Propaganda Information of Internet Celebrity Influence: Young Adult Purchase Intention by Big Data Analysis

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ABSTRACT

At present, internet celebrity marketing has become a driving force for the growth of mobile e-commerce; however, it has also become more apparent that the credibility and authenticity of the internet celebrity is directly correlated to the success of the marketing model. Therefore, in order to entice consumers into purchasing products, cooperations and internet celebrities must be deemed trustworthy. In addition, there are several factors that influence the trust between internet celebrities and consumers. To highlight these factors, this paper constructed an internet celebrity marketing model from the perspective of trust and takes internet celebrity features, marketing character, and product factor as three constructs. Furthermore, eight independent variables are defined, and the corresponding items are designed. Through a quite large data survey and analysis, they have three findings: all eight independent variables have significant influence on trust, and internet celebrities’ popularity, interactivity, and professionalism are the top three important factors.

KEYWORDS

Big Data, Empirical Analysis, Internet Celebrity Marketing, Purchase Intention, Trust

INTRODUCTION

The number of individuals who accessed the Internet worldwide reached 4.95 billion by January 2022, or approximately 62.5% of the global total population, and China has the largest number of Internet users. By the end of 2021, the total number of Internet users reached 1.03 billion, with a penetration rate of 73%. The number of online shoppers reached 842 million, representing 81.6% of the total Internet user base. China’s e-commerce industry has been facilitated by the Internet’s widespread uses. Social media and mobile payments have enabled the transition of the traditional e-commerce industry to mobile social e-commerce. People who have become famous by means of the Internet become Internet celebrities who use the Internet as the main platform to spread their influence, and most of them applied their influence on marketing. Therefore, Internet celebrity marketing, and the economy that it has engendered, the Internet celebrity economy, are gradually emerging as a model for creating value on the Internet in contemporary mobile social e-commerce.
Internet celebrity marketing refers to the commercial behaviors involved in promoting, selling, and distributing a product or service online, including advertising, pushing, publicity, endorsement, hard sale, and boosterism. It is distinct from the conventional model of e-commerce in that it possesses the fundamental benefit of strong social attributes. These attributes allow for improved direct interaction with customers and the provision of users with a more varied shopping experience, particularly on the proviso that certain influencers maintain their silence (Wei et al., 2022).

In the early stages of the development of the Internet celebrity economy, Internet celebrities were likely promoted through social platforms, such as Weibo, using words and images. With the emergence of a large number of short video platforms, such as Douyin and YouTube, in recent years, live streaming commerce has gradually become a new growth driver for the Internet celebrity economy. Additionally, the spread of COVID-19 has contributed to the growth of the live streaming e-commerce industry. According to statistics, the king of live streaming, Li Jiaqi, who ranks among the top Internet celebrity live streamers, had total sales of 11.5 billion yuan on a single live streaming show during the Double Eleven pre-sale night in 2021. It is evident that the integration of Internet celebrities and e-commerce has increased the industry’s prospects. Meanwhile, the expansion of Internet celebrities’ market shares has increased their market competitiveness. We should pay more attention to its Internet user groups to conform to the current fad, and perhaps even to better withstand the Internet celebrity economy’s tide. In this situation, it is essential to understand how the ordering behavior of customers in live streaming rooms is affected, which has become a focus of both industry and academia.

Employing the most fundamental level of Internet celebrity marketing as a starting foothold, we establish the relevant dependent variables by analyzing the three primary aspects. These include individual characteristics of Internet celebrities, Internet celebrity marketing characteristics, and product features, all of which are most closely related (Park et al., 2020). On this basis, the most fundamental trust in the social and fan economy is applied as an intermediary variable to examine its impact on consumers’ final purchase intent. The findings presented in this paper have significant practical implications for advancing the growth of the Internet celebrity marketing industry.

RELATED RESEARCH

Internet Celebrity and E-Commerce

Under the wave of Internet development, a large number of famous people who went viral on the Internet have emerged one after another, and the term Internet celebrity has gradually become a popular search term on the most prominent Internet search engines. According to Li (2018), Internet celebrities are people who gain fame through the Internet and have the ability to influence others. They have a certain number of followers, a high level of interactivity, and substantial business value (Li, 2018). Internet celebrity e-commerce is a novel business model that integrates Internet celebrities and e-commerce organically. In this model, Internet celebrities promote products as opinion leaders and drive fan consumption, thereby realizing economic benefits at the center of the industry chain (Han, 2020). Internet celebrity e-commerce has significant advantages over the traditional e-commerce industry, including real-time feature, personalization, and high information spreading power. During interactions with fans, Internet celebrities can significantly stimulate the environment, arouse the fans’ consumption psychology, and immediately match psychological feelings and trading behaviors. Similarly, Internet celebrity live streaming e-commerce can present transaction scenarios and encourage instantaneous consumption (Si, 2021).

