



# Revolutionizing Retail Analyzing Douyin's Influence on the Digital Shopping Behaviors of China's Youth

By Xinya Wang  
National College of Ireland

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## Abstract

This paper explores the significant impact of Douyin, China's leading short video platform, on the purchasing decisions of Chinese consumers aged 20-30. With more than 700 million daily active users, Douyin is not only a short video focused social media, but also integrates e-commerce features that have a significant impact on consumer behavior. This study explores how Douyin's personalized recommendation algorithm, KOLs, and integrated e-commerce capabilities are reshaping shopping patterns for young consumers.

The study uses a qualitative approach to gather in-depth insights from users in the target population through semi-structured interviews. The results of the analysis show that personalized content greatly increases user engagement, influences purchase decisions, and often leads to impulsive purchases. Influencers on Douyin also play a vital role in shaping brand perception and enhancing consumer trust.

In addition, the seamless integration of e-commerce functions in Douyin, such as instant purchases during live broadcasts, creates a seamless connection from product discovery to purchase, thus facilitating users' shopping experience. This integration is particularly effective in reducing the steps between interest and purchase.

This paper contributes to an understanding of the digital marketing strategies of Chinese social media platforms and provides recommendations for leveraging these insights in the broader context of digital marketing. The paper highlights Douyin's transformative role in e-commerce. It will help other applications study how to become better tools for integrating social media with e-commerce.

**Keywords** Douyin, Chinese Tiktok, social media marketing, consumer behavior, e-commerce, influencer marketing, China, digital transformation.

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Name: Xinya Wang

Student Number: x22215824

Degree for which thesis is submitted: MSc in International Business

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Thesis supervisor: Lynda McElherron

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background

According to statistics provided by Simon Kemp of DataReportal (2023), “the world’s population passed 8 billion on 15 November 2022, and has reached 8.01 billion at the start of 2023. There are 5.16 billion internet users in the world today, meaning that 64.4 percent of the world’s total population is now online.” The 21st century is characterized by a thriving business environment, largely driven by digital technology. Analysts expect 20.1% of all retail purchases to be made online in 2024, with e-commerce sales expected to grow nearly 9% due to the ongoing boom in the overall e-commerce business, and forecast the total global e-commerce market to reach \$6.3 trillion in 2024. As the market shows no signs of slowing down at present, experts predict that the total e-commerce market is expected to exceed \$7.9 trillion by 2027 (Snyder, 2024). With the development of e-commerce, social media, which we use every day, has also undergone tremendous innovation. Social media has undergone a huge change over the past decade, and consumers are now increasingly using social networking sites to find information about a variety of products and services. Instead of just relying on the traditional methods, such as TV, radio, magazines and so on (Schivinski and Dabrowski, 2016). Over the past decade, social media has evolved from a simple communications hub to an agent of change. It affects the daily activities of human beings and thus changes people's lives. Social media today is a web-based social communication tool that enables people to communicate with each other by sharing and consuming information (Singh and Singh, 2018). The rise and popularity of social media has made it one of the biggest advertising weapons in the world, and people can be easily selected as target audiences through big data. The most important part of it is the revolution it brings to the concept of e-commerce (the idea of buying everyday items from a store). In this way, a person can easily get the product he wants at his doorstep without having to go outside his home. So, it's all possible through social media. Therefore, the use of social media is becoming more and more widespread (Minhas, 2022).

According to statistics, from January 2023 to January 2024, the number of social media users worldwide increased by 320 million. By 2024, the total number of social media users worldwide is expected to reach 5.17 billion. The average person uses 6.7 different social networks per month. According to social media's advertising statistics, Facebook remains the advertising giant, with Facebook being the most used platform by marketers worldwide (89%). Instagram ranked second (80 percent). Instagram, once the social platform of choice for influencers, is now facing competition from TikTok. TikTok has completely transformed itself into a must-have digital platform for brands. TikTok expects to have more than 2 billion users by 2024. Younger consumers and smaller influencers currently dominate the platform (50+ must-know social media marketing

statistics for 2024, 2024).

The social media I study is China's Douyin, which is similar to TikTok (TikTok overseas version), two smart phone short video social applications, both founded and operated by Chinese mainland Bytedance company. In China, Douyin as the most active social media with daily users, has a very important impact on the development of e-commerce in China. The rise of Douyin has been a surprise. Since its launch in 2016, the app has quickly become one of the most popular social media platforms in China, with more than 1 billion active users. Today, Douyin is not only an entertainment platform, but also a powerful marketing tool. Brands and companies use the app to appeal to young Chinese consumers who are increasingly turning away from traditional advertising channels such as television and print media. Such is the impact of Douyin on consumer behavior that it has even given rise to a new industry of "Douyin marketing" agencies dedicated to helping brands leverage the app's vast user base and unique features to increase their reach and engagement (Douyin: The rise of chinese video app - media scope group 2023).

## 1.2 Problem Statement

In the fast-growing e-commerce space, social media platforms, particularly China's Tiktok—Douyin, are becoming key to influencing consumer behavior (Loch , 2023). While the global impact of social media on consumer purchases is widely recognized, Douyin's specific impact - particularly on the shopping decisions of Chinese consumers in their 20s and 30s - remains underexplored. This oversight is significant given Douyin's unique integration of e-commerce features, such as live streaming and influencer collaborations, which presumably have a different impact on consumer behavior than more traditional platforms like Facebook or Instagram (Riethmueller, 2024). The study aims to fill this gap by focusing on how Douyin's interactive and personalized e-commerce features influence young consumers' purchasing decisions, which is crucial for marketers aiming to tap into China's huge market of young consumers. Understanding these dynamics will also provide effective recommendations for digital marketing strategies.

Unlike other traditional social media platforms, Douyin encourages interactive engagement and blurs the line between entertainment and commerce.(chen, 2022) How does this interaction affect the shopping behavior of Chinese youth?

Due to the algorithm personalization, complex algorithms are used to provide personalized content to users. This personalization can not only increase user engagement, but also influence purchasing decisions by displaying tailored ads and product recommendations (chen, 2022).

Like Instagram, there are a large number of influencers on Douyin who have significant influence over their followers. How can platforms use these influencers to influence consumer trust and purchase intentions in the 20-30 age group?

Douyin seamlessly integrates e-commerce capabilities into its platform, allowing users to make purchases without leaving the app. This integration facilitates a smooth transition



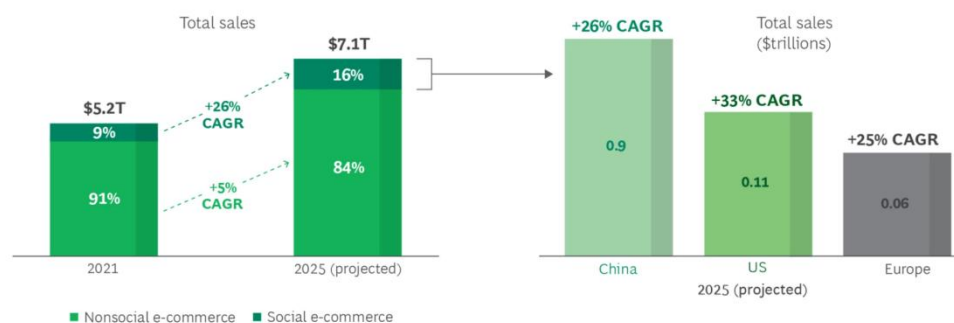
from "discover" to "buy," allowing consumers to watch live streams on the software and place orders right away. How does this integration affect the consumer's shopping journey, from product discovery to the final purchase decision? And so on, there are still many problems to be discovered and examined.

## 1.3 Research Justification

The pandemic has accelerated the digital transformation of the Chinese economy, especially in business-to-consumer (B2C) and business-to-business (B2B) applications. Digitalization has huge significance for China's economy, especially for the younger generation of China. (Understanding Chinese consumers: Growth Engine of the ... 2021) The convergence of e-commerce and social media, known as social commerce, is changing the traditional e-commerce model. In the future, social commerce is expected to grow significantly, indicating a shift in the way consumers shop online. (Wu et al., 2023) Douyin, known for its user-friendly video creation tools and algorithm-driven content recommendations, has become a significant cultural phenomenon in China. It influences fashion and beauty trends among young consumers, offers new career opportunities as content creators or internet celebrities, and integrates e-commerce directly into the app, which influences consumer behavior significantly. (Douyin: The rise of chinese video app - media scope group 2023)

Platforms like Douyin have accelerated this shift by melding lifestyle, entertainment, and marketing into a single interactive platform. Research shows that product personalization

Exhibit 2 - Social Commerce Is a Rapidly Growing Segment of E-Commerce



Sources: eMarketer; Forrester; Statista; BCG analysis.

and loyalty to the platform have a significant positive impact on users' purchase decisions. These factors directly promote the user's purchase behavior. The improvement of users' sense of trust and value to the host will enhance platform loyalty, and the increase of such loyalty will in turn increase users' purchase intention. Douyin's recommendation algorithm and personalized content can significantly increase the user's stay time on the platform, which is positively correlated with the user's purchase probability (chen, 2022). Entrepreneurs use Douyin's algorithms' preferences for specific content, such as trending topics or a particular style of video, to design livestreaming and video content that will capture consumers' attention. These content strategies are

designed to attract specific groups of consumers and increase their interest in the product and their willingness to buy it (Wang & Cao, 2024). Researchers have identified eight characteristics of social media influencers - homogeneity, expertise, trustworthiness, trustworthiness, alignment with products, entertainment value, informational value, and attractiveness - that are moderately to highly correlated with customer engagement and purchase intent. Of all the attributes analyzed, the entertainment value of social media influencers has the strongest correlation with customer engagement. More than any other attribute, an influencer's trustworthiness influences purchase intentions (Ao et al., 2023). The endorsement of Tiktok influencer significantly improves the brand image and consumers' perception of lifestyle, which in turn increases consumers' willingness to buy these products. Digital influencers play a very important role in marketing and their significant impact on consumer behavior, especially in industries such as skincare, where brand perception and lifestyle associations play a crucial role in consumer purchasing decisions (Sari, Sumarwan, and Munandar, 2024). It is believed that social media has triggered e-commerce because social media keeps everyone informed of new trends and products. Social media creates superiority among online brands and goods, therefore, the development of e-commerce will contribute to economic growth (Minhas, 2022).

These related studies all show that social media plays a very important role in consumers' shopping decisions. While studies such as those by Ao et al. (2023) and Sari, Sumarwan, and Munandar (2024) demonstrate the broad impact of influencers on consumer behavior globally, however, since China's Tiktok (douyin) platform and the international version of TikTok are different audience groups, there is currently a lack of international knowledge about the impact of China's Douyin on consumers' shopping decisions, especially on young people aged 20-30. People in this age group tend to be pioneers in adopting new technologies and digital platforms. They tend to be active users of social media and are more likely to engage in e-commerce through these platforms. By focusing on the 20-30 age group, researchers can gain valuable insights into the dynamics of modern consumer behavior, the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies, and the future of e-commerce integration within social media platforms. I think it is very necessary to study this topic, which will explore more about the growing importance of social media marketing and its significant impact on consumer behavior, especially the platform Douyin. Studying the influence of Douyin on the shopping decisions of a young group is also conducive to further exploring how the functions of e-commerce should be adjusted in the face of specific groups of social media, as well as the economic impact of the operation of social media in China on e-commerce.

