## Management and Economics

Understanding the Impact of Social Media Marketing in Driving Consumer Behavior and Purchase Intentions in the Chinese E-Commerce Market

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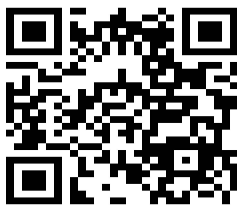
Abstract:

This research presents a comprehensive exploration of the intricate dynamics within the Chinese e-commerce market, focusing on the profound impact of social media marketing, social media influencers, consumer behavior, consumer engagement, and online advertising on purchase intention. The study employs a robust methodology, integrating both primary and secondary data collection approaches, with a sample size of 390 respondents drawn from various Chinese e-commerce platforms. Drawing from insights derived from six well-established theoretical frameworks, the research constructs a novel conceptual framework to illuminate the relationships among these key variables. The results highlight the substantial influence of social media marketing on consumer behavior, emphasizing the noteworthy role played by both social media marketing and influencers in shaping consumer engagement. Additionally, the study identifies a significant nexus between consumer behavior, consumer engagement, online advertising, and purchase intention. While providing valuable insights into the factors influencing purchase intention in the Chinese e-commerce market, it is crucial to note the study's limitations. The scope is confined to Chinese domestic online consumers, and caution is exercised against making broad generalizations about diverse cultural backgrounds or international consumer contexts. Nevertheless, this research contributes original perspectives, offering a deeper understanding of the pivotal elements driving purchase intention in the dynamic landscape of the Chinese e-commerce market.

Keywords: Social Media Marketing; Social Media Influencers; Consumer Behavior; Consumer Engagement; Online Advertising; Purchase Intention

JEL Classification Code: M31, M37, L81, L82

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of study

The Chinese e-commerce landscape has undergone a profound transformation, evolving into

a global e-commerce powerhouse. Boasting a consumer base exceeding one billion and a rapidly expanding middle class, China's e-commerce sector stands as a colossal and dynamic domain, propelled by technological innovation and ever-shifting consumer preferences. A pivotal aspect of this transformation is the pervasive adoption of social media platforms, integral in influencing consumer behavior and purchase intentions (Wang et al., 2021).

China's digital realm exhibits a distinctive fusion of e-commerce giants, such as Alibaba Group and JD.com, with a tech-savvy populace exhibiting a strong predilection for online shopping. The fusion of e-commerce and social media platforms represents a defining characteristic of this digital ecosystem. Within these platforms, consumers often seek product recommendations, engage with brands, and make purchase decisions.

Moreover, the Chinese e-commerce sphere presents a distinctive amalgamation of online and offline retail experiences. The "New Retail" paradigm, championed by Alibaba's Jack Ma, effectively dissolves the demarcation between online and physical retail, culminating in a seamless shopping journey for consumers. This innovative approach integrates digital technology and data-driven insights into brick-and-mortar stores, augmenting the overall shopping experience (Kaur, 2020).

The advent of mobile payment systems such as Alipay and WeChat Pay has revolutionized transactional processes. These innovations enable consumers to complete purchases with the simplicity of scanning their smartphones. These developments underscore the dynamic nature of the Chinese e-commerce arena and its profound influence on consumer behavior.

Social media platforms like WeChat, Weibo, and Douyin (TikTok) have become integral aspects of daily life for Chinese consumers. Beyond serving as communication tools, these platforms offer multifaceted functionalities, encompassing social interaction, entertainment, content consumption, and, crucially, e-commerce activities. The role of social media marketing within this context is substantial, empowering businesses to engage with consumers, establish brand presence, and ultimately stimulate purchase intentions.

Understanding the intricate dynamics through which social media marketing shapes consumer behavior and purchase intentions within the Chinese e-commerce realm holds paramount importance for businesses navigating this dynamic terrain. This necessitates a deep dive into the nuances of consumer decision-making, the impact of digital advertising, the influence of influencers and the unique cultural and regulatory factors that sculpt the Chinese consumer landscape.

Furthermore, the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the adoption of e-commerce and online shopping in China. As lockdowns and social distancing measures came into effect, consumers increasingly turned to digital channels for safety and convenience. Consequently, China's e-commerce market witnessed exponential growth, underscoring the urgency for businesses to fathom the intricate interplay between social media marketing and consumer actions.

This study endeavors to bridge existing knowledge gaps by furnishing comprehensive insights into the intricate relationship between social media marketing, consumer behavior, and purchase intentions within the Chinese e-commerce sphere. It aims to offer pragmatic implications for businesses striving to optimize their digital marketing strategies, illuminate the digital consumer journey in China, and contribute substantively to the academic discourse surrounding e-commerce and digital marketing in one of the world's largest and most dynamic consumer markets.

1.2 Problem statements

The Chinese e-commerce market is a dynamic and expansive landscape fueled by technological innovation and the burgeoning middle class. Yet, it presents a compelling challenge—understanding the profound impact of social media marketing on

consumer behavior and purchase intentions in this ever-evolving digital environment. Within this context, social media platforms such as WeChat, Weibo, and Douyin are reshaping how consumers interact with brands and make purchasing decisions. Meanwhile, China's "New Retail" paradigm blurs the lines between online and offline shopping, further complicating this landscape.

The rapid surge in e-commerce adoption during the COVID-19 pandemic underscores the urgency of deciphering the intricate relationship between social media marketing strategies, evolving consumer behaviors, and ultimate purchasing decisions. Businesses operating in China's e-commerce sector find themselves at a pivotal juncture, where understanding the complexities of consumer decision-making influenced by social media marketing is crucial for success. Simultaneously, academic research endeavors aim to unveil the enigmatic realm of consumer behavior shaped by ever-evolving digital marketing tactics.