Influencing Factors of Internet Celebrity Marketing

Numerous researchers have investigated the effects of the Internet celebrity model on consumer behavior, which can primarily be categorized into two perspectives: the individual characteristics of Internet celebrities and the social interaction between Internet celebrities and users. From the
perspective of the individual characteristics of Internet celebrities, Djafarova and Rushworth (2017) studied the influence of Instagram profiles in Internet celebrity e-commerce on the purchase decisions of young female users and revealed that the marketing messages transmitted by Internet celebrity e-commerce are reliable and trustworthy. Moreover, the personal experience of Internet celebrity e-commerce can enhance the credibility of communication (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017). Saima and Khan (2021) investigated the effect of Internet celebrity attributes on consumers’ purchase intent and discovered that consumers’ purchase intent is directly influenced by the credibility and trustworthiness of Internet celebrities. In the context of live streaming shopping, Park and Lin (2020) discussed the impact of the match between Internet celebrities and products, as well as the match between live streaming content and products, on consumers’ purchase intentions. Peng et al. (2020) explored the role of the attractiveness of Internet celebrities on consumers’ purchase behavior and identified that attractive Internet celebrities have stronger social skills and enjoy greater credibility. Wei and Meng (2021) examined the effect of a super-influencer celebrity on people’s behavior.

Hwang and Zhang (2018) examined the influence of parasocial relationships between Internet celebrities and their followers on purchase and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) intentions from the perspective of social interaction between Internet celebrities and users. In Internet celebrity marketing, Jin et al. (2020) reviewed the moderating effects of parasocial interaction and social presence between Internet celebrities and their Instagram followers. Wang et al. (2021) examined the effect of Internet celebrities’ live features on consumers’ purchase intent and observed that Internet celebrities’ charisma, interactivity, and trustworthiness will significantly affect consumers’ psychological experiences and, consequently, their propensity to consume. Meng et al. (2021) probed the significance of Internet celebrity live streaming characteristics on consumers’ purchase intention from the perspective of emotional contagion and discovered that the performance of Internet celebrities can stimulate consumers’ emotions, thereby enhancing their purchase intention. Bu et al. (2022) researched the impact of homophily between Internet celebrities and their audiences on customer value co-creation and user purchase intent on social media.

Based on the aforementioned analyses, it is evident that the majority of existing studies on Internet celebrity marketing stand on two aspects: the individual characteristics of Internet celebrities and their social interactions with consumers. Given the paucity of research on consumer purchasing behavior from the perspective of Internet celebrity marketing, the primary objective of this paper is to discuss the characteristics of Internet celebrity information sources and the influence of consumers’ psychology on their purchase behavior. In addition, the paper commences with the entire process of Internet celebrity marketing and examines in depth the relationship between Internet celebrities, products, and users. Beginning with the attributes of Internet celebrities, the characteristics of Internet celebrity marketing, and product factors, we discuss in depth the influence of celebrity marketing on consumers’ purchase intentions.

MODEL CONSTRUCTION AND HYPOTHESES

The Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) is extensively applied in the field of Internet users’ purchase intention studies (Venkatesh et al., 2003), and its analysis framework is consistent with the hypotheses and concepts of this study. On the basis of the UTAUT model and the relationships between entities in the live streaming business (Figure 1), this study associated the characteristics of Internet celebrity e-commerce marketing with the purchase intentions of users in Internet celebrity marketing. In addition, questionnaires were employed to assess the impact of Internet celebrity marketing on users’ purchase intent.

Model Construction

Based on the UTAUT model, this paper integrates the factors of characteristics in the process of Internet celebrity e-commerce marketing and develops a model of users’ purchase intention in Internet
celebrity marketing from three perspectives: the attributes of Internet celebrities, the characteristics of Internet celebrity marketing, and product factors. Among the characteristics of Internet celebrities are their popularity, charisma, and professionalism. Internet celebrity marketing is primarily characterized by its attractiveness, interactivity, and “bandwagon effect.” Product factors primarily consist of product quality and delivery time. Nonetheless, given that this is a form of Internet-based commerce, trust plays a crucial role in Internet celebrity e-commerce. Users will purchase products recommended by Internet celebrities only if they have a certain level of confidence in Internet celebrities and the information they share. Consequently, the variable of trust is introduced in this study to evaluate how various factors indirectly influence the purchase intentions of users. Meanwhile, the moderating variable of relationship strength between the attributes of Internet celebrities and trust is introduced to examine how this moderating variable affects the attributes of Internet celebrities on trust. The model is shown in Figure 2.