## **1.4 Research Questions**

Considering that there is insufficient evidence on Douyin's important role in influencing consumer behavior, especially on young people in China, it is necessary to raise the following research questions.

### **How do the functions of Douyin affect the shopping decisions of young consumers aged 20-30?**

I will use qualitative research methods and conduct semi-structured interviews to gain an in-depth understanding of how Douyin's live broadcasts, influencer promotions, and short video content meet user needs and how these contents affect their purchasing decisions.

### **How do Douyin users aged 20-30 describe their engagement with the platform's interactive e-commerce features?**

This question aims to delve deeper into the user experience, focusing on interactive elements such as instant purchases during live broadcasts, and how these features impact shopping decisions.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Introduction to the Literature Review**

With the continuous change and development of people's lifestyle, e-commerce model has quickly become a very popular fashion shopping way. Nowadays, online shopping is very common, and people's lifestyles are becoming more and more convenient, and transactions are becoming more and more digital. In China, Douyin is one of the most popular social media e-commerce apps in China. As one of China's largest and most engaging platforms, Douyin has more than 700 million daily active users, with users spending an average of 2 hours a day on the app. Because Douyin's cutting-edge algorithm can push a lot of content that interests users, it has contributed to the amazing growth of users in recent years. In 2022, Douyin's social e-commerce transaction volume will reach 1.41 trillion yuan (\$208 billion), an increase of 76% over last year (WARC, 2023). It is attractive because they can view short videos that last for about 10-30 seconds. Douyin, which started as a platform for users to share their own 15-second videos, has now evolved into a social e-commerce platform (Red Digital, 2021). Subsequently, Douyin added new e-commerce features to its platform, which achieved significant growth within two years. More than two-thirds of online shoppers in China have heard of Douyin's live streaming shopping (100ec.cn, 2023). Currently, Douyin has become one of the most popular online shopping platforms. This study will focus on Douyin, a social media, and explore in depth "How does Douyin influence consumers' purchasing decisions?" and "How do Douyin users aged 20-30 describe their participation in the platform's interactive e-commerce functions?" In-depth Study the user experience, pay attention to the impact of interactive functions and user participation on their consumption decisions.

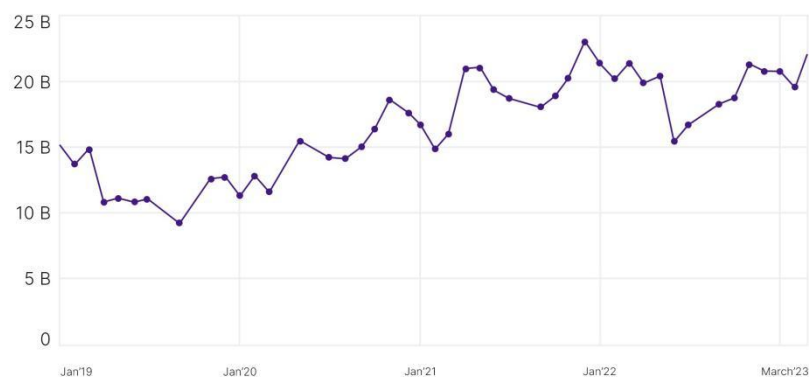
## 2.2 Overview of E-Commerce and Social Media

### 2.2.1 E-commerce

E-commerce is the process of conducting business online through sales transactions and information exchange. E-commerce began in the 1960s, when organizations began using electronic data interchange (EDI) to transfer business documents back and forth. Online shopping took off in the 1990s and has become a phenomenon today. The first ever online purchase was a Sting CD, sold by US retailer NetMarket on August 11, 1994 (Bloomenthal, 2024). With the advancement and popularization of computer technology, e-commerce has developed rapidly in the 21st century. It has brought significant changes in business areas such as supply chain management, employment, marketing, etc (Wienclaw, 2021). E-commerce operates in different types of segments and can be conducted through computers, tablets, smartphones, and other smart devices. Nowadays, almost anything can be purchased through e-commerce, which makes e-commerce very competitive (Bloomenthal, 2024).

Following a surge in traffic in 2020, traffic continued to grow at a slower pace in 2021 and 2022, although the average growth rate during the three-year period remained at an impressive 18%. Despite a temporary drop in traffic during the summer of 2022, rates rebounded across the board in early 2023. By the end of the first quarter of 2023, traffic was up 8%, surpassing the highest level for all of 2022 and approaching the industry's all-time high peak in December 2021 (Zhukova, 2023). The e-commerce industry has provided consumers with a more convenient way to shop and merchants with sales channels that differ from traditional business models, thereby reducing costs. Global retail e-commerce sales are expected to reach \$7.391 trillion in 2025, nearly half of 2012's total retail sales of approximately \$16 trillion (Emarketer, 2022).

**Ecommerce Industry Traffic Trend, Global 2019-2023**

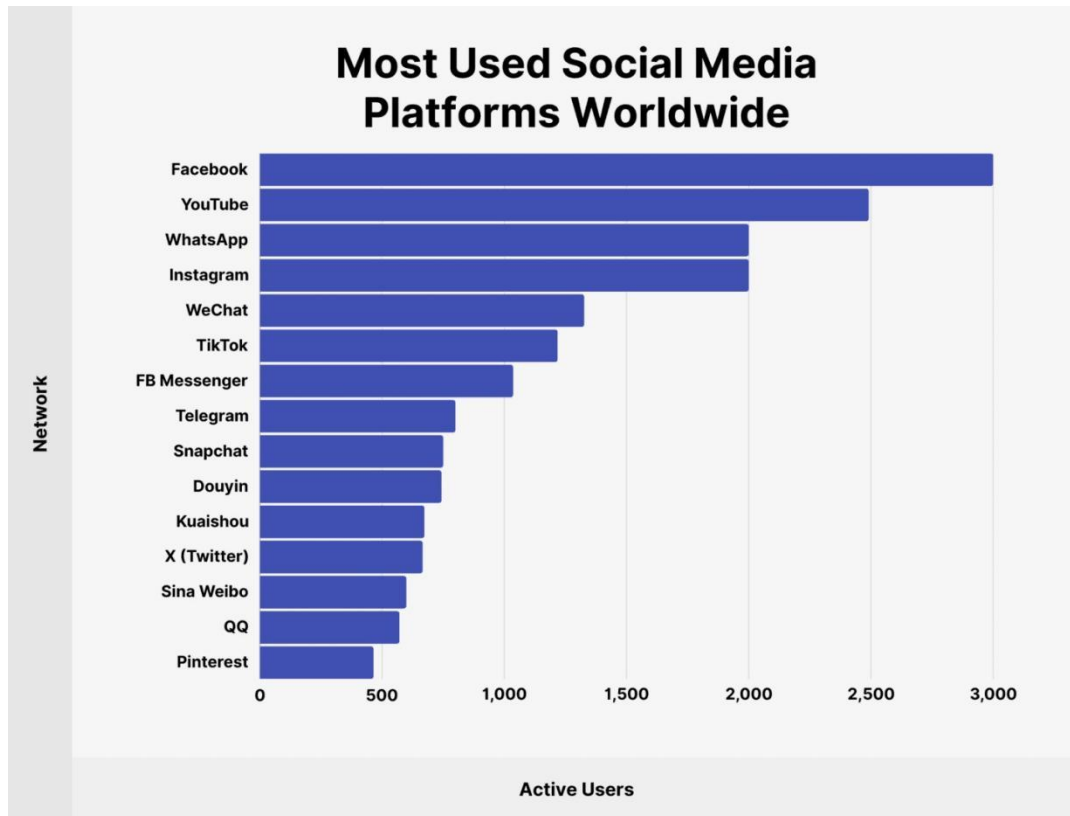


Source: Semrush .Trends



## **2.2.2 Social Media**

The concept of social media began in the mid-to-late 1990s, when Internet users first gained the ability to create their own websites through servers such as Geocities. Social media is divided into several areas. Any application that allows users to create profiles and build friend lists is considered a social network. The most popular example is Facebook, which was founded in 2004 and had more than 2.96 billion monthly active users as of January 2023 (Cooper, 2023). The total user base of social networking platforms has almost tripled over the past decade, from 970 million in 2010 to 4.95 billion in October 2023. 61.4% of the global population uses social media, including 80.8% of those over the age of 18 (D.says: et al., 2024). Nowadays, with the development of information technology, social media such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn are the most popular platforms at the moment. These platforms have become an integral part of many brands' marketing strategies, providing brands with the ability to create and share relevant, engaging, and visually appealing content. This content can be shared with a global audience at a low cost, making it an ideal platform for both small and large businesses. There has been a lot of research done on the impact of social media on brand marketing. Overall, it's generally accepted that social media can significantly impact a brand's marketing efforts (Sushma, Khan, and Kruthika, 2023). Social media has transformed marketing and consumer engagement, with traditional million-dollar television ads no longer the primary drivers of purchase intent. Instead, social media has become the world's largest referral program, with people referring products and services through these platforms. Moreover, the age of expensive newspaper subscriptions is waning as individuals receive more pertinent and timely information for free through social media. This can be accessed from the comfort of one's home or on-the-go using mobile devices. Consequently, consumer transactions, ranging from buying baby carriages to creating wills, have become more convenient and cost-effective for buyers, while businesses experience increased profitability (Cramer-Flood, 2022).



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### 2.2.3 Social Media role in E-Commerce

Unlike a decade ago, the Internet has developed into a common household commodity. Social networking sites and e-commerce sites have experienced a period of tremendous growth (Lee and Fung, 2007). Social media has become an increasingly familiar platform in e-commerce for marketing services and resources to existing and potential customers.(Singh and Singh, 2018) There are surveys and studies showing that global e-commerce will be the future shopping model, and people are willing to accept these changes because people think it will save their time and competitiveness and diversify, and they will have more choices with just one click. So, the whole process of e-commerce is accompanied by the integration of social media to modernize life and also make shopping easier for people (Minhas et al., 2022). User-generated content, such as reviews and recommendations, is an important factor influencing purchasing decisions. Discounts and promotions also spread quickly through social media, increasing the sense of urgency to buy ( Detweiler, 2023). Social media e-commerce is the practice of using social media to market an e-commerce business by increasing brand awareness, increasing online awareness, expanding the customer base and even increasing sales. 99% of social media users access apps via mobile devices (West, 2024).

According to the commonground digital website, social media has had a significant impact on the e-commerce industry by providing various promotional tools to marketers.