This study is designed to challenge this overarching challenge by conducting a comprehensive examination of "the impact of social media marketing on consumer behavior and its influence on purchase intentions in the Chinese e-commerce market." Through this exploration, it seeks to provide valuable insights for businesses looking to optimize their digital marketing strategies, illuminate the consumer journey in China's digital landscape, and make a substantial contribution to the academic discourse surrounding e-commerce and digital marketing in one of the world's most dynamic and transformative consumer markets. Ultimately, this research aspires to unravel the intricate web of consumer behavior in response to social media marketing, offering guidance for the future of e-commerce in China.

1.3 Objectives of study

The study focuses on understanding the impact of social media marketing in driving consumer behavior and purchase intentions in the Chinese e-commerce Market. The research objectives are as follows:

(1) To examine the impact of social media marketing on consumer behavior in the Chinese e-commerce market.

(2) To examine the impact of social media marketing on consumer engagement in the Chinese e-commerce market.

(3) To examine the impact of social media influencers on consumer engagement in the Chinese e-commerce market.

(4) To examine the impact of consumer behavior on purchase intention in the Chinese e-commerce market.

(5) To examine the impact of consumer engagement on purchase intention in the Chinese e-commerce market.

(6) To examine the impact of online advertising on purchase intention in the Chinese e-commerce market.

1.4 Research questions

(1) Does social media marketing have an impact on consumer behavior in the Chinese e-commerce market?

(2) Does social media marketing have an impact on consumer engagement in the Chinese e-commerce market?

(3) Does social media influencer have an impact on consumer engagement in the Chinese e-commerce market?

(4) Does consumer behavior have an impact on purchase intention in the Chinese e-commerce market?

(5) Does consumer engagement have an impact on purchase intention in the Chinese e-commerce market?

(6) Does online advertising have an impact on purchase intention in the Chinese e-commerce market?

1.5 Significance of the study

The significance of this research "Understanding the Impact of Social Media Marketing in Driving Consumer Behavior and Purchase Intentions in the Chinese E-commerce Market" extends to various

stakeholders within the Chinese e-commerce market and beyond:

Businesses and Marketers: The insights derived from this study hold immense value for businesses and marketers operating in the Chinese e-commerce sector. By refining their social media marketing strategies based on the findings, they can more effectively influence consumer behavior and purchase intentions. This, in turn, leads to improved marketing return on investment (ROI), increased revenue, and a heightened competitive advantage in the ever-evolving e-commerce landscape.

Consumers: While indirectly benefiting from this research, consumers can anticipate a more personalized and engaging online shopping experience. As companies fine-tune their marketing strategies based on a deeper understanding of consumer behavior, shoppers can expect content and product recommendations that align more closely with their preferences. This translates to a more enjoyable and convenient shopping journey, ultimately catering to their needs and desires.

Academic Community: The academic community will find significant value in this study as it contributes to the body of knowledge in e-commerce and digital marketing, with a specific focus on the unique Chinese context. This research empowers scholars, researchers, and students to build upon these findings, fostering a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the intricate relationship between social media marketing, consumer behavior, and purchase intentions, both within China and in the global context.

In summary, this research serves as a valuable resource for enhancing the strategies and experiences of businesses, marketers, and consumers, while also advancing the academic understanding of digital marketing and e-commerce in the Chinese market and beyond.

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

2.1 Social Media Marketing, Consumer behavior, Consumer engagement

Social media marketing (SMM) is a dynamic strategy that harnesses various platforms to bolster brand recognition among online consumers, employing principles akin to word-of-mouth promotion. Categorized into Social Networking Platforms, Social News Websites, Media Sharing Platforms, and Blogs, each serves distinct functions for content sharing and engagement, fostering closer relationships and meaningful connections with both potential and existing customers. SMM facilitates targeted interaction with specific customer demographics, transforming consumers from passive spectators to active participants and advocating dynamic two-way engagement between brands and audiences. Livestreaming e-commerce, exemplified by platforms like Taobao Live and JD Live in China, revolutionizes the online shopping experience through real-time product demonstrations, emphasizing the increasing role of social media in the evolving digital retail landscape, particularly with digitally savvy Generation Z consumers (HSBC, 2023).

Consumer behavior, encompassing purchase decisions, online perceptions, attitudes toward shopping experiences, and post-purchase behaviors, is significantly influenced by information available through social media channels (Jacinto et al., 2021). The multifaceted informational and social dynamics within digital environments, including exposure to peer evaluations and decisions via social media, exert a profound influence on future consumer actions. Access to knowledge via social media channels emerges as a pivotal factor (Stephen, 2016). The article emphasizes the potent influence of word-of-mouth in shaping individuals' perspectives and significantly molding purchasing behaviors (Balakrishnan et al., 2014).

Media's impact on various senses makes it interesting for consumers, with high vividness being beneficial in improving attitudes toward a website and click-through rates, an indicator of engagement (Farook & Abeysekera, 2016). Utilizing social media to engage customers by offering value is essential, enhancing social network marketing as a channel for business promotion (Husnain & Toor, 2017). Social media marketing plays a vital role in facilitating meaningful connections and enhancing consumer engagement through various channels, including

customer relationship management, customer service, buyer research, lead generation, sales promotion, paid advertising, and branding (Nguyen et al., 2020).

Therefore, the hypotheses have been proposed:

Hypothesis 1 (H1): *Social media marketing has no significant impact on consumer behavior in the Chinese e-commerce market.*

Hypothesis 2 (H2): *Social media marketing has no significant impact on consumer engagement in the Chinese e-commerce market.*

2.2 Social media influencers and consumer engagement

A social media influencer is an expert content creator with a dedicated following, establishing significant marketing appeal for brands through consistent production of valuable content on social media platforms (Lou et al., 2019; Dummanonda & Nuangjamnong, 2021). These influencers contribute to business competitiveness by generating user-generated content that captures customer insights and enhances fundamental product offerings (Jaitly & Gautam, 2021). Distinguished from traditional celebrities, influencers craft a unique digital persona, gaining popularity through content tailored for social media channels (Ao et al., 2023). As independent endorsers, Social Media Influencers (SMIs) wield significant influence over audience attitudes through various platforms, shaping perceptions and responses to products, services, or ideas (Freberg et al., 2011). Their shared content can have both beneficial and detrimental effects, serving as inspiration for healthier lifestyles or unintentionally promoting negative behaviors.