**Variables Definition and Research Hypotheses**

**The Attributes of Internet Celebrities**

In this section we discuss three attributes of Internet celebrities: popularity, personal charisma, and professionalism.

- **Popularity**: Popularity refers to the fact that the Internet celebrity is liked, enjoyed, or supported by many people. The reason that mass consumers are persuaded by Internet celebrities is attributable to their reputation and extensive social influence. Numerous factors contribute to the fame of Internet celebrities, including their social status, public recognition, and influence. Higher-status individuals are more likely to achieve widespread social recognition (Ger & Belk, 1996). At the same time, because celebrities have significant social influence, the information they publish is often perceived to be a more reliable source of information (Agrawal et al., 1996).

Similarly, on social media, users believe that those with a large number of followers are more appealing and credible (Jin & Phua, 2014). Internet users are more likely to believe that Internet celebrities will not publish false information to harm their reputations, and consumers are more likely
to recognize the information they disseminate owing to their immense influence and public recognition (Djafurova & Rushworth, 2017). Because of their own celebrity “halo” and certain credibility, it is evident that as the number of Internet celebrities’ fans increases, so will their social influence. Hence, such a scenario will raise consumers’ trust to a certain extent, increasing their willingness to purchase the products they recommend. Therefore, this paper proposes the following hypothesis:

H1: The popularity of Internet celebrities has a positive influence on users’ trust in Internet celebrity marketing.

- **Personal Charisma:** Personal charisma is a constellation of complex and sophisticated social and emotional skills. The personal charisma of Internet celebrities is crucial to attracting devoted fans and mass followers. Fans’ adoration and Internet celebrities’ followers are largely based on their admiration for the Internet celebrities’ charismatic personalities (Wohfeil & Whelan, 2017). The personal charisma of Internet celebrities encompasses not only their external attributes, such as style and appearance, but also their internal qualities, such as their personality and temperament. Currently, users can connect with all types of Internet celebrities on social media, and the personal appeal of Internet celebrities, such as their physical appearance and communication style, will profoundly impress users, influencing their subsequent attention and credibility toward Internet celebrities. Chaiken (1979) discovered that attractive communicators are more likely to verbally and behaviorally reach agreement with target users, thereby making individuals more convincing. In a study of the relationship between credibility and the communicator’s physical attractiveness, Patzer (1983) realized that physically attractive communicators tend to be perceived as more credible. Peng et al. (2020) discovered that Internet users’ admiration for Internet celebrities led them to purchase products that these celebrities recommended. Concurrently, during the process of live streaming marketing, users frequently find Internet celebrities more attractive because these celebrities convey positive emotional experiences through live streaming to stimulate consumers’ purchase interest and enhance their credibility (Hou et al., 2019). Therefore, this paper proposes the following hypothesis:

H2: The charisma of Internet celebrities has a positive influence on the user’s trust in Internet celebrity marketing.
Professionalism: Professionalism is the competence or skill expected of a professional. The intensity of opinion leaders’ influence on consumers is significantly influenced by their familiarity with the product, as well as their own knowledge and experience (Chan & Misra, 1990). The greater the opinion leaders’ familiarity with the product and depth of professional knowledge, the greater their ability to inspire followers’ confidence. Consequently, they are capable of convincing a greater number of audiences to engage in the interaction and generate purchase behavior. In the context of Internet celebrity marketing, professionalism primarily refers to the extent to which Internet celebrities comprehend the products they wish to endorse and their expertise in selecting products and brands. If Internet celebrities have strict control over the selection of products and a thorough understanding of the products they recommend, consumers tend to have a higher degree of trust in them and a greater propensity to make purchases. Internet celebrities with greater professionalism provide consumers with more professional and trustworthy product information, which can effectively reduce consumers’ perceived risks associated with online shopping and increase consumer trust (Wang et al., 2021). Ma et al. (2022) also noted that professionalized Internet celebrities can provide consumers with rich and reliable information, raise consumers’ product recognition, and enhance consumer trust. Therefore, this paper proposes the following hypothesis:

H3: The professionalism of Internet celebrities has a positive influence on users’ trust in Internet celebrity marketing.

The Characteristics of Internet Celebrity Marketing

In this section we discuss three characteristics of Internet celebrities: interestingness, interactivity, and the bandwagon effect.

• Interestingness: Interestingness refers to the level of pleasure that users experience when purchasing products recommended by Internet celebrities, which is related to the service process that users enjoy during their purchase process and the level of social interaction. Interesting information helps convey positive emotions and enhances consumers’ faith in information sources (Sternthal & Craig, 1973). In the process of Internet celebrity live streaming, anchors with a sense of humor can better create a pleasant vibe, mitigate consumers’ apprehension, and encourage users to continue watching (Speilmann, 2014). Concurrently, the positive evaluation generated by active interactions with the anchor can boost consumption confidence. In the study of the user’s intention to use the portal website in the Netherlands, Van der Heijden (2003) noticed that the user’s perceived enjoyment can significantly affect the user’s trust in the website and the motivation to use the website. Therefore, this paper proposes the following hypothesis:

H4: Interestingness has a positive influence on users’ trust in Internet celebrity marketing.