Established social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube contribute significantly to the traffic generated by e-commerce websites. The widespread use of social media has also promoted the development of e-commerce, which helps build brand awareness and adopt different marketing methods, such as working with influencers for promotion and introducing products through live broadcasts. This can create a deeper connection with your target customers through social media. Additionally, social media advertising can help businesses generate more conversions. 27% of respondents to the Digital 2020 report said they discovered new brands and products through social media advertising. Currently, social media plays a very important role in driving brands' online sales. For example, if certain products have a large amount of exposure online, such as videos or pictures with high views, this will greatly increase brand awareness and allow for more direct communication with target consumers through promotions and targeted advertising. Additionally, social media can provide insights into what competitors are doing, showing companies different ways to reach their target audiences. Social media can help organizations measure consumer interest in their products and services. It is also easier for businesses to understand and analyze consumer sentiment through comments and interactions on social media (Chouffani, 2022).

Instagram has grown into a significant e-commerce platform due to its visual nature and high engagement. Brands use Instagram to showcase products through high-quality images and videos, leverage influencer partnerships, and engage directly with customers through comments and direct messages (Khasturi, 2023). Instagram Shops are particularly popular among younger generations. Currently, in the US, Gen Z and Millennials are the social network users most likely to have made at least one purchase through social channels. Using the Shopify integration, brands can automatically sync products to Instagram and create shoppable posts and ads (Stanley, 2024).

Unlike Instagram's user base, people in the 25 to 34 age group tend to spend more time on Facebook. Facebook allows brands to create detailed customer profiles and deliver targeted ads based on user behavior, demographics, and interests (Social Commerce: Integrating Social Media into your strategy 2024). Facebook Shop allows businesses to display and sell their products directly on Facebook. It is designed to help businesses create online storefronts and manage their inventory, orders, and payments through Facebook. On the other hand, Facebook Marketplace lets users buy and sell goods and services within their local community. It is primarily designed for individual sellers, allowing them to list used or new items for sale (Oshafi, 2024).

However, Instagram and Facebook have been integrating shopping features such as Instagram Shop and Marketplace, but these features are often not seamlessly integrated into the user's social experience, and often redirect users to external websites for the final transaction. Instagram's approach with Reels and Shop tabs is more focused on integrating commerce into the existing social experience, but still lacks the depth of integration in the TikTok (Douyin) model (Jones, 2020).

## **2.3 Specific Focus on Douyin**

### **2.3.1 Douyin's Development**

Due to China's regulations on the Internet, many websites and apps that are popular in the United States are inaccessible in China unless they access them using a virtual private network (VPN). As a result, China has developed its own alternatives to replace many popular social networks (Highhouse, 2023). Douyin(TikTok), a short video platform owned by ByteDance, is hugely popular in China's social media space (Su, 2023). Douyin and TikTok, while sharing the same parent company and core functions, cater to different audiences due to regional restrictions (Azoya, 2023). TikTok is the international version and is available all over the world except for China, where it is called Douyin. Launched in September 2016, TikTok made waves in the social media space by enabling users to create short videos up to three minutes long, and has become one of the most popular social media apps to date (D'Souza, 2024). In the future, software applications such as short video Douyin(TikTok) will have a bigger market and better development prospects (Su, 2021).

### **2.3.2 Features**

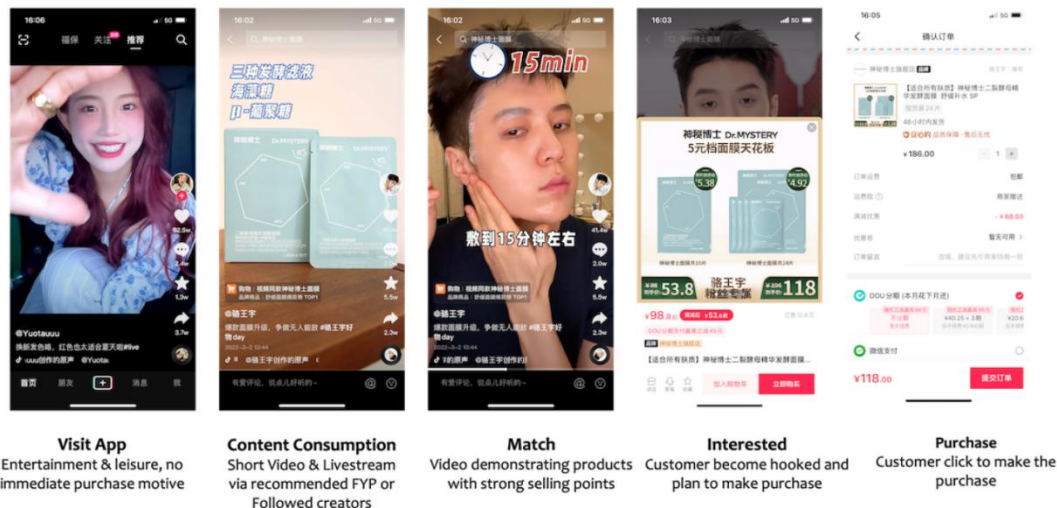
#### **Short Videos**

The platform allows users to create, watch and share 15-second videos taken on mobile devices or webcams. With its personalized quirky short video Settings, music and sound effects, the app is known for its addictive quality and high level of engagement. A lot of businesses are jumping on board and using it as a way to educate audiences and promote their products (D'Souza, 2024). TikTok's algorithms, based on FACT (field, alliance, campaign, top-koal), are becoming increasingly important (Red Digital, 2021). These are key points to help the Douyin brand expand sales on China's social e-commerce platforms. Douyin stands out among the many shopping platforms due to its unique features, which attract a large number of Chinese users. Its advertising ecosystem is efficient and offers a variety of formats to meet different marketing goals (Penny, 2023). Advanced algorithms play a key role in Douyin advertising, automatically adjusting audience groups, regions, and exposure times based on collected user data (Azoya, 2023). This precision increases conversion rates. On Chinese social e-commerce platforms, Douyin's short videos can provide a straightforward and enjoyable way to purchase goods (Red Digital, 2021). Regarding the attributes of Douyin's short video clips, the e-commerce model allows users to easily click on a product link within the video (Chen, 2022). Additionally, similar to Taobao, Douyin offers various promotions and



packages to customers, resulting in increased sales within a short period of time. Advertising and support platform policies have brought about an increase in traffic and conversion rates for brand Douyin Live.

### Customer journey in Douyin



## KOLs

KOL stands for Key Opinion Leaders. Partnering with other creators will help brand messages appear in more streams and increase sales (Hirose, 2023). When video creators on douyin accumulate a certain number of followers, a company will partner with them. They will post interesting and unique content for certain products to attract users who are interested in the video content and in turn become curious about the product. Users can then click on a link on the video page to view the product and eventually make a purchase. This is called dynamic advertising. Brands can use short videos of 5 – 60 seconds to appear as native ads on the Douyin feed. These ads have a high visual impact and blend seamlessly into the flow of information, enabling brands to quickly achieve their marketing goals (Douyin, KOL Marketing, cited in Chen, 2022). Many creators have flocked to Douyin to provide unique entertainment content. Brands use this platform to find KOLs or use skits to promote their products. Douyin creators have a large fan base and followers who enjoy entertainment and skit shows. Collaborating with content creators to feature products in their skits not only fosters a strong relationship between the brand and the creator, but also enhances consumer trust in the brand due to their admiration for the creator (Red Digital, 2021). Furthermore, Douyin boasts a top KOL. By working with Douyin's contracted Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs) and leveraging the reach of internet celebrities or stars, products can gain significant exposure to a large and engaged audience (Chen, 2022).

## Live Streaming

According to digitalcrew, live streaming is a feature of Douyin and is often used to promote products. By occasionally streaming live videos, brands can directly connect with customers and build strong relationships with them. Providing daily real-time updates can make them a part of customers' daily lives, offering new content and value packages (Jakwatanatham, 2022). Brand Douyin live is becoming more and more popular, accounting for an increasing share of total sales, and high-value brands have achieved great success (XU, 2024).

Several brands have joined the ranks of Douyin Live streaming, with ZARA's four-hour show attracting an impressive 1.22 million views, with 13,000 simultaneous viewers at its peak. Zara's previous live stream averaged less than 200,000 views. However, the GMV for the latest livestream is between 250,000 yuan (\$35,133) and 500,000 yuan (\$70,265) (Wang, 2023). Douyin makes full use of live streaming for sales, with influencers and brands showcasing products in real time, engaging with viewers and facilitating instant purchases. This approach is more integrated and utilized on Douyin compared to Facebook and Instagram (Yu & Huang, 2022).

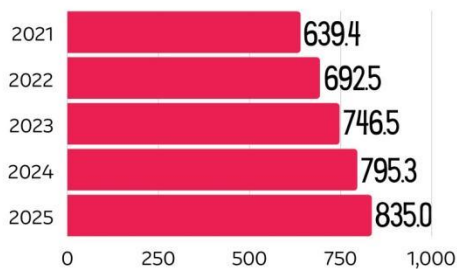
Douyin is increasingly using AI technology to enhance its live e-commerce capabilities. Companies such as Silicon Intelligence and Xiaoice are at the forefront of developing AI streamers that can simulate human interactions, allowing them to conduct live sales on Douyin. These AI streamers can respond to live comments, adjust marketing strategies in real time, and even express emotions based on audience interactions and sales performance (Yang, 2023). Virtual anchors are sweeping the live streaming ecosystem, with many brands, including L'Oréal, KANS, Perfectdiary, and others, choosing virtual anchors to appear in their live broadcast rooms (How to do douyin marketing: The great access to over 743 users 2023). There are many companies in Southeast Asia that hire creators on a contract basis to help them sell products on TikTok Shop 24/7. It would be easy for these companies to turn to AI anchors, thereby reducing employment opportunities for human anchors. In fact, the income of these anchors in China has dropped by 20% compared to last year. How to establish a real connection with fans like a real human creator is a big problem (Choudhary, 2023).



## 2.3.3 User Base

When taking into account the number of active users on each social media platform, TikTok ranks first as the fifth most popular platform. TikTok for iOS dominates with 30.8 million daily active users (Shepherd, 2024). By 2023, Douyin had 746.5 million monthly active users, making it the second most popular app in China after wechat, which has 1.3 billion users. The number of Douyin users in China is expected to grow to 835 million by 2025. From the perspective of gender distribution, male users account for a slightly larger proportion, accounting for 54% of the total number of Douyin users. Although Douyin is considered one of the Chinese apps for young people, 65% of Douyin users are under the age of 35. But in fact, it is expanding to other age groups. The number of senior daily active users is growing as the app has introduced many features in recent years, such as e-commerce integration and live streaming capabilities becoming popular (VEROT, 2023).

