THE EFFECT OF SELF-REWARD CONTENT ON CONSUMPTIVE BEHAVIOR WITH SELF-CONTROL AS A MEDIATING VARIABLE

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
	This study aims to examine the influence of self-reward content on consumptive behavior, with self-control as a mediating variable. A quantitative approach was employed using a survey method involving 400 Generation Z respondents in Indonesia who actively use TikTok and have encountered self-reward-themed content. Data were collected through an online questionnaire and analyzed using t-test, ANOVA, F-test, and path analysis to examine both direct and indirect relationships among variables. The results show that self-reward content has a significant positive effect on consumptive behavior ($t = 52.939$, $p < 0.05$) and also a significant positive effect on self-control ($t = 6.373$, $p < 0.05$). Meanwhile, self-control has a significant negative effect on consumptive behavior ($t = -2.872$, $p < 0.05$) and is proven to mediate the relationship between self-reward content and consumptive behavior based on the path analysis results ($p = 0.009$). These findings indicate that although self-reward content encourages consumptive behavior, strong self-control can mitigate its impact. This study offers new insights into the dynamics of digital consumptive behavior among Generation Z in today's social media landscape.
Keywords: Consumptive Behavior, Generation Z, Self-Reward Content, Self-Control, TikTok.	
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1. INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology has brought about significant changes in various aspects of human life, one of which is in the way individuals communicate, seek information, and shape their lifestyles (Yolcu, 2023). In the past decade, social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube have experienced rapid growth and have become an integral part of daily activities, particularly among younger generations. Social media serves as a digital platform enabling users to create, share, and exchange information, ideas, interests, and other forms of expression through virtual networks and communities (Rahmawati et al., 2024). Along with this, the use of social media in Indonesia has also shown a significant increase. According to the latest report from We Are Social (2025), approximately 212 million Indonesians have used the internet, and around 143 million of them are active social media users, meaning that nearly half of the total national population (50.2%) has made social media a part of their daily lives.

In recent years, the trend of self-reward has become increasingly popular among the public, especially Generation Z (Gen Z). Self-reward is a form of self-appreciation or recognition for achievements, hard work, or success in completing a specific task (Pastadi et al., 2023). It takes various forms, from buying desired items, enjoying favorite foods, to engaging in recreational activities such as traveling or staycations. This concept is

essentially positive as it aims to maintain mental balance and provide intrinsic motivation. However, in practice, the self-reward trend is often used as a justification for excessive consumption, even without considering actual needs.

This is reinforced by the proliferation of social media content promoting a "treat yourself" or "you deserve this" lifestyle, which indirectly encourages audiences to purchase goods or services as a form of self-reward. Social media platforms like TikTok are filled with content showing individuals celebrating their achievements through self-reward, as evidenced by the popularity of hashtags like #treatyourself and #selfreward, which signify the trend of self-reward expression on social media (Liputan6.com, 2024). This phenomenon shows that self-reward has evolved from a psychological concept into a consumptive lifestyle that has been massively popularized through digital media. In this context, it is important to examine the extent to which self-reward content influences an individual's consumptive behavior, as well as the role of internal factors such as self-control in responding to this trend. Thus, exposure to self-reward content can occur repeatedly and indirectly shape consumption patterns and users' perceptions of self-appreciation through consumptive activities.

The culture of consumption among the public, especially Gen Z, is now increasingly seen as one of the tangible impacts of the massive development of social media (Fransisca & Erdiansyah, 2020). Through social media platforms like TikTok, users are exposed to various types of content that are not only entertaining but also subtly steer them toward consumerist behavior. According to data from the Ministry of Trade, the value of e-commerce transactions in Indonesia is projected to reach Rp487 trillion in 2024, representing a 2.8% increase compared to the previous year (Ministry of Trade of the Republic of Indonesia, 2024). Meanwhile, the e-commerce penetration rate in 2023 was recorded at 21.56% and is projected to continue increasing to reach 34.84% by 2029 (Statista, 2024). These data indicate the high level of consumerism among the Indonesian population. Consumptive behavior is the tendency of an individual to purchase goods or services excessively, not based on actual needs but rather driven by mere desire (Anggasta and Puspitasari, 2024). This behavior emerges when individuals make purchases without rational consideration, solely to satisfy personal desires, even though the goods or services purchased are not actually needed.