In the realm of consumer engagement, influencers play a crucial role by effectively marketing products through integrated lifestyle and public relations initiatives, removing communication barriers between brands, consumers, and influencer followers on social media platforms (Jaitly & Gautam, 2021; Hua & Nuangjamnong, 2021). Social media enables interactive communication, allowing consumers to actively engage with brands and influencers rather than passively observing advertisements. Influencers encourage followers to actively participate, fostering enhanced consumer engagement and interaction. Studies highlight that social media influencers are trusted almost as much as friends by consumers (Lou et al., 2019). With their unique communication approach and personal connections, influencers become relatable and approachable, seamlessly integrating sponsored content into their daily stories. This genuine approach builds trust, resulting in heightened consumer engagement with the promoted products or services (Ao et al., 2023).

Therefore, the hypothesis posits:

Hypothesis 3 (H3): *Social media influencer has no significant impact on consumer engagement in the Chinese e-commerce market.*

2.3 Consumer behavior and purchase intention

Consumer behavior encompasses a spectrum of elements, including purchase decisions, online perceptions, attitudes toward shopping experiences, and post-purchase behaviors (Jacinto et al., 2021). Marketers find understanding this behavior crucial for aligning strategies with target audience preferences. Influenced by cultural, socioeconomic, personal, and psychological factors, consumer behavior has evolved significantly in the digital age, with people heavily relying on digital platforms for research, purchases, and sharing experiences (Kaur & Kochar, 2018). The projected shift towards digital channels, with one-third of global advertising spending expected to be on digital platforms by 2017, underscores the importance of exploring consumer behavior in these dynamic environments (Stephen, 2016).

As of 2022, the global population reached 8.01 billion, with a substantial portion residing in urban areas. Digital platforms, with 5.44 billion unique mobile phone users and 5.16 billion internet users, play a pivotal role in consumer behavior, especially on social media, where 4.76 billion users actively engage (Kemp, 2023). In China, a digitally forward consumer market, even pre-COVID-19, displayed a preference for online experiences, luxury purchases, and digital adoption exceeding global averages (Cheng, 2021). These insights underscore the necessity of a profound understanding of digital

behavior when navigating China's consumer market landscape.

Purchase intention, a crucial indicator for evaluating consumer behavior, gauges the likelihood of a consumer purchasing a product, with higher purchase intention indicating greater readiness to make a purchase (Husnain & Toor, 2017). Habits stemming from perceived value and attitudes, such as online shopping addiction, problem-solving tendencies, and indulgent behaviors, have the potential to influence the consumer purchase decision-making process (Apasrawirote & Yawised, 2022). Findings reveal that mobile coupons in physical stores increase unplanned spending while interacting with products on mobile devices enhances emotional possession. Mobile display ads impact brand preferences and purchase intentions, particularly for high-involvement, utilitarian products (Bhosale et al., 2020). These findings underscore the significance of understanding consumer behavior and its implications for purchase intention, leading to the proposed hypothesis:

Hypothesis 4 (H4): *Consumer behavior has no significant impact on purchase intention in the Chinese e-commerce market.*

2.4 Consumer engagement and purchase intention

Customer Engagement (CE) serves as the metric for an individual's interaction and connection with an organization's products, services, and initiatives, initiated by either the customer or the organization itself (Vivek et al., 2012). It involves social activities tied to perceptions, emotions, and behaviors related to consumption, eliciting positive assessments from consumers, and representing a psychological process with cognitive and emotional dimensions (Nguyen et al., 2020). The realm of Consumer Engagement (CE) comprises a psychological facet, involving cognitive and emotional aspects, and a behavioral facet, encompassing actions and activations (Hepola et al., 2020).

Recognizing customer engagement (CE) as an integral and seamlessly integrated strategic component is crucial for cultivating an enriched

service brand experience and encouraging repeat purchase intentions (Islam et al., 2019). A clear comprehension and practical application of customer engagement are imperative, aligning it with both traditional and contemporary marketing approaches and methodologies (Zheng et al., 2022; Wongsawan & Nuangjamnong, 2022).

Consumer engagement plays a pivotal role for companies pursuing relationship marketing objectives, with highly engaged consumers contributing significantly to revenue, spending more per purchase, and doing so more frequently. Engaged consumers possess an elevated lifetime value and the potential to influence others towards becoming consumers themselves. In online retail, consumer engagement is an indispensable driver of success (Husnain & Toor, 2017). Positive brand engagement becomes a catalyst for buying decisions when consumers harbor intentions to make a purchase (Martins et al., 2019). Studies suggest that customer participation in a brand community reflects their willingness to purchase products or services from that brand (Zheng et al., 2022). Active engagement indicates a stronger commitment and connection, leading to increased loyalty and trust, translating into a higher likelihood of making purchases as customers demonstrate their support and investment in the brand.

Therefore, the proposed hypothesis is:

Hypothesis 5 (H5): *Consumer engagement has no significant impact on purchase intention in the Chinese e-commerce market.*

2.5 Online advertising and purchase intention

Online advertising has experienced a transformative evolution, establishing itself as one of the most rapid and effective mediums in history, indispensable for successful businesses (Anusha, 2016). It serves as a versatile platform for engaging customer interactions, providing swift results from the campaign's inception, and seamlessly aiding entrepreneurs (Balakrishnan et al., 2014; Ayamuang & Nuangjamnong, 2023). Leveraging customization capabilities in the social network environment and advanced targeting options, online advertising

proves significantly more efficacious than traditional media.