## DOUYIN USER DEMOGRAPHICS

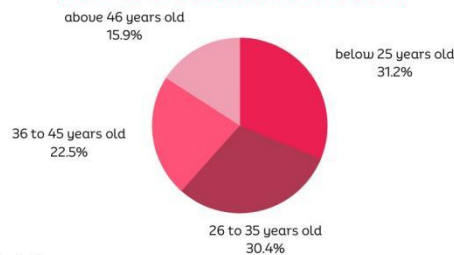


### GENDER DISTRIBUTION



of users check Douyin on their smartphones. This number will grow up to 87% in 2025.

### AGE DISTRIBUTION

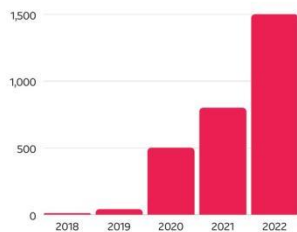


GMA

## 2.3.4 E-commerce Revenue

As can be seen from the chart below, e-commerce revenue is growing rapidly from 2018 to 2022. Revenue appears to have started at a very modest figure in 2018 and increased substantially year over year, peaking in 2022. Revenue grew 25% year-over-year in 2022, while 2021 was even stronger at 68%. In terms of transaction volume, the transaction volume of livestreaming commerce on Douyin has risen sharply from 10 billion yuan in 2018 to about 1.5 trillion yuan (about 200 billion U.S. dollars) in 2022.

## DOUYIN ECOMMERCE REVENUE



The transaction value of live-streaming commerce grew from 10 billion yuan in 2018 to 1500 billion (~\$200 billion) in 2022.



\$20B.

It's Douyin's goal for the 2023 local life services unit.

25%

revenue year-on-year growth in 2022, compared to 68% in 2021.

\$85B.

is the total ByteDance revenue from 2022

GMA

Douyin reported \$274 billion in e-commerce sales in the first ten months of 2023. Last Single's Day, it achieved 119% year-on-year and is rapidly gaining market share from

rivals Taobao and Tmall. According to Shanghai Securities, the GMV of beauty products on Taobao decreased by 6.1% to \$2.2 billion, while Douyin beauty experienced a 60.4% surge to \$1.9 billion from January to August 2023 (Azoya, 2023).

The emergence of Douyin has not only changed people's leisure and entertainment habits and preferences for watching videos. It gave rise to modern Tiktok culture and has had a significant impact on the speed at which information spreads. Douyin (Tiktok) is a commercial platform with commercial realization as its fundamental attribute, but because businesses want to achieve profit, the user experience is actually contradictory. And because the barriers to entry in the industry are low, anyone can post videos on the platform and get traffic. At present, the short video industry is very competitive. And this also brings about a rough advertising model; some content is mixed with advertising, and the content of the entire platform is very mixed, which also greatly affects the user experience.

## **2.4 Consumer Behavior and Marketing Strategies of Douyin**

Marketing strategy is determined by its interaction with consumer decisions. A good marketing strategy is to provide products that can meet the needs of consumers (Yunus, 2023). Douyin's marketing positioning strategy is "vertical". The fast-paced life makes people only pay attention to the content that interests them (Pu et al., 2023).

### **2.4.1 Algorithmic Targeting and Personalization**

Douyin short videos have made many users dependent on it due to the effectiveness of its recommendation algorithm. The platform's recommendation system uses collaborative filtering technology and efficient interaction design to attract users to continue using it. As the frequency of user use increases, the accuracy of algorithm predictions also increases. This algorithm design not only meets the needs of users, but also positively promotes users' continued participation in Douyin (Zhao, 2021). The more a user interacts with a particular type of content, such as liking or watching a video for a longer period of time, the more similar content the algorithm will customize for their feed (Boeker & Urman, 2022). The user's perception of the algorithm affects their interaction with the platform. Educated users, aware of algorithmic personalization, may try to manipulate their feeds by strategically interacting with content in order to influence what is pushed. Content creators can also use their understanding of algorithms to improve the visibility of their posts through strategies such as keyword optimization (Wang & Cao, 2024). Douyin encourages active participation, such as responding to comments and joining platform challenges, which can increase a user's visibility. The platform's algorithms reward these interactions, and users and brands can effectively increase their exposure and influence (Douyin algorithm: TIPS for enhanced visibility 2023).

Other studies have pointed out that the ability of the algorithm to cater to user preferences, while helping to increase user engagement, may increase addiction and reduce contact (Zhao, 2021). This can lead to a so-called "echo chamber" effect, where users are primarily exposed to content that reinforces their existing beliefs, thus limiting their exposure to a wider range of perspectives (Traverso, 2021). There is also an impact on mental health. The algorithms used by Douyin can cause content to spiral and negatively impact users, especially if the content triggers or reinforces negative behavior (How is TikTok affecting our mental health? It's complicated, new U of M study shows 2023).

Therefore, Douyin needs a more balanced algorithmic strategy that takes into account both user engagement and the potential social and psychological impact of how content is curated and presented.

## **2.4.2 User Engagement Strategies**

Douyin's livestreaming feature allows for real-time interaction between brands and users. This feature is especially useful for product demos, Q&A sessions, and interactive events. And, the seamlessly integrated capabilities of e-commerce can minimize the steps they need to purchase products displayed in videos or live broadcasts, guiding users to place orders quickly (Zhang, 2022). Douyin encourages users to generate short video content and participate through challenges and hashtags. These activities not only increase user engagement, but also help the viral spread of content and increase the visibility of the topic across the platform (How to do douyin marketing: The great access to over 743 users 2023). Additionally, Douyin added the "e-commerce member" function, users can click on the page to recommend brand members, immediately join, after authorization can receive merchant membership cards, users can receive points, coupons. For merchants, the establishment of a member system, providing member points, birthday gifts, coupons, invitation vouchers, lottery and other member activities, can strengthen customer loyalty, help sales transformation (Yu &Huang, 2022).

## **2.4.3 Brand Integration and Promotion**

Accurate brand positioning can help brands gain advantages. Then according to the matching of consumers' fixed consumption habits, precise positioning is carried out.Brands attract attention through attractive account avatars and names, and use conversion portals to link to shopping sites. In terms of content, choose the right video theme and style, convey the message clearly through subtitles, and use infectious music to enhance the user experience, so as to enhance user identification and interaction with the brand (Pu et al., 2023).

At Douyin, every user has the opportunity to gain attention and exposure through video creation. Lancome has launched a "Foundation Holding Time Challenge" on Tiktok, where all creators can participate in the challenge, and the 30 creators with the highest video views have a chance to win a full-size foundation. The event attracted the participation of many creators, and eventually the total number of views of short videos related to the challenge exceeded 200 million, and the number of followers of Lancome's official account also increased by 28,000 (Yu &Huang, 2022). Brands like Under Armour have adopted a strategy of high-frequency content delivery, producing up to 20 videos per day. This approach saturates user dynamics, increases user stickiness, and drives traffic to their live events. Although some of the video content is repetitive, this strategy effectively utilizes Tiktok's algorithms to increase exposure on the platform (Riethmueller, 2024). However, consumers seemed to have little interest in purchasing from brand accounts during live broadcasts. For brands without a solid fan base and relying heavily on live broadcasts, it may be challenging to maintain long-term user stickiness and convert it into sales. Douyin's strict requirements for discounts may also reduce the value of brands in the long run (CHEN, 2020). Spes, a niche hair care brand, has achieved rapid sales growth on Tiktok e-commerce, which is due to the integration of content strategy and Tiktok scene experience. This also shows that the influence of the brand on Tiktok is inseparable from the quality of the created content (Yu &Huang, 2022).

## **2.4.4 Influencer Partnerships**

Douyin has had a significant impact on consumer behavior in China, especially through influencer marketing. The entertainment value of the platform primarily attracts users, but those seeking social connection are often more susceptible to influencers. This trend reflects broader changes in consumer behavior in China, where social media interactions, especially on platforms such as Douyin, play a crucial role in shaping purchasing decisions. Research shows that users who interact with Douyin for social reasons establish stronger parasocial relationships with influencers, leading to higher purchase intentions (Yang&Ha, 2021). In addition, there is a positive relationship between consumers watching short videos and buying Tiktok e-commerce. The likability of video creators and live business anchors also affects consumer behavior.(Wei, 2023) Lululemon has expertly used Douyin to promote new and limited-edition products, setting its strategy apart from the broader focus of its Tmall store. By inviting professional sports influencers to participate in live broadcasts, Lululemon enhances the appeal and relevance of its content, leveraging expert advice to increase product awareness. (Riethmueller, 2024) Engagement rate and praise rate are both measures of user engagement. The value of working with Kols can be seen through the large number of comments and shares of short videos (WARC, 2023). Video creators use Douyin to realize their desire to express themselves and get attention. Most consumers are impulsive consumers willing to pay for online education (Ma, 2020).

However, working with KOLs on Douyin has some potential negative impacts on consumer decision-making. If consumers perceive endorsements as inauthentic, they do

not always lead to sustained purchase intent. In addition, over-reliance on KOLs can obscure the brand's own attention, making consumer engagement heavily dependent on the KOL's presence and popularity, which is not friendly to long-term strategic goals (Yuan et al., 2022). In addition, when the KOL's endorsement is inconsistent with the brand's values or the practicality of the product, it may cause consumers to distrust or doubt the KOL and the brand, thereby reducing the brand's credibility and affecting the brand image (Digital Crew, 2023).

## **2.4.5 Consumer Data Usage and Privacy Concerns**

The consumer behavior and marketing strategies employed by Tiktok, while having a positive impact on consumer engagement, also raise significant privacy concerns due to data practices. While Tiktok has effectively captured and retained users' attention through customized content and interactive marketing, the platform's approach to data collection and privacy management raises important ethical and practical questions. These extensive data collections for personalized marketing also pose a risk to user privacy and can affect consumer trust and behavior (Lin, 2022).

Such as issues related to consumer privacy, the impact of algorithmic bias, or the socioeconomic consequences of increased digital consumerism. Douyin reportedly collects a large amount of information about users' devices and usage patterns. This includes collecting the device's MAC address, which is a unique identifier. This level of data collection is more extensive than many international platforms, raising concerns about excessive tracking of users and a lack of privacy (Lin, 2022).

Douyin operates under a strict regulatory framework in China, which greatly affects its data privacy practices. The platform is known for its opaque process around government data and content review requests, with limited transparency about how authorities access or review user information (Staff, 2022). There is no research showing that Douyin and Tiktok collect contact lists, record and send photos, audio, video, or geolocation coordinates without user permission. Although Douyin does not exhibit obvious malicious behavior, it contains some features that raise privacy and security issues, such as dynamic code loading and server-side search censorship. TikTok does not include these features (Lin, 2021).