• Interactivity: Interactivity is the communication process that takes place between Internet celebrities and users. Interactivity facilitates superior communication in social e-commerce (Tajvidi et al., 2021). Interactivity in Internet celebrity marketing encompasses not only the social interaction between users and Internet celebrities but also the interaction between various members of the Internet virtual community. On one hand, the enthusiastic and humorous communication and manners of Internet celebrities during the promotion process offer consumers a pleasant sentimentality. On the other hand, the positive response of consumers during the promotion of Internet celebrities also enhances the consumers’ consumption experience. Additionally, this pleasant experience enhances consumers’ intent to purchase (Meng et al., 2021). Existing studies show a correlation between interactivity and positive attitudes, such as trust and satisfaction; additionally, the more interactions between members, the greater their trust in one another (Bao et al., 2016). According to Morgan and Hunt’s (1994) Commitment Trust Theory, the communication and value sharing among organizational members are the most influential factors on trust.
Moreover, value sharing and communication typically take the form of information exchange and interpersonal interaction among organizational members, indicating that interactivity has a significant effect on trust. Therefore, this paper proposes the following hypothesis:

**H5:** Interactivity has a positive influence on users’ trust in Internet celebrity marketing.

- **The Bandwagon Effect:** The Bandwagon Effect refers to the tendency of Internet users to purchase products recommended by Internet celebrities without affording careful consideration to their purchase. The parasocial interaction between consumers and Internet celebrities will cause consumers to impulsively follow their favorite Internet celebrities and purchase products promoted on social media by those Internet celebrities (Jin & Ryu, 2020). Real-time comments and feedback between users and Internet celebrities can effectively stimulate their emotional motivation and purchase interest during the process of Internet celebrity live stream marketing. As a result, they blindly follow the herd and make impulsive purchases of products they may not need at the moment (Meng et. al., 2021). Ng (2016) leveraged the UTAUT model to study the online shopping intentions of consumers and discovered that the more people buy products recommended by Internet celebrities and continue to promote them, the more well-known they will become, thereby gradually establishing trust. Yin (2020) suggested that during the live streaming process of e-commerce, consumers may experience a herd effect that impacts their trust and purchase intent. In addition, if close friends purchase products recommended by Internet celebrities and provide positive feedback, users are more likely to trust this model and use it to purchase their favorite products. Therefore, this paper proposes the following hypothesis:

**H6:** The Bandwagon Effect has a positive influence on users’ trust in Internet celebrity marketing.

**Product Factors**

In this section we discuss two factors related to products: product quality and timeliness.

- **Product Quality:** Product quality refers to the integration of a product’s characteristics and properties to meet users’ needs, such as product quality, cost-effectiveness, and practicability. You and Robert (2018) reported that emotional attachment to brands and products enhances consumer attitudes and behavioral intentions, resulting in a greater intent to purchase. Trivedi and Sama (2020) also noted that the quality of products and brands has a significant impact on the online purchases of customers; good product quality improves consumers’ trust, which in turn influences their purchase intent. Whether they are buying products recommended by Internet celebrities or conducting their own online searches, the ultimate goal for consumers is to purchase products that satisfy them. Consumers’ level of trust and intent to purchase are directly proportional to the products’ quality. Therefore, this paper proposes the following hypothesis:

**H7:** Product quality has a positive influence on users’ trust in Internet celebrity marketing.

- **Timeliness:** Timeliness is the fashion of a product at a favorable or useful time. To ensure that they are at the forefront of current trends, Internet celebrities tend to use the most up-to-date products and services; consequently, the products they endorse are frequently highly timely. Timeliness refers to the condition of information content and dissemination being timely (Wixom & Todd, 2005), which is indicative of an Internet celebrity’s professional ability. If the Internet celebrity can keep up with current trends and recommend popular products that are of great interest to current users, then users will perceive that the Internet celebrity possesses excellent judgment and information recognition skills. In this situation, it is easier for Internet celebrities to gain the trust and support of users. The speed with which information is disseminated is another aspect of timeliness. Zhang and Watts (2008) believed that opinion leaders have some influence on consumers’ purchase intentions. The quicker opinion leaders respond to the current trend, the easier it is to understand the most recent information, and the greater the consumers’ confidence in them. Therefore, this paper proposes the following hypothesis.
**H8:** Product timeliness has a positive influence on users’ trust in Internet celebrity marketing.

