Analysis on the Consumption Decision-making Path of the "Recommendation" Model Based on Social Media

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Abstract. The recommendation is a new consumption model based on social media. It will establish an information transmission chain among consumers, between consumers and merchants, and between merchants through a non-central information transmission mode and through consumers' understanding and trust of commodities and services. To a certain extent, it has become an important factor affecting consumers' purchase decisions. On the basis of an overview of the consumption pattern of "recommendation" and AISAS model, taking social media as the background and combining the characteristics and influencing factors of the consumption pattern of "recommendation", This paper proposes relevant strategies to promote the development of consumption model of social media "recommendation" and brand new model interpretation based on model improvement and optimization, hoping to provide theoretical references for promoting the healthy development of social media marketing and network marketing.

Keywords: Recommendation; Social Media; Key Opinion Leaders; AISAS Model; Consumption Decision-making; Path Analysis

1 Introduction

The development of social media has brought a lot of convenience to consumers and enterprises. In the past, most consumers could purchase products or services only through physical stores or telephone contact enterprises to complete, want to know the specific information about the product can only be obtained through limited channels. But now, the media has become a necessary channel for consumers to get information, as long as a mobile phone can know the information of various products. In addition, various advertisements, recommendations and evaluations of products on social media platforms that consumers pay attention to will also help consumers have a deeper understanding of the products. At the same time, enterprises have realized that using the media to interact with consumers is an important means to promote products, and are gradually transferring to the media. Recommendation, as a form of consumer behavior on the media, has quickly gained acceptance.

Consumption of recommendation has many advantages. Due to the huge user base on social media, consumers can obtain a large amount of information on these platforms, so as to be more clear about their needs and psychology. When they need to buy a certain product, they only need to find the manufacturer or distributor that is considered to be the best in social media, discuss it and have a detailed understanding of the product. At the same time, recommendation also brings

valuable opportunities for enterprises to contact some influential opinion leaders through social media platforms and promote their products through these opinion leaders. These influencers have great influence on social media, which can bring more reputation and recognition to enterprises, promote the smooth completion of sales and promotion, and win more customers and profits.

However, recommendation as a consumer habit has some problems. First of all, some consumers may be misled by some untrue comments, leading to the purchase of lower-quality products. Secondly, due to the great influence of key opinion leaders, enterprises may encourage these opinion leaders to promote their products through awards or other means, which may lead to the issue of advertising standards. In order to solve these problems, we need to strengthen supervision and regulations to ensure that consumers have access to and reliable information, and stipulate that enterprises do not use false advertising means. At the same time, consumers also need to clearly realize that recommendation is not a completely reliable way of consumption, and the final decision should be made after multiple comparisons and comprehensive consideration.

In short, the development of social media has brought a lot of convenience to consumers and enterprises, and the application of recommended consumption mode on the media also makes it more convenient for consumers to find the products they want, and provides a new way of marketing promotion for enterprises. However, while enjoying the convenience brought by recommended consumption, we should also recognize the limitations of the consumption, maintain an objective and rational attitude, and ensure that their consumption choices are real and reliable. Therefore, it is believed that under the continuous strengthening of supervision and norms, the consumption will be more perfect and health.

2 Theoretical Background

2.1 Recommendation and Model AISAS

A report by Reimagining Commerce found that about 75 percent of consumers said they would search online for product information before making a purchase, and 70 percent of those consumers said they would consult others about their shopping experiences before making a purchase decision. The research also shows that the influence factors of online recommendation on consumers' Consumption decisions are many. Among them, personal trust and influencer professionalism are two important factors. The network "recommendation" is essentially a kind of social marketing^[1], which uses social relations to root the concept of consumerism in daily life, and directly disintegrates goods into desires. When goods are produced continuously, desires become difficult to meet^[2]. The common way of networking "recommendation" can be roughly summed up as: KOL demonstration, community connection and acquaintance recommendation. Most of these recommended machines utilize live stream, short video and graphic push to mobilize the audience's various senses and improve the probability of success of "recommendation". Compared with traditional advertising, network "recommendation" can "arouse consumers' potential consumption desire and mobilize their consumption interests and desires"^[3]." Recommendation" satisfies the entertainment needs of consumers to a certain extent, but it is difficult to escape from the trap that Baudrillard thought, that is, consumption domesticates people with a certain code and some unconscious discipline of competitive cooperation corresponding to this code^[4]. Enterprises manipulate consumers' desires and senses, making them fall further into the field of consumerism and enhancing the effect of domestication.

