Original Paper

The Impact of KOL Marketing's Content on Chinese Female Generation Z Consumers' Interest in Light Meal Restaurants

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Abstract

In recent years, demand for healthy, low-calorie foods has been growing in Chinese market, leading to an increase in the number of light meal restaurants and, consequently, a gradual saturation of the light meal market. Light meal restaurants need to use promotion to stand out. The rapid development of social media has presented new opportunities for the light meal market, where Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs) play a significant role in shaping Gen Z consumers' preferences. Therefore, this study aims to examine whether digital content published by KOLs can effectively enhance Gen Z female consumers' interest on social media platform RED (Note 1). Through quantitative research, the analysis result shows a positive correlation between the interests of Generation Z women and the content shared by KOLs regarding light meal restaurants in both post and video formats. Furthermore, the décor style of restaurants in video format and the taste of food in post format have presented the most significant impact on consumers' interest.

Keywords

KOL Marketing, Digital Content of Chinese Light Meal Restaurant, Chinese Generation Z, Consumer Interest

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background

1.1.1 Industry Overview

Light food primarily refers to foods that are low in sugar, fat, and salt, yet rich in fiber and have a high nutrient density. These foods do not require complex cooking methods or excessive seasonings, preserving the food's original taste. Light food is not just a dietary habit, but also represents a balanced,

natural, and healthy lifestyle (Foresight Industry Research Institute, 2021).

The 'light meal' industry has been continuously expanding, with increasing competitiveness. Owing to the heightened health awareness among the Chinese population, more and more people are pursuing diets that are low in calories, sugar, and fat, focusing on healthy eating. Light meal caters precisely to this trend. Over the past five years, there has been a rising trend in the registration of light meal-related businesses in China. In 2020 alone, over 3,000 new light meal related enterprises were registered. As of April 29, 2023, nearly 1,300 new light meal-related businesses have been added. Therefore, distinguishing oneself in the vast light meal industry, is currently a crucial issue (Chen, 2023) .

Women are the core demographic for healthy light meal. According to data from Oceanengine on the user profile of those interested in healthy light meal videos on Chinese TikTok in 2021, the Target Group Index (TGI) for men stands at 69, whereas for women, it soars to 129. When broken down by age groups, the TGI for the age bracket of 18-23 years is at 203, 24-30 years is 117, 31-40 years is 73, 41-50 years is 62, and for those over 50 years, it stands at 40. From this, it's evident that consumers who show interest in light meal products are predominantly female from the Gen Z demographic in Chinese market (Arithmetic Research Alliance, 2022).

1.1.2 KOL Marketing in Chinese Market

With Chinese rapidly advancing digital channels, using KOL marketing to promote brands through social media platforms has become a new avenue to attract consumers' attention and enhance sales. Data from 2021 shows that when Chinese netizen sought information on light meal, 59.6% of consumers preferred content-sharing platforms RED. Additionally, 45.5% were inclined towards short video platforms TikTok, while 43% leaned towards video-streaming platforms Bilibili (Note 2). It is evident that a larger audience gets to know about light meal-related content through social media platform RED, making it potentially effective means for digital promotions (An, 2023).

According to the 2022 Chinese New Consumer Brand Development Trends Report, social media has become a central arena for branding, with KOL communication playing a significant role. Research indicates a strong overall positive correlation between the number of posts by KOLs and e-commerce sales volume. Additionally, there is a positive overall correlation between the investment in KOL marketing and e-commerce sales revenue (Advantage Intelligence Brand Marketing, 2022) Therefore, it can be concluded that KOL marketing is a highly effective means of attracting consumers.

With the proven popularity of KOLs in social media platforms among Chinese consumers, Chinese business owners such as owners of light meal stores all face a common challenge: how to use KOLs in digital platforms to introduce their restaurants to consumers and capture their attention?

1.1.3 The Social Media Platform RED

According to data released by digital marketing data analysis company Qian-Gua.com, in 2022, regarding the profile of active influencers' followers on Red, female users account for a staggering 88.80%, with males making up just 11.20%. In terms of age distribution, 18-24-year-olds represent 46.39%, 25-34-yearolds comprise 36.08%, those under 18 years old account for 13.47%,

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35-44-year-olds stand at 3.40%, and those above 44 years old are only 0.65% (Qian-Gua.com, 2022). Microseed & Fat Whale (2022), another Chinese data analysis company also reported that *RED* shows a high Target Group Index (TGI) for younger users aged 19-25 and 26-30. Therefore, the primary clientele of Red are females from the Gen Z demographic, which, as discussed in 1.1.1, is also the target consumer group of light meal restaurant.

In order to further confirm the current application of KOL marketing in *RED* for light meal industry, the author did a preliminary study on the platform *RED*. Posts relating to light meals with more than 1,000 likes are collected in 1 month of time, which totaled up 34 posts. This included 8 video posts, 16 posts with images and text. Among these posts, 11 posts were published by food bloggers, 4 by merchants, 6 by casual users, and 7 by restaurant explorers. From this data, it can be inferred that: posts related to light meal that are published by KOLs tend to have a higher liking rate, i.e. content generated by KOLs are more popular among audiences. In conclusion, the preliminary research data shows, utilizing KOLs to disseminate content on *RED* is an effective means to attract light meal restaurants' target consumers' interests. Now the challenge to the business owners of light meal restaurants, as aforementioned, is how to use KOLs to attract consumers' attentions online.