## **2.5 Synthesis of the Literature**

In synthesizing the existing literature, it becomes evident that the convergence of social media and e-commerce, particularly through platforms such as Douyin, is fundamentally reshaping consumer behavior. This synthesis highlights that while the impact of social media on e-commerce is well-documented globally, the specific mechanisms through which Douyin influences young adult consumers in China (aged 20-30) are less understood. This demographic is pivotal as they represent a digitally savvy cohort that is deeply engaged with Douyin's interactive features. Existing literature tends to generalize the impact of influencers across various platforms without sufficient focus on Douyin's



unique integration of e-commerce functionalities, such as live streaming, influencer collaborations, and algorithm-driven content personalization. These features potentially drive consumer behavior differently compared to more traditional social media platforms like Facebook or Instagram. This study aims to fill these gaps by delineating how Douyin's specific features influence purchasing decisions, thereby enriching our understanding of social media's evolving role in modern e-commerce landscapes. This approach not only addresses the shortcomings in the current research landscape but also underscores the necessity for future studies to consider the unique attributes of platforms like Douyin when examining their impact on consumer behavior.

## **3. Research Methodology**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter outlines the methodology used in this study to explore the impact of Douyin, a Chinese social media platform, on consumer behavior, specifically focusing on how personalization features on Douyin influence the purchasing decisions of consumers aged 20-30 years old. The study adopts a qualitative approach, using semi-structured interviews to gain insight into the experiences and perceptions of individuals who interact with social media platforms during the purchasing process.

The qualitative research design was chosen due to the need to understand complex social interactions and consumers' subjective experiences, which are not easily quantified. Qualitative research focuses on feelings, ideas, or experiences (Ugwu, 2023). Semi-structured interviews were chosen as the primary data collection method to allow for an in-depth exploration of participants' thoughts and feelings (Mashuri, 2022). This method allows for detailed exploration of individual experiences and opinions, allowing the study to capture the richness and diversity of consumers' interactions with social media.

### **3.2 Research Aims and Objectives**

#### **3.2.1 Research Aims**

My research goal is to explore and understand how social media influences young consumers' purchasing decisions. Specifically, the research will focus on interactive features on the Douyin platform, such as live streaming and KOL (key opinion leader) promotion, as well as some of the Douyin-specific interactive features with consumers, and how these features influence consumers' purchasing behavior. Through qualitative

research methods, I hope to gain a deeper understanding of how these social media features shape consumers' perceptions of brands and products and their purchasing motivations. This can provide some inspiration for other social media to achieve success, and allow merchants who want to enter the Douyin platform to have a clearer understanding of the Douyin platform.

### 3.2.2 Research Objectives

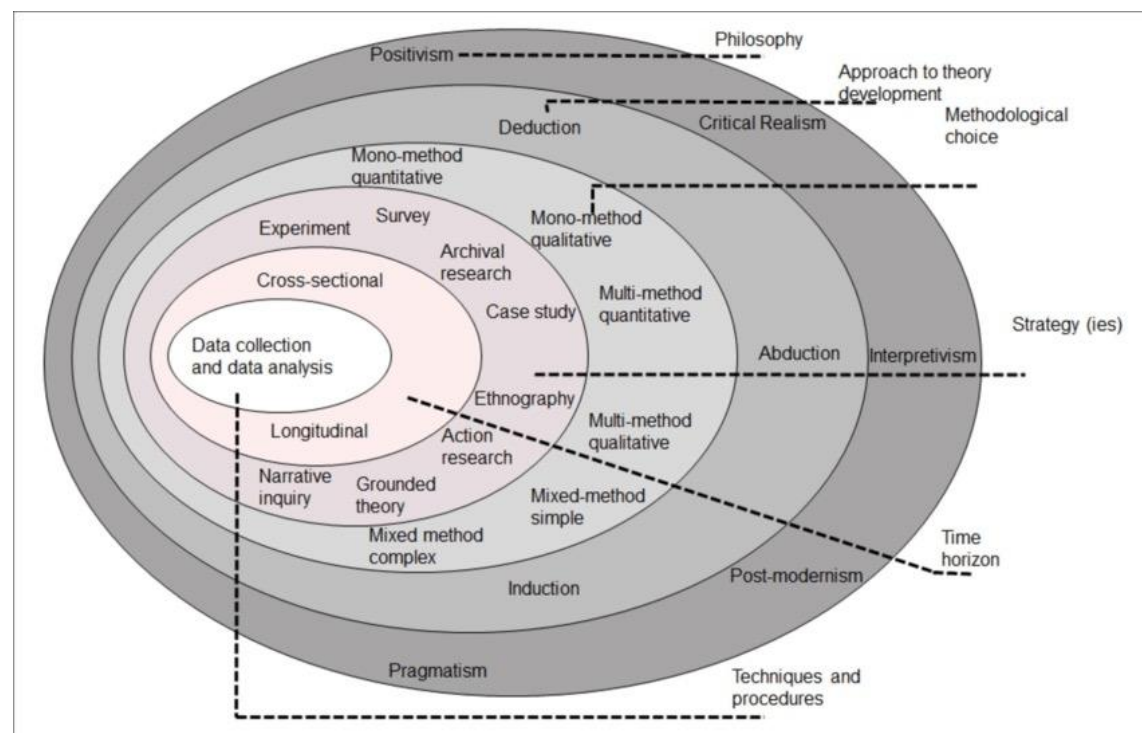
Research objective 1: Explore how Douyin's personalized recommendation algorithm shapes users' perceptions of products and their propensity to buy

Research objective 2: Analyze how influencers influences young consumers' trust in brands and their subsequent purchasing behavior.

Research objective 3 : Investigate how the seamless integration of e-commerce features within Douyin (e.g., purchase during live broadcasts) influences young consumers' shopping behavior.

Research objective 4 : Explore user experience

### 3.3 Research Design and Approach



Research onion (Saunders et al., 2019, p. 108).

The research onion of Saunders et al. (2016) describes the different decisions that need to be made when developing a research methodology. To achieve the research objectives, it is necessary to understand the participants and their behaviors, thoughts and meanings as a whole. Interpretivism in the research onion emphasizes the influence of social and cultural factors on individuals (Jansen, 2023).

The deductive approach starts with an existing theory, from which hypotheses are derived and tested through data collection. The goal is to see if the data supports the theory (Saunders et al., 2016).

The inductive approach starts with data collection and explores the phenomenon. Themes and patterns are analyzed from the data to generate theories. It is usually less structured and related to qualitative research, focusing on understanding the meaning and patterns of specific cases (Saunders et al., 2016). My research involves understanding the complex phenomenon of consumer behavior, especially focusing on experiential and psychological aspects. This is a good fit for the inductive approach. This approach allows you to gain a deeper understanding through qualitative data, generate new theories, and explore the specific impact and psychological changes of Douyin on consumer behavior.

### **3.4 Research Philosophy**

The first layer of the onion is the research philosophy, which describes the set of beliefs that the research is based on. Research philosophy can be described from an ontological or epistemological perspective (Jansen, 2023).

Ontology, a core component of the philosophical foundations of qualitative research, examines the nature of reality, questioning what constitutes existence. This inquiry is crucial as it shapes the methodological framework, influencing how phenomena are observed and interpreted within the research context (Packer, 2017). Ontology examines the existence and nature of the social world and its constituents. Researchers' ontological convictions shape their understanding of what it means for anything to exist in the domain under investigation. These commitments are evident in how they construct their research questions and what they regard to be legitimate knowledge (Packer, 2017). The ontological position of the researcher guides the choice of research techniques: either reality is objective and exists outside of human ideas or is socially produced and subjective. A subjective ontology would favor qualitative approaches, while an objective ontology may tilt toward quantitative metrics (Phillimore & Goodson, 2021). The ontological perspective affects how data is analyzed and interpreted. (Packer, 2017). It demands transparency in how researchers' ontological positions might influence their interpretations and presentations of data (Phillimore & Goodson, 2021). However, for a rapidly changing and highly personalized social media environment like Douyin, this universal discussion of ontology may not adequately capture the dynamics and diversity generated by individual user experiences. Because ontology pays more attention to the

facts of objective existence, it often ignores the importance of individual subjective experience and perception. However, in this study, the core of the research is the user's subjective experience, feelings and how to construct personal meaning through these experiences. User interaction on social media platforms is extremely complex, involving many factors such as culture, social customs, and personal preferences. Ontological studies often struggle to fully capture these complex social interactions and cultural influences because they focus more on the 'existence' of phenomena than on the 'meaning' of them.

In qualitative research, epistemology emphasizes understanding things via the subjective experiences of the participants. It refutes the concept that knowledge is solely factual and measurable, demonstrating that knowledge can also originate from personal and contextual understandings (Pernecky, 2016). Researchers may use different approaches based on their epistemological perspectives. A constructivist epistemology, for example, would promote approaches such as participant observation and in-depth interviews, which provide a more in-depth knowledge of the participants' viewpoints and experiences (Goodson & Phillimore, 2020). This approach is crucial for capturing the personal and contextual factors that influence young people's consumer behavior, which can reflect the subtle ways in which users are influenced by Douyin. Epistemology also determines how findings are confirmed. In qualitative research, validation is frequently achieved by the consistency and reasonableness of the interpretations made, rather than factual confirmation alone. This entails assessing the consistency and transferability of knowledge gathered from various contexts (University of Valencia, 2020). As a social platform integrating content creation and e-commerce, Douyin's influence is not objectively fixed, but changes with the subjective experience of users and the different social environment. Epistemology emphasizes understanding such subjective experience and situational knowledge, which is in line with the need to study the influence of social media on consumer behavior. In this study, we are concerned with how to acquire knowledge through young people's use and experience of the Tiktok platform, rather than just analyzing existing facts or phenomena. This study adopts epistemology and focuses on the individual perspective of young users to explore how they perceive and interpret the experience of using Tiktok, and how these experiences affect their consumption decisions.

Ontology asks what exists, while epistemology asks how we know that such a thing exists. An ontological perspective supporting objectivism could restrict researchers' capacity to investigate the subjective interpretations and meanings users assign to the Douyin experience. An epistemological perspective helps one understand how consumers view this medium and incorporate it into their daily life considering the dynamic and customized character of content consumption on digital platforms like Douyin. This study will adopt an epistemological philosophy, which means that this study will accumulate enough information through a qualitative in-depth interview process to understand the impact of the Douyin platform on the consumption of young people in China.

The following are three common philosophical research paradigms used to guide research methods and analysis: positivism, interpretivism, and critical theory (Blackwell, 2018).

Positivism relies on hypothetical deduction to test a priori hypotheses, which are usually stated in a quantitative manner, and derive functional relationships between causal and explanatory factors and outcomes (Ponterotto, 2005). Using this method allows researchers to make assumptions about the results, which is not necessary for my research. Critical theory attempts to reveal and challenge power structures and inequalities in society. It critically examines social and cultural phenomena, trying to expose the power dynamics that maintain certain social orders and oppress others (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016). Obviously, this theory is different from the purpose of my research. Interpretivism focuses on understanding the rich subjective realities of human beings. This approach emphasizes understanding these realities through deep qualitative inquiry, taking into account the complexity and nuances of social interactions and perceptions. It values the subjective perspectives of participants and aims to understand their experiences in situated realities (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016).