In 1898, the famous advertising scientist E.S. Lewis proposed the AIDMA marketing law, which divides consumer buying behavior into five stages, namely attention, interest, desire, memory and action. However, in the Internet era, fragmented and diversified information is affecting and changing consumers' lifestyles and consumption behaviors. Internet technology has become an important communication medium in the marketing process, resulting in that traditional AIDMA marketing rules cannot accurately summarize some purchasing behaviors and significant characteristics of consumers^[5](See Figure 1). In 2005, Dentsu Group of Japan put forward the AISAS theory based on online purchasing consumers' behavioral intention can be divided into three types of variables: search, purchase and sharing, and two types of perceptual variables, attitude and trust^[6], to measure the influence path from marketing to consumers' decision completion.

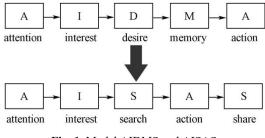


Fig. 1. Model AIDMS and AISAS

2.2 Key Opinion Leader and Reputation

Paul Lazarsfeld believes that the transmission of information is carried out in accordance with the two-level communication mode from media to opinion leaders to audiences. Opinion leaders are the intermediate stations of information dissemination. They are an active part of the crowd and can be widely responded to by the crowd. They have more exposure to the media than the average person, and know more about the content of the medium, are regarded by the public as the main information channel, by which they load information into the minds of the audience and influence their decisions. In marketing, key opinion leaders are usually defined as those who have more and more accurate product information, are accepted or trusted by relevant groups, and have a great influence on the group's purchasing behavior^[7]. With the rise of short video and e-commerce live streaming, the meaning and forms of KOL become richer and more diversified, and then KOL marketing is gradually derived, namely, KOL-dominated social media marketing communication behavior^[8]. By employing such key opinion leaders, enterprises can export appropriate content to consumers, so as to influence consumption decisions and facilitate transactions and consumption.

Brand reputation is often an important factor affecting consumption decisions. A good reputation is essential for any organization to achieve lasting success, and reputation management is an industry with huge potential value^[9]. Podolny believes that reputation is an important signal of an organization's position in the social relationship network among various organizations. The social relationship network and the organization's position in the network becomes a competitive advantage. The high status of an organization makes other organizations willing to have relations with it, which further strengthens their reputation. The key opinion leader is an important node responsible for transmitting signals in the social relationship network. Enterprises can send signals to consumers^[10] by employing Kols to demonstrate their capabilities. Meanwhile, on this basis, non-salvageable cost. For example, exquisite packaging, luxury services and advertising endorsement help customers distinguish between different products^[11], so as to influence consumption decisions^[12].

3 Research Method

3.1 Research Design

In view of the few empirical studies on the specific influence path of "recommendation", we mainly adopted the method of online questionnaire to explore how social media influences consumers' consumption decisions in the process of "recommendation", and explored the mutual path relationship between each stage of AISAS model to seek a better explanation of "recommendation" based on the model.

The questionnaire designed for this survey is mainly divided into two sections: the demographic characteristics of the interviewees and their cognition and views on "recommendation". The first plate is composed of single choice and filled in the blank, and the second plate is mainly Likert scale. The scale propositions of the second section were all based on the AISAS model, and divided into three parts, attention, interest and search, to set up specific indicators respectively.

3.2 Data Collection

We conducted a survey on college students from China, the main group of consumers, after receiving the information about "recommendation". In order to ensure the representativeness of the samples, questionnaires from different provinces, genders, incomes and schools in different regions of China were deliberately balanced in the process of data collection. Meanwhile, in order to ensure the reliability and validity of the questionnaire design, the research was divided into two stages: pre-investigation and formal investigation.

After collecting the pre-survey data, IBM SPSS Statistics 25 was used to analyze the reliability of the scale in the questionnaire by the Alpha reliability coefficient method. Cronbach's Alpha was 0.923. Similarly, KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin) test statistics were measured by using IBM SPSS Statistics 25 and Bartlett spherical test factor analysis showed that KMO values at the three levels were all greater than 0.8. The significance level of Bartlett sphericity test factor analysis has been passed, which is suitable for factor analysis.

