The Impact of Social Media Influencers' Marketing Promotion on the Purchase Intention of Young Consumers

Yueci Fu

School of Economic and Trade, Guangzhou Xinhua University, Shenzhen, Guangdong, 518000, China

Keywords: Social Media Influencer, Consumer, Purchase Intention.

Abstract: In today's rapidly developing online world, the impact of social media influencers (SMIs) on the purchase intention of young consumers has been widely discussed. However, there are still some deficiencies in the related research on how the nature of SMIs affects consumers' purchase intention. By collecting relevant sample data of young consumers and conducting correlation analysis, this paper concludes that SMIs' commodity marketing promotion in the four properties of trust, expertise, entertainment value, and Homophily has a positive effect on young consumers' purchase intention to a certain extent. Based on this, this paper suggests that SMIs should focus on improving their trust to increase the expectations of customers; Strengthen their professional knowledge, and focus on the areas they are good at to improve their competitiveness; pay more attention to the interest and creativity of content creation, and attempt to maintain a high degree of similarity with its target audience in terms of interests, hobbies, lifestyles, etc. to make consumers feel close, to attract more users to believe in their recommendations.

1 INTRODUCTION

For the past few years, with the further development of social networks, social media has ushered in a new round of popularity. More and more people are affected by social media, making it a new and widely spread marketing method (Ao et al., 2023). As a result, the number of SMIs surged, and more and more consumers began to pay attention to SMIs. The so-called Social media influencers are a new type of independent third party who use social platforms such as blogs and Twitter to shape and guide audiences' opinions and attitudes (Freberg et al., 2010). As social media software becomes more widely used and the user base expands, the scope of SMI is also increasing. So the question of whether SMIs have a certain impact on consumers' purchase intention has been raised. In this regard, some social media users believe that SMIs with profound knowledge in a specific field are more convincing and authentic than traditional celebrity endorsements (Borchers & Enke, 2022). Hisashi Masuda et al. Found that after social media users watched the commodity promotion videos of SMIs, they had higher purchase intentions for the commodities recommended by SMIs with high credibility or greater professionalism (Masuda et al., 2022). Therefore, more and more brands are aware

that SMIs are a new medium to contact the target audience. These brands have begun to cooperate with SMIs, making SMIs rapidly become a significant part of brand marketing strategy (Qalati et al., 2021; Qalati et al., 2022).

Recently, the relevant research on SMIs has also gradually increased. Zhangdandan concluded that when SMIs use more professional language to recommend products, users' confidence is stronger (Zhang, 2019). Liyanni and Renchunyang believe that when the influencers recommend goods, they can arouse consumers' desire to buy by describing their real use experience. They conclude that the personal disclosure of SMIs has a considerable positive impact on meaning transfer, and the intimate self-disclosure of SMIs is an important variable to improve consumers' perception of the influencers' credibility and product purchase intention (Li, 2024; Rem. 2023). Ao L and others studied the effect of SMIs on customer engagement and purchase intention from eight viewpoints, such as Homophily、 expertise, and so on. Their research found that the attributes of SMIs have a certain impact on consumers' purchase intention to a certain extent (Ao et al., 2023).

Through correlation analysis, this study identified the four basic elements of SMIs: trust, expertise, entertainment value, and Homophily marketing on young consumers' purchase intention. Firstly, this

study reviews the basic definition of SMIs and four basic determinants. Secondly, the study expounds on the influence of four factors on consumers' purchase intention through frequency analysis, reliability and validity analysis, and correlation analysis. Finally, this study gives some suggestions on how to promote the influence of SMIs on consumers' purchase intention.

2 METHOD

2.1 Social Media Influencer

Social media influencers are well-known people with professional knowledge in certain specific industries, such as music, health, fashion, or tourism. They operate their accounts with the focus of spreading messages to other social media users (Ao et al., 2023). They use a variety of marketing methods, such as image and video promotion of recommended products, diversity of promotion content, and interactive marketing with social media users. More and more users pay attention to SMIs and communicate with them to understand the latest situation in a specific field. Thus influencers will upload their opinions and lives to social media software to communicate with followers, which causes the development of SMIs (Ao et al., 2023).