Table 1. Analysis Result from *RED* Posts

	Data from RED	Number
Post Analyzed	Post (Over 1000 likes)	34
Post Types	Videos	8
	Combining images and text	16
	Food bloggers	11
	Merchants	4
	Casual users	6
	Restaurant explorers	7

1.2 Research Objective

Based on above discussion of light meal industry and the application of KOL marketing in targeting Gen Z audiences, it is clear to see that the light meal industry needs more information regarding how to effectively use KOL marketing to evoke consumers' interests. This research aims to investigate the means through which light meal restaurants can effectively enhance consumer interests by using KOL marketing in social media platforms like Red. Specifically, this research wants to uncover which types of content resonate most effectively, thereby sparking the interest of Gen Z female consumers who are intent to purchase light meal.

2. Literature Review

2.1 KOL Marketing in Chinese Market

In Meng (2023)'s 'How to Use the KOL Marketing Model in The New Era to Stimulate the Consumption of Beauty Products,' KOL marketing is elaborated in detail. KOL stands for 'Key Opinion Leader,' typically referring to notable figures in a specific domain. They possess accurate product information and are accepted or trusted by a group, influencing their purchasing behaviors. Given their substantial fan base, KOLs can greatly impact a group's consumption and purchasing decisions through their influence. Many businesses capitalize on this by collaborating with KOLs to promote products, a practice known as KOL marketing. According to the '2022-2023 China Video KOL Marketing and Management White Paper,' video and post content are predominant methods in KOL marketing (Industry Report Think Tank, 2023).

The vertical nature of social interactions enhances the influence of KOLs. By interacting with fans on social platforms, KOLs establish emotional bonds based on personal identification and high level of engagement with consumers, subsequently influencing fans' decisions or actions. In Zhou's research (2022), he mentions that KOL marketing can precisely capture the hearts of consumers by being closely related to everyday life scenarios, offering detailed practical tutorials, providing genuine reviews and analyses, and staying attuned to current hot topics. Similarly, Peng (2019) studied KOL in Chinese fashion market, he discussed that consumer willingness is dictated by consumer preferences, which in turn is influenced by their interests. Thus, to enhance consumer desire, KOL marketing needs to grasp and cater to these interests, making people more inclined to follow KOLs.

KOL marketing can significantly influence the interests of Generation Z. Jiang's (2022) research indicates that these 'Internet Celebrity-style KOLs,' as primary creators of short videos, subtly influence the self-perception and value construction of Gen Z. Their content can significantly sway the interests of this generation, who show a heightened enthusiasm for posts or videos from their favored KOLs.

2.2 Independent Variable: Video Content in KOL Marketing

Driven by the rapid rise of online self-media platforms, an increasing number of businesses are adopting video formats for promotion, enhancing brand or product recognition through the internet. KOL marketing plays a pivotal role in piquing consumer interest. KOLs can offer users high quality content, seamlessly integrating product information into the short videos viewed by users. Han (2022) studies have shown that using video as the format of promotion content can effectively stimulate users' purchasing desires in various ways, converting users into consumers.

Multimedia videos can frequently and actively establish connections with fans, strengthening the bond between enterprises and their fans. As the interactivity of multimedia intensifies, the number of comments and likes increases, enhancing the likelihood of multimedia exposure. The quantification of comments and likes can lead to a qualitative change in marketing hotspots, thereby expanding the company's recognition. Products recommended by high-traffic KOLs are more favored by consumers.

Video-based KOL marketing captivates the interest of Generation Z consumers. In Zhang's (2022)

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study, it is highlighted that the usefulness, user-friendliness, and entertainment value of KOL product recommendation short videos pique the interest of Gen Z, leading to purchase intentions. There exists a significant positive relationship between these factors.

In this research, video content refers to posts on social media that are primarily video based, aimed at sharing information, experiences, opinions, or entertainment content. Key Opinion Leaders (KOL) can utilize video format to showcase their genuine experiences in light meal restaurants, offering consumers an intuitive feel. Moreover, this approach allows for a more vivid presentation of the light meals, captivating consumer interest visually and gastronomically.

X1: Meal Taste Sharing

Sensory evaluation is a scientific method used to measure, analyze, and interpret people's sensory reactions to products. Taste sharing is one form of sensory evaluation that allows consumers to assess the flavor of food in a relatively short time and at a lower cost (Stone, 2018).

Sensory evaluation of flavor sharing is particularly important in the food industry. Descriptions of food flavors by Key Opinion Leaders (KOL) on social media platforms can greatly influence consumer perception and interest. Such evaluations are not limited to descriptions of the taste of food, but may also include descriptions of the appearance, smell, and texture of the food. KOL use a video format that combines the visual and auditory senses. By showing the KOL's facial expressions and tone of voice, the taste of the food can be more effectively communicated, stimulating consumers' curiosity and desire to try it. The video format can effectively attract consumers' attention and motivate their interest in the food of the light food restaurant.

H1: KOL's video content sharing light restaurant meal taste sharing influence the interests of Gen Z women.

X2: Meal Combination Sharing

Food combination is a method of identifying which foods complement each other in terms of flavor. This approach typically takes into account individual tastes, the popularity of certain foods, the availability of ingredients, and traditional cultural practices (Kristen, 2018).Through the sharing of meal pairings by Key Opinion Leaders (KOL) on social media, consumers can better identify foods they like. For those keen on weight loss diets, sharing of food pairings can also help them better determine if the meals offered by light meal restaurants are indeed effective for fat reduction. Moreover, sharing food pairings also aids individuals with special dietary needs to identify foods they are intolerant to, allergic to, or simply dislike, thereby enhancing their dining experience. Therefore, the sharing of meal pairings can pique consumer interest in light meal restaurants.