In the formal investigation stage, a total of 535 questionnaires were sent out to Chinese college students at home and abroad through some online communities/communities on social media, and 484 questionnaires were recovered with an effective recovery rate of 90.47%. The following is the basic information about the respondents. (See Table 1)

	Item	Value	Proportion
Gender	Male	208	43.0
Gender	Female	276	57.0
Institution area	Chinese mainland	443	91.5
Institution area	Outside mainland China	41	9.3
	Freshman year	64	13.2
	Sophomore year	109	22.5
Grade	Junior year	169	34.9
Glade	Senior year	93	19.2
	Senior 5 and above	4	0.8
	Postgraduate	45	9.3
	x≤800	13	2.7
	$800 < x \le 1100$	83	17.1
	$1100 < x \le 1400$	124	25.6
Average monthly expenditure	$1400 < x \le 1700$	97	20.0
p	$1700 < x \le 2000$	60	12.4
	$2000 < x \le 2300$	43	8.9
	x > 2300	64	13.2

4 Hypothesis Development

Based on the AISAS model, this paper explores whether college students' cognition and performance in the three stages of the recommendation process will affect their purchasing decisions. There are three main points: First, whether college students have a certain sense of identity with the consumer culture formed in the process of "recommendation"; second, whether they will have trust in products when shopping; third, whether consumption decisions will be influenced by opinion leaders. Based on the above views, this study lists three stages in the process of "recommendation": Attention, hereinafter referred to as A, Interest, hereinafter referred to as I, and Search, hereinafter referred to as S. Factor analysis was carried out on the pre-survey data to verify the results, as shown in Table 2:

According to the load value of each index in the component matrix after rotation, it can be obtained^{[13],[14],[15],[16],[17]}:

4.1 Trust

A-brand identity, I- product meeting demand, S- product reputation, price, experience, function and raw material (safety) are classified into factor 1: trust. Therefore, hypothesis can be established:

H1a: Trust degree of consumers in "recommendation" does not affect consumption decisions.

H1b: Trust degree of consumers in "recommendation" affect consumption decisions.

4.2 Attitude

A- advertising word, brand co-branding, star endorsement, I- advertising word attraction, rich welfare benefits, S- product series, popularity and packaging are classified into factor 2: attitude. Therefore, hypothesis can be established:

H2a: The cultural identity of consumers in "recommendation" does not affect consumption decisions

H2b: The cultural identity of consumers in "recommendation" affects the consumption decision

4.3 Key Opinion Leader

A-star endorsement, I-traffic blogger promotion and high credibility of bloggers are classified into factor 3: opinion leaders. Therefore, hypothesis can be established:

H3a: The opinion leaders of consumers in "recommendation" do not influence consumption decisions

H3b: In "recommendation", consumer opinion leaders influence consumption decisions

5 Data Analysis

5.1 Hypothesis Testing Analysis

In this study, the consumption decision performance after receiving online "recommendation" information corresponds to the questionnaire "Have you ever tried to change the idea of a brand or product series because of the influence of online" recommendation "information, or have the intention to do so? During data preprocessing, the options "yes" and "no", which means the consumption decision is not affected by "recommendation", are re-coded as "2", and the option "no", which means the consumption decision is not affected by "recommendation", is coded as "1". Factor 1: trust, factor 2: attitude and factor 3: key opinion leaders were calculated and taken as new variables respectively. Then, relevant measurements were carried out to verify whether the hypothesis was valid. The results are shown in Table 3:

	Composition			Composition		
	1	2	3	1	2	3
I-Product meets demand	0.775			0.862		
S-Product reputation	0.751			0.820		
S-Price	0.741			0.809		
S-Experience	0.835			0.786		
A-Brand identity	0.739			0.778		
S-Function	0.667			0.754		
S-Raw material	0.531			0.612		

Table 2. The component matrix after rotation^a

S-Network popularity	0.965		0.799				
I-Advertising word attraction	0.855		0.772				
A-co-branding	0.845		0.727				
I-Rich welfare benefits	0.818		0.712				
S-Series	0.696		0.711				
A-Advertising words	0.840		0.689				
A-Celebrity endorsement	0.855	0.717	0.656	0.550			
S-Packing	0.531		0.545				
I-Traffic blogger promotion		1.048		0.838			
I-Bloggers have high credibility		0.925		0.786			
Extraction method: principal component analysis.							
Rotation method: Caesar's normal maximum variance method.							
a. The rotation has converged after 11 iterations.							