Today's SMIs differ from traditional celebrities in that they use social media software to publish original product marketing content to attract potential customers. Traditional celebrities win recognition through traditional ways and then communicate with fans through social media software to stabilize fans (Ao et al., 2023). SMIs often share their personal lives, which makes them more affinity and homogeneity than traditional celebrities (Breves et al., 2021).

2.2 Dimension Setting

According to AO.L et al When studying the impact of SMIs on eight SMIs explain the problem (Ao et al., 2023). Hisashi et al. Stated the influence of influencer attributes on purchase intention in social media influencer marketing from two aspects: personal attributes and perceptual characteristics. The characteristics are trustworthiness, qualified expertise, and parasocial relationship, and personal attributes are attitude homophily 、 physical attractiveness, and social attractiveness (Masuda et al., 2022). Based on this, this paper will discuss the influence of SMIs on consumers' purchase intention

from four aspects: trust, expertise, entertainment value, and Homophily.

2.2.1 Trust

Trust is a good quality, which is the basis of transactions and exchange relationships. So whether it is for traditional celebrities or SMIs, the degree of trust of consumers is crucial (Masuda et al., 2022). If consumers trust SMIs, it means that they think they will benefit from the commodity marketing promotion of SMIs. Therefore, this study proposes the following assumptions:

H1: The trust of SMIs will affect consumers' purchase intention.

2.2.2 Expertise

Expertise is a crucial factor, it forms the foundation of knowledge dissemination. Professional knowledge reflects the knowledge and ability of influencers in specific fields (Lajnef, 2023). Experts are generally regarded as knowledgeable people who can provide accurate and reliable information. Therefore, consumers tend to consider the products recommended by SMIs who are regarded as experts (Ao et al., 2023). Therefore, it can be considered that:

H2: The professional knowledge of SMIs will affect consumers' purchase intention.

2.2.3 Entertainment Value

Entertainment value is also regarded as one of the important indicators of whether SMIs are attractive. Nowadays, more and more young people have social media accounts, leading to the main audience of social media software becoming young people. At present, an important way for young people to spend time is through social media software with an entertainment nature. Entertainment includes emotions such as fun, enjoyment, and appointment. These emotions make consumers more dependent on the influencers, thus affecting purchase intention (Ao et al., 2023). Therefore, it can be assumed that:

H3: The entertainment value of SMIs will affect consumers' purchase intention.

2.2.4 Homophily

As the saying goes, "Birds of a feather flock together, and people are grouped", homogeneity means that people will interact and get acquainted with people with the same characteristics. People with the same interests usually have some of the same characteristics, which are easy to communicate and

can establish stronger ties. Many studies have studied various forms of homogeneity and concluded that homogeneity will affect consumers' purchase intention (Shen et al., 2024). Therefore, it can be considered that:

H4: The homogeneity of SMIs will affect consumers' purchase intention.

2.3 Questionnaire Design and Distribution

In this study, a questionnaire survey was used to collect questionnaire data on the Internet. The main reason for adopting the questionnaire survey method is that the questionnaire survey has the characteristics of wide coverage, relatively low cost-effectiveness, concealment, and easy data analysis. This makes it possible to quickly start data screening when getting the real first-hand data, and get effective data for the next step of analysis.

In this study, young consumers aged 18-40 were surveyed by sending out questionnaires in the form of online answers. Because the experimental object of this study is young consumers and young consumers are skilled in using social media, an online questionnaire survey is the most direct and intuitive method for data processing and analysis.

The questionnaire is primarily divided into three sections: the first section contains the fundamental information about the respondents, through the investigation of the respondent's age, gender, identity, and other basic information. The second part is about the respondents' time using social media software and their understanding of the concept of social media influencers, which further excludes the respondents who do not meet the requirements of this study. The third part is to use the Likert five-point scale to ask questions on trust, professional knowledge, entertainment value, and homogeneity to comprehensively understand the impact of SMIs on respondents. A total of 186 valid questionnaires were collected in the study. The respondents were 18-40 years old, and 93 were 25 years old and below, which met the requirements of young respondents; There were 58 male respondents and 128 female respondents, covering students, office workers, freelancers, and other groups.

3 RESULT

This study used the spss 27 version to carry out reliability validity analysis and correlation analysis, which further improved the conclusions. Among

them: frequency analysis reflects the actual distribution of the questionnaire data, reliability and validity analysis shows the rationality of the questionnaire, while correlation analysis analyzes the relationship between each variable and the four factors in detail.

