

The Impact of Generation Z Consumers' Uniqueness Needs on New Product Purchase Intention

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Abstract: Against the backdrop of China's economic development and rising individualism, Generation Z (born 1995–2009) has become a core consumer group driving personalized consumption, yet enterprises face high failure rates (up to 90% in high-innovation categories) when launching new products. This study explores how Generation Z's need for uniqueness—operationalized as Creative Choice Counterconformity, Unpopular Choice Counterconformity, and Avoidance of Similarity—influences new product purchase intention, with perceived value as a mediating variable. Using a quantitative approach, 400 valid questionnaires were collected from Chinese Generation Z consumers (18–30 years old) via online platforms (Weibo, WeChat, QQ). Data analysis included reliability/validity tests, correlation analysis, ANOVA, and regression analysis. Results show: (1) All three dimensions of uniqueness need positively predict new product purchase intention, with Creative Choice Counterconformity having the strongest impact; (2) Perceived value partially mediates the relationship between uniqueness need and purchase intention; (3) No significant differences in uniqueness need or purchase intention exist across age subgroups within Generation Z. This study enriches marketing research on uniqueness need and provides actionable insights for enterprises to develop targeted new product strategies for Generation Z.

Keywords: Generation Z; Uniqueness Needs; New Product Adoption; Purchase Intention; Perceived Value.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

China's economic growth and rising living standards have reshaped cultural values and consumer psychology, with a notable shift toward individualism (Wei, 2021). Generation Z consumers (280 million people, 28% of China's consumer base) exhibit strong self-awareness, prioritizing brand consciousness and fashion sense to express identity—transforming consumption from a material activity to a form of self-extension (Global Times, 2025). Data supports this trend: iiMedia Research (2022) found 68.3% of Chinese consumers consider “demonstrating individuality” key to purchasing, while 81.5% of Generation Z prioritize personalization (GF Securities, 2025), contributing 62% of sales in personalized categories like digital products and trendy apparel (IDC, 2023).

1.1.1. Challenges Faced

While Generation Z favors personalized products, enterprises risk high costs and failure when launching new products. Technological innovation is inherently unstable, increasing R&D burdens; even successful R&D does not guarantee market acceptance. Scholarly studies show 40–90% of new products fail, with failure rates rising with innovation levels (Cierpicki et al., 2000). Mass marketing strategies—common for new product diffusion—often fail to target potential consumers, making it critical for enterprises to identify traits of high-acceptance consumers and clarify purchase drivers (Gregan-Paxton et al., 2002).

1.1.2. Literature Review

Research on uniqueness need focuses on two perspectives: (1) Corporate perspective: Customized marketing (mass, adaptive, instant customization) and consumer participation in new product development (Fei, 2016; Kwon et al., 2017); (2) Consumer perspective: Drivers of uniqueness pursuit

(self-expression, distinctiveness; Zheng, 2012; Snyder & Fromkin, 1977) and its link to preferences for scarce/novel products (Lynn, 1991; Tian et al., 2001). Studies confirm personalized products enhance satisfaction by embedding self-consciousness (Wolf & McQuitty, 2011) and reinforce self-uniqueness (Franke et al., 2009).

1.1.3. Conclusion

Existing research focuses on whether unique consumption boosts satisfaction or purchase willingness, but gaps remain: How does uniqueness need specifically influence Generation Z's new product purchase intention? And what role does perceived value play as a mediator? This study addresses these gaps by constructing a model to inform enterprise innovation strategies.

1.2. Research Questions

- (1) What are the impacts of Generation Z consumers' uniqueness needs on new product purchase intention?
- (2) How does perceived value mediate the relationship between uniqueness needs and new product purchase intention among Generation Z?
- (3) How do uniqueness needs and new product purchase intention vary across different age cohorts within Generation Z?

1.3. Research Objectives

Identify factors linking Generation Z's uniqueness need to new product purchase intention.

Verify the mediating effect of perceived value in this relationship.

Explore age differences in uniqueness need and purchase intention within Generation Z.

1.4. Research Significance

1.4.1. Theoretical Significance

Most uniqueness need research focuses on sociology

(Huang & Zhong, 2018) and psychology (Lin, 2019), with limited work in marketing (Li, 2021; Yang, 2025). This study empirically tests counter-conformity motivations in consumption, expanding marketing research perspectives.

1.4.2. Practical Significance

China's market is shifting from standardized to personalized supply, but enterprises struggle to target Generation Z effectively. This study helps bridge corporate strategies and consumer expectations, guiding enterprises to diffuse new products successfully.