Statistics from 2013 to 2017 showcased an 80% surge in social networking usage, underscoring the escalating influence of online advertising (Zeljko et al., 2018). Rich media advertising, featuring real-time interactive multimedia elements, offers an engaging online advertising experience. Advertising holds the power to influence consumer purchasing decisions and transforms into "infotainment" in an engaging context rooted in the Marketing Mix's 4 Ps: Product, Price, Place, and Promotion (Kim & Han, 2014; Mishra & Mahalik, 2017).

Purchase intention, indicating consumers' interest and likelihood of acquiring a product, serves as an indicator of their future inclination to make purchases, correlating with a higher probability of actual purchases (Martins et al., 2019). Instrumental in gauging consumer demand for new products, purchase intention is closely intertwined with behaviors, perceptions, and attitudes (Vahidreza et al., 2015). It delineates the extent of a consumer's readiness to engage in a purchase, aiding managers in appraising the feasibility of channel development and selecting target markets and consumer segments (Peña-García et al., 2020).

Advertising, a key promotional strategy, significantly influences purchase intention by creating awareness, guiding decision-making, and fostering positive brand perception. Online advertising, with real-time interactive features, captivates customers and sparks interest, especially in smartphone ads, where user engagement shapes purchase inclination (Kim & Han, 2014). Consumers value messages meeting their needs and providing valuable purchase information, enhancing purchase intention through targeted advertisements (Martins et al., 2019).

The proposed hypothesis is:

Hypothesis 6 (H6): *Online advertising has no significant impact on purchase intention in the Chinese e-commerce market.*

2.6 Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework is constructed by synthesizing insights from six prior research studies,

each anchored in distinct theoretical frameworks and literature. These studies collectively unveil the intricate connections between social media marketing, consumer behavior, engagement, and online advertising, shedding light on their combined impact on purchase intention. Figure 1 illustrates The Impact of Social Media Marketing on Consumer Behavior, integrating the following six theoretical frameworks:

The first theoretical framework is drawn from "Social Media Marketing Towards Consumer Buying Behavior: A Case in Panabo City" by Jacinto et al. (2021). Their study explores the influence of social media marketing on consumer behavior.

The second theoretical framework is derived from "Influence of Social Media Marketing on Customer Engagement" by Farook and Abeysekera (2016). Their research delves into the impact of social media marketing on consumer engagement.

The third theoretical framework is based on "Influencer Marketing: Homophily, Customer Value Co-creation Behavior, and Purchase Intention" by Bu et al. (2022). This study investigates the influence of consumer behavior on purchase intention.

The fourth theoretical framework is extracted from "How Customer Engagement in Live-Streaming Affects Purchase Intention and Customer Acquisition, E-tailer's Perspective" by Zheng et al. (2022). The researchers explore the impact of consumer engagement on purchase intention.

The fifth theoretical framework is derived from "The Impact of Social Media Marketing Medium toward Purchase Intention and Brand Loyalty among Generation Y" by Balakrishnan et al. (2014). The study investigates how online advertising influences purchase intention.

The sixth theoretical framework is drawn from "Impact of Social Media Influencers on Customer Engagement and Brand Perception" by Jaitly and Gautam (2021). The researchers explore the impact of social media influencers on consumer engagement.

This comprehensive conceptual framework provides a synthesized understanding of the multifaceted relationships among these variables in the context of the Chinese e-commerce market.

Figure 1. The conceptual framework of The Impact of Social Media Marketing on Consumer Behavior
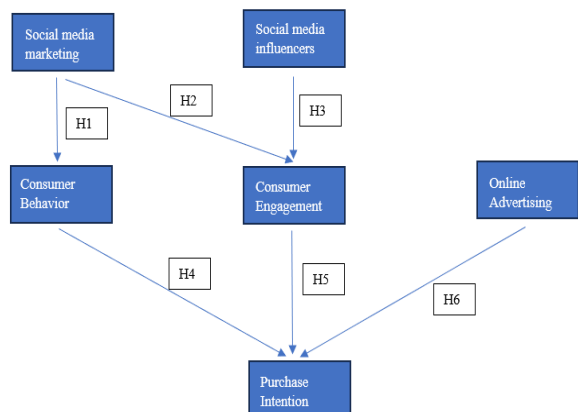
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3. Research Methods and Materials:

3.1 Research design

This study employs a quantitative research design to investigate the intricate dynamics of social media marketing, consumer behavior, consumer engagement, social media influencers, online advertising, and purchase intention within the dynamic Chinese e-commerce market. The research design aims to systematically gather data through surveys and questionnaires, enabling precise measurement of the variables under investigation. Utilizing a non-probability sampling method, the study's participants will be selected, and specialized statistical software, including Cronbach's Alpha, Multiple Linear Regression, Simple Linear Regression, and Descriptive Statistics, will facilitate a comprehensive examination of the relationships among these variables to achieve the research objectives. This approach is poised to provide valuable insights into the mechanisms shaping consumer behavior and purchase intentions in the Chinese e-commerce context.

Target population: The target population for this research comprises the extensive community of social media users in China, numbering 983 million individuals as of January 2022 (Kemp, 2022). This diverse user base spans various age groups, geographic locations, and interests, offering insights into the online shopping behaviors and decision-making processes of people in China. The

information gathered has the potential to assist businesses and marketers in refining their online sales strategies to better cater to the needs and preferences of these users.

Sample Size: To determine the sample size for an unknown population, the Cochran sampling technique is applied in this research, considering a 95% confidence level, a Z-score of 1.96, a 50% standard deviation, and a 5% margin of error. The calculated sample size is 384, deemed appropriate for the research objectives. Cochran's formula ensures a representative sample that accommodates the specified confidence level and margin of error.

Sampling Procedures: The researcher utilizes a combination of convenience sampling and snowball sampling, both non-probability methods, to collect data. These methods were chosen considering time constraints and the need for social distancing measures. Non-probability sampling proves suitable in this context, allowing for convenient data collection while addressing the constraints and limitations in place.

