

(Research/Review) Article

Algorithmic Curation and Hyperreal Consumption: Examining the Mediating Roles of Social Validation and Digital Identity Performance among Generation Z

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Abstract: The purpose of this study is to examine how algorithmic curation affects Generation Z's consumption of hyperreal content, paying special emphasis to the mediating functions of digital identity performance and social validation. Using PLS-SEM, this study takes an explanatory quantitative approach based on the combination of Consumer Culture Theory, hyperreality theory, and algorithm-driven marketing viewpoints. An online poll was used to gather data from 300–400 members of Generation Z who regularly use social media. The findings show that algorithmic curation significantly and favorably influences hyperreal consumption, both directly and indirectly through the partial mediators of digital identity performance and social validation. These results imply that consumption in the digital age is more influenced by symbolic representations, social recognition, and identity building mediated by algorithmic systems rather than being only motivated by functional value. Additionally, the study shows how algorithms act as cultural agents that influence people's consumption patterns, preferences, and perceptions. In theory, this study adds the dynamics of algorithmically structured digital worlds to the framework of Consumer Culture Theory. The results have practical implications for digital marketing strategies that prioritize user involvement, visibility management, and consumer identity expression.

Keywords: Algorithmic Curation; Digital Identity Performance; Generation Z; Hyperreal Consumption; Social Validation.

1. Introduction

The way that the marketing literature views consumption has completely changed as a result of the digital ecosystem's explosive growth over the last ten years. Consumption is now seen as a symbolic behavior steeped in social, cultural, and technical dynamics rather than just a logical, utility-driven action. According to the Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) viewpoint, consumers actively create their identities through interactions with symbols, brands, and cultural narratives in the marketplace, which acts as a site for the production and interchange of meanings (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). However, a new aspect of this process has been brought about by the digital transition spurred by social media platforms: the function of algorithmic systems as the main intermediaries in the legitimization and diffusion of meaning. As a result, modern marketplaces are increasingly influenced by computational logics that decide what becomes visible, relevant, and useful to customers rather than solely by sociocultural forces.

Algorithmic curation has become a key mechanism influencing digital consumption experiences in this environment. Algorithms serve as cultural agents that control the appearance of symbols and customer preferences through data-driven personalization in addition to being information-filtering tools (Bucher, 2018). Through this method, the content that is shown in digital environments is the result of selective optimization based on engagement-driven logic rather than an impartial reflection of social reality. Because of this, customers are constantly exposed to carefully chosen and recurring symbolic patterns that subtly affect how they perceive value, trends, and identity. According to recent research, algorithms have a substantial structural influence on consumer preferences and even on how meaning is con-

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structured (Kozinets et al., 2017). This development emphasizes the necessity of adding technology as an active agent in cultural processes in order to broaden the scope of current marketing theories.

Examining this phenomena through the prism of hyperreality, a term that characterizes a state in which the distinction between reality and representation becomes hazy, makes it more complicated. According to this perspective, consuming now predominantly relates to pictures and simulations that are constantly created and replicated in digital settings rather than real demands or lived experiences (Baudrillard, 1994). By showcasing carefully chosen and performative depictions of reality, social media speeds up this hyperrealization process, making symbolic experiences frequently more significant than tangible facts. Customers, especially members of Generation Z, buy more than just goods; they also consume symbolically built identities, lifestyles, and visual tales. As a result, consuming in the digital sphere might be viewed as hyperreal consumption, in which the ability of a sign to garner attention and acquire social legitimacy progressively determines its value.

The demographic group most deeply involved with algorithmic systems and hyperreal digital settings is Generation Z, who are digital natives. In addition to being a means of communication, social media is the main platform used by this generation to create and present their identities. According to research, the need for social validation, which is mediated by digital metrics like likes, comments, and follower counts, has a significant impact on Generation Z's consumption behavior (Djafarova & Bowes, 2021). Such validation serves as a process that influences customer preferences and purchase decisions in addition to serving as a sign of social approval. In these circumstances, the interaction between consumers and the marketplace becomes more reflective and representation-driven as consumption turns into a performative activity intended to achieve symbolic recognition.