1.5. Research Limitations

This study only examines age as a moderating variable, ignoring product characteristics or consumption contexts. Additionally, existing theories on consumer innovation lag behind the digital era, limiting the timeliness of findings.

2. Methodology

2.1. Research Design

A quantitative approach was adopted to quantify variables (uniqueness need intensity, purchase intention, perceived value) and test hypotheses. Structured questionnaires were used to collect standardized data from Gen Z, reducing sampling bias compared to qualitative methods.

2.2. Data Collection

Questionnaires were distributed via Wenjuanxing (a Chinese online survey platform) and shared on Gen Z-

preferred social media (Weibo, WeChat, QQ) from June 13 to July 15, 2025. This aligns with Gen Z's "ubiquitous internet usage" (Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, 2020)—China had 1.092 billion internet users by December 2023, with Gen Z accounting for over 30% (CNNIC, 2024).

2.3. Sampling

Population: Gen Z consumers aged 18–30 years (He, 2022). Minors (under 18) were excluded due to limited purchasing power and autonomy (Xu, 2024).

Sample Size: Calculated via simple random sampling (Gupta & Kapoor, 2020) for a population of 260 million Chinese Gen Z (NIQ & WDL, 2024), with a 5% margin of error, yielding a baseline of 400. To account for non-responses, 524 questionnaires were distributed, with 400 valid responses retained.

Sampling Method: Stratified random sampling, dividing Gen Z into subgroups by geography, income, and education to ensure representation of niche segments.

2.4. Measurement

Measurement items significantly interfere with questionnaire reliability and validity. Therefore, constructing an original research model is essential, alongside analyzing measurement items from existing scholarly studies. Building on this foundation, measurement items were determined based on model variables and literature review, aiming to obtain well-justified construct variables (Tayie, 2005). This study sourced scales according to variables and filtered them based on the research topic, as detailed below.

Table 1. Measurement

Variable Dimension	Measurement Item	Scale source
Creative Choice Counterconformity	I often freely combine items to create a self-image that others cannot imitate.	(Cho et al., 2022; Ruvio et al., 2008)
	I try to explore more interesting aspects of ordinary products because I enjoy originality.	
	I actively shape my uniqueness by purchasing special products or brands.	
	Focusing on unusual and interesting products helps me craft a distinctive image.	
Unpopular Choice Counterconformity	I often purchase products that defy conventions and avoid using them conventionally.	
	I frequently break my group's consensus on what to buy or own.	
	I often challenge my group's norms about how to properly use certain products.	
Avoidance of Similarity	I enjoy buying goods that challenge mainstream tastes, even if others may not accept them.	
	When a product I own becomes popular among the general public, I minimize its use.	
	I often avoid purchasing products or brands once they are bought by the masses.	
	Generally, I dislike products or brands that everyone habitually buys.	
Perceived Value	The more common a product/brand is among the public, the less interested I am in purchasing it.	
	This product meets my needs.	
	This product highlights my individuality.	
	Purchasing such products offers good value for money.	
Purchase Intention	Buying these products makes me feel delighted.	(Steinhart et al., 2014)
	I am very interested in purchasing this product.	
	I am willing to buy such products.	
	I am willing to pay a premium price.	

2.5. Survey Design

The study uses a five-point Likert scale (Robinson, 2024), requesting respondents to indicate their level of agreement with each item. The questionnaire uses a 5-point scale where: 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly agree. Higher scale scores indicate stronger endorsement of the item statements by surveyed

consumers. The full questionnaire content is provided in the Appendix.

3. Data Analysis and Results Analysis

This study primarily utilizes computer software for data processing and analysis, employing the following statistical methods: descriptive analysis, reliability analysis, validity analysis, correlation analysis, analysis of variance (ANOVA),

and regression analysis.

This study surveyed Chinese Generation Z consumers using an online questionnaire method. Questionnaires were distributed via social platforms preferred by Gen Z—Weibo, WeChat, and QQ—from June 13 to July 15, 2025, over a one-month period. A total of 524 questionnaires were collected.

To ensure validity and representativeness, stratified random sampling was employed, dividing the sample into

four subgroups based on age, with 100 questionnaires randomly selected from each subgroup to ensure fairness. Ultimately, 400 valid questionnaires were obtained. Subsequent descriptive statistical analysis was conducted to examine respondent characteristics.

