

The Influence of KOL Internet Marketing on Consumers from the example about Beauty products in Xiaohongshu Platform

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Abstract. Key opinion leader (KOL) Internet marketing is one of the key research topics today. Researchers have found that with the rise and popularity of Xiaohongshu platform in recent years, more and more beauty products have been promoted by KOL on this platform, thus affecting consumers. However, there is still a research gap on the form and degree of influence behind it. Therefore, this paper collects questionnaire data on the consumption of beauty products purchased by Xiaohongshu of all ages, and conducts regression analysis on the data, to explore the relationship between the KOL Internet marketing environment and consumers. The results show that under the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), consumer attitude, subjective criteria and cognitive behavior control all have positive effects on consumer behavior intention. All factors under the CMM model will promote consumers' media attention to the product, and media attention has a positive effect on consumers' consumption behavior intention.

Keywords: KOL, Xiaohongshu, TPB, consumers, influence

1. Introduction

In recent years, the emergence of the Internet has brought a new era of marketing. The use of KOLs in online marketing is becoming more and more popular, and Xiaohongshu platform has become one of the most popular social media platforms in China, whose influence on consumers is beyond doubt. Xiaohongshu is a social media platform that allows users to share their experiences with products and services. It also provides a platform for KOLs to promote their products and services through multiple forms of content, such as video, images and text. According to relevant data, as of September 2020, the number of active KOLs in Xiaohongshu exceeded 100000, and some KOLs entered the daily

update stage. Through this platform, KOLs can reach out to potential customers and influence their purchasing decisions. KOL online marketing on the Xiaohongshu platform is particularly effective when it comes to certain types of products, as it is able to establish an emotional connection with the audience and provide detailed information about the products or services being promoted. This type of marketing can significantly impact consumer behavior when it comes to certain types of products, such as cosmetics, fashion, and lifestyle products.

In daily life, individuals are affected by strong social pressures. Various studies have come to different conclusions about the relationship between conformity and behavioral willingness, with some arguing that no significant correlation and others is arguing the opposite. It can be seen that the research on the relationship between herd psychology and behavioral willingness needs to be combined with the actual situation. In the context of "we media" marketing, consumers' purchase intention is actually a socialized behavior.

Based on the theory of TPB, this paper will take the active users who frequently use Xiaohongshu and have online shopping behaviors in the past month as the object and adopt the method of an online questionnaire to study the influence of online marketing of Xiaohongshu platform KOL on consumers of specific products (cosmetics).

2. Literature Review

The Theory of Planned Behavior originally dated back to the Theory of Multi-attribute Attitude, which was put forward by Fishbein in 1963. The main idea of the Theory of Multi-attribute Attitude is the main attitude of the product by combining assessment with an intensity of significant belief of the product in the process of combining [1], and this attitude decides the behavioral intention.

On this basis, Ajzen and Fishbein improved together and put forward the Theory of Planned Behavior. The main idea of the theory is that attitude, subjective norms and cognitive behavior control jointly affect behavioral intention, and the intention will affect actions that people actually do. Recently Theory of Planned Behavior is used broadly in the research of forecasting behavior, as well as the research of customers' behavior, many research results based on this theory constantly appear, and the Theory of Planned Behavior has good reliability and validity in the area of broadcasting customers' behavioral intention [2].

Now, customers' Theory of Planned Behavior is divided into three stages, including customer's purchase intention because of the need for the product in daily lives, purchase behavior restricted by own conditions and customers changing purchasing behavior after analysing the advantages and disadvantages of purchasing items [3]. Therefore, the article wants to research the impact of Xiaohongshu platform cosmetics on consumers under KOL internet marketing in the view of TPB, which is based on the wide application of the Theory of Planned Behavior to consumers.

Today with the development of TPB, the TPB model has also been continuously improved. For various development models, there is still no unified explanation. And there is no solution to the "intention-behavioral gap", and scholars are needed to continue to find the reasons and solutions [4]. In addition, more and more researchers have found that many consumers who self-reported good willingness to buy did not produce a corresponding intensity of actual consumption behavior, which shows that there is still a big difference between willingness and behavior [5]. Therefore, this paper assumes that the two are positively correlated. In addition, consumers' purchase intention is one of the most important indicators to predict their purchase behavior, and consumers' purchase intention is the degree of maximum effort they are willing to put into making purchase behavior [6].