3.2 Validity and Reliability Test

Content Validity (IOC): In evaluating the quality of each questionnaire item, the researchers employed the Item Objective Congruence (IOC) Index. Seeking the opinions of three experts, the researchers established a content validity score. The IOC value obtained, at 0.67, surpasses the threshold of 0.5, indicating that all questions are suitable for distribution to respondents. The detailed IOC Index can be referenced in Table 1.

Pilot Test Reliability using Cronbach's Alpha: To identify potential discrepancies or errors in the questionnaire variables, a pilot test involving 50 participants was conducted. The reliability of the questionnaire was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, with criteria for interpretation applied (Cronbach, 1951): $\alpha > 0.9$ (Excellent), $0.8 < \alpha < 0.9$ (Good), $0.7 < \alpha < 0.8$ (Acceptable), $0.6 < \alpha < 0.7$ (Questionable), $0.5 < \alpha < 0.6$ (Poor), and $\alpha < 0.5$ (Unacceptable).

The Cronbach's Alpha values for the independent variables—social media marketing, social media influencers, consumer behavior, consumer engagement, online advertising, and purchase

intention—obtained from the pilot test with 50 participants exceeded 0.8. This indicates that these items exhibit internal consistency and are suitable

with good strength for the survey. Further details are provided in Table 1.

Table 1. IOC Index with three experts and pilot test n=50

Variables	Before N. of items	After N. of items	Range IOC weight scores	Cronbach's alpha
Social Media Marketing (SMM)	5	5	0.67 – 1.00	0.885
Social media influencers (SMIs)	5	5	0.67 – 1.00	0.891
Consumer Behavior (CB)	5	4	0.67 – 1.00	0.889
Consumer Engagement (CE)	5	4	0.67 – 1.00	0.913
Online Advertising (OA)	5	5	0.67 – 1.00	0.876
Purchase Intention (PI)	5	4	0.67 – 1.00	0.871

4. Data Analysis

4.1 Descriptive analysis of demographic data

Following the successful collection of data from target respondents through an online survey, a total of 390 participants were aligned with the predetermined and suitable sample size for this study. The researcher meticulously analyzed the demographic data of respondents engaged with social media platforms (e.g., WeChat, Weibo, TikTok) in China, utilizing descriptive analysis in the JAMOVI program. Various demographic aspects were scrutinized, including gender, age, annual household income, region or city in China, frequency of social media platform usage, marital status, and the number of people in the household. Descriptive analysis was employed to provide an insightful understanding of respondent characteristics detailed in Table 2.

Gender: Out of the 390 respondents, males accounted for 50%, females for 49.7% and 0.3% were not specified. The distribution resulted in 195 male respondents, 194 female respondents, and 1 unspecified respondent.

Age (years): The majority of respondents fell within the age range of 25-34 years, constituting 40.3%. Other age brackets included 35-44 years (26.9%), 18-24 years (21%), and 45 or older (11.8%).

Annual household income: Predominantly, respondents reported an annual household income of 74,999 CNY or more (50.8%). Other income brackets comprised 50,000 CNY - 74,999 CNY (27.5%), 25,000 CNY - 49,999 CNY (15.6%), and under 25,000 CNY (6.2%).

Region or city in China: The geographic distribution included 6 cities in the north, accounting for 41.3% of respondents, and 18 cities in the south, representing 58.7% of respondents.

Frequency of social media platform usage: The majority of respondents (45.6%) reported using social media platforms several times a day, followed by once a day (30%), a few times a day (15.1%), rarely (8.2%), and never (1%).

Marital status: Single respondents comprised the majority at 46.2%, followed by married respondents at 32.1%, and those who preferred not to disclose marital status at 21.8%.

People in household: The majority of respondents reported a household size of 3 people (36.2%), followed by 2 people (32.3%), 1 person (22.3%), and 4 or more people (9.2%).

Table 2. Demographics of the Respondents

Demographic Factors	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	195	50.0
Female	194	49.7

Prefer not to say	1	0.3
Toal	**390**	**100**
Age		
18-24	82	21.0
25-34	157	40.3
35-44	105	26.9
45 or older	46	11.8
Toal	**390**	**100**
Annual household income		
Under 25,000 CNY	24	6.2
25,000 CNY - 49,999 CNY	61	15.6
50,000 CNY - 74,999 CNY	107	27.4
74,999 CNY or more	198	50.8
Toal	**390**	**100**
Region or city in China		
North cities	161	41.3
South cities	229	58.7
Toal	**390**	**100**
How frequently used social media platforms		
Once a day	117	30.0
Serval times a day	178	45.6
A few times a week	59	15.2
Rarely	32	8.2
Never	4	1.00
Total	**390**	**100**
Marital status		
Single	180	46.2
Married	125	32.0
Prefer not to say	85	21.8
Total	**390**	**100**
People in household		
1	87	22.3
2	126	32.3
3	141	36.2
4 or more	36	9.2
Total	**390**	**100**

4.2 Descriptive analysis with mean and standard deviation

In Table 3, the analysis of various factors is presented:

Social Media Marketing: The highest mean in social media marketing is attributed to the statement "I believe social media marketing campaigns should be relevant to my interests," with a score of 3.75. Conversely, the lowest mean is associated with "Social media marketing often helps me discover new products and services," scoring 3.56. Additionally, the highest standard deviation is observed for the statement "Social media marketing often helps me discover new products and services," recorded at 1.2, while the lowest is for "I trust recommendations from brands through social media marketing," with a standard deviation of 1.14.

Social Media Influencers: For social media influencers, the highest mean is found in "Collaborations between influencers and brands can influence my buying decisions," scoring 4.04. In contrast, the lowest mean pertains to "I trust the recommendations of social media influencers when considering a purchase," with a score of 3.77. The highest standard deviation is associated with "Authenticity is essential for me when it comes to influencer-brand partnerships," at 1.062, while the lowest is for "Collaborations between influencers and brands can influence my buying decisions," at 0.968.