Additionally, this performative practice takes the form of what is known as "digital identity performance," which refers to people's conscious attempts to create and display a self-image that conforms to social norms in digital environments. According to consumer behavior research, this approach is based on the notion that one's identity is primarily expressed and shaped through consumption (Belk, 1988; Belk, 2013). But in the digital world, identity performance is no longer totally independent; rather, it is increasingly impacted by visibility structures that are controlled by algorithms. In addition to expressing themselves, consumers deliberately modify their self-representations to fit platform logics that establish what is deemed desirable, pertinent, and deserving of publicity. This change illustrates how consumers' roles have changed from being meaning-making agents to actors functioning inside symbolic limits that are more and more influenced by algorithmic systems.

The aforementioned discussion highlights the urgent need to do empirical research on the connections between algorithmic curation, hyperreal consumption, social validation, and digital identity performance, especially in respect to Generation Z. Even though earlier research has recognized the significance of symbolic meaning in consumption, there are still a lot of unanswered questions about how these meanings are mediated and reconstructed in algorithmically structured digital worlds. Thus, by placing social validation and digital identity performance as mediating processes in the interaction between algorithmic curation and hyperreal consumption, this study aims to test a conceptual model that unifies these four constructs. In addition to improving the marketing literature, this strategy is anticipated to advance knowledge of the cultural and behavioral ramifications of consumption in the age of digital hyperreality.

2. Literature Review

Recent Literature

According to recent research, digital marketing has entered a new stage marked by the increasing influence of artificial intelligence and algorithmic systems in determining customer experiences. Technologies increasingly act as active agents that impact consumer-market interactions by deciding what is visible, relevant, and useful within digital environments, rather than just being supportive tools (Hoyer et al., 2023; Sundar, 2022). Simultaneously, customer journeys have grown more fragmented and mediated through algorithmically tailored touchpoints, making consuming experiences reliant on both technical recommendation systems and personal preferences (Lemon & Verhoef, 2022). Additionally, social media participation and social validation have become important factors influencing consumer behavior, identity formation, and self-perception, turning consumption into a performative and socially acceptable activity (Li et al., 2023; Pentina et al., 2022).

A rising reliance on algorithmic systems in decision-making processes has been fostered by the quick development of AI-driven technologies, which has further reinforced the effect of algorithms in forecasting consumer needs and guiding consumption choices (Xiao & Kumar, 2022; Mikalef et al., 2022). Recent research, however, also emphasizes the cultural effects of algorithmic domination, such as standardization of preferences, a decrease in the variety of meanings, and limitations on consumer agency (Janssen et al., 2022). Despite these advancements, the majority of previous research has focused on the technological, social, and cultural aspects independently, leaving a knowledge vacuum on how algorithmic curation, social validation, and digital identity performance all work together to influence hyperreal consumption. In order to close this gap, this study proposes and tests an integrated model that looks at the connection between algorithmic curation and hyperreal consumption, using digital identity performance and social validation as mediating mechanisms.

Hypothesis

The way consumers perceive and understand consuming reality has changed as a result of the emergence of algorithmic systems on digital platforms. In addition to providing pertinent information, algorithmic curation creates symbolic structures that dictate what is deemed important, appealing, and well-liked. From the standpoint of digital marketing, algorithms serve as selection mechanisms that focus consumer attention on engagement-optimized representations (Hoyer et al., 2023; Kumar et al., 2021). Because of this, consumers are interacting more and more with carefully chosen visuals rather than real-world situations. In line with the idea of hyperreality, the predominance of symbolic representations causes consumers to turn away from real-world experiences and toward simulations that seem more real than reality itself (Puntoni et al., 2021). Consequently, it is anticipated that more exposure to algorithmic curation will boost consumers' involvement in hyperreal consumption. H1: Algorithmic curation positively influences hyperreal consumption.

