coefficients did not pass the significance T-test set at 0.05.

From Table 4, with behavioral intention (BI) as the dependent variable and subjective norms (SN), perceived behavioral control (PBC), perceived usefulness (PU), and perceived ease of use (PEOU) as independent variables, a linear regression analysis was conducted. The resulting linear regression equation is as follows:

$$BI = 0.179 * SN + 0.384 * PBC + 0.174 * PU + 0.206 * PEOU - 0.025$$

Table 4: Results of the linear regression analysis

	Unstandardised coefficients	Standardisation coefficient	t	P	VIF
(constant)	−0.025		−0.084	0.933	
sex	0.048	0.026	0.843	0.4	1.036
occupation	−0.002	−0.004	−0.136	0.892	1.037
record of formal schooling	0.016	0.021	0.644	0.52	1.25
Monthly post-tax income	0.002	0.001	0.043	0.965	1.245
Exercise frequency	−0.035	−0.03	−0.932	0.352	1.174
Purchase channel	−0.026	−0.046	−1.499	0.135	1.06
Behavioural attitude	0.056	0.045	0.986	0.325	2.322
Subjective norms	0.179	0.148	2.932	0.004	2.874
Perceptual code of conduct	0.384	0.389	9.781	0	1.775
Perceived usefulness	0.174	0.172	3.54	0	2.638
Perceived ease of use	0.206	0.201	3.902	0	2.969
Adjusted R square				0.645	
DW				1.859	
F				66.771	
P				0.000	
Dependent variable: behavioral intention (BI)					

3.4 Testing of Research Hypotheses

From the data analysis, it is discernible that factors such as gender, occupation, educational level, average monthly post-tax income, frequency of exercise, purchase avenues, and attitude do not exert any significant impact on the purchasing intentions of Generation Z for domestic sportswear brands. Therefore, hypotheses H1, H2, H3, H4, and H5 are not supported. The purchasing intentions of Generation Z towards domestic sportswear brands have a significant positive correlation with subjective norms. Hence hypothesis H6 is supported. Likewise, the purchasing intentions have a significant positive correlation with perceived behavioral control, supporting hypothesis H7, and with perceived usefulness, supporting hypothesis H8, as well as with perceived ease of use, supporting hypothesis H9.

3.5 Analysis of Mediating Effects

Using the Bootstrap technique to re-estimate the standard error and confidence interval of indirect effects, and based on the Bias-corrected and Percentile criteria that do not include 0, the PROCESS plugin in SPSS software was chosen to test the mediation effect. The results are presented in table below (Table 5).

From the results, perceived behavioral control has a significant positive mediating effect between perceived usefulness and behavioral intentions, with a mediating effect size of 0.2863 ($p < 0.05$) and a confidence interval of 0.1958–0.3866. Further, perceived usefulness has a significant direct

Table 5: Effect of latent variables on behavioral intention

Subactive variables	metavariable	direct effect	mesomeric effect	gross effect
Perceived usefulness	Perceptual code of conduct	0.3857	0.2863	0.6720
Perceived usefulness	Subjective norms	0.4935	0.1785	0.6720
Perceived usefulness	Behavioral attitude	0.5719	0.1001	0.6720
Perceived ease of use	Perceptual code of conduct	0.4225	0.2912	0.7137
Perceived ease of use	Subjective norms	0.5518	0.1619	0.7137
Perceived ease of use	Behavioral attitude	0.6266	0.0871	0.7137

positive impact on behavioral intentions, with a direct effect size of 0.3857 ($p < 0.05$) and a confidence interval of 0.3092-0.4623. Overall, the total effect of perceived usefulness on behavioral intentions is significant, with a magnitude of 0.6720 ($p < 0.05$) and a confidence interval of 0.5969-0.7471. The proportion of the mediating effect in the total effect is 42.60%.

Subjective norms play a significant positive mediating role between perceived usefulness and behavioral intentions, with a mediating effect size of 0.1785 ($p < 0.05$) and a confidence interval of 0.0944-0.2820. Further, perceived usefulness has a significant direct positive impact on behavioral intentions, with a direct effect size of 0.4935 ($p < 0.05$) and a confidence interval of 0.4082-0.5788. Overall, the total effect is significant, with a magnitude of 0.6720 ($p < 0.05$) and a confidence interval of 0.5969-0.7471. The proportion of the mediating effect in the total effect is 26.56%.

Behavioral attitude serves as a significant positive mediator between perceived usefulness and behavioral intentions, with a mediating effect size of 0.1001 ($p < 0.05$) and a confidence interval of 0.0430-0.1887. Further, perceived usefulness has a significant direct positive impact on behavioral intentions, with a direct effect size of 0.5719 ($p < 0.05$) and a confidence interval of 0.4910-0.6528. The total effect is significant, with a magnitude of 0.6720 ($p < 0.05$) and a confidence interval of 0.5969-0.7471. The proportion of the mediating effect in the total effect is 14.90%.