Customer Behavior: In terms of customer behavior, the highest mean is linked to the statement "Based on e-commerce platform history, I often receive related product or service whenever I start to search the new product to purchase," scoring 3.91. Conversely, the lowest mean is associated with "My past experiences significantly impact my future purchasing decisions," with a score of 3.64. The highest standard deviation is observed for "My past experiences significantly impact my future purchasing decisions," at 1.09, while the lowest is for "I make purchasing choices based on my personal preferences and needs" and "Based on e-commerce platform history, I often receive related product or service whenever I start to search the new product to purchase," both at 1.01.

Customer Engagement: In customer engagement, the highest mean is found in "I'm more likely to purchase the product or service if a brand engages with me personally," scoring 4.06. On the contrary,

the lowest mean pertains to "I enjoy interacting with brands on social media platforms," with a score of 3.80. The highest standard deviation is linked to "I often like, share, or comment on posts from brands I follow on social media," at 1.06, while the lowest is for "I'm more likely to purchase the product or service if a brand engages with me personally," at 1.02.

Online Advertising: For online advertising, the highest mean is associated with "Online advertising helps me discover new products and services," scoring 3.80. In contrast, the lowest mean is shared between "The relevance of online ads affects my likelihood of clicking on them" and "I pay attention to online ads that are tailored to my interests," both scoring 3.65. The highest standard deviation is observed for "Online ads often catch my attention while I'm browsing the internet," at 1.13, while the lowest is for "Online advertising helps me discover new products and services," at 1.07.

Purchase Intention: In the realm of purchase intention, the highest mean is linked to "My purchase intention can fluctuate depending on my current needs and desires," scoring 4.16. Conversely, the lowest mean is associated with "My purchase intention is influenced by the products or services offered," with a score of 3.95. The highest standard deviation is observed for "My purchase intention is influenced by the products or services offered," at 1.05, while the lowest is for "My purchase intention can fluctuate depending on my current needs and desires," at 0.951.

Table 3.

			Mean	S.D.
Social media marketing			**3.67**	**1.168**
SMM1	Social media marketing often helps me discover new products and services.		3.56	1.200
SMM2	I believe social media marketing campaigns should be relevant to my interests.		3.75	1.150
SMM3	I pay attention to the performance of social media marketing when making purchasing decisions.		3.65	1.170
SMM4	I trust recommendations from brands through social media marketing.		3.73	1.140
SMM5	Social media marketing has influenced my awareness of brands and products		3.66	1.180
Social media influencers			**3.92**	**1.013**
SMI1	I trust the recommendations of social media influencers when considering a purchase.		3.77	1.033
SMI2	Collaborations between influencers and brands can influence my buying decisions.		4.04	0.968
SMI3	I follow social media influencers who align with my interests and values.		3.90	1.032
SMI4	I pay attention to influencer marketing campaigns on social media.		4.03	0.970
SMI5	Authenticity is essential for me when it comes to influencer-brand partnerships.		3.88	1.062
Customer behavior			**3.78**	**1.040**
CB1	My past experiences significantly impact my future purchasing decisions		3.64	1.090
CB2	I make purchasing choices based on my personal preferences and needs.		3.88	1.010
CB3	I often participate in surveys and market research to share my consumer opinions.		3.67	1.050
CB4	Based on e-commerce platform history, I often receive related product or service whenever I start to search the new product to purchase.		3.91	1.010
Customer engagement			**3.93**	**1.043**

CE1	I enjoy interacting with brands on social media platforms.	3.80	1.050
CE2	Excellent customer service increases my engagement with a company.	4.00	1.040
CE3	I often like, share, or comment on posts from brands I follow on social media.	3.86	1.060
CE4	I'm more likely to purchase the product or service if a brand engages with me personally	4.06	1.020
Online advertising		**3.68**	**1.102**
OA1	Online ads often catch my attention while I'm browsing the internet.	3.53	1.130
OA2	I believe online advertising can provide valuable information about products.	3.79	1.090
OA3	The relevance of online ads affects my likelihood of clicking on them.	3.65	1.100
OA4	Online advertising helps me discover new products and services.	3.80	1.070
OA5	I pay attention to online ads that are tailored to my interests.	3.65	1.120
Purchase intention		**4.06**	**1.003**
PI1	My purchase intention is influenced by the products or services offered.	3.95	1.050
PI2	My purchase intention involves positive online reviews and recommendations on e-commerce platforms.	4.12	0.980
PI3	I often change my purchase intention based on available promotions or discounts.	3.99	1.029
PI4	My purchase intention can fluctuate depending on my current needs and desires.	4.16	0.951

4.4 Hypothesis Testing

Result of Simple Linear Regression of H_1

Statistical Hypothesis

H_{1o}: Social Media Marketing has no significant impact on consumer behavior.

H_{1a}: Social Media Marketing has a significant impact on consumer behavior.

In Table 4, a simple linear regression was executed to assess the potential impact of social media marketing (H_1) on consumer behavior. The outcome from Hypothesis 1 reveals a significance level of <0.001, which is less than 0.05. Consequently, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that customer behavior is indeed influenced by social media marketing. Furthermore, the coefficient of determination (R-square) for this analysis stands at 0.095, indicating that roughly 9.5% of the variance in the dependent variable (customer behavior) can be accounted for by the independent variable incorporated into the regression model, as illustrated in the structural framework presented in Figure 2.

Table 4 Simple Linear Regression Analysis Summary for Hypotheses 1

Hypothesis	B	SE B	β	p
H_1: SMM→CB	0.256	0.0401	0.308	<.001*

Note: R^2=0.095, Adjusted R^2 = 0.0927, *$p < 0.05$. Dependent Variable = Customer behavior

Result of multiple Linear Regression of H_2, H_3

Statistical Hypothesis

H_o: Social Media Marketing (H_2), Social Media influencer (H_3) have no significant impact on consumer engagement.