3.1 Reliability and Validity Analysis

Table 1. Four-factor reliability analysis.

Variable	Scale average after deleting items	Scale variance after deleting items	Corrected item and total correlation	Clone Bach alpha after deleting an item	Alpha after standardization
H1	7.07	3.287	0.624	0.787	
H2	6.97	3.053	0.685	0.759	0.823
H3	6.85	2.961	0.673	0.765	
H4	7.03	3.367	0.608	0.794	

According to Table 1, the overall standardized credit coefficient of the four basic variable questions using the scale method is 0.823, which is lower than the overall 0.823 according to the deleted credit coefficient. Therefore, the current questionnaire topic does not need to be changed.

The overall standardized reliability coefficient is 0.823, and the value range of the reliability coefficient is between 0 and 1. The closer to 1, the higher the reliability. The result of this reliability analysis is 0.823, which is relatively good.

The result of the KMO coefficient test is 0.771 in the exploratory factor analysis which means the data is suitable, and the KMO coefficient ranges from 0 to 1. The closer to 1, the better the validity of the questionnaire.

Therefore, based on the results of the significance of the spherical test, the significance of this test is extremely close to 0, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis, thus the questionnaire demonstrates good validity.

3.2 Correlation Analysis

According to Table 2, the P values of trust, professional knowledge, entertainment value, and homogeneity are all less than 0.01, showing a significant positive correlation. It shows that these four factors of SMIs will affect consumers' purchase propensity to a certain extent.

Table 2. Correlation analysis of four elements.

Assume	Basic factors of SMI	A	H1	H2	H3	H4
A		1				
H1	Trust	.420**	1			
H2	Expertise	.382**	.567**	1		
H3	Entertainment Value	.341**	.502**	.621**	1	
H4	Homophily	.282**	.499**	.496**	.539**	1
** At 0.01 level (two-tailed), the correlation was significant.						

In this regard, it can be seen that the higher consumers' trust in SMIs, the more consumers are willing to trust their recommended products which improves their confidence in purchasing decisions. Therefore, the improvement of trust can significantly improve consumers' acceptance of recommended products by SMIs, thus increasing their purchase intention. Secondly, when SMIs show strong professionalism, consumers will think that they are more authoritative, so they are more willing to accept their recommendations. Deep professional knowledge enables consumers to know more about products, which can prompt them to make purchase decisions. Therefore, the professional knowledge of SMIs can eliminate consumers' concerns about products, enhance their confidence, and firm their purchase intention. Then, when consumers feel interested and relaxed about the content published by SMIs, it is easier for consumers to feel emotional resonance. Highly entertaining recommended content can not only attract more consumers but also indirectly enhance the acceptance of recommended products. Therefore, the entertainment content of SMIs can effectively attract consumers' attention and enhance consumers' purchase intention through positive emotional experiences. Finally, consumers tend to trust SMIs with high similarity to themselves, believing that they can better understand their own needs. Because homogeneity enhances consumers' sense of identity, it is more favorable to the influencers with strong homogeneity. Therefore, the homogeneity between SMIs and consumers can promote emotional resonance and make consumers more inclined to accept the products they recommend.

From the above points, it can be seen that the most positive impact on consumers' purchase intention is consumers' trust in SMIs, followed by expertise, then entertainment value, and finally homophily. This is similar to the results of Ao. L et al (Ao et al., 2023).

4 DISCUSSION & SUGGESTION

Based on this study, the following suggestions are put forward:

First, the data shows that the credibility of social media influencers helps enterprises increase customer expectations. Due to the high credibility of celebrities, consumers have made a positive response to the received commodity marketing promotion (Ao et al., 2023). In this regard, SMIs can express information when sharing content, and try to be honest and transparent. Maintain the frequency of publishing high-quality content in the long-term sharing process and establish a long-term trust relationship with social media users. SMIs should try their best to fulfill the above suggestions so that consumers or social media users can trust them more.

Second, the professional knowledge of SMIs. If SMIs show expertise in certain specific areas, consumers are increasingly willing to believe the recommendations of these influencers (Masuda et al., 2022). So SMIs should focus on their professional fields continue to accumulate knowledge and share more professional use experience to help users solve problems, to improve their position in the hearts of users.