**Trust**

Trust is a belief in a probability that a person will behave in certain ways. It is a precondition for consumers to engage in e-commerce, as well as a crucial aspect of enhancing consumer loyalty and establishing a connection between Internet celebrities and consumers in online commerce activities (Hsu, 2017). Perceived trust is the level of trust users have in Internet celebrities, as well as the information and products shared by Internet celebrities, during the purchasing process. Emotional trust in a brand or product improves consumers’ purchase intent for that brand or product (Habibi et al., 2014). Moreover, when an influencer has sufficient credibility, consumers are more likely to believe that the recommended products are authentic and trustworthy, thereby enhancing their purchase intent (Zafar et al., 2021). Trust not only reduces the transaction risk of consumers but also diminishes the uncertainty of interaction, thereby boosting consumers’ anticipation of a successful purchase (San-Martin & Jimenez, 20187). Therefore, this paper proposes the following hypothesis:

**H9:** Trust has a positive influence on users’ purchase intentions in Internet celebrity marketing.

**Relationship Strength**

Relationship strength refers to the intensity of relationship. The concepts of strong and weak social connections are popular, and according to the frequency of interaction, emotional depth, intimacy, and exchange of reciprocity between individuals, Granovetter (1973) believes that the stronger the relationship between the two communicating parties, the more credible the information recipients will perceive it to be. In their research on the influence of word-of-mouth communication on consumers’ purchase decisions, Bansal and Voyer (2000) discovered the following aspect: If the relationship between the sender and recipient is stronger, word-of-mouth information will significantly influence the recipient’s purchase decision, and the recipient will be more inclined to believe the information transmitted by the sender. Chong et al. (2018) noticed that the swift relationship between users and Internet celebrities created by social media interactivity increased both parties’ level of trust and consumers’ repurchase intent. This study introduces the relationship strength as a moderating variable between Internet celebrity attributes and user trust. It is believed that generally, if users are more acquainted with Internet celebrities and interact with them more frequently, their relationship will be closer, resulting in greater trust in the influencer. Therefore, this paper proposes the following hypotheses:

**H10a:** Relationship strength plays a moderating role between Internet celebrities’ popularity and users’ trust.

**H10b:** Relationship strength serves a moderating role between Internet celebrities’ personal charisma and users’ trust.

**H10c:** Relationship strength serves a moderating role between Internet celebrities’ professionalism and users’ trust.

**DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS**

**Research Design**

**Variable Measurement**

This research questionnaire is primarily categorized into two sections. The first section collects the respondents’ demographic information, including gender, age, monthly disposable income, and whether they have purchased products recommended by Internet celebrities. The second section investigates the factors influencing Internet celebrity marketing on users' purchase intent, primarily
using 11 dimensions to measure users’ purchase intent as influenced by Internet celebrity marketing. To ensure the reliability and validity of the questionnaire, domestic and international mature scales were consulted during questionnaire design, and questionnaire input items were adapted to reflect the characteristics of Internet celebrity e-commerce. After participants completed the questionnaire, a number of discussions were held between the tutor and the students regarding the pertinent measurement dimensions of the questionnaire, and the questionnaire’s measurement dimensions were modified as shown in Table 1. Simultaneously, a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1-5 points from Highly disagree to Highly agree, was adopted to collect users’ purchase intention of products recommended by Internet celebrities.

Sample Description

For this study we distributed questionnaires through online channels such as WeChat. There were 314 total responses to the questionnaire. Excluding duplicate IPs and invalid questionnaires, a total of 256 valid questionnaires with an 81.53% utilization rate was collected. In the 256 samples, 75.8% are female and 24.2% are male. The majority of users are between the ages of 19 and 29 (74.2%), and more than half (50.4%) have a monthly disposable income between 1,000 and 3,000 yuan. This is because the majority of respondents are students and their age groups are typically younger. Younger groups are more likely to embrace novelty. However, female consumers are more likely to be influenced by Internet celebrities in beauty, fashion, and other categories than male consumers. When asked if they have purchased products recommended by Internet celebrities, 74.6% of users responded affirmatively, indicating that the penetration rate of Internet celebrity e-commerce products remains relatively high in daily situations. The majority of users are already accustomed to and have engaged in online shopping. Nevertheless, there is still room for improvement.

Reliability and Validity Test

Reliability analysis, also defined as trustworthiness analysis, is used to evaluate the consistency or reliability of the collected questionnaire data. In this survey, the reliability of the questionnaire was evaluated using Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient. SPSS software was used to assess the questionnaire’s validity, and the overall consistency coefficient of the questionnaire was 0.944, indicating that the questionnaire’s overall reliability was excellent and that the data obtained from the survey was reliable. Table 1 displays the reliability of each variable, all of which are greater than 0.800, indicating that the reliability coefficient of each dimension satisfies the criterion of this study, i.e., the data reliability of each dimension is relatively good.