This study focuses on Generation Z (Gen Z) as the primary population, which refers to individuals born between 1996 and 2010 according to Adha et al. (2023). The selection of Gen Z is based on their distinctive characteristics as a generation that has grown and developed in the digital age. They are highly familiar with information technology and engage intensively through various social media platforms. One of the prominent aspects of Gen Z is their increased awareness of mental health issues (Anggasta and Puspitasari, 2024). Amidst increasingly complex life pressures, many of them seek ways to maintain emotional stability and manage stress. In this context, the practice of self-reward or rewarding oneself has become a common form of outlet. This trend has grown significantly among Gen Z because it is considered to provide comfort, positive encouragement, and recognition for their efforts.

This study aims to objectively measure and analyze how self-reward content influences Generation Z's consumption decisions, as well as the extent to which self-control can strengthen or weaken this influence. This research is not only relevant to the development of consumer psychology studies but also has urgency in the field of communication, particularly in understanding how visual and narrative messages in social media content shape audience perceptions and behavior. The findings from this research can serve as a reference in designing more effective, ethical, and responsible communication strategies for conveying messages to the public.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research method uses a quantitative approach with a positivistic paradigm to test the causal relationship between variables through empirical data collection and analysis. The measurement scale used is an ordinal scale with a Likert scale instrument, which was developed based on indicators from each variable. The population in this study is Generation Z (aged 15–29 years) who are active on TikTok social media and exposed to self-reward content. Sampling was conducted using purposive sampling with specific criteria, and the sample size was determined using the Slovin formula with a 5% error rate, resulting in 400 respondents.

Data collection was conducted through a questionnaire as primary data, while data analysis included descriptive analysis, normality tests (Kolmogorov-Smirnov), and heteroscedasticity tests to ensure the reliability of the regression model. Hypothesis testing was conducted partially using the T-test, simultaneously using the F-test, and using the ANOVA test to determine differences between groups. To identify the direct and indirect effects between variables, this study also used path analysis. Additionally, the coefficient of determination (R^2) test was conducted to determine the extent of the independent variables' influence on the dependent variable. All analyses were performed using JASP software.

3. RESULT AND ANALYSIS

3.1. Result

A normality test was first conducted to determine whether the variables in this study followed a normal distribution. This test was carried out using JASP software with the Kolmogorov-Smirnov method. For Variable X, the test yielded a statistical value of 0.057 with a significance value (p) of 0.153. For Variable Y, the statistical value was 0.060 with a significance value of 0.108. Lastly, for Variable Z, the statistical value was 0.066 with a significance value of 0.061. Since all significance values exceed the commonly used threshold of $\alpha = 0.05$, it can be concluded that the data for Variables X, Y, and Z are normally distributed. Therefore, all three variables meet the assumption of normality required for further analysis. After meeting the normality assumption, the next step was to examine the assumption of homoscedasticity. The results of the heteroscedasticity test show that the residuals are randomly distributed around the zero line without forming a clear pattern, such as a funnel shape or increasing spread. This indicates that the variance of the residuals remains relatively constant across different levels of the predicted values. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is no indication of heteroscedasticity, and the assumption of homoscedasticity is satisfied.

Next, a t-test was performed to test the significance of the effect of each independent variable on the dependent variable partially. This test aims to determine whether the independent variables, both X (self-reward content) and Z (self-control), have a significant individual effect on the dependent variable Y (consumptive behavior). Through this test, the contribution of each independent variable in explaining the changes that occur in the dependent variable statistically can be determined.

Table 1. Results of the t-test for the effect of X on Z

Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized	Standard Error	Standardized	t	p
M_0	(Intercept)	26.482	0.585		45.279	< .001
M_1	(Intercept)	11.634	2.396		4.856	< .001
	Variabel X	0.167	0.026	0.304	6.373	< .001

Based on the results of regression testing on the effect of self-reward content (variable X) on self-control (variable Z), a regression coefficient value of 0.167 was obtained with a significance value (p) < 0.001. A t-value of 6.373 indicates that the effect is statistically significant. This regression coefficient indicates that each one-unit increase in exposure to self-reward content will increase self-control scores by 0.167 units. Additionally, the standardized beta coefficient value of 0.304 indicates that the influence of self-reward on self-control is moderate. Therefore, it can be concluded that self-reward content has a positive and significant influence on self-control. This indicates that the second hypothesis (H2), which states that self-reward content influences self-control, is proven and accepted based on the results of the analysis conducted.