H2: KOL's video content sharing the meal combination sharing of light meals restaurants can influence the interest of Gen Z women.

X3: Restaurant Decor and Environment Sharing

The style of restaurant decor has a significant impact on customers. The design and decorative style of a restaurant can influence customers' cognitive experiences, such as their perception and evaluation of

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the restaurant's environment. Such cognitive and emotional states ultimately affect customer behavior, including their interest in the restaurant, loyalty, and likelihood of recommending it to others (Nusairat, 2020).

Particularly in the era of social media, distinctive decor styles, such as the popular Instagram aesthetic, elegant American style, or minimalist modern look, greatly attract consumers to take photos and share their experiences. These styles not only become highlights that draw customers but also promote word-of-mouth publicity, transforming the restaurant into a social hotspot, thereby creating a unique brand recognition and emotional connection among the customer base.

H3: KOL's video content sharing the decor and environment of light meals restaurants can influence the interest of Gen Z women.

2.3 Independent Variable: Post Content in KOL Marketing

The integration of graphics and text is a mode of dissemination on social media platforms. By combining images and words, information can be conveyed clearly and concisely. For individuals with a strong sense of purpose, information can be rapidly assimilated. Thoughtfully designed graphic-text posts can convey both taste and professionalism. Nie (2022) confirmed posts attract more attention and have a significant impact on user engagement on social media. The fit between images and text content in social media posts increases the likelihood of people liking the post in question. Xie (2022) analyzed the initial content notes of Red in her article, highlighting that they were primarily in the form of graphic-text posts. The creation of these notes is relatively straightforward and cost effective. Despite the prevalent issue of content homogenization, this format is especially apt for notes abundant in valuable content, such as personal experience sharing and product collection notes. For readers, this approach offers a clearer and more intuitive presentation.

In this research, posts in a graphic and textual format refer to those published on social media that combine images and text, aimed at conveying information to consumers in a more intuitive and comprehensible way. Key Opinion Leaders (KOL) can provide consumers with detailed information through these graphic-textual posts, which are easier for consumers to browse and review. High quality food photography can also greatly capture consumers' attention. Descriptions and introductions of light meal restaurants and their food by KOL can more conveniently assist consumers in making informed choices.

X4: Meal Taste Sharing

Key Opinion Leaders (KOL) can also attract consumers by sharing the taste of the food in the light food restaurant through the form of posts. Posts can quickly provide consumers with information about their senses through a combination of text and images. Descriptions of the food in text and good-looking images can promote interaction between KOL and consumers and the sharing of food experiences (Stone 2018). With Kols' descriptions of the food and high-quality visual content, the posts can attract consumers' attention and promote their interest in and exploration of the food of the light food restaurant.

H4: KOL's graphic content sharing the meal taste in light meals restaurants can influence the interest of Gen Z women in liking or saving the content.

X5: Sharing Dishes

Sharing images of dishes through social media is an important part of attracting consumers. Customers tend to choose restaurants by searching for food dish images on other customer generated social media (Casais, 2019). Sharing meal dishes on social media makes it easier for consumers to locate the restaurants they want to try. For those who have never visited a particular restaurant, attractive images and descriptions of dishes can spark their curiosity and generate interest, motivating them to try the restaurant's offerings. At the same time, KOLs sharing tempting pictures of dishes can also stimulate users' appetite and can attract more consumers to the restaurant.

H5: KOL's graphic content sharing the dishes of light meals restaurants can influence the interest of Gen Z women.

X6: Restaurant Location Sharing

The geographical location of a restaurant is critically important and greatly influenced by its surroundings. Due to agglomeration and competition effects, different areas exhibit varying operational performance patterns (Wang 2017). Therefore, clear geographical location descriptions of light meal restaurants by Key Opinion Leaders (KOL) on social media can attract nearby consumers to a greater extent.

The location of a restaurant not only plays a key role in its business success but is also significantly impacted by its neighborhood. Different restaurants in different areas might display varied performance models due to agglomeration and competition effects. This means that a restaurant's location, along with its relationship with the surrounding environment, is crucial for attracting customers and increasing revenue. In this context, KOLs' clear descriptions of the geographical location of light meal restaurants on social media can significantly boost appeal to nearby consumers. Clear and detailed address information on social media is very important for potential customers. It not only provides easy and quick navigation but also helps consumers make swift dining decisions.

Furthermore, Kols' portrayal of the restaurant's location, including its surrounding environment, accessibility, nearby popular attractions, or cultural activities, can deepen consumer curiosity and interest, thereby increasing the likelihood of them visiting the restaurant.

H6: KOL's graphic content sharing the location of light meals restaurants can influence the interest of Gen Z women.

2.4 Dependent Variable: Consumers' Interest

In this research, the concept of "interest" is derived from the AIDA model, which divides consumer behavior into four stages: Attention, Interest, Desire, and Action. Within this model, interest is defined as attracting the consumer's attention, leading them to develop an interest through understanding the brand's advantages and how it fits into their lifestyle (Rawal, 2013).