My research focuses on understanding how young consumers interact with and are influenced by the features of Douyin. As we know from the above interpretivist concepts, it emphasizes the importance of subjective experience and the meaning that individuals give to their interactions. This approach is very consistent with my goal of deeply studying the perceptions and behaviors of consumers influenced by social media. It can provide an in-depth analysis of how specific elements of Douyin influence consumer behavior, rather than quantifying or generalizing. Using an interpretivist approach will enable me to explore the subjective and different experiences of participants, thereby gaining a deep understanding of the complex factors that influence consumer behavior in the context of innovative social commerce platforms such as Douyin.

## **3.5 Research Strategy**

### **3.5.1 Research Methods**

Quantitative research usually focuses on the amount, frequency, and trend of data and is suitable for measurement and validation on known phenomena (Creswell, 2014). In the face of emerging phenomena such as Douyin platform, quantitative research requires the construction of questionnaires and experimental design based on hypotheses, which may limit the discovery of unknown or unexpected phenomena, lack of flexibility for my research, and hinder the understanding of the influence of background and environmental factors on behavior.

Patton details how qualitative research provides insight into the deep psychological and

emotional motivations behind an individual's behavior. Qualitative research methods are appropriate for exploring complex social phenomena in depth, especially when the research goal is to understand human behavior, experiences, attitudes, and motivations (Patton, 2002). This makes sense for my research, which explores Douyin's impact on consumer buying behavior, which is particularly important for understanding how social media influences user behavior. Researchers can adjust interview guidelines as needed to explore emerging topics, which is very important to my research. Creswell discusses the flexibility of qualitative research in the data collection process, allowing researchers to adapt research methods as needed to explore new or unexpected phenomena (Creswell, 2014). Douyin, as a relatively new research subject, uses qualitative methods to discover new insights and patterns. Therefore, the choice of qualitative research method can help to deeply understand the influence of Douyin on consumer behavior.

In-depth interviews are a powerful tool for exploring an individual's deep feelings and experiences, and their openness and flexibility allow researchers to tailor questions to the development of the conversation to gain insight into the participant's personal perspective (Fontana & Frey, 2005). In addition, in-depth interviews are widely used to generate theories, especially when studying new fields, and this method is able to reveal unforeseen patterns and theories (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). However, in-depth interviews are very open and may lead to a wide range of topics that are difficult to control, and the data collected from each interview may vary greatly in content and depth, which may lead to difficulties in data analysis (Kvale, 1996). Semi-structured interviews increase comparability between different interviews through a consistent question framework, which helps to systematically analyze and compare data. In order to gain an in-depth understanding of consumers' response to Douyin's marketing strategy, semi-structured interviews were chosen for this study. The flexibility and adaptability of this interview method make it ideal for exploring complex social phenomena (Bryman, 2012). In addition, Kvale (1996) pointed out that semi-structured interviews can effectively reveal participants' personal experience and deep feelings, providing the necessary depth for understanding consumer behavior. In this study, semi-structured interviews were chosen instead of in-depth interviews mainly to achieve comprehensive coverage of key topics and efficiently manage the interview process. King and Horrocks (2010) point out that semi-structured interviews provide an ideal structure for collecting in-depth and consistent data through a combination of preset questions and open dialogue. In addition, Ritchie et al. (2013) emphasize that this approach allows researchers to flexibly respond to new themes that emerge in interviews while maintaining data comparability, thus effectively supporting the construction and verification of theories. For situations where data needs to be gathered around my research question (the effect of Douyin on consumer shopping behavior), semi-structured interviews provide more structure and direction through pre-set open-ended questions, ensuring that the discussion stays focused on key topics, but remains flexible enough to explore your insights into the platform.

### **3.5.2 Data Collection**

In their 2006 study, Guest, Bunce, and Johnson explored how qualitative research determines the number of interviews conducted to achieve data saturation. Their experimental results show that after 12 interviews, the addition of new information decreases significantly, indicating that the data begins to reach saturation. After completing the initial interviews (for example, after the 6th interview), conduct a detailed data analysis to see if there is any new information generated. Based on the results of the above preliminary analysis, decide whether additional interviews are needed. If it is found that 8 interviews are sufficient, you can consider stopping. If there is still new information, you can consider continuing to increase the number of interviews. Therefore, I will prepare to select up to 12 research subjects and use a purposeful sampling method to ensure that all participants are active Douyin users and have representative online shopping experience. Each participant is between 20 and 30 years old. Each interview is expected to last 45 to 60 minutes. The interview will focus on user behavior, purchase motivation, content response, and experience feedback.

### **3.5.3 Population**

This study focuses on the influence of Douyin on the purchasing behavior of Chinese young consumers aged between 20 and 30. Users in this age group are the core active group of Douyin platform, and they not only have frequent contact with social media, but also actively participate in online shopping, making them ideal targets to understand the influence of social media (Kozinets, 2015). Considering the wide geographical differences and cultural diversity in China, residents of Zhejiang Province and Shanghai will be selected as samples for this study, as young people in these two regions generally have higher social media usage. Such a selection is useful for studying how social media influences consumer behavior within a specific region, although it may not be fully representative of the diversity of China as a whole.

To ensure the quality and depth of the data, eight participants will be recruited using convenience sampling. The main reasons for choosing this sampling method are that it is easy to implement and cost-effective, especially in preliminary exploratory studies Bryman (2016). Each participant will be selected through recruitment advertisements posted on social media and university bulletin boards, ensuring that their nationality is Chinese and that they have experience using the Douyin platform for shopping.

In general, although the number of participants selected is small, according to the study of Guest et al. (2006), even a small sample is enough to achieve data saturation in qualitative research, especially in semi-structured interviews, which is conducive to in-depth exploration and understanding of individual behaviors and motivations.

### **3.5.4 Data Analysis**

Study the innermost layer of the onion, the "data collection and analysis methods" layer. This layer is a very critical part of the research process because it is directly related to how data is acquired and processed to answer the research questions (Saunders et al., 2016). The information was collected through wechat calls and interviews with a total of 8 participants. All interviews were scheduled in advance to ensure that the interviewers had sufficient time and energy to face the interview and were informed in advance that the conversation would be included.

Interview data in this study will first be recorded and accurately transcribed to maintain the integrity and reliability of the information (Silverman, 2013). Next, the transcribed text is openly encoded using NVivo software to identify key concepts and themes, ensuring that themes are systematically extracted and integrated from the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Then, it is further integrated through thematic analysis.

### **3.6 Ethical Issues**

Throughout the study, the researchers strictly adhered to the National College of Ireland's "Guidelines and procedures for Research ethics involving human participants." All data and information stored through interviews are used for the research purposes of this paper only. In addition, the qualitative aspect of participating in this survey is voluntary. Conducting research with the highest ethical standards allows participants to remain open and honest throughout the research process. This continued until the results were analyzed. (Saunders et al., 2016).

### **3.7 Limitations to Research**

This study explores the influence of Douyin on consumer purchasing behavior through semi-structured interviews, but there are some limitations. First, the generality and extrapolation of the findings may be limited due to the small sample size (Morse, 2015). Secondly, due to regional issues, I only collected information from two regions in southern China and did not analyze other regions, which would lead to results that are more representative of a certain region of China rather than the whole country. In addition, data collection relies on participants' recalled descriptions, which can lead to memory errors or self-reported biases that affect data accuracy (Kvale, 2007).



## 4.0 Findings/Results

The main focus of this chapter is to present the results of the study and to discuss and summarize all the information obtained from this semi-structured interview. The questionnaire for this interview was designed around how Douyin influences the purchasing behavior of young Chinese consumers in their 20s and 30s. The young Chinese people who participated in this interview provided insights and perspectives to the researchers. This chapter will explore the impact of Douyin's interactive features and personalized content on consumer behavior. The eight participants in this study were Chinese young adults aged 20-30 years old who had shopping experiences on Douyin.

The table below summarizes additional information about the study participants.

Participant	Gender	Nationality	Age	The average time spent on Douyin
A	female	China	27	every day
B	male	China	21	1-2h/day
C	male	China	21	3-4h/day
D	female	China	29	2-3h/day
E	female	China	28	1h/day
F	female	China	27	0.5h/day
G	male	China	26	2h/day
H	female	China	27	0.5-1h/day

## 4.1 Personalized Algorithm

### Research objective 1

Explore how Douyin's personalized recommendation algorithm shapes users' perceptions of products and their propensity to buy

At the start of the interview, the researcher questioned the participants regarding their daily Douyin usage and frequency. Each participant said they used it as a social media tool to watch short videos on a daily basis, with an average of two hours per person per day. In the interview, we explored how Douyin's personalized recommendation algorithm shapes users' perceptions of products and their propensity to buy.

### 4.1.1 Perspective

Participant G "For example, if I stay for a long time while looking at something, it may

think that I am interested in it. And then recommend something related to it."

Participant F "It will recommend me more videos of similar products based on what I have already purchased to see if I am interested in buying them."

Most participants said that Douyin uses the algorithm to accurately recommend relevant content that might be of interest to them. And they were happy with the results, not bored. This shows that the algorithm mode of Douyin platform is relatively effective and accurate.

Participant A "I think the main reason is that it has some functions of commenting and sharing. Then these functions will enable its algorithm to study that I may have some interests and preferences. Then through such an interest preference, it will recommend me homogeneous content, and it can guess what kind of video I like. And then use it to influence what I want to see or what I might want to buy next. The preference for me will cause me to see a change in the content of the next video."

This answer emphasizes how Douyin's algorithm customizes the user experience by learning from interactions such as comments and shares, therefore impacting possible purchase decisions by adjusting the information that shows on the user's feed. From the perspective of user interaction with the Douyin algorithm, the research shows that users "train" the personalized recommendation system through their participation patterns. This interaction plays an important role in shaping the output of the algorithm, thereby influencing what content is promoted and how effectively users use the platform to maximize their visibility and impact (Eslami et al., 2015; Gran et al., 2021).

### **4.1.2 Propensity**

Participant C "Based on the videos I often view and some purchase records, it will recommend some products that I may need, and I often buy products through the recommended videos."

The majority of respondents indicated that Douyin's personalized recommendation algorithm has a significant influence on their shopping behavior. The algorithm effectively identifies user interest based on interaction times and content engagement, such as likes or comments, and subsequently tailors the content feed to show related products or videos. This often leads to increased user engagement and sometimes culminates in purchases, especially when the products displayed align well with the users' immediate needs or interests. However, not all users fully understand how the algorithm works or its impact on their content consumption. Also, not all participants were of the opinion that algorithmic recommendations have little impact on their shopping decisions, as they are relatively rational consumers.

Like Participant A said "I am not the kind of person who will be influenced by the video to consume impulsively."