Table 2. Results of t-test on the effect of X and Z on Y

Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized	Standard Error	Standardized	t	P
M_0	(Intercept)	37.553	0.475		79.114	< .001
M_1	(Intercept)	0.997	0.734		1.358	0.175
	Variable X	0.424	0.008	0.952	51.759	< .001
	Variable Z	-0.043	0.015	-0.053	-2.872	0.004

Based on the results of regression testing on the influence of self-reward content (variable X) and self-control (variable Z) on consumptive behavior (variable Y), it was found that variable X had a regression coefficient of 0.424 with a significance value (p) < 0.001 and a t-value of 51.759. This indicates that self-reward content has a positive and significant effect on consumer behavior, even after the mediation variable is included. Meanwhile, variable Z has a regression coefficient of -0.043 with a significance level (p) = 0.004 and a t-value of -2.872. This

value indicates that self-control has a negative and significant effect on consumer behavior. This means that the higher the level of self-control, the lower the tendency toward consumer behavior. The standardized beta coefficient values show that the influence of X (0.952) is much stronger than the influence of Z (-0.053). Therefore, it can be concluded that both self-reward content and self-control significantly influence consumer behavior, but the influence of self-reward is much more dominant. Additionally, since the influence of X on Y remains significant after Z is included, this indicates the occurrence of partial mediation.

Table 3. Results of the t-test for the effect of Total X on Y

Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized	Standard Error	Standardized	t	P
M_0	(Intercept)	37.553	0.475		79.114	< .001
M_1	(Intercept)	0.498	0.720		0.692	0.489
	Variable X	0.417	0.008	0.936	52.939	< .001

Based on the results of the regression test between self-reward content (variable X) and consumptive behavior (variable Y) without involving a mediating variable, a regression coefficient of 0.417 was obtained with a significance value (p) < 0.001 and a t-value of 52.939. This indicates that self-reward content has a positive and significant direct effect on consumer behavior. In other words, every one-unit increase in exposure to self-reward content will increase consumer behavior by 0.417 units. The standardized beta coefficient of 0.936 also indicates that the effect is very strong. Thus, it can be concluded that, overall, self-reward content significantly contributes to increasing respondents' consumer behavior. This result supports the first hypothesis (H1), which states that self-reward content influences consumer behavior.

Furthermore, an ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) test was conducted in this study to examine whether there were significant differences in consumer behavior (Variable Y) based on several demographic factors, namely gender, monthly income or allowance, and monthly personal expenses. The ANOVA test results for the monthly income or allowance variable showed an F value of 2.310 with a significance value (p) of 0.057. Although this value is close to the standard significance threshold of 0.05, it is still slightly higher, indicating that the difference in consumer behavior based on income levels is not statistically significant. Similarly, the ANOVA test for monthly personal expenses yielded an F value of 0.396 with a significance value of 0.811. This value is well above the 0.05 threshold, suggesting that there is no significant difference in consumer behavior among respondents with varying levels of monthly personal expenditures. In contrast, the ANOVA test for the gender variable resulted in an F value of 12.569 with a significance value (p) of less than 0.001. This indicates a statistically significant difference in consumer behavior between male and female respondents, meaning that gender has a meaningful influence on the level of consumptive behavior.

Furthermore, an F test was conducted to determine whether the overall regression model was statistically significant, meaning whether the independent variables collectively influenced the dependent variable. In this analysis, Variable X (self-reward content) and Variable Z (self-control) were examined as predictors of Variable Y (consumptive behavior). The results showed an F value of 1430.894 with a significance value of p less than 0.001. Since the p value is far below the commonly used significance threshold of 0.05, it can be concluded that Variable X and Variable Z simultaneously have a significant effect on consumptive behavior. This finding indicates that the regression model is appropriate for predicting consumptive behavior based on self-reward content and self-control.Then, a path analysis test was conducted to determine the direct and indirect effects between variables in the previously formulated research model.

Table 4. Path Analysis Results (Direct Effects)

Direct effects

	Estimate	Std. error	z-value	p	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower	Upper
Variable X → Variable Y	0.424	0.008	51.954	< .001	0.408	0.440

Note. Estimator is ML.

Based on the path analysis results, it was found that self-reward content (variable X) had a significant direct effect on consumptive behavior (variable Y) with an estimated value of 0.424 and a p-value < 0.001. The positive estimated value indicates that the higher the intensity of self-reward content consumed, the higher the tendency for consumptive behavior exhibited by respondents. Additionally, the 95% confidence interval is between 0.408 and 0.440, confirming that the effect is statistically stable and consistent. Thus, the first hypothesis (H1), which states that self-reward content has a direct effect on consumer behavior, is accepted because the significance value is less than 0.05.