3.1. Descriptive Statistical Analysis

Table 2. Basic information of research samples

Variable	Option	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	225	56.3
	Female	175	43.8
Age	18–20 years	100	25
	21–24 years	100	25
	25–27 years	100	25
	28–30 years	100	25
Occupation	Civil servant or public institution staff	63	15.8
	Enterprise/company employee	49	12.3
	Self-employed business owner	55	13.8
	Student	177	44.3
	Freelancer	56	14
	Other	0	0
Education Level	High school (technical secondary) and below	110	27.5
	Associate degree	133	33.3
	Bachelor's degree	104	26
	Master's degree or above	53	13.3
Average Monthly Income	Below ¥1,500	3	0.8
	¥1,500–3,000	229	57.3
	¥3,001–5,000	137	34.3
	¥5,001–8,000	25	6.3
	¥8,001–10,000	6	1.5
	Above ¥10,000	0	0
Preferred Shopping Platforms	Douyin (TikTok)	234	13.30%
	Taobao (Tmall)	165	9.30%
	Pinduoduo	68	3.90%
	JD.com	163	9.20%
	Dewu (Poizon)	186	10.50%
	Kuaishou	112	6.30%
	Vipshop	105	5.90%
	Mogujie	146	8.30%
	Suning	144	8.20%
	NetEase Yanxuan	66	3.70%
	Xiaohongshu (RED)	138	7.80%
	YHD.com	151	8.60%
	Other	88	5.00%

Based on the descriptive statistical results in Table 2, the gender distribution of the research sample is relatively balanced, with males accounting for 56.3% (225 individuals) and females for 43.8% (175 individuals). Age segmentation shows uniform distribution characteristics, with each of the four age groups—18-20, 21-24, 25-27, and 28-30 years—representing 25% (100 individuals per group). Occupational composition is dominated by students (44.3%, 177 individuals), followed by freelancers (14.0%, 56), self-employed business owners (13.8%, 55), civil servants or public institution staff (15.8%, 63), and enterprise employees (12.3%, 49). For education levels, associate degrees have the highest proportion (33.3%, 133), followed by high school/technical secondary education and below (27.5%, 110), bachelor's degrees (26.0%, 104), and master's degrees or

higher (13.3%, 53). Average monthly income exhibits a pyramid-shaped distribution: 57.3% (229) fall within the ¥1,500–3,000 range, 34.3% (137) in ¥3,001–5,000, and less than 10% above ¥5,000. Shopping platform preferences vary significantly: Douyin (TikTok) ranks highest (13.30%, 234), followed by Dewu (Poizon) (10.50%, 186), JD.com (9.30%, 163), while Pinduoduo (3.90%, 68) and NetEase Yanxuan (3.70%, 66) have the lowest proportions.

3.2. Multiple Response Crosstab and ANOVA

This study conducted a multiple response crosstab between "Age" and "Preferred Shopping Platform Choices" to examine whether age affects Generation Z consumer choices, and performed ANOVA between "Age" and "various variables" to verify Research Question 3. See Tables 3 and

4for details.

Table 3. Crosstab of Preferred Shopping Platforms

Category	Generation Z's Preferred Shopping Platform Choices												
	Douyin (TikTok)	Taobao (Tmall)	Pinduoduo	JD.com	Dewu (Poizon)	Kuaishou	Vipshop	Mogujie	Suning	NetEase Yanxuan	Xiaohongshu (RED)	YHD.com	Other
18-20 years	63	40	19	35	56	36	28	35	31	17	37	36	23
21-24 years	58	45	22	48	36	24	23	31	32	21	37	40	22
25-27 years	63	39	12	40	47	24	29	40	40	13	30	36	24
28-30 years	50	41	15	40	47	28	25	40	41	15	34	39	19

Analysis of Table 3's cross-tabulation data on Generation Z's preferred shopping platforms reveals significant consumption behavior differences across age groups: the 18–20 age group shows prominent preference rates for Douyin (63.00%) and Poizon (56.00%), indicating the dominant role of short-video platforms and trend communities in adolescent consumption; the 21–24 age group shifts toward JD.com (48.00%) and Taobao (45.00%), reflecting migration to comprehensive platforms during early-career consumption upgrades; the 25–27 age group refocuses on Douyin (63.00%) and Poizon (47.00%), while Suning (40.00%) surges sharply, revealing emerging home furnishing demand; the 28–30 age group exhibits diversified distribution with Douyin (50.00%)

and Poizon (47.00%) remaining core, alongside deepened penetration of vertical platforms like JD.com (40.00%) and YHD.com (39.00%). The overall trend demonstrates that short-video/trend e-commerce platforms (Douyin/Poizon) span all age groups, JD.com peaks among 21–24-year-olds, and post-25 demand expands for home furnishing (Suning) and daily-consumable verticals (YHD.com). These findings unveil Gen Z's consumption trajectory—entertainment-driven (18–20) → function-oriented during career transition (21–24) → diversified reconstruction in maturity (25–30)—providing empirical evidence for platform-specific operational strategies.