This paper also assumes that the two are positively correlated. Perceived behavioral control (bc) is the degree of control an individual expects to have over a particular behavior. Research suggests that the more resources and opportunities individuals have at their disposal. The higher the perceived behavioral control, the more likely the behavior is to be taken [7]. However, apart from the influence

of planned behavior theory, is media attention also a positive indicator affecting consumers' behavioral intention? What consumer behaviors promote media attention? The discussion of these problems is of great significance to Internet marketing.

In this regard, this paper will comprehensively use the variable of media attention in the CMM model under the planned behavior theory to study whether there is a positive relationship between consumer attitudes, subjective norms and cognitive behavior control and consumer behavior willingness, and the relationship between media attention and behavior. And assumptions are as follows:

H1: Consumer attitude has a positive correlation with consumer behavior.

H2: Subjective norms (the opinions of important people, such as parents, spouses, and friends, on consumer behavior) have a positive correlation with consumers' consumption behavior intention.

H3: Consumer's perceived behavior control (consumer's judgment on the degree of self-control of consumption behavior) has a positive correlation with consumer's consumption behavior.

H4: Media attention has a positive impact on consumer behavior.

3. Method

The method used in this research is a questionnaire survey. It aims to study how attitude, subjective norms and cognitive behavior control affect customers' purchase intention and KOL marketing in Xiaohongshu platform. By convenient sampling, the researchers recruited 105 participants in the Xiaohongshu. The questionnaire is composed of six parts of questions (as shown in table 1), including attitude, subjective norms, cognitive behavior control, actual behavior, media exposure, and background information (age and gender).

The questionnaire is based on the 7-point Likert scale, from 1(strongly disagree) to 7(strongly agree).

Table 1: Question setting.

	I think shopping under the recommendation of Xiaohongshu bloggers is a wise idea.
Attitude	I think watching recommending video in Xiaohongshu is pleasant. As for me, it is a good idea that accepting cosmetics information from Xiaohongshu in the next 30 days. I plan to get information about cosmetics from Xiaohongshu in the next 30 days. People who have influence on me encourage me to buy the goods recommended by the blogger of Xiaohongshu.
Subjective norms	People who are very important to me encourage me to shop online. People who are very important to me think it is a good idea to get information about this product from Xiaohongshu.
Perceived behavior control	People who are important to me will get information about beauty products from the Xiaohongshu. I have the channel and material ability to shop on the recommendation of the blogger. When watching recommending video to shop, I have a complete choice. After taking the initiative to watch the recommending video of the Xiaohongshu blogger, I plan to buy things immediately.

Table 1: (continued).

Perceived behavior control	After taking the initiative to watch recommending video of the Xiaohongshu blogger, I will consider whether to buy it with a budget.
	I strongly recommend that my friends/family members go shopping after watching recommending videos.
	For the recommendation of the same product I want to buy, I prefer to choose the brand recommended by my favorite blogger.
	Please comment on the difficulty of obtaining product information from Xiaohongshu in the next 30 days.
Behavior	I often shop online.
	I like to buy things on the recommendation of the Xiaohongshu blogger.
	I bought something on the recommendation of the Xiaohongshu blogger.
Media attention	I like to watch the recommending videos recommended by Xiaohongshu.
	If I am interested in a certain type of product, I will search for the recommending video I want to watch.
	I often watch videos of bloggers I'm interested in.

4. Results

First, the basic data characteristics of the sample are shown in table 2.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics.

		Number of people	Proportion (%)
Gender	man	21	20.0
	woman	84	80.0
Age	16-25	100	95.2
	26-35	3	2.9
	36-45	1	1.0
	46 and above	1	1.0
Region	first-tier city	34	32.4
	Second-tier cities and new first-tier cities	56	53.3
	Third and fourth tier cities	8	7.6
	county town	6	5.7
Income	Township level	1	1.0
	Less than or equal to 3000 yuan	80	76.2
	More than 3000 yuan and less than or equal to 5000 yuan	nine	8.6

Table 2: (continued).

	More than 5000 yuan and less than 8000 yuan.	seven	6.7
Income	More than 8, 000 yuan and less than or equal to 12, 000 yuan	five	4.8
	12, 000 yuan and above	four	3.8
	Junior high school and below	one	1.0
Level of education	senior high school	six	5.7
	undergraduate course	96	91.4
	postgraduate	one	1.0
	Doctor and above	one	1.0

Among the indicators in this sample, the participants' characteristics are female, the age range is 16-25 years old, second-tier cities and new first-tier cities, the income is less than or equal to 3000 yuan, and the undergraduate education level.

Table 3: Reliability table.

Dimension	Cronbach Alpha	Number of terms
Attitude	0.857	four
Subjective norm	0.864	four
Perceived behavior control	0.749	seven
Media attention	0.798	three
Behavior	0.818	three

It can be seen from the table 3 that the reliability of all dimensions is greater than 0.7, which proves good consistency within the scale.