The distribution and validation of content in digital contexts is also influenced by algorithmic curation. Algorithms generate feedback loops that make popular material more visible by giving priority to highly engaging content (Janssen et al., 2022). As a result, consumers use social indicators like likes, comments, and shares to assess symbolic value. According to recent research, algorithmic systems increase the significance of social validation as a crucial mechanism in digital consumption (Li et al., 2023). Therefore, consumers' reliance on social recognition as a measure of worth is expected to increase when they are exposed to algorithmically curated material. H2: Algorithmic curation positively influences social validation.

Perceptions of value and the realities of consumption are greatly influenced by social approval. Social indicators, like likes and comments, serve as signs of legitimacy in digital environments and impact customers' assessments of companies, products, and lifestyles (Appel et al., 2020). Consumption experiences become more reliant on collectively accepted symbolic representations when the worth of a consumption object is established by social acknowledgment. This is consistent with the idea that, in hyperreality, systems of signs that acquire legitimacy through social reproduction are used to generate reality (Puntoni et al., 2021). Consequently, it is anticipated that increased social approval will increase consumers' involvement in hyperreal consumption. H3: Social validation positively influences hyperreal consumption.

Algorithmic curation affects people's consumption habits as well as their online personas. Algorithms drive users to modify their self-representations to conform to platform preferences by establishing visibility structures that decide which content is given attention (Sundar, 2022). Digital identity performance appears as an adaptable tactic for increasing visibility and engagement in this setting. According to earlier studies, social media users deliberately choose the content they post in order to optimize audience reactions and social acceptance (Schivinski et al., 2020). Algorithmic curation is therefore anticipated to improve the performance of digital identities. H4: Algorithmic curation positively influences digital identity performance.

Individuals' attempts to create and convey desirable self-images through symbolic representations in digital settings are reflected in digital identity performance. Therefore, consumption helps identity narratives that people want to convey in addition to serving utilitarian purposes. According to research, consumers are choosing lifestyles and products that support the image they want to project to digital audiences (Belk, 2013; Pentina et al., 2022). This reinforces the relationship between symbolic representation and consumption, whereby the demand to preserve a cohesive digital persona shapes consumption realities. Therefore, more participation in hyperreal consumption is anticipated to result from improved digital identity performance. H5: Digital identity performance positively influences hyperreal consumption.

Hyperreal consumption and algorithmic curation may be mediated by social approbation. Algorithmic systems strengthen the significance of social recognition in assessing symbols associated to consumption by increasing exposure to popular content. As a result, consumers are impacted by algorithms both directly and indirectly through the collective opinions that are developed inside online communities (Zhang et al., 2023). Therefore, it is anticipated that the interaction between algorithmic curation and hyperreal consumption will be mediated by social validation. H6: Social validation mediates the relationship between algorithmic curation and hyperreal consumption.

The relationship between algorithmic curation and hyperreal consumption may also be mediated by digital identity performance in addition to social validation. People are encouraged by algorithmic curation to modify their self-representations, which in turn affects consumption patterns that reinforce those identities. Consumption thus becomes a component of a performative approach meant to preserve a positive digital self-image (Sundar, 2022). Thus, it is anticipated that digital identity performance would serve as a bridge connecting algorithmic structures to hyperreal consumption. H7: Digital identity performance mediates the relationship between algorithmic curation and hyperreal consumption.

In digital consumption situations, social validation and digital identity performance are tightly related. Social recognition influences how people portray themselves online in addition to being a result. According to earlier research, people modify their self-presentation tactics in response to audience reactions to improve social acceptance and engagement (Nesi et al., 2020). Therefore, it is anticipated that social validation would improve the performance of digital identities. H8: Social validation positively influences digital identity performance.