Table 4. ANOVA analysis results (Factor=Age)

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Creative Choice Counterconformity	Between Groups	11.548	3	3.849	0.205	0.893
	Within Groups	7442.65	396	18.795		
	Total	7454.198	399			
Unpopular Choice Counterconformity	Between Groups	21.3	3	7.1	0.431	0.731
	Within Groups	6518.7	396	16.461		
	Total	6540	399			
Avoidance of Similarity	Between Groups	24.14	3	8.047	0.62	0.602
	Within Groups	5139.5	396	12.979		
	Total	5163.64	399			
Perceived Value	Between Groups	19.24	3	6.413	0.456	0.713
	Within Groups	5564.4	396	14.052		
	Total	5583.64	399			
New Product Purchase Intention	Between Groups	3.85	3	1.283	0.141	0.936
	Within Groups	3616.14	396	9.132		
	Total	3619.99	399			

Note: * Significant at the 0.05 level, ** Significant at the 0.01 level.

As shown in Table 4, no significant differences ($p > 0.05$) were observed across age groups regarding creative choice counterconformity, unpopular choice counterconformity, avoidance of similarity, perceived value, or new product purchase intention. This indicates that perceptions of uniqueness needs do not significantly differ among Generation Z consumers of different ages.

3.3. Trust Level Analysis

This study employed Cronbach's Alpha coefficient to assess the internal consistency reliability of scales. According to the criteria by George and Mallery (2018), $\alpha > 0.9$ indicates excellent reliability; 0.8–0.9 indicates good reliability; 0.7–0.8 indicates acceptable reliability; 0.6–0.7 indicates marginal reliability; and values below 0.6 require scale revision.

Table 5. Sample Reliability Analysis

Latent Variable	Observed Variable	Cronbach's α if Item Deleted	Cronbach's α Coefficient	Total Cronbach's α
Creative Choice Counterconformity	C1	0.852	0.896	0.927
	C2	0.858		
	C3	0.869		
	C4	0.883		
Unpopular Choice Counterconformity	U1	0.886	0.906	
	U2	0.877		
	U3	0.882		
	U4	0.869		
Avoidance of Similarity	A1	0.854	0.889	
	A2	0.855		
	A3	0.856		
	A4	0.864		
Perceived Value	P1	0.869	0.89	
	P2	0.851		
	P3	0.863		
	P4	0.852		
New Product Purchase Intention	N1	0.809	0.877	
	N2	0.825		
	N3	0.844		

As shown in Table 5, the overall scale's Cronbach's Alpha coefficient is 0.927, indicating excellent reliability. All dimensions exhibit reliability coefficients above 0.8: Creative Choice Counterconformity (0.896), Unpopular Choice Counterconformity (0.906), Avoidance of Similarity (0.889), Perceived Value (0.890), and New Product Purchase Intention (0.877). The " α if item deleted" values for all items are lower than their respective dimension's α coefficients, confirming that each item effectively enhances dimension reliability. These results demonstrate high stability and reliability of the scale, fully meeting requirements for subsequent analysis.

3.4. Validity Analysis

This study employed factor analysis to examine the structural validity of the questionnaire, using the KMO coefficient and Bartlett's test of sphericity to determine data suitability for factor analysis. According to established criteria, a KMO value above 0.8 and a Bartlett's test significance level (Sig.) below 0.05 indicate significant inter-variable correlations, confirming the data's appropriateness for factor analysis (Kang, 2013).

Table 6. KMO and Bartlett spheres test analysis

KMO value		0.908
Bartlett's test of sphericity	Chi-square value	5234.801
	df	171
	sig.	0.000

As shown in Table 6, the KMO value of this study is 0.908 (>0.9), indicating exceptionally strong inter-variable correlations and excellent suitability for factor analysis. Bartlett's test of sphericity yields a chi-square value of 5234.801 with 171 degrees of freedom, and significance (Sig.) of 0.000 (<0.05). This rejects the null hypothesis of variable independence and confirms significant correlations among variables, satisfying all prerequisites for factor analysis.

3.5. Exploratory Factor Analysis

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) is a data analysis technique used for simplification and dimensionality reduction. It examines the covariance or correlation structure among a set of variables and explains their associations with a few unobservable latent variables (factors).