When consumers find posts or videos on social media platforms interesting, they often express their

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emotions through liking and saving. Chu's (2019) study analyzed these behaviors of liking and saving. The research shows that "liking" are one of the most common social and user behaviors on social media platforms. Facebook views a "liking" as a positive affirmation of content, while Xinlang Weibo considers it a shortcut to support an opinion. Therefore, the action of "liking" represents the user's attitude of affection and support. On the other hand, the behavior of "saving" often indicates a user's intent to gather information and a psychological desire to "saving" content for further exploration. Saving is mainly due to the perceived usefulness of content or information, allowing users to easily access their favorites to find posts or videos of interest when needed. Thus, both "liking" and "saving" behaviors can reflect a user's interest.

In this research, Generation Z women use the RED platform to search for information about casual dining restaurants of their interest. Consumer interest can be measured by the consumers' action of "liking" and "saving". When consumers show appreciation for content, it specifically manifests as liking and saving on RED, corresponding to their interests.

This is also the reason that preliminary study used "like" and "saving" as the criteria when selecting posts for analysis from RED. The posts with highest "likes" and "saving" were chosen for analyzing the content that are most effective in attracting consumers' attention.

2.5 Theoretical Model

Based on relevant research and theories, this study establishes a theoretical model that indicates the relationships between KOL marketing and consumers' interest in promoted content. The research exams these relationships by using quantitative correlational research.

Figure 1. Theoretical Model

3. Research Design

3.1 Content Analysis

Content analysis is a research method that provides a deeper understanding of the research topic by extracting useful information and data within the content, conducting systematic and reliable analyses

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(Haggarty, 1996). In the preliminary stage of the research, the researcher utilized content analysis of secondary data, which helped the research to validate the existing promotion trends in RED and laid the foundation for further primary data collection. In order to understand the current status of digital marketing for light meal restaurants, the content analysis collected posts related to light food restaurants in RED platforms as data. As shown in Table 1 in Introduction of this paper, content analysis found that posts about light food restaurants published by key opinion leaders (KOLs) tended to have high rates of likes and saves.

During the data collection and analysis stage, researcher has conducted the second content analysis. This second content analysis collected the content shared by KOLs about light food restaurants on RED in 2 months of time, and used pivot table methods to calculate the number of likes and saves for specific content. The researchers collected 40 posts related to light dining restaurants on the RED platform, all of which have more than 1,000 likes and savings. The researcher counted the number of specific likes, savings, tags, post content keywords, post content features, comment keywords and occurrences, and blogger and follower followings for each post. The categorization of the content is based on marketing 7Ps model: process, physical environment, service people, product, promotion, place, and price. The content keywords, content titles, content features, tags, keywords in comments are all labelled based on these categories. For example, some contents are related to place, which is labelled as introducing the location of the restaurant; some content are related to product, which is labelled as introducing the taste of the meal; some content are relating to the physical environment, which is labelled as introducing the deco and environment of the restaurant.

This result of the second content analysis is shown in Table 2 below. The result illustrates the type of content that interests the target audience. The following chart categorizes and counts the secondary data content and its number of likes and savings. It also presents the analysis results after filtering the specific content using the pivot Table:

Table 2. Content Analysis Result

Video	Meal taste sharing	35.942k	3689
	Sharing food pairings	17.368k	3469
	Sharing Restaurant Decor and Environment	11.4k	2723
Post	Meal taste sharing	58.48k	42371
	Sharing meal dishes	62.482k	35807
	Sharing Restaurant Location	50.164k	35922

3.2 Survey

A "survey" is a means of collecting information and data through questionnaires or interviews. Survey

methods are usually used to obtain data on the attitudes, opinions, behaviors, etc., of a specific group of people, with the aim of collecting systematic information from the target population. In the later stage of data collection, survey is used to collecting data. Electronic questionnaires were distributed using Questionnaire Star to rapidly gather data. Ultimately, correlational studies will help determine whether variables are related (Showkat, 2017).

3.2.1 Data Collection Method: Online Questionnaire

The researcher disseminated the questionnaire through Chinese social network platform WeChat. The questionnaire has a total of 16 questions, the data were collected for 1 month, which resulted a total of 233 questionnaires, of which 185 valid results. Some questions in the questionnaire were supplemented by the pictures from RED as physical stimuli to help respondents better understand the questions, and the questionnaire questions were all in the form of a Likert scale - (Strongly Disagree - Disagree - Fairly - Agree - Strongly Agree) so that they could be coded and processed in SPSS to obtain more accurate conclusions.

3.2.2 Variable Measurements

Meal Taste Sharing

When sharing food, people communicate and perceive flavors by using language or words to describe the taste texture of food, communication and perception (Ensaff, 2016). Meal taste sharing refers to the user's perception of the flavor of the light meal restaurant meal. Measurements of meal taste sharing in this study are 1. KOL's textual description of the taste of the light meal (including the smell of the food, texture), 2. KOL's facial expression and tone of voice paired with the description of the taste, which is more likely to be effective in motivating consumers to want to try it, and at the same time, the KOL tends to attract consumers' interest with their detailed descriptions. Meal taste sharing measured by Likert scale (1=strongly disagree,5=strongly agree):1. I am interested in the video form content (e.g., taste, flavour, odour, texture, etc., of the light meal restaurant Meal taste shared by KOLs.2. I am interested in the KOLs' sharing of the light meal restaurant meal taste's content in graphic form (e.g. texture, taste, odour, texture of light meals) is of interest.