Table 4: Correlation analysis.

		Behavior attitude	Subjective norm	Cognitive behavior control	practical action	Media contact
Attitude	Pearson correlation	one				
Subjective norm	Pearson correlation	.653**	one			

Table 4: (continued).

Perceived behavior control	Pearson correlation	.714**	.635**	one		
Behavior	Pearson correlation	.453**	.380**	.664**	one	
Media attention	Pearson correlation	.590**	.433**	.639**	.745**	one

* *. At the level of 0.01, the correlation is significant.

Table 5: Coefficient a.

model	Non-standardized coefficient		Standard coefficient	t	significance	Collinear statistics	
	B	Standard error	beta			allowance	VIF
(constant)	0.501	0.419		1.197	0.234		
Attitude	-0.238	0.120	-0.189	-1.971	0.049	0.398	2.516
Subjective norm	-0.030	0.076	0.033	0.394	0.694	0.514	1.946
Perceived behavior control	0.626	0.139	0.445	4.511	0.000	0.377	2.655
Media attention	0.558	0.077	0.587	7.220	0.000	0.554	1.806
R ²				0.796a square			
F				43.313			
P				0.000b square			
Dependent variable: Behavior							

Referring to table 4 and 5, the good fit of this linear regression model, with $R^2 = 0.796 > 0.6$, implies that behavioural attitudes, subjective norms, cognitive behavioural control, and media exposure explain 79.6% of the reasons for the existence of the influence on actual action and have good explanatory power. In addition, there was no multicollinearity between the four independent variables as seen in the VIF values. The following regression equation was derived between the variables: actual purchase behaviour = 0.501 + (-) 0.238*behavioural attitudes + (-) 0.030*subjective norms + 0.626*cognitive behavioural control + 0.558*mediated exposure.

The regression equation was significant, $F=43.313$, $p<0.001$, implying that at least one of the four independent variables can significantly influence the dependent variable actual behaviour. As can be seen from the data, behavioural attitudes can significantly and negatively influence actual purchase actions ($B= -0.238$, $p < 0.05$); subjective norms cannot significantly influence actual purchase behaviour ($B= 0.694 > 0.05$); cognitive behavioural control can significantly and positively influence satisfaction ($B= 0.626$, $p < 0.05$); and media exposure can significantly and positively influence satisfaction ($B= 0.558$, $P < 0.05$). The results demonstrate that beauty products on the Xiaohongshu platform have a significant influence on consumers in a KOL seeding environment, and the extent of

this influence varies with subjective norms, cognitive behavioural control and media attention, guided by the theory of planned behaviour, social norms theory and the CMM model, respectively.

5. Discussion

The following discussions can be drawn from the results of the above study. Firstly, consumer behavioral attitudes have a negative relationship with consumer behavior. Similar to Peter and Olson's view of attitudes as "cognitive evaluations", consumer behavior is more likely to be influenced by the media and KOLs during this period [8]. In this environment, consumers are more likely to be influenced by an "automatic thinking" mechanism. The so-called automatic thinking is a relatively fixed pattern of thinking and behavior that has been accumulated over a long period of time, and actions are issued without the need for brain thinking, but in accordance with the established pattern. This is different from Ajzen, I. In this "automatic thinking" mechanism, many of the individual's false ideas, irrational thoughts, absurd beliefs, fragmented or misplaced perceptions, etc., may exist outside of the individual's consciousness or awareness. Therefore, under such "automatic thinking" and receiving "seeding" information from the media and KOL, it is easier to take actions without thinking, to act outside the scope of one's thinking, and to act in an irrational way that one would not have done otherwise [9].

Moreover, in the research of Ajzen, he mentions that cognitive-behavioral theory uses cognition for behavior modification, emphasizes the importance of cognition in the problem-solving process, and emphasizes the interaction between internal cognition and the external environment. It is believed that both external behavioral changes and internal cognitive changes will eventually affect the change of individual behavior. That is, consumers' internal unstable cognition will influence whether they choose to buy the product or not under the influence of the environment and their own behavior of accepting media and KOL's seeding will affect the change of consumers' own behavior. All these interpretations could explain the result of this research that consumer behavioral attitudes are negatively correlated with consumer consumption behavior in the KOL seeding environment.