Table 3. Correlation analysis

	Correlation coefficient	0.079			
Trust - total score	P-value	0.084			
Attitude - total score	Correlation coefficient	0.141**			
Attitude - total score	P-value	0.002			
	Correlation coefficient	0.165**			
Key Opinion Leaders - total points	P-value 0.000				
* p<0.05 ** p<0.01					

5.1.1 Consumers' Trust and Consumption Decisions in "Recommendation"

After the correlation test, the p value is 0.084, which is greater than 0.05, indicating that the correlation relationship is not significant. The null hypothesis is accepted, that is, the trust degree of consumers in "recommendation" does not affect the consumption decision.

5.1.2 Consumers' Attitude and Consumption Decision in "Recommendation"

Correlation test p value is 0.002, less than 0.05, indicating significant correlation, namely, null hypothesis is rejected and alternative hypothesis is valid. The cultural identity of consumers in "recommendation" affects the consumption decision. And the correlation coefficient r=0.141 > 0, that is, the higher the degree of cultural identity of consumers in "recommendation", the more likely consumers will be influenced by "recommendation" to consume.

5.1.3 Key Opinion Leaders and Consumption Decisions of Consumers in "Recommendation"

The p value of the correlation test is 0.000, less than 0.05, indicating a significant correlation. That is, the null hypothesis is rejected, the alternative hypothesis is valid, and the opinion

leaders of consumers in "recommendation" influence consumption decisions. And the correlation coefficient r=0.165 > 0, that is, the higher the degree of consumer identification with opinion leaders in "recommendation", the more likely consumers are to be influenced by "recommendation" to consume.

5.2 Influence Path Analysis

In this study, the three stages in the process of "recommendation", namely attention, interest and search, were taken as three dimensions in the questionnaire setting, and the respondents' preference factors for the three stages were measured respectively. This part will carry out impact path analysis around three stages to measure and screen out key factors.

The path analysis of the three processes "A", "I" and "S" of "recommendation" and the final consumption decision is carried out respectively, and the following results are obtained: When (I) is the independent variable and search (S) is the dependent variable, the standardized path coefficient value is 0.530>0, and the path presents a significance level of 0.01 (z=11.634, p=0.000<0.01), which indicates that interest (I) will have a significant positive influence on search (S).When (A) is the independent variable and search (S) is the dependent variable, the standardized path coefficient value is 0.316>0, and the path presents A significance level of 0.01 (z=6.939, p=0.000<0.01), which indicates that attention (A) will have a significant positive influence on search (S). When attention (A) is the independent variable and interest (I) is the dependent variable, the standardized path coefficient value is 0.809>0, and the path presents the significance level of 0.01 (z=30.318, p=0.000 < 0.01), which indicates that attention (A) will have a significant positive influence on interest (I), and search (S) is the independent variable. When the consumption decision is the dependent variable, the path does not show significance (z=-1.579, p=0.114>0.05), indicating that search (S) has no influence on the consumption decision. Interest (I) is the independent variable, and when the consumption decision is the dependent variable, the standardized path coefficient value is 0.366>0. Moreover, this path presents 0.01 level of significance (z=4.288, p=0.000<0.01), indicating that interest (I) has A significant positive influence on consumption decision. Note that when (A) is the independent variable and consumption decision is the dependent variable, this path does not show significance (z=-1.198, p=0.231>0.05), indicating that attention (A) has no influence on consumption decisions.

According to the model fitting indexes in Table 4, the model $\chi/df=2.768<3$, RMSEA and RMR values were 0.061 and 0.047, both less than 0.1, and the four indexes GFI, CFI, NFI and NNFI values were all greater than 0.9, indicating that all indexes of the model were within the standard range and the model fit was good.