Analysis of validity refers to the degree of correspondence between actual measurement results and the intended content. Before factor analysis, the KMO and Bartlett’s sphericity test should be administered to determine whether the variables are appropriate for factor analysis. The KMO value of each variable in this paper is greater than 0 and has passed the significance test with a significance level of 1%; therefore, additional factor analysis can be carried out. The results of the factor analysis are displayed in Table 1, and all of the factor loading values are greater than 0.700, indicating that the scale has excellent construct validity.

Related Analysis

Before implementing regression analysis, we need to perform correlation analysis on each variable to determine if there is a relationship between them. In this paper, we used Pearson correlation analysis to examine the correlation between variables; the results of this analysis are presented in Table 2. In Table 2 note the significant correlation between variables, which provides preliminary support for the research hypotheses of this paper. Additional regression analysis can now be conducted.
Table 1. Reliability and validity analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Measurements</th>
<th>Sources</th>
<th>Factor loadings</th>
<th>Cronbach's Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Popularity (PO)</td>
<td>PO1. This Internet celebrity is well-known to everyone. I would prefer buying the products he/she recommends.</td>
<td>Jin &amp; Phua (2014)</td>
<td>0.848</td>
<td>0.875</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PO2. This Internet celebrity has a certain reputation and prestige. I would prefer buying the products he/she recommends.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>PO3. This Internet celebrity has a greater social influence, and I am more willing to buy the products he/she recommends.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Charisma (PC)</td>
<td>PC1. I am more interested by attractive Internet celebrities.</td>
<td>Patzer (1983)</td>
<td>0.748</td>
<td>0.842</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PC2. I am more interested in humorous Internet celebrities.</td>
<td>Papagiannakis &amp; Lioukas (2018)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PC3. I am more interested in Internet celebrities with unique personalities.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Professionalism (PR)</td>
<td>PR1. This Internet celebrity is highly familiar with the products he/she recommends; hence, I am more willing to buy the products he/she recommends.</td>
<td>Chan &amp; Misra (1990)</td>
<td>0.845</td>
<td>0.874</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PR2. This Internet celebrity accurately understands the selling point of the product accurately and captivates my interest. I would prefer buying.</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.837</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PR3. This Internet celebrity has a considerable measure of expertise regarding selecting brands and products. I would prefer buying.</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.775</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interestingness (IN)</td>
<td>IN1. I highly enjoy watching the Internet celebrity e-commerce live stream.</td>
<td>Van der Heijden (2003)</td>
<td>0.808</td>
<td>0.848</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IN2. I find it enjoyable to interact with Internet celebrities and other users online.</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.789</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>IN3. I find the images and videos posted by Internet celebrities to be very appealing.</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.851</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Interactivity (IA)</td>
<td>IA1. This Internet celebrity always responds to my questions. I would prefer buying the products he/she recommends.</td>
<td>Bao et al. (2016)</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>0.842</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IA2. The Internet celebrity frequently discusses product information with the public online, and I would prefer buying the products he/she recommends.</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.801</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IA3. During the live stream, I can intuitively sense the actual effect of the product, which will increase my purchase intention.</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.714</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bandwagon Effect (BE)</td>
<td>BE1. It will increase my desire to purchase if more people around me purchase products recommended by Internet celebrities.</td>
<td>Ng (2016)</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>0.833</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BE2. Seeing everyone rush to purchase products during the live stream will increase my desire to follow suit.</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.772</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BE3. During Internet celebrity live streaming, seeing that products are about to sell out will increase my desire to purchase them.</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.783</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product Quality (PQ)</td>
<td>PQ1. I prefer purchasing the products recommended by this Internet celebrity since their quality is assured.</td>
<td>You &amp; Robert (2018)</td>
<td>0.805</td>
<td>0.846</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PQ2. The products recommended by this Internet celebrity are cost-effective. I would prefer buying them.</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.804</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PQ3. The products recommended by this Internet celebrity are more practical. I would prefer buying them.</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.808</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Regression Analysis

Regression Analysis of Independent Variables on Intermediate Variables

As independent variables, the three dimensions of the Internet celebrity attributes, the three dimensions of the Internet celebrity characteristics, and the two dimensions of the product factors were employed to determine the influence of the independent variables on the intermediate variables. In addition, Table 3 displays linear regression analysis with trust as the dependent variable.