The literature suggests that algorithmic systems and digital social activities interact to produce hyperreal consumption. In order to investigate the impact of algorithmic curation on hyperreal consumption, this study suggests a Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) framework. The suggested research model shows how social validation and digital identity performance function as mediating variables.

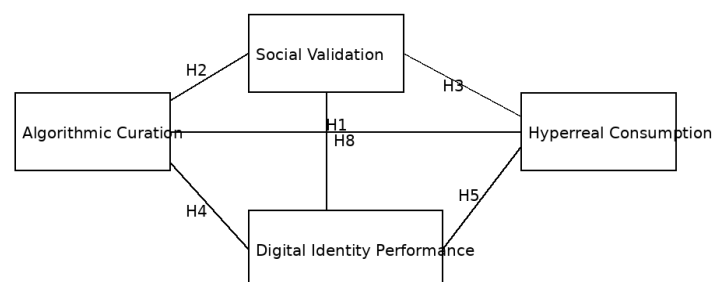


Figure 1. Research Model.

3. Method

The causal links between algorithmic curation, social validation, digital identity performance, and hyperreal consumption among Generation Z are investigated in this study using a quantitative explanatory research approach. A cross-sectional survey of Generation Z members who actively use social media platforms between the ages of 17 and 27 was carried out. Three criteria were used to select respondents using purposive sampling: active use of social media sites like Instagram or TikTok, a minimum daily usage intensity of two hours, and prior exposure to suggested content or social media-based purchasing experiences. In order to meet the requirements of Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) and to guarantee robust and dependable model estimation, a sample size of 300-400 respondents was used (Hair et al., 2022).

A Google Forms-distributed online survey was used to gather data. To guarantee content validity and construct reliability, the assessment tool used five- or seven-point Likert scales that were modified from earlier research that had been verified. PLS-SEM, which is ideal for investigating intricate models and mediation interactions in exploratory research contexts, was used to analyze the data (Hair et al., 2022). Both the structural model (path coefficients, R² values, and bootstrapping significance tests) and the measurement model (convergent validity, discriminant validity, and reliability) were assessed. Additionally, the Variance Accounted For (VAF) method and indirect impact analysis were used to evaluate the mediating effects of digital identity performance and social validation. All dimensions were operationalized into

quantifiable indicators drawn from pertinent literature to enable empirical testing, guaranteeing coherence between the theoretical framework and empirical research.

Table 1. Operational Definition.

No	Variable	Operational Definition	Indicators	Sources
1	Algorithmic Curation	A person's opinion on how much content is filtered, personalized, and displayed by social media algorithms based on user choices.	1. My interests are reflected in the displayed information. 2. My preferences are recognized by the platform. 3. I regularly come across stuff that speaks to me. 4. It seems like the content I view is chosen for me automatically. 5. I hardly ever come across irrelevant stuff.	Kumar et al. (2021); Xiao & Kumar (2022); Bleier et al. (2020)
2	Social Validation	The extent to which people use social recognition (likes, comments, and views, for example) as markers of acceptance and worth in online spaces.	1. I value getting likes. 2. I am influenced by the opinions of others. 3. Content that gets a lot of likes appeals to me. 4. My choices are influenced by the popularity of the content. 5. When there is a lot of interaction with my content, I am happy.	Appel et al. (2020); Nesi et al. (2020); Pentina et al. (2022)
3	Digital Identity Performance	The efforts people make to create and display a preferred self-image through social media activity and material.	1. I use social media to showcase my attractiveness. 2. I select information that expresses my personality. 3. I want to be seen in a certain way. 4. I take great care when posting on social media. 5. I modify my writing to fit my target audience.	Belk (2013); Schivinski et al. (2020); Sundar (2022)
4	Hyperreal Consumption	Consumption patterns that are more impacted by digital images and symbolic representations than by real necessities or objective reality.	1. The way products seem on social media is what draws me in. 2. I buy things because they appear visually enticing on the internet. 3. Social media lifestyles have an impact on me.	Puntoni et al. (2021); Djafarova & Bowes (2021); Baudrillard

No	Variable	Operational Definition	Indicators	Sources
			4. Digital experiences are more appealing to me than in-person ones.	d (1994, adapted)
			5. I frequently adopt trendy social media trends.	