Common index	χ2	d f	р	χ2/df	GFI	RMS EA	RMR	CFI	NFI	NNFI
Value	5.5 36	2	0.063	2.768	0.997	0.061	0.047	0.997	0.995	0.990
Default Model: χ^2 (6) =1051.922, p=1.000										

Table 4. Model fitting index

On the basis of the first analysis, the influence paths that did not pass the significance test were eliminated, tabulated again and the influence path map was made. The results are shown in Table 5 below:

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Non standard- ized path coeffi- cient	SE	z (CR Value)	р	Normalized path coeffi- cient
Interest	Search	0.739	0.064	11.632	0.000	0.530
Attention	Search	0.410	0.059	6.942	0.000	0.316
Attention	Interest	0.753	0.025	30.314	0.000	0.809
Interest	Consumption decision	0.023	0.005	4.397	0.000	0.196

Table 5. Summary of the model regression coefficients

According to the results in the table above, attention has a significant impact on interest and search, interest has a significant impact on search and consumption decisions, but attention and search do not have a direct impact on consumption decisions, that is, interest is the most important in the process from "recommendation" to making up one's mind to buy products, and plays a significant intermediary effect. (See Table 6)

Item	$\begin{array}{c} \text{Attention} \rightarrow \text{Interest} \\ \rightarrow \text{Consumption decision} \end{array}$		
C total effect	0.012		
a	0.753		
b	0.036		
a*b Intermediate effect value	0.027	* n<0.05	
a*b (Boot SE)	0.062	* p<0.05 ** p<0.01	
a*b (z Value)	0.430		
a*b (p Value)	0.667		
a*b (95% Boot CI)	0.121~0.369		
c' Direct effect	-0.014		
Test conclusion	Complete mediation		

Table 6. Summary of mediation test results

6 Conclusion

Data analysis shows that interest has a significant impact on search and consumption decisions, but attention and search do not have a direct impact on consumption decisions. Only interest plays a complete mediating role, so it can be inferred that in order to successfully change consumers' consumption decisions, "recommendation" must focus on "interest" and stimulate consumers' interest in shopping through "interest". Because only when consumers are motivated to buy will they want to try and experience. "recommendation" is a kind of recommendation behavior based on interest and emotion, by establishing good interpersonal relationships with users to attract their attention and stimulate their desire to share. It is very difficult to get users to imitate and become interested in the product itself after "recommendation". At the same time, "recommendation" is not an immediate or quick way to make money. It requires advertisers to invest a lot of money and energy into studying the consumer psychology of users, to research and design products, and to publicize them to consumers. Only when advertisers can connect products with consumers, can "recommendation" effectively change the purchasing decision-making process of consumers. To achieve this goal, brands must have the characteristics of "people", know how to establish a relationship with users through social media, and understand the potential needs of users. Only when the brand has established a real and lasting influence on consumers on this basis can "recommendation" achieve good results and help the enterprise get the ideal return. In practice, enterprises should make full use of the advantages of social media and combine advertising with social platforms. For example, when a consumer shares an item on a social platform, that item becomes the focus of "recommendation". When consumers make actual purchases, social media is used to continue to spread and publicize them. This practice can not only stimulate the desire of consumers to buy, but also let consumers feel the value and service brought by the product.

Based on the path analysis and hypothesis testing analysis in the model analysis, how to arouse the interest of consumers is the core element of "recommendation". Meanwhile, the higher the degree of cultural identification of consumers and opinion leaders in "recommendation", the more likely it is to change consumers' shopping decisions. The brand can set rigorous, accurate and eye-catching advertising words, and high popularity of the IP, such as Disney, Marvel and other products, hire high-quality spokespeople to attract consumer attention, at the same time, create excellent product packaging, enhance product heat firmly consumer confidence to buy. At the same time, due to the prevalence of star-chasing culture, many fans are keen to spend a lot of money on their idols. In terms of attracting consumers' attention, we can hire hot-quality artists to endorse, sponsor hot real or virtual variety shows, and carry out fans' ranking activities legally. In terms of stimulating consumers' interest in shopping, bloggers with large traffic or high credibility can be invited to bring goods, record videos or write recommendation articles while consolidating the strength of their products.

At the same time, on the basis of referring to AISAS theory module and previous studies, this paper summarizes an effective and applicable model for "recommendation" marketing based on social media. The attention, interest and search in the original model should be summarized into recommendation (R for short), and the consumption decision can continue to be followed by action. After completing the purchase behavior, some consumers will return to the specific social share of social media. recommendation from KOLs, therefore, this form will be summarized into R (I) AS (R) model. (See Figure 2)

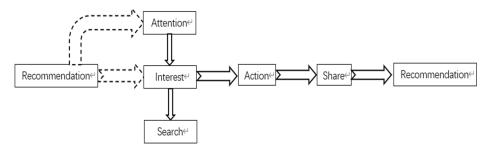


Fig. 2. Model R (I) AS (R)

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