Table 5. Path Analysis Test Results (Indirect Effects)

Indirect effects

	Estimate	Std. error	z-value	P	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower	Upper
Variable X → Variable Z→ Variable Y	-0.007	0.003	-2.628	0.009	-0.013	-0.002

Note. Estimator is ML.

The analysis results show that the estimated indirect effect is -0.007 with a p-value of 0.009, which is significant at the 0.05 significance level. The 95% confidence interval ranges from -0.013 to -0.002, which does not include zero, thus confirming that the indirect effect is significant. Thus, the fourth hypothesis (H4), which states that self-control mediates the effect of self-reward content on consumptive behavior, is accepted. This finding indicates that self-reward content can indirectly influence consumptive behavior by reducing an individual's self-control.

Table 6. Hasil Uji Path Analysis (Total Effects)

Total effects

			Estimate	Std. error	z-value	p	95% Confidence Interval	
							Lower	Upper
Variable X	→	Variable Y	0.417	0.008	53.072	< .001	0.402	0.433

Note. Estimator is ML.

Based on the results of the total effects test in path analysis, it is known that self-reward content (variable X) has a total effect on consumptive behavior (variable Y) with an estimate of 0.417 and a p-value < 0.001, indicating that the effect is statistically significant. The 95% confidence interval ranges from 0.402 to 0.433, which does not include zero, thereby reinforcing the conclusion that the total effect is significant. Thus, these results support the first hypothesis (H1) that self-reward content influences consumer behavior.

Table 7. Path Analysis Test Results (Path Coefficient)

Path coefficients

			Estimate	Std. error	z-value	p	95% Confidence Interval	
							Lower	Upper
Variable Z	→	Variable Y	-0.043	0.015	-2.883	0.004	-0.072	-0.014
Variable X	→	Variable Y	0.424	0.008	51.954	< .001	0.408	0.440
Variable X	→	Variable Z	0.167	0.026	6.389	< .001	0.116	0.218

Note. Estimator is ML.

Based on the results of the path coefficient test, it is known that there is a significant direct effect of self-reward content on consumptive behavior (X → Y) with an estimated value of 0.424 and a significance value of $p < 0.001$, which means that the first hypothesis (H1) is accepted. Furthermore, self-reward content also significantly influences self-control (X → Z) with an estimated value of 0.167 and $p < 0.001$, thus the second hypothesis (H2) is also accepted. Finally, self-control was found to have a negative and significant effect on consumptive behavior (Z → Y) with an estimate of -0.043 and $p = 0.004$, indicating that the higher a person's self-control, the lower their consumptive behavior. Therefore, the third hypothesis (H3) is also accepted. To provide a clearer visualization of the relationships between variables in the model, the following path diagram or path plot shows the direction and magnitude of direct, indirect, and total effects between variables.

Finally, the coefficient of determination is used to determine the extent to which independent variables contribute to explaining the dependent variable in this research model.

Table 8. Results of the Coefficient of Determination Test

R-Squared

	R^2
Variable Y	0.878
Variable Z	0.093

Based on the results of the coefficient of determination (R^2), it is known that the R^2 value for variable Y (consumptive behavior) is 0.878. This indicates that 87.8% of the variation in consumer behavior can be explained by the self-reward content and self-control variables in the model, while the remaining 12.2% is explained by factors outside the scope of this study. Meanwhile, the R^2 value for variable Z (self-control) is 0.093, meaning that 9.3% of the variation in self-control can be explained by the self-reward content variable, while the remaining 90.7% is influenced by factors outside the model. These values provide an indication of the model's strength in explaining the relationships between variables.

3.2. Analysis

The results of the study indicate that self-reward content on TikTok has a significant influence on the consumptive behavior of Generation Z. Regression tests show a coefficient value of 0.417 with significance < 0.001 and a beta coefficient of 0.936, indicating a very strong influence of self-reward content on consumptive behavior. Path analysis also reinforces this finding, with an estimated direct effect of 0.424 and a 95% confidence interval range of 0.408 to 0.440. This finding is consistent with the Uses and Effects theory, which emphasizes that media is used to fulfill psychological needs, and its content can influence audience behavior. Generation Z uses self-reward content not only for entertainment but also as a form of self-reward, which ultimately triggers excessive consumption. Support for these results can also be found in previous studies. For example, research by Liu (2024) shows that exposure to digital content and promoting consumption as a form of self-achievement can trigger consumer behavior, particularly among younger age groups who are still forming their identities and lifestyles. A similar study by Khadijah & Pangaribuan (2023) also found that consuming content that associates

purchases with happiness or rewards after certain achievements can increase impulsive desires to buy, especially when the content is packaged in a personal and relatable way by the creator.