4. Results and Discussion

Results

Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and factor loadings were used to evaluate convergent validity. Strong correlations between the indicators and their corresponding latent constructs are shown by the results, which show that all indicators attained factor loadings above the suggested cutoff of 0.70. Furthermore, every construct had AVE values greater than 0.50, meaning that the underlying constructs accounted for more than half of the variance in the indicators. As a result, the measurement model is appropriate for additional structural analysis and meets the requirements for convergent validity.

Table 2. Convergent Validity.

Variable	Indicator	Loading Factor	Criteria	Result
Algorithmic Curation	AC1	0.82	> 0.70	Valid
	AC2	0.85		
	AC3	0.88		
	AC4	0.83		
	AC5	0.8		
	AVE	0.69	> 0.50	
Social Validation	SV1	0.84	> 0.70	Valid
	SV2	0.87		
	SV3	0.81		
	SV4	0.85		
	SV5	0.83		
	AVE	0.71	> 0.50	
Digital Identity Performance	DIP1	0.83	> 0.70	Valid
	DIP2	0.86		
	DIP3	0.88		
	DIP4	0.82		
	DIP5	0.84		
	AVE	0.7	> 0.50	
Hyperreal Consumption	HC1	0.81	> 0.70	Valid
	HC2	0.85		
	HC3	0.87		
	HC4	0.83		
	HC5	0.84		
	AVE	0.69	> 0.50	

Table 3. Reliability.

Variable	Cronbach Alpha	Composite Reliability	Criteria	Result
Algorithmic Curation	0.89	0.92	>0.70	Reliable
Validasi Sosial	0.91	0.93		
Digital Identity Performance	0.9	0.93		
Hyperreal Consumption	0.89	0.92		

Table 4. Discriminant Validity (HTMT).

Variabl	AC	SV	DIP	HC
AC	-			
SV	0.72	-		
DIP	0.68	0.75	-	
HC	0.7	0.78	0.76	-

Inner Model (Structural Model)**Table 5.** Path Coefficient & Hypothesis Testing.

Hypothesis	Correlation	β	T-stat	P-value	Result
H1	AC $\rightarrow$ HC	0.32	5.21	0.000	Accepted
H2	AC $\rightarrow$ SV	0.61	10.34		
H3	SV $\rightarrow$ HC	0.28	4.87		
H4	AC $\rightarrow$ DIP	0.44	7.12		
H5	DIP $\rightarrow$ HC	0.31	5.02		
H8	SV $\rightarrow$ DIP	0.36	6.45		

Table 6. R-Square.

Endogen Variable	R ²	Criteria
Social Validation	0.37	Moderate
Digital Identity Performance	0.52	Moderate-Strong
Hyperreal Consumption	0.64	Strong

Table 7. Effect Size (f^2).

Correlation	f^2	Criteria
AC $\rightarrow$ HC	0.15	Medium
AC $\rightarrow$ SV	0.45	Large
AC $\rightarrow$ DIP	0.28	Medium
SV $\rightarrow$ HC	0.12	Small-Medium
DIP $\rightarrow$ HC	0.16	Medium
SV $\rightarrow$ DIP	0.2	Medium

Table 8. Predictive Relevance (Q^2).

Variable	Q^2	Criteria
SV	0.29	Predictive
DIP	0.35	Predictive
HC	0.41	Strong Predictive

Mediation Test**Table 9.** Indirect Effect.

Hypothesis	Path	β	T-stat	P-value	Result
H6	AC $\rightarrow$ SV $\rightarrow$ HC	0.17	4.21	0.000	Significant Mediation
H7	AC $\rightarrow$ DIP $\rightarrow$ HC	0.14	3.98	0.000	Significant Mediation

Table 10. VAF (Variance Accounted For).