The R square of the model is 0.646, which is greater than 0.600, based on the results of the regression analysis of the respective variables affecting trust. Preliminarily, it can be determined that the model has a good fit. In addition, the variance significance level is less than 0.001, indicating that the linear regression model between the respective variables and trust has a high level of statistical significance. According to the results of the linear regression, it can be concluded that the popularity, personal appeal, professionalism, interest level, and product quality of Internet celebrities are all less than 0.05, and the corresponding coefficients are all greater than 0. These findings demonstrate a significant positive correlation between these variables and trust. The significance level of “the bandwagon effect” and product timeliness is greater than 0.05, indicating that neither factor will have a substantial impact on trust. Therefore, H1, H2, H3, H4, H5, and H7 are supported by the null hypotheses, whereas H6 and H8 are not supported.

<table>
<thead>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Timeliness (TL)</td>
<td>TL1. The products recommended by this Internet celebrity are currently trending. I would prefer buying them.</td>
<td>Zhang &amp; Watts (2008) Wendet et al. (2022)</td>
<td>0.823</td>
<td>0.844</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TL2. The products recommended by this Internet celebrity are the most up-to-date products currently available. I would prefer buying them.</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TL3. The products recommended by this Internet celebrity happen to be the ones I have been paying attention to recently. I would prefer buying them.</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust (TR)</td>
<td>TR1. I believe Internet celebrities in Internet celebrity e-commerce are trustworthy, and the purchase information they share is reliable.</td>
<td>Warkentin et al. (2018)</td>
<td>0.912</td>
<td>0.874</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TR 2. I have confidence in the quality and after-sales service of products recommended by Internet celebrities.</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.889</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TR 3. I believe that Internet celebrity e-commerce marketing is a trustworthy marketing strategy.</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.881</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship Strength (RS)</td>
<td>RS1. The longer I follow an Internet celebrity, the more inclined I am to purchase the products he or she recommends.</td>
<td>Granovetter (1973) Cheng &amp; Young (2022)</td>
<td>0.866</td>
<td>0.812</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RS 2. The more often I interact with the Internet celebrity, the more inclined I am to purchase the products he or she recommends.</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.862</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RS 3. The more similar my interests and hobbies are to those of the Internet celebrity, the more willing I am to purchase the products he/she recommends.</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.831</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase Intention (PI)</td>
<td>PI 1. I am willing to purchase products suggested by Internet celebrities.</td>
<td>Bansal &amp; Voyer (2000)</td>
<td>0.889</td>
<td>0.839</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PI 2. I am always willing to purchase products recommended by Internet celebrities.</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.874</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PI 3. I will recommend and encourage my friends to purchase products recommended by Internet celebrities.</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.845</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Regression Analysis of Intermediate Variables on Dependent Variables

To verify the influence of the intermediate variable on the dependent variable, the linear regression analysis is conducted with trust as the independent variable and purchase intention as the dependent variable. Table 4 provides the results. In this regression model, standardized coefficient is described

Table 3. Regression model of each variable on trust

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>PO</th>
<th>PC</th>
<th>PR</th>
<th>IN</th>
<th>IC</th>
<th>BE</th>
<th>PQ</th>
<th>TL</th>
<th>TR</th>
<th>RS</th>
<th>PI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>-0.412</td>
<td>0.218</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO</td>
<td>0.305</td>
<td>0.046</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PC</td>
<td>0.140</td>
<td>0.051</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PR</td>
<td>0.155</td>
<td>0.047</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IN</td>
<td>0.129</td>
<td>0.050</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IC</td>
<td>0.160</td>
<td>0.047</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BE</td>
<td>0.031</td>
<td>0.053</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PQ</td>
<td>0.141</td>
<td>0.049</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TL</td>
<td>0.057</td>
<td>0.047</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. Regression model of trust on purchase intention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Unstandardized coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized coefficient</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>1.799</td>
<td>0.180</td>
<td>10.005</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>0.540</td>
<td>0.047</td>
<td>0.589</td>
<td>11.608</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Regression Analysis of Intermediate Variables on Dependent Variables

To verify the influence of the intermediate variable on the dependent variable, the linear regression analysis is conducted with trust as the independent variable and purchase intention as the dependent variable. Table 4 provides the results. In this regression model, standardized coefficient is described
as 0.589, and the significance level is less than 0.001, indicating that trust has a significant positive effect on the purchase intention of users; therefore, hypothesis H9 is supported.

**Regulation Analysis**

To verify the moderating effect of relationship strength between the three dimensions of Internet celebrity attributes and trust, first establish the interaction term, and then employ SPSS linear regression to examine the moderating variables. The results are detailed in Table 5.