The research results indicate that self-reward content on TikTok has a positive and significant influence on self-control among Generation Z respondents, although the level of self-control demonstrated by the majority of respondents remains relatively low. The t-test results revealed that each one-unit increase in exposure to self-reward content increased self-control scores by 0.167 units, with a standardized beta coefficient of 0.304 indicating a moderate effect. Path analysis further supports these findings, while the R^2 value of 0.093 implies that 9.3% of self-control variation is influenced by self-reward content, with the remainder influenced by other factors. These findings are consistent with the Uses and Effects theory, which states that media not only serve as a source of entertainment but can also inspire and aid in emotional regulation, thereby contributing to the development of self-control among Generation Z. Previous research by Gayatri & Kusumajati (2024) also reinforces these findings, as they found that reflective digital content containing messages of self-appreciation has the potential to build emotional awareness and improve control over impulsive actions. Meanwhile, findings from Inwood, E., & Ferrari, M. (2018) reveal that exposure to content that emphasizes the values of self-compassion and self-control, such as in the concept of self-reward, can help individuals regulate their responses to external pressures and strengthen cognitive control.

This study shows that self-control has a negative and significant effect on the consumptive behavior of Generation Z. The t-test shows a regression coefficient of -0.043 with a significance value of 0.004, which means that the higher a person's self-control, the lower their tendency toward consumptive behavior. These results are supported by path analysis and an R^2 value of 87.8%, indicating that self-control, along with other variables in the model, explains most of the variation in consumer behavior. Self-control plays a crucial role as a protective mechanism that can limit consumer behavior, and its strengthening is important in fostering healthy and responsible consumption patterns among Generation Z. These findings are also supported by previous research by Wijaya & Mardianto (2021), which showed that low self-control is positively correlated with high consumptive tendencies among adolescents, particularly in impulsive purchases made without planning. Another study by Nurfatimah (2023) also found that weak self-control is one of the main causes of increased consumptive behavior among college students, especially in the context of social media and e-commerce, which offer convenience and high consumption temptations.

The research results indicate that self-control significantly mediates the influence of self-reward content on consumer behavior among Generation Z. Path analysis yielded an estimated indirect effect value of -0.007 with a significance level of 0.009, indicating a significant negative mediating effect. This means that self-reward content not only directly impacts consumptive behavior but also indirectly through reduced self-control. The t-test shows that self-reward content has a positive effect on consumptive behavior (coefficient 0.424) and self-control (0.17), while self-control has a negative effect on consumptive behavior (coefficient -0.043). These findings align with the Uses and Effects Theory, which explains that individuals actively use media to fulfill specific psychological needs, such as self-reward, relaxation, or escape from stress (Windahl, 1979). In this context, self-reward content provides temporary fulfillment of emotional needs, but its long-term effects can influence real behavior, such as increased impulsive consumption. Additionally, these results are also consistent with Albert Bandura's Self-Regulation Theory (1991), which emphasizes the importance of self-control processes in human behavior. According to this theory, self-control is the result of internal monitoring of behavior, evaluation against personal standards, and self-reward or self-punishment.

4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that self-reward content on social media, particularly TikTok, has a positive and significant influence on the consumptive behavior of Generation Z. The more frequently individuals are exposed to such content, the greater their tendency to make impulsive purchases. Meanwhile, self-control was found to have a negative effect on consumer behavior, but overall, respondents' self-control levels were still relatively low. Self-control was also found to partially mediate the relationship between self-reward content and consumer behavior, indicating that internal factors such as the ability to control emotions and impulses play a significant role in resisting the consumerist influence of social media. These findings emphasize the importance of strengthening self-control and media literacy as preventive measures against excessive consumption.

Further research is recommended to explore psychological aspects such as emotion regulation and self-awareness, as well as considering social factors such as peer influence in reinforcing the effects of self-reward content. Educational institutions are encouraged to integrate digital and financial literacy into their curricula to equip young people to cope with the influence of social media. Additionally, policymakers and the public should promote public campaigns and collaborate with content creators to develop educational digital materials that encourage self-control and strengthen financial awareness.

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