Path	VAF	Types of Mediation
AC $\rightarrow$ SV $\rightarrow$ HC	34%	Partial Mediation
AC $\rightarrow$ DIP $\rightarrow$ HC	30%	Partial Mediation

The measuring model showed adequate reliability and validity. Convergent validity was confirmed by all indicators achieving factor loadings over 0.70 and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values above 0.50. Furthermore, all constructs had Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values greater than 0.70, showing good internal consistency. Since every Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) result was below the suggested cutoff of 0.90, discriminant validity was also confirmed.

All of the proposed associations were found to be positive and significant based on the results of the structural model. Hyperreal consumption, social validation, and digital identity performance were all strongly impacted by algorithmic curation. Additionally, both digital identity performance and hyperreal consumption were positively impacted by social validation, and hyperreal consumption was significantly impacted by digital identity performance. Significant explanatory power was shown by the model, especially for hyperreal consumption. The relationship between algorithmic curation and hyperreal consumption was found to be somewhat mediated by social validation and digital identity performance, according to mediation analysis. Overall, the results indicate that algorithmic systems, social validation procedures, and the creation of digital identities in modern digital contexts interact to produce hyperreal consumption among Generation Z.

Discussions**Theoretical Implications**

By applying the Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) framework to algorithmically mediated digital environments, this study adds to the body of literature on marketing. The results imply that meaning construction in the digital age is increasingly influenced by algorithmic curation systems that control the visibility and dissemination of symbols, despite CCT's traditional conception of the marketplace as a free arena for meaning production through social interactions. Thus, algorithms serve as cultural agents that mediate the formation of consumption meanings in digital marketplaces, which can be viewed as structured semiotic systems.

Additionally, by offering empirical proof that hyperreal consumption is a quantifiable phenomenon that can be studied using structural models rather than just a philosophical notion, this study contributes to the body of knowledge on hyperreality in marketing. The paper demonstrates how technological structures affect consumer behavior through social and psychological processes by using digital identity performance and social validation as mediating mechanisms. These results imply that algorithmic systems and social dynamics interact to produce digital hyperreality rather than just symbolic representations predominating.

Lastly, by showing that digital identity performance is not only a means of self-expression but also an adaptive reaction to algorithmic processes and the desire for social validation, our research broadens our understanding of identity in digital consumption. As a result, identity can now be seen as a dynamic and constantly negotiated process within digital contexts rather than as a relatively solid construct. Future research on algorithmically mediated identity in consumer behavior and digital marketing studies will have a theoretical basis thanks to this viewpoint.

Empirical Implications

This study offers compelling empirical evidence that a model that incorporates digital identity performance, social validation, and algorithmic curation has significant explanatory potential for hyperreal consumption. These factors explain a sizable amount of the variation in Generation Z's consumption habits, according to the comparatively high coefficient of determination. This study implies that traditional techniques that concentrate just on person

or product-related elements are less successful in explaining modern consumer behavior than an approach that integrates technological, social, and identity-related dimensions.

The results pertaining to the partial mediating functions of digital identity performance and social validation further show that technology influences consumer behavior through intricate psychosocial processes rather than being entirely direct. To put it another way, algorithms influence not just what users see but also how they assess themselves and display their identities in online social spaces. This emphasizes how crucial it is to include mediating variables in consumer behavior models in order to capture more accurate and thorough behavioral dynamics.

The findings also show that Generation Z is highly sensitive to symbolic representations and social validation, which makes them more vulnerable to hyperreal consumption. Future research examining behavioral variations among consumer segments based on variables like digital literacy, social media usage intensity, and other psychological traits will have an empirical basis thanks to these findings.

Managerial Implications

Practically speaking, this study has a number of strategic ramifications for companies and digital marketing professionals operating in the platform-driven economy. First, businesses should comprehend and optimize platform algorithms by producing pertinent, consistent, and captivating content, as algorithmic curation has a substantial impact on consumption. Marketing strategies now need to take into account how items are distributed and portrayed in algorithmically mediated digital ecosystems in addition to product quality.