This is in common with some existing research findings. Studies show that Douyin's algorithm, especially with regard to its tailored content recommendations, greatly influences customer purchase choices. For instance, a research underlined how the recommendation system of the platform uses user interactions such likes and comments to customize material that fits personal tastes, so impacting purchasing activities (Jiang, et al., 2024). This is consistent with results showing Douyin's algorithm not only raises user engagement but also creates a shopping atmosphere encouraging impulse buying with the live streaming function thereby transforming viewer attention into instantaneous purchases (Chen, 2022).

## 4.2 KOL/Brand Influence

### Research objective 2

Analyze how influencers influences young consumers' trust in brands and their subsequent purchasing behavior.

Here are some responses from the interviewees regarding how they decide to follow a KOL or brand on Douyin and how a KOL has influenced their views on a product or brand:

Participant H "Li Jiaqi, his live broadcast is indeed very famous... He, for example, in these products before the live broadcast he will have to first select the product so the first thing is to first pass his audit this level such as its quality for example its effect" .

From Participant H's answers, we could see that when a trusted kol recommended or endorsed a product, people's trust in the kol would also affect the product itself. Regarding the concept of "trust transfer", the credibility of key opinion leaders (Kols) extends to the products they endorse. Trust transfer in the marketing of social media influencers emphasizes that when influencers endorse products, consumers' trust in influencers can be extended to the products to be endorsed, especially in live e-commerce, where the degree of trust of influencers significantly affects consumers' purchase intention (Chen & Yang, 2023). Research by Lim et al. (2017) suggests that the influence of social media influencers on purchase intentions is largely mediated by consumer attitudes, which are shaped by trust in influencers. This suggests that the credibility of influencers not only transfers to the product, but also shapes consumer attitudes towards the product, leading to an increase in purchase intention (Lim et al., 2017). In China, when trusted influencers like Li Jiaqi recommend products, the audience's trust in Li Jiaqi can be transferred to the product, thus enhancing the audience's willingness to buy products based on his endorsement. This trust transfer mechanism is crucial for marketers to understand and leverage, especially on platforms like Douyin, where influencers are extremely influential.

Participant A "Wang Qianye shot a high-end Douyin advertisement such as Liushen Toilet Water... It makes me feel that the brand of Liushen may be a relatively cheap product in your eyes. But it may be displayed in different forms and it can also become a

very high-end product" .

Participant F "He is a very connotative person and his cultural background is very deep but every time he introduces a brand, He doesn't just introduce the product or just introduce its price. He will tell the story behind the brand. Or the design and packaging of this product from an artistic or literary point of view. This will make your understanding of the brand or the product more three-dimensional and multifaceted and then you will feel right. You will feel that this thing is really good and it will attract you even more."

It can be seen from the answers that Douyin users' opinions and purchasing behaviors are greatly influenced by kol and brand image. Factors that determine whether a user follows a KOL or brand include the quality of the brand, the quality of the KOL content, and personal interests or needs. Kols influence user impressions through high quality or interesting video content. This will effectively build user trust and interest, thus strengthening the close relationship with the audience. While trusting kol, users also have great interest in the brand or product, especially when kol presents the brand to users in a good way, users will have greater willingness to buy.

While some users are deeply influenced by KOLs who align with their interests or provide meaningful and engaging content, others are more passive, not specifically following any KOLs but occasionally interacting with the content.

Like Participant E said "Not particularly knowledgeable about KOL. There is no anchor I pay special attention to on Douyin so I don't know much about it."

Participant D "It mainly depends on what he outputs, which is more meaningful. Or the kind that is more interesting and the content is better".

Other literature has extensively recorded how Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs) affect customer behavior, particularly in relation to social media channels such as Douyin. Studies show that KOLs influence consumer decisions by improving the appeal of products by means of interesting content and reliable endorsements. Particularly with platforms like Douyin (Chen, 2022), which combine live broadcasting and direct sales, KOLs' dependability and beauty are absolutely vital since they assist to develop trust and inspire customer interest.

But at the same time, KOL can also have a negative impact on a brand, in the sense that when they make the public distrustful because of their own business abilities or ethical issues, this also greatly affects the user's impression of the brand. What impressed me a lot is that in the interview, two of the interviewees talked about a KOL who is very well known in China, his name is Li Jiaqi. He has a very large fan base.

"At a Li Jiaqi broadcast live, an audience said that the price of eyebrow pencil was a little expensive and then Li Jiaqi said that the price was not expensive. You have to think about whether you can't afford it because you don't work hard enough. Then a lot of

people have some negative perceptions of the brand. Because the brand and the user seem to be on the opposite side.” said by Participant A, also Participant B mentioned it too.

The effectiveness of KOL marketing thus heavily depends on the strategic alignment between the KOL’s persona and the brand’s values, as well as the authenticity of the KOL’s endorsements (Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006). This can lead to a dilution of the brand's core values or even backlash if the KOL engages in behavior that contradicts the brand's image or ethics (Caruelle, 2023).

## 4.3 Integrated E-commerce Features

### Research objective 3

Investigate how the seamless integration of e-commerce features within Douyin (e.g., purchase during live broadcasts) influences young consumers’ shopping behavior.

Below are responses related to how Douyin's seamlessly integrated e-commerce features influence young consumers' shopping behavior from the interview transcripts, with the majority having a positive view of Douyin's collection of integrated e-commerce features.

### 4.3.1 Integrated function

Like Participant G said “All aspects are relatively perfect. For example, some software may focus on pushing or a combination of text, pictures and videos.Plus, like he owns the mall, right?It's like a Taobao too.That is to say, as a social media platform, Douyin combines an e-commerce model, so it is integrated.”

Participant A "You don't need to jump out of the platform to pay elsewhere but you can place an order directly on Douyin. Such a pattern. It affects your shopping decisions"

Integrating seamless in-platform transactions into e-commerce, especially on platforms like Douyin, this simplified approach helps improve conversion rates and increase user satisfaction by reducing the friction typically associated with online purchases.In addition, integrating social media capabilities directly into e-commerce platforms enables seamless user interactions, such as sharing purchases, which can improve product visibility and influence purchasing decisions (BigCommerce, 2022). Ensuring that the website loads quickly and simplifying the checkout process is also necessary to maintain customer interest and reduce cart abandonment. Websites that perform well technically and offer streamlined checkout processes typically report lower bounce rates and higher customer retention rates (Noibu, 2024).Whether it's in a recommended short video or in a live stream, if people want to buy one of the products in the video, they can just click on the product link on that page to place an order.

This convenient and fast way to place orders is not only reflected in shopping, but also makes Douyin a very popular food shopping platform. In China, many restaurants will participate in some group buying promotions, so that people do not know what to eat, the restaurant's signature dishes combined with other dishes into a more affordable set meal. Compared with other food group-buying platforms, Douyin is more likely to get people to order food content because of the video content. And Douyin uses the integrated model of video and purchase links to make people more willing to place orders quickly.

“When I was going to eat, I compared Meituan and found that the Douyin package was more cost-effective, so I bought the package” , said by Participant G , “bought a meal set and got the QR code on Douyin, then Just scan it in the shop.”

Among young people, using Douyin to make food group purchases is very popular.

Participant C "Watch the video; then, periodically make some meal set purchases. " Because “It looks delicious. Then the set purchase is cheaper than going to the store. ”

### **4.3.2 Payment**

Participant B “Now with Douyin mall, you can buy it directly, which is very convenient.” Now Douyin has its own Douyin mall, people can directly browse it like other e-commerce platforms and make purchases directly within Douyin without jumping to a third party, it also supports bank cards and Alipay. “ It's very convenient. But Wechat payment is not supported” .

Research has shown that the ease of use and instant gratification offered by digital wallets can trigger impulse purchases, especially among younger consumers (Moghavvemi et al., 2021). As we all know, in China, people are not used to pay by credit card, and the most common payment methods are Alipay and wechat Pay. Although wechat Pay is not supported by Douyin at present, it does not cause much impact. Most interviewees said that Douyin's payment method is very convenient.

### **4.3.3 Live streaming**

Participant F “To be honest, the live broadcast of Douyin is cheaper than buying it on the purchase page.Because he may have some discounts in his live broadcast room. For example, his live broadcast time may be only one hour.Then it may be relatively cheap within an hour, and you can buy it with a coupon.”

According to the answers of the interviewees, price is an important factor affecting everyone's order in Douyin. Once during a Douyin livestream, Participant F was involved in selling tickets to a concert.

“ I did participate in it. I remember I saw a live broadcast of a music festival.Live broadcast of the music festival.You will go, for example, which guests and the price, mainly to ask if the price can be discounted and so on.It's interesting that one of its organizers will broadcast live on Douyin, and then sell tickets for the festival, right?”

In this live stream, it is possible to combine marketing, customer service, and purchase links so that people can be more aware of the details of the product, and through customer service interactions, users can be assuaged of their purchasing concerns.

Participant D “Douyin has an upper body effect, and then the anchor will have actions.In this case, the upper body effect is very intuitive.Another is the material. They will tell you in detail what kind of material it is or they have some special designs, and you will feel that the look and feel will be better. ”

Douyin's model of integrating e-commerce directly into its interface allows for a seamless shopping experience, which encourages impulse buying, a behavior that is particularly evident during live streaming (Li et al., 2022). In addition, the platform's design promotes transparency and interactive user engagement, which helps to build trust among users, thereby promoting higher conversion rates from browsing to purchasing (Huang et al., 2019).

The answers show how Douyin's integrated e-commerce tools — especially live broadcasts and tailored recommendations—effectively impact young consumers' buying choices. Important elements that improve buy intent are features including cost-effective discounts, price comparisons, and quality guarantees during live broadcasts. The seamless integration of e-commerce capabilities into Douyin, notably the ability to make purchases during live broadcasts, has a considerable impact on young customers' shopping habits. The respondents believe that the platform's ability to present immediate purchasing options without leaving the live broadcast area improves convenience and influences purchasing decisions. This connection builds on the trust and engagement established during live sessions, when KOLs or businesses can showcase items, demonstrate their use, and provide real-time promotions, making it an effective tool for influencing consumer behavior.

### **4.3.4 Concern**

There were also some interviewees who were skeptical and negative about pricing and promotional strategies on Douyin, indicating that not all promotions are popular and trusted by consumers.

Participant F expressed concerns about the veracity of promotions and the actual benefits offered "For example if I see a brand it has no discount on Taobao but I get a discount on Douyin. I'll figure it out."

Participant A "There are tissues like Xinxiangyin. He may say, for example, he will give you 50 packs at a very cheap price. But in fact, what we usually buy is usually a big bag, and it has a single board, but in fact, his so-called 50 bags are actually 100. Just like this is a bit of false propaganda for me, if I have this feeling, there will be some bad things."

Research underline the need of openness and accuracy in pricing to keep consumer confidence and loyalty in online markets such as Douyin. Good pricing policies should concentrate on fair competition and steer clear of dishonest methods to create a trustworthy buying environment (Chiang et al., 2007; Schlosser et al., 2016). False pricing could cause consumer mistrust, therefore erasing confidence in the platform and so affecting their purchase choice. Discount offers and promotional claims may cause consumers to grow cautious, which would lower engagement and discourage future buying.