The third point is about the value of entertainment. SMIs should pay attention to the interest and creativity in content creation so that social media users can receive commodity information in a humorous way, to improve the scope of product promotion of influencers.

The last point is about the homogeneity of SMIs and consumers. Homogeneity means that the image of SMIs is highly consistent with the self-ideal image of consumers (Masuda et al., 2022). Therefore, SMIs should try their best to maintain a high degree of similarity with their target audience in terms of interests, hobbies, lifestyles, etc., so that consumers can feel close, and make consumers more trust that the goods recommended by the influencers are useful to them.

5 CONCLUSION

This study is based on real and effective data from the network questionnaire. Through the analysis of reliability and validity, correlation analysis, and other

methods, it is concluded that social media influencers have a significant positive correlation with consumers' purchase intention in the four aspects of trust, expertise, entertainment value, and homophily. Based on this, this paper proposes that SMIs should focus on improving their professional knowledge, homogeneity, and other characteristics. This research has certain significance in how social media practitioners package themselves, improve their attractiveness, and how marketing practitioners choose relevant SMIs for commodity promotion. There is clear evidence that SMIs' credibility, professional knowledge, entertainment value, and homogeneity with consumers have a substantial effect on consumers' purchase intention. Promoting products through SMIs will further become an emerging marketing promotion method in the future consumer market. Enterprises should pay more attention to how to select SMIs to promote products, to attract more potential consumers.

At the same time, the limitation of this study is reflected in the universality of the sample. Future research can focus on the nature of more SMIs, collect more extensive and complete sample data of all ages in various countries, and further discuss the relationship between SMIs, users, and commodity companies, to determine the depth of influence of SMIs on consumers' purchase intention.

REFERENCES

B. Shen, M. Cheng, R. He, & M. Yang, Selling through social media influencers in influencer marketing: Participation-based contract versus sales-based contract. Electron. Commer. Res. 24(2), 1095-1118 (2024)

C. Ren, The effect of social media influencers' self-disclosure depth on consumers' purchase intention, Ph.D. thesis, East China Normal University (2023)

D. Zhang, Research on the impact of social media influencer recommendation on consumers' purchase intention, Ph.D. thesis, Xi'an University of Architecture and Technology (2019)

H. Masuda, S. H. Han, & J. Lee, Impacts of influencer attributes on purchase intentions in social media influencer marketing: Mediating roles of characterizations. Technol. Forecast. Soc. Change 174, 121246 (2022)

K. Freberg, K. Graham, K. McGaughey, & L. A. Freberg, Who are the social media influencers: A study of public perceptions of personality. Public Relations Rev. G model Pubrel 861, 3 (2010)

K. Lajnef, The effect of social media influencers on teenagers behavior: An empirical study using cognitive map technique. Curr. Psychol. 42(22), 19364-19377 (2023)

L. Ao, R. Bansal, N. Pruthi, & M. B. Khaskheli, Impact of social media influencers on customer engagement and purchase intention: A meta-analysis. Sustainability 15(3), 2744 (2023)

N. S. Borchers, & N. Enke, I've never seen a client say: Tell the influencer not to label this as sponsored: An exploration into influencer industry ethics. Public Relations Rev. 48(5), 102235 (2022)

P. Breves, N. Liebers, B. Motschenbacher, & L. Reus, Reducing resistance: The impact of non followers and followers' parasocial relationships with social media influencers on persuasive resistance and advertising effectiveness. Hum. Commun. Res. 47(4), 418-443 (2021)

S. A. Qalati, D. Ostic, M. A. B. A. Sulaiman, A. A. Gopang, & A. Khan, Social media and SMEs' performance in developing countries: Effects of technological-organizational-environmental factors on the adoption of social media. Sage Open 12(2), 21582440221094594 (2022)

S. A. Qalati, E. G. Vela, W. Li, S. A. Dakhan, T. T. Hong Thuy, & S. H. Merani, Effects of perceived service quality, website quality, and reputation on purchase intention: The mediating and moderating roles of trust and perceived risk in online shopping. Cogent Bus. Manag. 8(1), 1869363 (2021)

Y. Li, The Effect of social media influencers' self-disclosure on consumers' purchase intentions, Ph.D. thesis, Wuhan Textile University (2024)