Meal Combination Sharing

The combination of different foods, including the balance of calories, fiber and types of vegetables and fruits, is particularly important in promoting healthy eating and fat loss and reduction (James W Anderson, 2009). Meal combination sharing refers to the pairing of meals in light-food restaurants. In this study, the ingredients were measured by the combination of meal types shared by KOLs on the RED platform to determine whether the ingredients were fat-reducing, preferred or tolerated. Such content is more informative and KOLs will engage consumers with the comprehensiveness of what they share. Meal combination sharing was measured on a Likert scale (1=strongly disagree,5=strongly agree):I am interested in KOLs sharing video content (e.g., paired veggies, fruits, carbohydrates, and calories, etc.) of light meal restaurant meal combinations.

Restaurant Decor and Environment Sharing

Environmental conditions and decoration styles such as restaurant design, temperature, color, light and music can attract consumers and promote customer satisfaction (Sadia Farooq, 2020). Restaurant decor and environment sharing refers to content shared by KOLs that has a description of the decor style of a light meal restaurant. In this study, such content is more likely to attract consumers as measured by the videos posted by KOLs and the description of the environment of the light meal restaurant. Restaurant decor and environment sharing was measured using a Likert scale (1=strongly disagree,5=strongly agree): I am interested in KOLs sharing video content about restaurant decor and environment of light meal restaurants (e.g. (American style, minimalist style, ins style) are interested.

Sharing Dishes

Sharing dishes refers to the sharing of the types of dishes in light meal restaurants. In this study, sharing dishes was measured by 1. the menu content of light meal restaurant dishes shared by KOLs, and 2. the photos and names of light restaurant dishes shared by KOLs. sharing dishes was measured on a Likert scale (1=strongly disagree,5=strongly agree): I am interested in the graphic content of light meal restaurant dishes (e.g., appearance of the meal, price, variety).

Restaurant Location Sharing

The location of a restaurant is crucial in determining whether it will thrive or not, and the location of a restaurant is one of the factors that enhance its appeal (Feng Wang, 2016). Restaurant Location Sharing refers to the sharing of the location of a light meal restaurant, which in this study was measured by the KOL's description of the specific location of the light meal restaurant, its accessibility, and the surrounding popular attractions or cultural activities as measured by sharing dishes on a Likert scale (1=strongly disagree,5=strongly agree): I am interested in the KOL's sharing of the graphic content of the Restaurant Location (e.g., the surrounding environment, accessibility, popular attractions or cultural activities nearby).

Consumer Interest

According to Steven Chu (2019), when consumers find posts or videos on social media platforms interesting, they usually express their emotions by liking and saving Interest refers to interest in the promoted content. In this study, Interest will be measured in terms of likes (when I am interested in a post, I will express my interest through the act of liking) and savings (when I am interested in a post, I will express my interest through the act of saving).In the questionnaire, each item was measured on a Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree): 1. When I am interested in video type of content, I will like KOL's video of this light meal restaurant. 2. When I am interested in video type of content, I will save KOL's video of this light meal restaurant. 3. When I am interested in graphic type, I will like the KOL's post about this light meal restaurant. 4. When I am interested in the content of a graphic type, I will save the KOL's post about this light meal restaurant.

3.2.3 Sample Strategy

The survey adopted a purposive sampling strategy. This strategy is chosen because it allows for the selection of a specific subset of the population that meets predetermined criteria relevant to the research question. This approach is particularly useful when investigating niche markets or consumer behaviors within a distinct group. The criteria for selecting samples are: 1. Gen Z women (post 95), 2. Audiences who will refer to RED when choosing products, 3. Consumers who are interested in light meal options, 4. Audiences who had seen the Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs) posting content about light meal restaurants on the RED platform more than twice in the last three months. Based on these criteria, the questionnaire used the first 4 questions to screen the sample, ensuring that the participants were within the target demographic and had specific interests and behaviors relevant to the study's focus.

4. Empirical Analysis

4.1 Validity Analysis

Table 3. Validity Analysis (Video)

Reliability Statistics (Cronbach Alpha)			
Items	Corrected Item-Total Correlation(CITC)	Cronbach Alpha if Item Deleted	Cronbach α
Meal Taste Sharing	0.967	0.979	
Meal Combination Sharing	0.969	0.977	0.985
Restaurant Decor and Environment Sharing	0.967	0.979	

Cronbach α (Standardized): 0.985

Table 4. Validity Analysis (Post)

Reliability Statistics (Cronbach Alpha)			
Items	Corrected Item-Total Correlation(CITC)	Cronbach Alpha if Item Deleted	Cronbach α
Meal Taste Sharing	0.960	0.966	
Sharing Dishes	0.953	0.971	0.979
Restaurant Location Sharing	0.952	0.972	

Cronbach α (Standardized): 0.980

Reliability and validity analyses are essential when using SPSS for data analysis. The purpose of significance testing is to assess the reliability and validity of a measurement tool. Cronbach's alpha coefficient is used to assess the internal consistency reliability of a questionnaire, test, or research instrument. If the alpha coefficient is greater than 0.7 it indicates a good internal consistency reliability, i.e. there is sufficient correlation between the data. In this study, there are two dimensions respectively, the video dimension includes three items, which are Meal taste sharing, meal combination sharing,

restaurant decor and environment sharing, with an alpha coefficient of 0.985, and the graphic combination dimension also includes three items, which are Meal taste sharing, meal combination sharing, restaurant decor and environment sharing, with an alpha coefficient of 0.985. Meal taste sharing, meal combination sharing, restaurant location sharing, and its α coefficient is 0.979. For both variables, the Cronbach's α coefficient is very close to 1, which indicates that the internal consistency of both variables is very high. Therefore, based on the results of these analyses, it can be concluded that the survey data in this study is highly suitable for factor analyses and the validity of such analyses has been thoroughly verified.