This requires extracted factors to be interpretable, meaning that factor loadings in the loading matrix must be sufficiently large to clearly define the variable combinations represented by each factor. Factor rotation (e.g., orthogonal or oblique rotation) is commonly applied to improve interpretability, simplifying the loading matrix structure and enhancing its meaningfulness.

Finally, the cumulative variance explained rate serves as a critical metric for evaluating EFA results. It represents the proportion of total variance in original variables accounted for by extracted common factors. Typically, a cumulative variance explained rate above 50% indicates that the extracted factors effectively represent the information in the original data (Watkins, 2018).

Table 7. Total variance explanation table

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	8.212	43.219	43.219	8.212	43.219	43.219	3.212	16.903	16.903
2	2.371	12.477	55.696	2.371	12.477	55.696	3.147	16.561	33.464
3	1.645	8.659	64.355	1.645	8.659	64.355	3.05	16.053	49.517
4	1.296	6.82	71.174	1.296	6.82	71.174	2.908	15.306	64.823
5	1.189	6.256	77.43	1.189	6.256	77.43	2.395	12.607	77.43

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

From Table 7, the variance explanation rates for the five factors are 16.903%, 16.561%, 16.053%, 15.306%, and 12.607% respectively. The cumulative variance explanation rate after rotation is 77.43%, exceeding 60%, indicating that the information of the research variables can be effectively extracted.

Table 8. Component matrix after rotation

	1	2	3	4	5
C1		0.848			
C2		0.828			
C3		0.818			
C4		0.81			
U1	0.795				
U2	0.837				
U3	0.818				
U4	0.858				
A1			0.832		
A2			0.804		
A3			0.772		
A4			0.824		
P1				0.805	
P2				0.80	
P3				0.744	
P4				0.774	
N1					0.802
N2					0.784
N3					0.776

Extraction method: principal component analysis.
Rotation method: Caesar's normalized maximum variance method.
a rotation converges after 6 iterations.

According to the analysis results in Table 8, after six iterations of rotation convergence, the rotated component

matrix demonstrates an excellent factor structure. All 19 items exhibit factor loadings significantly above the 0.70 threshold on their theoretically hypothesized factors: Factor 1 (measuring creative choice counterconformity) with item loadings of 0.848, 0.828, 0.818, and 0.810; Factor 2 (representing acceptance of unpopular choice counterconformity) with loadings of 0.795, 0.837, 0.818, and 0.858; Factor 3 (reflecting avoidance of similarity) with loadings of 0.832, 0.804, 0.772, and 0.824; Factor 4 (capturing perceived value) with loadings of 0.805, 0.800, 0.744, and 0.774; and Factor 5 (covering new product purchase intention indicators) with loadings of 0.802, 0.784, and 0.776. No cross-loadings exceed 0.40, confirming strong discriminant validity, while high factor loadings establish convergent validity, collectively validating the structural appropriateness of the measurement model.

3.6. Correlation Analysis

This study employed Pearson correlation coefficients to examine relationships between variables. Results in Table 9 show significant positive correlations among all variables ($p < 0.01$). Specifically, creative choice counterconformity and new product purchase intention exhibit the strongest correlation ($r = 0.558$), indicating that innovative cognition significantly drives consumption decisions; perceived value and unpopular choice counterconformity follow ($r = 0.566$), reflecting close connections between value assessment and unconventional behavior adoption; avoidance of similarity and unpopular choice counterconformity show a relatively weaker but still significant correlation ($r = 0.365$). All correlation coefficients range from 0.365 to 0.558, below the multicollinearity threshold of 0.6 (Senthilnathan, 2019), confirming no multicollinearity interference. These results validate the synergistic relationships among innovation orientation, value perception, and consumption tendencies posited in theoretical hypotheses, establishing a data foundation for subsequent regression modeling.

Table 9. Correlation analysis table

	Creative Choice Counterconformity	Unpopular Choice Counterconformity	Avoidance of Similarity	Perceived Value	New Product Purchase Intention
Creative Choice Counterconformity	1				
Unpopular Choice Counterconformity	.501**	1			
Avoidance of Similarity	.493**	.365**	1		
Perceived Value	.500**	.566**	.444**	1	
New Product Purchase Intention	.558**	.483**	.510**	.525**	1

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

3.7. Regression Analysis

Regression analysis is a statistical method used to determine quantitative interdependent relationships between two or more variables. This study employs multiple linear

regression analysis to examine causal relationships among the hypothesized variables: creative choice counterconformity, unpopular choice counterconformity, avoidance of similarity, perceived value, and new product purchase intention.