H_a: Social Media Marketing (H_2), Social Media influencer (H_3) have a significant impact on consumer engagement.

In Table 5, a multiple linear regression was employed to assess whether social media marketing (H_2) and social media influencer (H_3) have a significant impact on consumer engagement. The results from the hypotheses reveal significant levels <0.001, which are less than 0.05. Consequently, the

null hypotheses are rejected. This suggests that consumer engagement is indeed influenced by both social media marketing and social media influencers. Furthermore, the coefficient of determination (R-square) for this analysis is 0.155, indicating that approximately 15.5% of the variance in the dependent variable (customer engagement) can be accounted for by the independent variables integrated into the regression model, as depicted in the structural framework shown in Figure 2.

Table 5. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Summary for Hypotheses 2, and 3

Hypothesis	B	SE B	β	p
H_2: SMM → CE	0.219	0.0421	0.252	<.001*
H_3: SMI → CE	0.264	0.0521	0.245	<.001*

Note: R^2=0.155, Adjusted R^2 = 0.151, *p < 0.05. Dependent Variable = Consumer engagement

Result of multiple Linear Regression of H_4, H_5, H_6

Statistical Hypothesis

H_o: Consumer behavior (H_4), Consumer engagement (H_5), Online advertising (H_6) have no significant impact on purchase intention.

H_a: Consumer behavior (H_4), Consumer engagement (H_5), Online advertising (H_6) have a significant impact on purchase intention.

In Table 6, a multiple linear regression was employed to assess whether consumer behavior (H4), consumer engagement (H5), and online advertising (H6) have a significant impact on purchase intention. The results from the hypotheses indicate significant levels <0.001, which are less than 0.05. Consequently, the null hypotheses are rejected. This suggests that purchase intention is indeed influenced by consumer behavior, consumer engagement, and online advertising. Furthermore, the coefficient of determination (R-square) for this analysis is 0.333, indicating that approximately 30% of the variance in the dependent variable (purchase intention) can be accounted for by the independent variables integrated into the regression model, as depicted in the structural framework shown in Figure 2.

Table 6 Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Summary for Hypotheses 4, 5, and 6

Hypothesis	B	SE B	β	p
H_4: CB → PI	0.257	0.0442	0.258	<.001*
H_5: CE → PI	0.246	0.0418	0.259	<.001*
H_6: OA → PI	0.270	0.0409	0.291	<.001*

Note: R^2=0.333, Adjusted R^2 = 0. 0.327, *p < 0.05. Dependent Variable = purchase intention

Figure 2. Results of structural framework
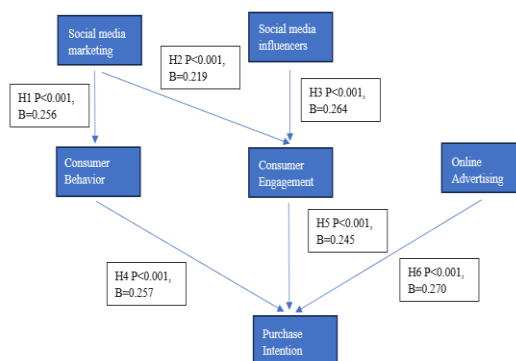
5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Summary of Findings

Based on an analysis of the overall demographic data from the research questionnaire, the majority of the 390 respondents, constituting 50%, were male. The predominant age group was 25-34 years old (40.3%), with an annual income mostly exceeding 74,999 CNY (50.8%). A significant portion of respondents resided in south cities in China (58.7%), used social media platforms several times per day (45.6%), was single (46.2%), and had a household size mainly consisting of three people (36.2%).

Survey instruments, using mean and standard deviation, were employed to assess factors influencing purchase intention in the Chinese e-commerce market. Purchase intention emerged with the highest mean and standard deviation (Mean = 4.06, SD = 0.813), followed by consumer engagement (Mean = 3.93, SD = 0.855), social media influencer (Mean = 3.92, SD = 0.793), consumer behavior (Mean = 3.77, SD = 0.815), online advertising (Mean = 3.68, SD = 0.876), and social

media marketing with the lowest mean (Mean = 3.67, SD = 0.983).

To assess the significance of each hypothesis, the research employed two hypothesis testing methods: simple linear regression (SLR) and two multiple linear regressions (MLR). Simple linear regression (SLR) was utilized to examine the influence of social media marketing on consumer behavior. Two multiple linear regressions (MLR) were employed, the first assessing the significance of social media marketing and social media influencers on consumer engagement, and the second evaluating the significance of consumer behavior, consumer engagement, and online advertising on purchase intention. The regression analysis revealed p-values less than 0.05 for all independent variables, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis.

5.2 Discussion based on Findings

The results of hypothesis testing indicate a positive relationship between social media marketing and consumer behavior and a significant impact of consumer behavior, consumer engagement, and online advertising on purchase intention. Additionally, social media marketing and social media influencers exhibit a positive impact on customer engagement.

5.2.1 Social Media Marketing on Consumer Behavior (H1)

The simple linear regression analysis reveals a significant connection between social media marketing and consumer behavior, with a p-value less than 0.001. The rejection of the null hypothesis emphasizes the substantial influence of social media marketing on consumer behavior, aligning with contemporary perspectives. The emphasis on relevance in our findings corresponds with the literature on personalized content, emphasizing its paramount importance. The nuanced relationship revealed in the mean scores suggests that while historical interactions play a role, they are just one facet in the multifaceted realm of consumer decision-making. This finding is consistent with the study by Ayamuang and Nuangjamnong (2023), Dummanonda and Nuangjamnong (2021), and Hua and Nuangjamnong (2021).