4.2 Correlation Analysis

Table 5. Correlation of Video

	Pearson			
	Interest (Video)	Meal Taste Sharing	Meal Combination Sharing	Restaurant Decor and Environment Sharing
Interest (Video)	1			
Meal Taste Sharing	0.964**	1		
Meal Combination Sharing	0.966**	0.958**	1	
Restaurant Decor and Environment Sharing	0.967**	0.956**	0.959**	1

* $p<0.05$ ** $p<0.01$

As can be seen from Table 5, according to the results of Pearson's correlation analysis, there is an extraordinarily strong positive correlation between "Interest (Video)" and Meal Taste Sharing, Meal Combination Sharing, and Restaurant Decor and Environment Sharing among the posts in the form of videos shared by KOLs. Combination Sharing and Restaurant Decor and Environment Sharing. Specifically, the correlation coefficients between "Interest (Video)" and Meal Taste Sharing, Meal Combination Sharing, and Restaurant Decor and Environment Sharing are 0.964, 0.966, and 0.967, and all these correlations are statistically significant ($p<0.01$). This suggests that when KOLs post video content about light restaurants that addresses these aspects, they are more likely to be of interest to Gen Z women and to be liked and saved.

Table 6. Correlation of Post

	Pearson			
	Interest (Post)	Meal Taste Sharing	Sharing Dishes	Restaurant Location Sharing
Interest (Post)	1			
Meal Taste Sharing	0.956**	1		
Sharing Dishes	0.949**	0.945**	1	
Restaurant Location Sharing	0.946**	0.943**	0.935**	1

* $p<0.05$ ** $p<0.01$

It is clear from Table 6 that there is a relationship between users "Interest" and different types of dining content sharing (dining tastes, dish sharing and restaurant location) for posts in the form of social media graphics. The data shows that the correlation coefficients between interest and meal taste sharing (0.956), sharing dishes (0.949) and restaurant location sharing (0.946) are extremely high, pointing to the fact that these content types of posts are highly likely to be interested by users. These correlation coefficients are all extremely close to 1 and statistically significant ($p<0.01$), suggesting that on this RED platform, when KOLs publish posts involving these dining-related content, it may be of interest to Generation Z consumers to generate liking and saving behaviors.

4.3 Regression Analysis

Regression analysis is used to measure the influential relationship between a dependent variable and one or more independent variables. It is often used to help build a model to predict outcomes (Sarstedt, 2014). The model summary typically provides key statistical indicators of the regression model, i.e., more detailed model fit indicators, which can be used to assess the overall fit and predictive ability of the model. The results obtained through regression analysis can help in market forecasting, guiding light meal restaurants to adopt effective content strategies when using KOL marketing for promotion, and emphasizing potential pitfalls to avoid.

This paper investigates the influence of KOL marketing content on Generation Z female consumers' choice of light food restaurants and constructs a benchmark regression model based on theoretical analysis as follows:

$y= \beta_0+ \beta_1 X_1+\ldots+ \beta_n X_n+ \epsilon$

Among them, Y is the predicted value of the dependent variable, in this study it is consumer interest, β_0 is the intercept of y, and X is the independent variable of the study, in this study, in the video form of post, X1 is meal taste sharing, X2 is sharing food pairings, and X3 is sharing restaurant decor and environment. in graphic form post X4 is meal taste sharing, X5 is sharing meal dishes and X6 is sharing restaurant location. ϵ represents the model error, i.e., the variation of the study on the y estimate.

Table 7. Model Summary (Video)

			Model Summary			
R	R^2	Adj. R^2	RMSE	D-W	AIC	BIC
0.980	0.959	0.959	1.315	1.734	796.950	810.755

Table 8. Model Summary (Post)

			Model Summary			
R	R^2	Adj. R^2	RMSE	D-W	AIC	BIC
0.970	0.941	0.940	1.453	2.047	843.219	857.023

Based on the information provided in Tables 7 and 8, it is commonly accepted in statistical analysis that an adjusted R-squared value exceeding 0.4 indicates a relatively reasonable model fit. In the context of this study, the adjusted R-squared values exceed 0.8, which is significantly higher than the aforementioned benchmark. This demonstrates that the model has a good fit, as it explains a large portion of the variance in the data after adjusting for the number of predictors. This high level of fit indicates that the model is not only statistically significant but also of practical significance, providing strong evidence that the variables included in the model have a significant explanatory power for the dependent variable being studied.