Perceived behavioral control has a significant positive mediating effect between perceived ease of use and behavioral intentions, with a mediating effect size of 0.2912 ($p < 0.05$) and a confidence interval of 0.2047-0.3866. Moreover, perceived ease of use has a significant direct positive impact on behavioral intentions, with a direct effect size of 0.4225 ($p < 0.05$) and a confidence interval of 0.3418-0.5032. The overall effect is significant, with a magnitude of 0.7137 ($p < 0.05$) and a confidence interval of 0.6410-0.7865. The proportion of the mediating effect in the total effect is 40.80%.

Subjective norms play a significant positive mediating role between perceived ease of use and behavioral intentions, with a mediating effect size of 0.1619 ($p < 0.05$) and a confidence interval of 0.0768-0.2717. Moreover, perceived ease of use has a significant direct positive impact on behavioral intentions, with a direct effect size of 0.5518 ($p < 0.05$) and a confidence interval of 0.4644-0.6391. The overall effect is significant, with a magnitude of 0.7137 ($p < 0.05$) and a confidence interval of 0.6410-0.7865. The proportion of the mediating effect in the total effect is 22.68%.

Behavioral attitude serves as a significant positive mediator between perceived ease of use and behavioral intentions, with a mediating effect size of 0.0871 ($p < 0.05$) and a confidence interval of 0.0287-0.1769. Moreover, perceived ease of use has a significant direct positive impact on

behavioral intentions, with a direct effect size of 0.6266 ($p < 0.05$) and a confidence interval of 0.5450-0.7082. The overall effect is significant, with a magnitude of 0.7137 ($p < 0.05$) and a confidence interval of 0.6410-0.7865. The proportion of the mediating effect in the total effect is 12.20%.

From this, we can conclude that perceived usefulness has a significant positive impact on the purchasing intentions of Generation Z consumers towards domestic sportswear brands through perceived behavioral control, subjective norms, and behavioral attitude. Likewise, perceived ease of use has a significant positive impact on purchasing intentions through perceived behavioral control, subjective norms, and behavioral attitude.

4 Discussion

This study attempts to integrate the theory of planned behavior with the model of technology acceptance to provide a model of consumer behavior of domestic sports brands with good predictive effect and to explain in detail the influencing factors of consumer behavior of domestic sports brands to improve our cognition of Generation Z consumers' consumer behavior of domestic sports brands. To provide some theoretical basis for the marketing of domestic sports brands, to promote generation Z to domestic sports brand clothing consumption behavior. The main contribution of this study is to empirically test the application of planned behavior theory and technology acceptance model in domestic sports brand consumption behavior.

The results of this study show that both subjective norms and perceived norms of behavior have a significant positive impact on consumption intention, which is consistent with the findings of Zhu Lianghao (2021) [14] and Li Xiaolan (2015) [16]. Perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use not only have a direct positive impact on behavioral intention but also have an indirect positive impact on consumption intention mediated by behavioral attitudes, subjective norms and perceived norms of behavior, which is consistent with the research results of Zhang Baofeng and CAI Linmei (2022) [15], and the mediating effect of perceived norms of behavior is the highest in this study. The indirect impact on consumption intention is the largest, which may be because the convenience of shopping and economic factors are the key factors affecting the purchase of domestic sports brands by Gen Z consumers.

This research is quantitative and has limitations as the sample is concentrated in the Beijing and Hebei areas, which might only reflect the purchasing intentions of Gen Z in North China. Based on the findings, the following suggestions are provided to enhance Gen Z's purchasing intentions for domestic sportswear brands:

5 Conclusion

Based on the analysis, there is no significant relationship between the exercise frequency of Generation Z consumers and their willingness to purchase domestic sportswear brands. The level of exercise frequency does not impact Generation Z consumers' purchasing intentions for domestic sportswear brands. This might suggest that for Gen Z consumers, the choice of domestic sportswear brands is not exclusive to sport-related activities but is also preferred for daily casual wear, indicating a high level of recognition for domestic sportswear brands among this generation.

Furthermore, the purchasing channel does not affect their purchasing intentions. In the current omnichannel retail environment, domestic sportswear brands that integrate physical stores, e-commerce, and mobile commerce provide a consistent shopping experience. Hence, the choice of purchasing channel has minimal impact on Gen Z's buying intentions. Perceived usefulness and ease of use significantly and positively impact the purchasing intentions of Gen Z consumers through perceived behavioral norms, subjective norms, and behavioral attitudes. This implies that when shopping online, the perceived usefulness and ease of use of the device and interface play a substantial role in influencing Generation Z's willingness to purchase domestic sportswear brands online.

The following suggestions are made in this regard:

At a macro level, there should be increased promotion of domestic sportswear brands to enhance consumer recognition. Encourage and advocate for consumer behavior that favors domestic sportswear brands, increasing their visibility and acceptance.

At a micro level, domestic sportswear brands should focus on improving product quality and comfort, facilitating consumers in their sports activities. Companies should advance their technologies and continuously innovate, offering superior products to win over Generation Z consumers. Online shopping platforms should be technically optimized to enhance user experience, streamline supply chain systems, and design better services. Brands should also keep pace with fashion trends and develop integrated omnichannel retail strategies to cater to Generation Z consumers, thereby promoting the growth of domestic sportswear brands.

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