## **4.4 User experience**

### **4.4.1 Ads**

Some people expressed negative attitudes about whether advertisements had affected their shopping experience.

Participant A "Isn't there more soft advertising now? If you insert this kind of soft advertising in the middle of the video you are interested in, you will feel a little uncomfortable sometimes"

Participant C "Anyway the advertisements embedded by other bloggers in that kind of video are a headache".

Nearly half of the respondents reported that advertisements in video content on Douyin can interfere with the viewing experience, especially soft ads, where an eye-catching title leads viewers to click on an AD, even if the ads are presented in a very creative way. According to studies on product placement in media, bad execution of this practice could compromise audience viewing experience and brand perception. This is particularly true with extremely interesting material when viewers might believe their amusement is being sacrificed in order to further business goals. Such placements could be seen as invasive and might cause bad opinions of the promoted brands (Cowley and Barron, 2008).

Participant G "For the shopping experience, I think it's more about real reviews and I think it can be improved. For example, highlighting what the reviews of people who



bought those items say about the product, rather than just looking at the store's description of the product."

With the marketing of ads, users will also want to see some real reviews of buyers, which is important for Participant G. Through advertising marketing, users will also want to see some authentic reviews from buyers, which is important to Deng. Through the real buyer feedback, you can see the real product and shopping experience. On Douyin, a large number of product descriptions are from the merchants themselves, but there are not many real and effective reviews, which makes it difficult for buyers to trust and suspect that this is advertising marketing.

But others have a positive attitude towards advertising. Thanks to the marketing of these ads, users can learn more about niche brands. Compared with big brands, small brands rarely have the opportunity to enter the public's vision. However, many small brands have high cost performance and good quality. On the Douyin platform, it allows any brand to enter the platform and express the brand story in its own way.

Participant B does not dislike "for example, there is a brand that is actually very small and the public does not know about it." But it's getting more and more publicity on Tiktok, and it actually makes people want to try the brand, and then you think it's actually good, as good as the big brands."

## **4.4.2 Privacy**

When we talk about the privacy risks posed by Douyin, most people are optimistic about it, and they don't feel that their privacy has been compromised. According to their description, there are many Settings on Douyin that accept or refuse to share their privacy and location information.

Participant B "I feel like I can do that in this app setting, and I feel like my data privacy won't be compromised"

However, some people have negative views on the security of personal information.

Participant G "I think the data privacy on Douyin may not be particularly good, especially for China. Whether it's his recommendation algorithm or recommending friends, then he gets a lot of permissions. Specifically, after getting your permission, for example, his recommended friend is here. Maybe you don't want your friend to brush you, but his recommendation method includes that you may brush your friend. That is to say, after you may brush it, he will show you the people you may know. But it's true that I haven't seen this kind of news on foreign social media"

Others, such as Participant D, share a similar view "It is not very secure, although it has some Settings that can be turned off and blocked from others, but because of the

function of the algorithm, people you know well may still see your account. ”

Douyin's positioning in the Chinese market requires it to comply with Chinese laws and regulations, including content control and data processing methods. Compared to TikTok for international markets, Douyin includes some features that are only required in the Chinese market, such as dynamic code loading and server-side search censorship (Open Technology Fund, 2021). Some of Douyin's features may be used to restrict or censor sensitive content (The Citizen Lab, 2021). Regarding data security, most of Douyin's network communications are encrypted using HTTPS, with additional encryption measures (such as ttEncrypt) for some data. However, the need for this additional layer of encryption is still not entirely clear (Bloodyev, 2024). Although Douyin has some security measures in place to protect user data, its control over content and the specific way it handles data may still raise privacy and security concerns (Open Technology Fund, 2021). At present, there is no clear data or information about the privacy and security of Douyin, and people with both positive and negative attitudes towards this issue have no great impact on the use of Douyin in general.

## **5.0 Discussion**

### **5.1 Link to Literature**

According to existing literature, social media influences consumer behavior mainly through advertising, KOL (Key Opinion leader) recommendations, and algorithmic push of personalized content. This study aims to explore how these elements specifically influence the shopping decisions of 20-30 year old Chinese consumers on the Douyin platform. Consistent with the study of Jones et al. (2020), this study found that Douyin's personalized recommendation algorithm significantly enhanced consumers' purchase intention. Previous studies have pointed out that recommendation systems of social media platforms personalize content by learning users' interaction behaviors, thus influencing purchase decisions (Jiang et al., 2024). This is consistent with the findings of this study, that Douyin's recommendation algorithm monitors user interactions (likes, comments) to push products with a higher propensity to buy. However, the study further revealed how the algorithm differed in effectiveness between different consumers, for example, some users said that their shopping behavior was not significantly affected by the recommendation system, suggesting that users' rational consumption attitudes may diminish the impact of the algorithm.

Previous studies have shown that influencers on social media (KOLs) can significantly increase brand credibility and product purchase rates (Chen, 2022). The results of this study provide new insights into this, finding that despite the influence of KOLs on Douyin, young consumers tend to conduct more personal research and comparison before

making a purchase decision, indicating that consumers are more cautious about products promoted through KOLs.

Other studies have pointed out that the interactive features of social media platforms such as instant purchases and participation in reviews can increase users' purchase intentions (Smith et al., 2023). Consistent with these views, my research confirms that the interactive nature of Douyin, particularly through livestreaming and instant purchase links, significantly enhances the behavior of instant purchases. However, there are also findings that excessive commercialization and advertising can lead to user fatigue, affecting long-term user engagement and brand loyalty.

## **5.2 Key Findings**

### **5.2.1 The impact of personalized recommendation algorithms**

Research shows that Douyin's personalized recommendation algorithm significantly affects users' shopping decisions. By analyzing user behavior (such as viewing time, interaction, and purchase history) to deliver personalized ads and short videos, the algorithm effectively improves the purchase intention of users. This finding highlights the central role of algorithmic technology in shaping consumer behavior in modern e-commerce, especially in the highly competitive social media environment.

### **5.2.2 Social influence and the role of KOL**

Although KOLs has a certain positive impact on brand awareness and product promotion, young consumers are more inclined to rely on their own research and compare different product options when making purchase decisions. This suggests that contemporary young social media users are becoming more rational and discerning and cautious about the goods promoted by Kols, which is an important insight for brand strategy and marketers. The brand owner also needs to take into account the personal quality and moral conduct of Kols itself, so as not to have a negative impact on the brand and thus affect sales.

### **5.2.3 Interactive functions and consumer behavior**

The interactive features of the Douyin platform, such as live shopping and instant discount purchase links, have greatly promoted instant purchase behavior. Especially during live broadcasting, the interaction between anchors and users greatly increases the purchase intention of users. However, users have reservations about excessive advertising and marketing, which can affect long-term user engagement. This finding

highlights the importance of finding a balance between keeping users engaged and driving sales. It provides strategic guidance on how to optimize the commercial functions of social media platforms.

## **5.3 Limitations**

The sample size of this study was relatively small and focused on specific regions (e.g., specific cities or provinces). As a result, the sample may not be fully representative of the entire Chinese demographic of young consumers aged 20 to 30. This means that the study findings may not be broadly generalizable to the wider population. The limitations of the sample may cause the results of the study to be somewhat biased towards specific communities or cultural backgrounds, and fail to fully capture consumer behavior in different regions or contexts (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022).

Studies using primarily qualitative methods, such as semi-structured interviews, may fail to fully quantify all relevant variables (Almeida, 2017). While qualitative methods provide insight and motivation to understand user behavior, their subjectivity can affect the objectivity and verifiability of the results. In addition, the interpretation of qualitative data depends on the subjective judgment of researchers, which may lead to interpretation bias.

Douyin and other social media platforms are rapidly evolving, with frequent updates to their features and user interfaces, and the data used in the study can quickly become outdated (Gao, 2023). This may affect the long-term relevance and generalization of the study. As platforms change, the way users behave and interact may also change, which means that the conclusions of the research may need to be updated and verified regularly.

Despite these limitations, this study provides initial insights into how the Douyin platform may influence the shopping decisions of young Chinese consumers. Future studies should overcome these limitations by expanding sample sizes, using mixed methodology studies, and tracking data over time to provide a broader and deeper understanding.

## **6.0 Conclusion**

Douyin's personalized recommendation algorithm has significantly influenced the shopping behavior of young consumers. By analyzing user interaction data (such as viewing time, likes, and comments), algorithms are able to push items that users are likely to be interested in, thereby increasing the probability of purchase. Although KOLs is able to attract users' attention when promoting products, the study found that consumers tend to conduct more in-depth personal research before making a purchase decision, rather than relying solely on KOLs recommendations.

These findings have important implications for understanding how social media, particularly platforms like Douyin, influence consumer behavior. For brands and marketers, understanding these dynamics can help them more effectively leverage social media tools to increase user engagement and conversion. In addition, it suggests that policy makers and platform developers need to pay attention to consumer privacy and advertising concerns to ensure the health and sustainability of social media advertising.

## 6.1 Recommendations

It is suggested that future studies could conduct a broader survey, including consumers in different geographical locations, different socioeconomic backgrounds, and different age groups, to verify the generality and applicability of the findings of this study (Wyborn et al., 2018). Expanding the sample could help researchers better understand how different groups respond to Douyin's marketing strategies, and whether there are significant differences in the impact of these strategies on different user groups.

An in-depth study of the long-term effects of the algorithm is recommended. Conduct longitudinal studies to track the long-term impact of algorithmic recommendations on user behavior, particularly their role in purchasing decisions and brand loyalty (Chacon et al., 2022). Long-term studies help to understand how users interact with recommendation systems over time, and how that interaction affects users' spending habits and brand preferences. Apply more quantitative research methods, such as experimental design or big data analysis, to complement the findings of qualitative studies and provide more rigorous statistical validation. Quantitative methods can provide clearer predictions of causality and trends, increasing the objectivity and reliability of research.

Subsequent research suggests exploring consumer privacy and algorithmic transparency. Study consumers' attitudes toward personal data use and algorithmic transparency, and how these factors affect their trust and engagement with platforms such as Douyin. As data privacy becomes a growing public concern, understanding consumer attitudes toward these issues will be important for developing effective data policies and improving user satisfaction (Watson & Nations, 2019).

For those brand marketers, they can use this study to pay more attention to brand authenticity, which is the key to building trust with customers and driving purchasing decisions. They can also adjust their marketing strategies based on user interactions with the platform, such as number of likes, number of retweets, and comments, to ensure alignment with brand goals. If other platforms want to emulate Douyin's success as the largest e-commerce social media platform in China, they need to ensure a smooth transition from content discovery to purchase, integrate one-click purchase options into the platform and simplify the checkout process. Such a seamless shopping experience is very important in social media.

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