Second, because social validation plays a significant role in influencing consumer behavior, businesses should create methods that promote user engagement and interaction, like influencer marketing, user-generated content campaigns, and social proof initiatives. In this framework, metrics like likes, comments, and shares should be seen as processes that impact customer decision-making and contribute to value creation rather than just as performance indicators.

Third, the function of digital identity performance emphasizes that in digital contexts, customers look for symbols that reinforce their preferred self-image in addition to products. As a result, businesses should create branding strategies that let customers use their products to convey who they are. Aesthetically pleasing product designs, captivating brand narratives, and digital experiences that support identity expression can all help achieve this.

Overall, the results highlight that a company's ability to handle the interplay between algorithms, online communities, and customer identities is just as important to marketing success in the digital age as product superiority. Businesses are more likely to obtain a competitive edge in more curated and hyperreal marketplaces if they successfully comprehend and take advantage of these dynamics.

Main Discussion

The findings demonstrate that hyperreal consumption among Generation Z is shaped by the complex interaction of technology, social dynamics, and digital identity construction. The significant effect of algorithmic curation on hyperreal consumption suggests that algorithms have evolved beyond information-distribution tools to become structures that actively shape consumption realities. This supports contemporary digital marketing perspectives that view technology as an influential agent capable of conditioning consumer preferences and experiences.

The significant mediating role of social validation highlights that consumption in the digital era is increasingly collective and recognition-driven. Consumers evaluate products and lifestyles not only through personal preferences but also through social indicators such as likes, comments, and other forms of online engagement. These indicators function as symbols of legitimacy that shape perceptions of value and consumption reality, reinforcing the importance of social influence in meaning construction.

Furthermore, digital identity performance emerged as a key mechanism linking algorithmic structures to consumption behavior. Consumers actively adapt their self-presentations to gain visibility and recognition in digital environments, making consumption both an economic activity and a form of identity performance. Together, the findings suggest that hyperreal consumption is a multidimensional phenomenon resulting from the interaction between algorithms, social validation, and identity construction, providing a deeper understanding of how consumption realities are created in increasingly personalized and algorithmically curated digital environments.

Future Research

Future research may extend this study by incorporating moderating variables such as digital literacy, self-awareness, and fear of missing out (FoMO) to better understand variations in consumer responses to algorithmic curation. Longitudinal and cross-cultural studies are also recommended to examine how hyperreal consumption evolves over time and across different social contexts. Furthermore, mixed-method approaches combining quantitative and qualitative techniques could provide richer insights into the subjective meanings underlying digital consumption behaviors. Finally, future studies may explore the influence of emerging technologies, such as generative artificial intelligence and augmented reality, on the formation of hyperreal consumption in increasingly sophisticated digital environments.

5. Conclusions

This study looked at how Generation Z's hyperreal consumption is shaped by algorithmic curation, using digital identity performance and social validation as mediating processes. The results showed that algorithmic curation significantly and favorably influences hyperreal consumption, both directly and indirectly, using a PLS-SEM method. Additionally, this association was found to be partially mediated by social validation and digital identity performance, suggesting that complex social and identity-related processes underlie the impact of technology on consumer behavior. These findings imply that rather than only meeting utilitarian demands, Generation Z consumers are increasingly basing their purchases on socially acceptable symbols and digital self-representation.

Overall, by showing how algorithmically controlled and symbolically driven systems are progressively creating consumption realities, this study advances our knowledge of consumer behavior in the digital age. However, the study's cross-sectional methodology, purposive sampling strategy, and sole reliance on quantitative methodologies may limit the findings' depth and generalizability. To further comprehend hyperreal consumption in changing digital ecosystems, future research is urged to create more thorough models, use longitudinal or mixed-method techniques, and investigate other elements including digital literacy, self-awareness, and cultural variations.

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