Table 9. Regression Analysis (Video)

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	p	Collinearity Diagnostics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			VIF	Tolerability
Constant	0.049	0.092	-	0.530	0.597	-	-
Meal Taste Sharing	0.601	0.103	0.306	5.868	0.000**	15.354	0.065
Meal Combination Sharing	0.621	0.105	0.319	5.910	0.000**	16.480	0.061
Restaurant Decor and Environment Sharing	0.736	0.105	0.369	7.009	0.000**	15.615	0.064
R^2			0.959				
Adj R^2			0.959				
F			$F (3,229)=1806.657, p=0.000$				
D-W			1.734				

Parameter Estimates ($n=233$)

Dependent Variable: Video

* $p<0.05$ ** $p<0.01$

Table 10. Regression Analysis (Post)

	Parameter Estimates (n=233)							
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	p	Collinearity Diagnostics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			VIF	Tolerability
Constant	0.091	0.114	-	0.799	0.425	-	-
Meal Taste Sharing	0.786	0.112	0.402	6.989	0.000**	12.732	0.079
Sharing Dishes	0.599	0.104	0.308	5.748	0.000**	11.087	0.090
Restaurant Location Sharing	0.540	0.103	0.279	5.268	0.000**	10.798	0.093
R^2			0.941				
Adj R^2			0.940				
F			F (3,229)=1207.867,p=0.000				
D-W			2.047				

Dependent Variable: Post

* $p<0.05$ ** $p<0.01$

The parameter estimates of video and graphic forms can be seen in Table 9 and Table 10, where the larger the t-value and smaller the p-value of video and graphic forms, the more significant the effect of independent variable on dependent variable is, and it can be seen from the charts that p value of both video and graphic forms is less than 0.01, so the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable in this study is very significant.

Meanwhile, it can be seen from the chart that all six dimensions of video and graphic forms can have a significant positive effect on Y (Interest).

The regression model of video content is:

Y = 0.049+0.601* X1 (Meal Taste Sharing) +0.621* X2 (Meal Combination Sharing) +0.736*X3(Restaurant décor and environment sharing)

The regression model of post content is:

Y=0.091+0.786*X4(Meal Taste Sharing) +0.599*X5(Sharing Dishes) +0.540*X6(Restaurant Location Sharing)

To be more specifically, Y(Interest) increases by 0.601 units for every unit of Meal Taste Sharing in video form, Y(Interest) increases by 0.621 units for every unit of Meal Combination Sharing in video form. Y(Interest) increases by 0.736 units for every increase in Restaurant decor and environment sharing and Y(Interest) increases by 0.786 units for every increase in Meal Taste Sharing in graphic form. Y(Interest) increases by 0.599 units for every unit increase in Sharing Dishes in graphic form and Y(Interest) increases by 0.540 units for every unit increase in Restaurant Location Sharing in graphic form. In conclusion, this study is statistically significant.

Based on the models and the standardized coefficient, the research found out that, when consumers look at the videos that share information about light meal restaurants, content about restaurant décor and environment has the most significant impact on their interests, meal taste sharing has the least impact on their interests. When consumers look at the posts that share information about light meal restaurants, the post that talk about the meal taste can best influence consumers' interests, the location

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sharing has the weakest influence on consumers' interests.

5. Discussion

5.1 Introduction

In recent years, as healthy eating habits have increasingly garnered attention, the light food industry in China has seen significant growth, particularly among Generation Z women who are seeking low-calorie, low-sugar, low-fat but nutrient- and fiber-rich meals. The rapid popularity of light food among this demographic and the continuous expansion of the industry, along with the emergence of numerous related businesses, highlight the fierce competition in the market. Simultaneously, the digital age has brought unprecedented opportunities and challenges to the light food industry. On social media platforms, key opinion leaders (KOLs) play a crucial role in shaping consumer preferences and behaviors. However, with the constant emergence of new digital marketing strategies, light food restaurant owners and KOLs face significant challenges in attracting the attention of Generation Z women, effectively promoting light food restaurants, and determining which content can spark consumer interest. In light of this, researchers have conducted explanatory study on this phenomenon, aiming to provide practical strategies and insights for the light food industry and KOLs.

5.2 The Model Construction

Through quantitative analysis of secondary data, combined with existing literature and theories, this study employed six variables to measure and analyze the impact of digital content published by KOLs: video format variables include the taste of food, food pairing, and decor style of light food restaurants; while the variables combining images and text involve the taste of food, types of dishes, and geographical location of light food restaurants. According to data analysis of firsthand data collected through survey, all the hypothesis posed were validated, demonstrating that specific content indeed has a positive impact on consumer interests. Particularly, when using these variables to investigate the interest of Generation Z women in content published by KOLs on the RED platform, the results were significant. Thus, these contents have been proven to effectively stimulate the purchase interest of Generation Z women. The following will provide an overview of model construction and a detailed discussion to delve into the conclusions extracted from the data.
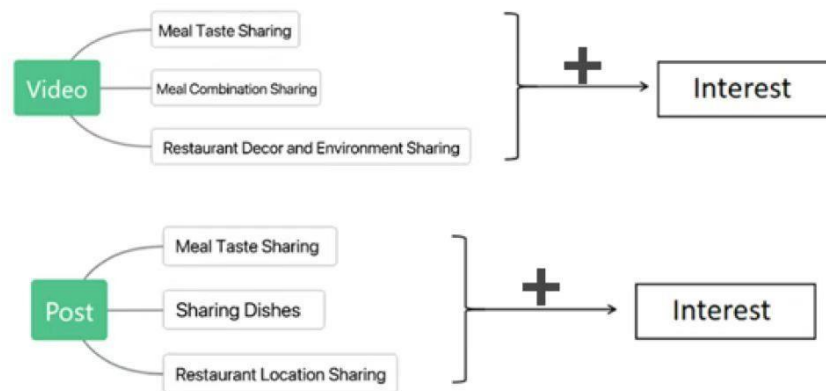
Figure 2. Model Construction

5.3 Key Findings

Finding 1 - Regarding the videos of light dining restaurants shared by KOLs, the taste of the food, the food pairing, and the decoration style of the light dining restaurants all have a significant impact on the interest of Generation Z women. Of these, content about restaurant decor and environment had the greatest impact on their interest.