5.2.2 Social Media Marketing and Social Media Influencers on Consumer Engagement (H2, H3)

The multiple linear regression analysis highlights a significant impact of social media marketing and influencers on consumer engagement, with p-values less than 0.001. The rejection of null hypotheses underscores these elements' influential role in shaping consumer engagement. The high mean score for the statement 'Collaborations between influencers and brands can influence my buying decisions' suggests a strong positive sentiment towards influencer marketing, aligning with contemporary perspectives on its synergistic effects with social media marketing. These findings have been confirmed by the study by Wongsawan and Nuangjamnong (2022).

5.2.3 Consumer Behavior, Consumer Engagement, Online Advertising on Purchase Intention (H4, H5, H6)

The examination of consumer behavior, consumer engagement, and online advertising through multiple linear regression reveals a significant impact on purchase intention, with p-values below 0.001. The rejection of null hypotheses accentuates the substantial roles these factors play in influencing purchase intentions within online advertising contexts. The elevated mean score for 'My purchase intention can fluctuate depending on my current needs and desires' underscores the dynamic nature of consumer decision-making. These findings are consistent with the study by Lin and Nuangjamnong (2022).

5.3 Recommendations based on Findings

5.3.1 Social Media Marketing and Consumer Behavior

To leverage the influence of social media marketing on consumer behavior, businesses should adopt a targeted and personalized approach. Crafting campaigns that resonate with specific consumer interests and preferences, along with monitoring emerging trends, will enable effective adaptation strategies.

5.3.2 Social Media Marketing and Consumer Engagement

To maximize consumer engagement through social media marketing, brands must focus on creating interactive and shareable content. Encouraging user-generated content, conducting polls, and fostering two-way communication can cultivate a sense of connection. Embracing real-time engagement strategies, such as live sessions, can contribute to heightened consumer interaction.

5.3.3 Social Media Influencers and Consumer Engagement

When collaborating with social media influencers, authenticity should be a central focus. Brands should carefully select influencers whose values align with the target audience, emphasizing partnerships that extend beyond mere promotional content. Establishing long-term relationships with influencers contributes to sustained consumer engagement and fosters brand loyalty.

5.3.4 Consumer Behavior and Purchase Intention

To enhance purchase intention based on consumer behavior, businesses should prioritize providing a seamless and personalized shopping experience. Tailoring product offerings and marketing messages based on consumer preferences and past behaviors is essential. Implementing customer feedback mechanisms and loyalty programs can incentivize positive purchase intentions.

5.3.5 Consumer Engagement and Purchase Intention

To optimize the connection between consumer engagement and purchase intention, a personalized approach is paramount. Marketers should focus on tailoring engagement strategies to individual preferences, incorporating exclusive promotions, contests, and interactive campaigns. Utilizing data analytics to understand engagement patterns informs targeted approaches, ensuring interactions align with consumer interests.

5.3.6 Online Advertising and Purchase Intention

Effective online advertising strategies can significantly shape purchase intention through targeted and compelling approaches. Prioritizing relevance by tailoring ads to individual preferences,

visual and interactive optimization, and incorporating storytelling techniques are key. Transparency and authenticity in online advertising build trust, a critical factor in influencing purchase intention. Regular analysis of campaign performance and iterative improvements based on insights ensure adaptability to changing consumer dynamics.

5.5 Implications, Limitation and Father Study

The extensive examination of social media marketing, social media influencers, consumer behavior, consumer engagement, online advertising, and purchase intention unveils nuanced implications across practical and strategic dimensions, offering valuable insights for practitioners and marketers.

Practical Implications - In practical terms, the study's findings offer actionable guidance for practitioners navigating the dynamic landscape of digital marketing. Elevated mean scores in specific aspects of social media marketing and influencers signal a need for tailored campaign refinement. This underscores the importance of customizing marketing initiatives to align with consumer preferences, emphasizing the pivotal role of relevance and authenticity in content creation. The insights provide a clear direction for enhancing campaign effectiveness and resonance with target audiences.

The substantiated impact of consumer engagement, online advertising, and their collective influence on purchase intention introduces practical considerations for campaign design. Understanding the intricate connections among these variables emphasizes the strategic imperative of crafting interactive and compelling content within online advertising. Marketers are encouraged not only to captivate the audience but also to guide them toward favorable purchase intentions through immersive and engaging campaigns.

Strategic Implications - From a strategic standpoint, the study advocates for an integrated marketing approach that comprehensively considers the influences of social media, influencers, consumer engagement, and online advertising. Aligning strategies with these interconnected elements enables brands to harness a more holistic and potent approach

to marketing, capitalizing on the unique strengths of each facet. The research underscores the imperative of adaptability in the face of dynamic consumer behaviors. Strategies must remain fluid, evolving in tandem with shifts in consumer preferences, highlighting the crucial need for flexibility and responsiveness in overarching marketing strategies.

Limitations of the Study - Despite the rigorous research approach, certain limitations should be acknowledged. The reliance on data from online customers in the specific context of China's e-commerce platforms may limit the generalizability of findings to other cultural or market contexts. Additionally, the quantitative approach, while offering valuable statistical insights, might overlook qualitative nuances that could enhance the depth of understanding.

Further Studies - Building on the insights obtained, future research avenues within the realm of consumer behavior in Chinese e-commerce are suggested. Qualitative research methodologies, such as in-depth interviews or focus groups, could provide a deeper understanding of subjective experiences and motivations driving consumer decisions. Exploring the impact of emerging technologies like augmented reality (AR) or virtual reality (VR) on the e-commerce experience is a promising avenue for understanding evolving online consumer interactions. Investigating the role of social influence, both from influencers and peer networks, in shaping e-commerce behaviors offers another compelling area for future investigation. Expanding the scope to include cross-cultural studies would contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of how cultural factors influence online consumer behaviors. Longitudinal studies tracking consumer behaviors over time would provide a dynamic perspective on the evolving nature of e-commerce interactions.

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