Second, the results show that subjective norms have a positive relationship on consumers' consumption behavior intention. This is also similar to Ajzen, I. There is a similarity with the subjective norm theory that this refers to the beliefs of the majority of people whether they approve or disapprove of the behavior. It is related to a person's beliefs about whether his or her peers and those who are important to him or her believe that he or she should engage in the behavior. This factor can influence consumers' behavioral judgments or even directly affect consumer behavior. In this component, behavioral intentions are influenced by attitudes about the likelihood that the behavior will produce the desired outcome and by subjective assessments of the risks and benefits of that outcome. In this case, the risk is whether the consumer's expectations of the actor are consistent with the actor's behavior, and the actor evaluates his or her consumption behavior from this perspective, and in this study, they tend to make more favorable choices, for example, choices that meet the expectations of others. In this study, there are more perspectives in the TPB theory, not only in the subjective norm, but also in the social norm, which is considered to be in line with the expectations of others, and in the cultural context.

Moreover, the cognitive behavioral control of consumers (consumers' judgment of the degree of control over their consumption behavior) has a positive correlation with consumers' consumption behavior. Ajzen, I. In the TPB theory of behavioral intention, that is, under the motivation factor of a given behavior, the stronger the intention of the consumer to execute the behavior, the more likely the behavior will be executed. To put it bluntly, the more consumers want to consume, the more likely it is to be performed. According to the theory of TPB, consumers' Behavior Intention in consuming behavior is their own behavior intention, that is, individuals' judgment on the subjective probability of taking a certain behavior, which reflects individuals' willingness to take a certain behavior [10].

Finally, media exposure has a positive impact on consumer behavior. In the context of this study, the factor of media exposure affects consumers' positive or negative feelings towards the behavior, that is, the attitude formed after the conceptualization of an individual's evaluation of the specific behavior. Media contact influences consumers through its own special means of information transmission, and consumers form new behavioral attitudes after their own evaluation and digestion of their consumption behaviors [11]. In the context of this study, in the KOL promotion on Xiaohongshu platform, consumers' attitudes are more likely to be influenced by opinion leaders, which is because opinion leaders have the right to speak among consumer groups and even affect the level of social pressure consumers receive. Because, according to Ajzen, I, salient individuals or groups who have an influence on their behavioral decisions have a significant impact on whether or not they take a particular behavior. Because if an individual does not engage in a particular behavior, the individual may feel social pressure not to engage in that particular behavior. Here, even though KOLs are influential individuals and groups, in such a context, consumers will also feel social pressure, but this social pressure is brought to consumers through media contact, rather than through consumers' important others, such as parents, spouses, friends. However, it is worth noting that the behavioral choices made by consumers under this behavior will not affect KOLs' views of them, because, in most cases, there is no social relationship between KOLs and consumers. Consumers simply face social pressure and their own psychological pressure to seek social and group recognition, and will not be pressured by the views of specific individuals and groups.

6. Conclusion

In this study, it is found that beauty products on Xiaohongshu platform have a positive impact on consumers as a whole in the environment of KOL grass cultivation (Consumers receive KOL's recommendations for a certain product in the form of pictures, videos, or text), and the degree of such influence varies with the changes of attitude, subjective criteria, cognitive behavioral control and media attention under the guidance of planned behavior theory, social norm theory and CMM model respectively, which can be verified by the following facts. First of all, in the context of KOL grass planting(Consumers receive KOL's recommendations for a certain product in the form of pictures, videos, or text, and purchase the product under the influence of such recommendations), some consumers will be affected by the psychology of blindly following the trend and promote their own consumption behaviors, which will be further transformed into subjective criteria and affect the consumption behaviors of others. Secondly, cognitive behavioral control is manifested by the judgment of one's own consumption power. Strong consumption power will naturally promote the development of consumption behavior. Finally, under CMM, if consumers have a positive attitude towards a certain kind of cosmetics product and have a high demand for it, it will certainly promote the media attention of the product, thus affecting consumer behavior.

Firstly, this study scientifically evaluated the objective influence of KOL herbal cosmetics products on consumers. This is conducive to the Xiaohongshu platform, various KOL talents and their affiliated companies to more comprehensively understand the consumer tendency and consumer psychology of beauty products, and further improve the grass planting process of such products and the grass planting environment of KOL. At the same time, it is helpful for consumers to have a deep understanding of the operating mechanism of KOL in Xiaohongshu platform and consume more rationally.

Finally, the questionnaire did not break down the differences in the influence of various beauty products on consumers under the influence of KOL environment. As mentioned in the literature review, the frequency of use of different beauty products in consumers' daily life may lead to different degrees of influence on consumers in the KOL environment. In the future, beauty products can be

taken as variables to carefully distinguish various products for further analysis, so that this issue can be studied more deeply.

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