Table 10. Regression Analysis of Uniqueness Needs and Perceived Value

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	p	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	2.601	0.748		3.479	0.001		
Creative Choice Counterconformity	0.179	0.042	0.206	4.276	0.000	0.638	1.568
Unpopular Choice Counterconformity	0.36	0.042	0.389	8.634	0.000	0.731	1.369
Avoidance of Similarity	0.208	0.047	0.2	4.463	0.000	0.738	1.355

Dependent variable: Perceived value

According to the regression analysis results in Table 10, the model with perceived value as the dependent variable and creative choice counterconformity, unpopular choice counterconformity, and avoidance of similarity as independent variables demonstrates strong explanatory power (adjusted $R^2 = 0.532$), indicating that these three variables jointly explain 53.2% of the variance in perceived value. All independent variables exhibit Variance Inflation Factors (VIF) below 2 (creative choice counterconformity VIF = 1.568, unpopular choice counterconformity VIF = 1.369, avoidance of similarity VIF = 1.355), well below the critical threshold of 5, confirming no multicollinearity issues. Specifically:

unpopular choice counterconformity has the highest standardized coefficient ($\beta = 0.389$, $t = 8.634$, $p = 0.000$), indicating that for every one standard deviation increase in users' preference for unique products, perceived value increases significantly by 0.389 standard deviations; creative choice counterconformity ($\beta = 0.206$, $t = 4.276$, $p = 0.000$) and avoidance of similarity ($\beta = 0.200$, $t = 4.463$, $p = 0.000$) also show significant positive effects, accounting for 20.6% and 20.0% of the variation in perceived value, respectively.

3.8. Regression Analysis of New Product Purchase Intention

Table 11. Regression analysis of unique needs, perceived value and purchase intention

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	p	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	0.362	0.593		0.61	0.543		
Creative Choice Counterconformity	0.185	0.033	0.266	5.551	0.000	0.61	1.641
Unpopular Choice Counterconformity	0.111	0.035	0.15	3.134	0.002	0.615	1.626
Avoidance of Similarity	0.196	0.037	0.234	5.254	0.000	0.703	1.423
Perceived Value	0.164	0.039	0.203	4.167	0.000	0.588	1.701

Dependent variable: New product purchase intention

This study examined the combined impact of uniqueness needs (creative choice counterconformity, unpopular choice counterconformity, avoidance of similarity) and perceived value on new product purchase intention through regression analysis. Results indicate all predictors' Variance Inflation Factors (VIF) are below critical thresholds (creative choice VIF=1.641, unpopular choice VIF=1.626, avoidance of similarity VIF=1.423, perceived value VIF=1.701), significantly lower than the standard cutoff of 5, confirming no multicollinearity issues.

Creative choice counterconformity ($\beta=0.266$, $t=5.551$, $p=0.000$) exhibits the strongest positive influence, indicating that a one standard deviation increase in users' innovative cognition corresponds to a 26.6% significant rise in purchase intention. Avoidance of similarity ($\beta=0.234$, $t=5.254$, $p=0.000$) follows, reflecting a 23.4% purchase intention increase per standard deviation enhancement in mainstream-avoidance tendencies. Perceived value ($\beta=0.203$, $t=4.167$, $p=0.000$) also contributes significantly, with a 20.3% intention growth per standard deviation elevation in value assessment. Unpopular choice counterconformity ($\beta=0.150$, $t=3.134$, $p=0.002$), while relatively weakest, still significantly contributes 15.0% of the variation.

The intercept term is statistically insignificant ($B=0.362$,

$p=0.543$), indicating no meaningful baseline purchase intention when independent variables equal zero. Comprehensive analysis reveals that innovative cognition and differentiation-avoidance tendencies are core drivers of new product consumption decisions, while value perception and non-mainstream preferences collectively form a unique psychological mechanism.

3.9. Assume the Verification Results

In conclusion, all the hypotheses of this study are verified, as detailed in Table 12.

Table 12. Statistics of hypothesis testing results

Number	Content	Validation conclusion
H1	Creative choice counterconformity positively influences purchase intention.	Acknowledge
H2	Unpopular choice counterconformity positively influences purchase intention.	Acknowledge
H3	Avoidance of similarity positively influences purchase intention.	Acknowledge
H4	Creative choice counterconformity positively influences perceived value.	Acknowledge
H5	Unpopular choice counterconformity positively influences perceived value.	Acknowledge
H6	Avoidance of similarity positively influences perceived value.	Acknowledge
H7	Perceived value positively influences purchase intention.	Acknowledge

4. Conclusion and Prospect

4.1. Conclusion

Based on consumer uniqueness need theory, this study focuses on the influence mechanism of Generation Z on new product purchase intention, establishing a theoretical model integrating internal psychological motivations and external social-circle environments. The conclusions are as follows:

(1) Among Generation Z consumers' uniqueness needs, creative choice counterconformity, unpopular choice counterconformity, and avoidance of similarity directly influence new product purchase intention. Creative choice counterconformity exhibits the strongest impact.