The results of this study are in line with previous literatures, for example, Jiang's study (2022), where Generation Z showed great enthusiasm for posts or videos shared by KOLs, Zhang's study (2022), where short videos of KOL product recommendations can stimulate Generation Z's interest, and Han's study (2022), where multimedia videos can build connections with fans, and recommendations from high-traffic KOLs, which are more favored by consumers. The same correlation between KOL marketing and the interests from target audiences is again confirmed in this study. Therefore, the hypotheses of this study are meaningful. And this study also adds new knowledge to the existing theories through empirical data analysis, further confirming the effectiveness of video content for KOL marketing in stimulating consumer interest.

Furthermore, based on the data analysis, when Gen Z female consumers watch videos that share information about light meal restaurants, content about the restaurant's decor and environment has the greatest impact on their interest. In the study by Nawras Nusairat (2020), the design and décor style of a restaurant is confirmed of influence the customer's perception and assessment of the restaurant, and this perception can affect the customer's interest in restaurants. This research further reveals that KOLs' descriptions of light restaurant environments can also significantly influence Gen Z women's interests of light meal restaurants. The ambience of a restaurant is a key factor in influencing consumer behavioral intentions (Namkung, 2008).For example, KOL would show to audiences that chic and stylish restaurant environments make them feel that the restaurant showcases a good taste on décor, and that the dining experience is a good one. Therefore, audiences who watched these videos will be interested in the decor and will want to try the light meal restaurant.

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This is because light meal restaurants with special styles may also attract Gen Z women. This group of consumers may be attracted by special light meal restaurant styles wanting to try the food or wanting to go to a good-looking light meal restaurant shop to take photos and post in their social media accounts. As a result, restaurant videos with good-looking decor tend to be more popular with Gen Z women.

Finding 2 - For the photo and text posts about light dining restaurants shared by KOLs, the taste of the food, the variety of food dishes, and the geographical location of the light food restaurants all significantly influence the interest of Generation Z women. Of these, meal taste sharing posts had the greatest impact on consumer interest.

These results coincide with the previous studies that are discussed in the literature review chapter. For example, Nie's study found (2022) that KOLs posting in graphic form can convey information in a clear and concise manner, and well-designed posts in graphic form can attract more consumers' attention and have a significant impact on users' engagement in social media. Xie's study argues that (2022) posts in graphic form can provide consumers with clearer and more intuitive presentations, which are preferred by consumers. The correlation between KOL marketing in form of posts and consumers' interests is also confirmed in this study. Therefore, the hypothesis of this study is meaningful. This study also adds new knowledge about the light meal industry through empirical data, and further confirms the effectiveness of KOL marketing's graphic content in stimulating consumer interest.

Furthermore, based on data analysis, when Generation Z female consumers viewed graphic posts that shared information about light food restaurants, the content about meal taste sharing had the greatest impact on their interest. A study by Stone (2018) states that meal taste sharing is a way that can allow consumers to learn about the flavor of food in a shorter period of time and at a low cost.

Therefore, KOLs' sharing in graphic form can enable Gen Z women to quickly find out whether the taste of the food match with their interests. The reason why other content sharing in the graphic type does not attract attention as much as meal taste sharing may be that there are so many good-looking photos of light meals on the RED platform that it is difficult to see the differences between them, resulting in Gen Z female consumers value more the flavors of light meals shared by KOLs more than any other. In addition to this, the reason why the geographic location factor is not particularly important may stem from the fact that Gen Z females are able to taste light meals in the form of takeaways. The underlying reasons could be further revealed by a follow-up study.

5.4 Contribution of the Study

The contribution of this study lies in providing valuable insights for operators and marketers in the light food industry, helping them understand how to effectively utilize KOLs regarding the content on the RED platform to enhance brand visibility and attract potential consumers. It also offers guidance for KOLs, enabling them to create content more targetedly to resonate with Generation Z women. By analyzing which types of content can stimulate more user interactions, such as likes and savings, this article provides practical advice on how to maximize user engagement through content creation and

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publication strategies.

This research not only fills the gap in studies on content strategy of KOL marketing and their impact on the interests of Generation Z women, but also presents a series of empirically based strategic recommendations, providing guidance for digital marketing practices in the light food industry. It assists operators, marketers, and KOLs in more effectively leveraging social media platforms, especially in the rapidly evolving field of digital marketing, opening new avenues for growth and expansion in the light food industry.

6. Conclusion

This research delves into the content published by KOLs on the RED platform, investigates whether the use of KOL marketing in the light meal industry on RED social media platforms can increase the interest of Generation Z female consumers. In particular, the research analyzes which types of content lead to the result that certain posts and videos receiving more likes and savings. Through this research, we aspire to reveal the correlation between the content posted by KOLs and the interests of Generation Z women, thereby validating the effectiveness of specific content strategies in attracting this demographic. The study primarily focuses on two types of content forms: videos and photo-text posts about light food restaurants, with the goal of comparing how different content within these forms impacts consumers.

While confirming the effectiveness of KOL marketing in terms of video and post content to stimulate consumer interest, it also confirms that the content of light meal restaurant decor and ambience in videos shared by KOLs about light restaurants has the greatest impact on the interest of Gen Z females, and that the meal taste sharing in light meal restaurants in graphic posts shared by KOLs about light meal restaurants has the greatest impact on the interest of Gen Z females.

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