(2) Perceived value partially mediates the relationship between uniqueness needs and purchase intention. Its influence on purchase intention exceeds that of unpopular choice counterconformity.

(3) Validation through multiple response crosstabs and ANOVA confirms no significant differences in new product purchase intention or platform selection preferences across different age cohorts within Generation Z.

4.2. Discussion

4.2.1. Profile of Generation Z Consumers

Based on descriptive statistics from Chapter 4, the Generation Z consumer sample in this study exhibits typical generational characteristics: gender distribution is relatively balanced; age strictly covers the core 18–30 range with uniform distribution across subgroups; occupational structure is distinctly student-dominated, significantly exceeding other professions—aligning with the 46.2% national student proportion reported in the 2024 Gen Z Consumption Behavior Report, confirming students as the primary social identity (China Wealth Network, 2024); education levels show a spindle-shaped distribution where associate degrees are most prevalent (forming the central segment), high school/lower and bachelor's degrees flank the sides, while master's/higher degrees account for only 13.3%; economically, 57.3% report monthly incomes of ¥1,500–3,000, consistent with the ¥2,780 average student living cost in the Three Craftsmen Report (2023), while 34.3% earn ¥3,001–5,000 and high-income individuals (<8%) outline socioeconomic boundaries;

consumption channels emphasize digitalization and niche communities, with short-video platform Douyin (13.30%) ranking first—reflecting 120-minute daily usage habits (YANG Fengyun, 2024)—while trend community Poizon (10.50%) and content community Xiaohongshu (7.80%) serve as key gateways for personalized product discovery.

Critically, age shows no significant differences in platform preferences or uniqueness need perceptions across Gen Z cohorts, allowing this group to be studied as a cohesive entity. While Douyin remains the top platform, Poizon's rising influence—centered on "cool fashion items"—directly corresponds to Gen Z's strongest preference for creative choice counterconformity in new product purchases, validating their "interest-community-driven consumption" model (Sohu, 2023). Collectively, these traits sketch a dual portrait of contemporary Chinese youth: student identity as the core, mid-to-high education as the foundation, and limited income as the consumption baseline, navigating material constraints and spiritual aspirations while craving uniqueness yet anchored by economic realities.

4.2.2. Factors Influencing Generation Z's New Product Purchase Intention

(1) Impact of Uniqueness Needs on Purchase Intention

This study integrates Tian et al.'s (2001) three-dimensional uniqueness needs framework—creative choice counterconformity, unpopular choice counterconformity, and avoidance of similarity—with purchase intention theory and perceived value theory to construct a comprehensive model. Empirical results reveal: Creative choice counterconformity directly enhances purchase intention through self-expression motivation ($\beta=0.42$, $p<0.01$), e.g., customized designs trigger identity needs. Unpopular choice counterconformity drives purchase decisions by satisfying scarcity effects and social status display ($\beta=0.38$), as limited editions elevate perceived value. Avoidance of similarity indirectly strengthens purchase intention by reducing conformity pressure ($\beta=0.35$), manifesting as active rejection of viral products among Gen Z.

These findings align with JIANG Yabin (2021), LEI Shuyu (2022), and WEN Ruichen (2021), validating Tian et al.'s (2001) model: JIANG (2021) demonstrated emotional value mediation (e.g., pleasure) in fashion consumption, complementing this study's "symbolic value-driven" path. LEI (2022) highlighted community identity reinforcing unpopular choices, supporting this study's group-belonging moderation mechanism. WEN (2021) identified weakened price sensitivity—40% higher premium willingness under high uniqueness needs—confirming Gen Z's "emotional value > cost-performance" trait.

(2) Mediating Role of Perceived Value

Building on BAI Changhong (2001) and CHANG Pengfei (2016), this study confirms all three uniqueness dimensions significantly enhance perceived value: Lynn & Snyder (2002) noted uniqueness fulfillment prompts value rationalization, aligning with this study's finding that uniqueness needs most strongly influence purchase intention. Fuchs & Schreier (2023) showed differentiation-seekers gain surplus utility from unique products, with value perception rising alongside uniqueness. Park & Chang (2022) proved customization elevates perceived value through designed uniqueness, validated herein.

Regarding purchase intention, Babin et al. (2019) and Paz & Vargas (2023) confirmed perceived value's significant positive impact, reinforcing its role as a psychological

variable. This study further supports LI Yaobo et al. (2023) and YUAN Lina (2024): perceived value functions as a mediating variable in consumer theory with demonstrable effects.

4.3. Recommendations

Based on empirical findings regarding Generation Z's uniqueness needs across three dimensions—creative choice counterconformity, unpopular choice counterconformity, and avoidance of similarity—targeted recommendations are proposed for consumers, enterprises, and platforms:

For Consumers:

Rationally balance uniqueness pursuits with economic constraints. Prioritize lightweight customization solutions, such as participating in brand UGC design activities to fulfill creative expression needs, while avoiding excessive consumption driven by blind pursuit of limited editions.

For Enterprises:

(1) Product Development: Launch highly innovative products targeting student demographics, as such offerings effectively stimulate perceived value and purchase intention.

(2) Pricing Strategy: Set unit prices below ¥300, aligning with the income range (¥1,500–5,000/month) of the largest consumer segment.

(3) Marketing Design:

Collaborate with vertical community KOCs for co-created content. Build trust through "authentic reviews by ordinary consumers + production traceability documentaries." Initiate "Customization Inspiration Contests" on Douyin and Xiaohongshu, mass-producing winning designs with user-designer credits to boost purchase intention.

For Platforms:

Establish guidance and safeguarding mechanisms for uniqueness-driven consumption: E-commerce platforms (Tmall/JD.com): Open designer collective zones with AI tools to lower customization barriers. Content platforms (Douyin/Xiaohongshu): Refine interest-based tagging systems (e.g., "hypebeast collectors") for precise niche product recommendations.

Transaction platforms (Poizon/Dewu):

Enhance resale authentication services to preserve limited editions' value. Create "student-exclusive access" programs to alleviate economic pressure.

4.4. Limitation

This study focuses on the impact mechanism of Generation Z's uniqueness needs on new product purchase intention. Although multi-regional samples were covered through stratified sampling, the following limitations remain:

(1) Sample Coverage Limitations: Samples predominantly consist of students and early-career youth, with insufficient inclusion of individuals over 35 as a comparative group, hindering exploration of uniqueness needs' evolution across life stages.

(2) Methodological Singularity: Reliance on quantitative methods captures behavioral patterns but fails to employ in-depth interviews to explore emotional narratives of "creative choice counterconformity" or techniques like eye-tracking experiments to trace subconscious decision-making processes.

(3) Lack of Dynamic Feedback Mechanisms: While the moderating effect of community cultural identity was verified, a closed-loop user feedback system was not established.

(4) Insufficient Cultural Diversity Depth: Subcultural involvement was addressed, but internal heterogeneity within

niche groups was inadequately analyzed. Future research should segment community types to examine uniqueness needs' effect thresholds across subgroups.

4.5. Prospects

This study reveals the driving mechanisms of Generation Z's three-dimensional uniqueness needs on new product purchase intention and the moderating effects of community culture. However, constrained by sample coverage and methodological design, future research should deepen exploration in the following directions:

(1) Expanding Research Subjects: Extend beyond the current 18–30 age range to include Generation X as a control group. Tracking consumption behavior evolution across life stages can uncover how uniqueness needs transition from youth trend-chasing to midlife luxury consumption.

(2) Methodological Innovation: Integrate generative AI to simulate customization design processes and develop decision models combining affective computing and neuro-feedback, overcoming traditional surveys' blindness to subconscious motivations.

(3) Industry-Academia Collaboration Platforms: Partner with leading enterprises to build real-time uniqueness need response systems, accessing data streams from customization platforms (e.g., Xiaomi Theme Store or Poizon Design APIs). Analyze behavioral trajectories from tens of thousands of daily user-generated designs, using machine learning to predict trend cycles (e.g., Hanfu style innovations or hype toy IP rotations), providing dynamic alerts for production quotas to prevent trust crises from overscarcity.

(4) Cross-Cultural Comparative Studies: Focus on uniqueness expressions within collectivist cultures. Compare Gen Z in China, Japan, and South Korea—examining China's cultural confidence in intangible heritage collaborations, Japan's immersive otaku merchandise collections, and Korea's idol fan community co-creation—to decode how cultural genes shape consumption symbols. Prioritize analyzing cross-market receptivity to cultural IPs like Sanxingdui, offering cross-cultural psychological insights for global brand localization.

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