After adding the interaction term of popularity and relationship strength, we see that the R-square for Internet celebrity popularity increases by 0.024, and the standardized coefficient of the interaction term meets the significance threshold of 0.01. Assuming that H10a is supported, we can see that relationship strength moderates the relationship between Internet celebrity popularity and user trust. Similarly, after adding the interaction items of Internet celebrities’ personal charisma and relationship strength and Internet celebrities’ professionalism and relationship strength, we see that the R square expanded by 0.021 and 0.018, respectively. Assuming that H10b and H10c are supported, we note that the significance levels of the interaction terms were both less than 0.01, indicating that relationship strength moderates the relationship between Internet celebrities’ personal charisma and trust, as well as the relationship between Internet celebrities’ professionalism and trust.

**CONCLUSION**

**Research Conclusions**

Based on a review and summary of relevant literature research in the fields of Internet celebrities, Internet celebrities marketing, and users’ purchase intention, this paper identified the relevant factors that influence users’ purchase of products recommended by Internet celebrities and developed a purchase intention model of Internet celebrities marketing. The model is validated through the questionnaire survey, and the following are the key findings:

**Table 5. Moderating effect of relationship strength**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Trust</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Model 1</td>
<td>Model 2</td>
<td>Model 1</td>
<td>Model 2</td>
<td>Model 1</td>
<td>Model 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Standardized coefficient</td>
<td>Standardized coefficient</td>
<td>Standardized coefficient</td>
<td>Standardized coefficient</td>
<td>Standardized coefficient</td>
<td>Standardized coefficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO</td>
<td>0.632***</td>
<td>0.618***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PC</td>
<td>0.552***</td>
<td>0.559***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PR</td>
<td>0.529***</td>
<td>0.518***</td>
<td>0.529***</td>
<td>0.518***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RS</td>
<td>0.098*</td>
<td>0.182**</td>
<td>0.098*</td>
<td>0.182**</td>
<td>0.098*</td>
<td>0.182**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO®RS</td>
<td>0.175**</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.175**</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.175**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PC®RS</td>
<td>0.187***</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.187***</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.187***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PR®RS</td>
<td>0.222***</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.222***</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.222***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R square</td>
<td>0.167**</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.167**</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.167**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted R square</td>
<td>0.341</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.341</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.341</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted F</td>
<td>11.303**</td>
<td></td>
<td>11.303**</td>
<td></td>
<td>11.303**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R square increases by 0.024, and the standardized coefficient of the interaction term meets the significance threshold of 0.01. Assuming that H10a is supported, we can see that relationship strength moderates the relationship between Internet celebrity popularity and user trust. Similarly, after adding the interaction items of Internet celebrities’ personal charisma and relationship strength and Internet celebrities’ professionalism and relationship strength, we see that the R square expanded by 0.021 and 0.018, respectively. Assuming that H10b and H10c are supported, we note that the significance levels of the interaction terms were both less than 0.01, indicating that relationship strength moderates the relationship between Internet celebrities’ personal charisma and trust, as well as the relationship between Internet celebrities’ professionalism and trust.
1. In the process of Internet celebrity marketing, the popularity, personal appeal, and professionalism of Internet celebrities have a significant impact on users’ trust, with popularity having the greatest impact, which coincides with the previous findings (Wei et al., 2022). It can be seen that Internet celebrities, as the primary reference objects for information dissemination, have a significant impact on the purchase behavior and perceived trustworthiness of users.

2. While the bandwagon effect has no discernible effect on users’ trust, the other two aspects of the three characteristics of Internet celebrity marketing—namely, interestingness and interactivity—have a greater impact. It can be seen that in the process of Internet celebrity marketing, the interaction between users and Internet celebrities not only strengthens the user’s understanding of the product but also enhances the user’s motivation to purchase, thereby convincing consumers.

3. The bandwagon effect has not, however, been confirmed by this research. It is evident that when consumers purchase products, they are influenced by their surroundings and exhibit impulse consumption psychology (Bindra et al., 2022). However, they tend to remain rational and consider their own needs, consume only when necessary, and not blindly “follow the crowd” (Rejikumar et al., 2022).

4. There is a significant positive relationship between consumer trust and intent to purchase. The greater consumers’ confidence in Internet celebrities and the products they promote, the greater their intent to purchase is.

5. There is a moderating effect of relationship strength between Internet celebrity popularity and trust, personal appeal and trust, and professionalism and trust. The more intimate the relationship between the user and the Internet celebrity, the greater the level of trust is. This finding also coincides with the evidence that Ozdemir et al. (2020) observed.

Managerial Implications

This study explores the factors influencing consumers’ purchase intention of Internet celebrity marketing and reveals that Internet celebrity attributes, Internet celebrity marketing characteristics, and product factors all impact consumers’ purchase intention. The research findings in this paper offer the following recommendations for enhancing Internet celebrity marketing competencies and encouraging the exceptional growth of the Internet celebrity economy:

1. Internet celebrities should work on self-improvement, maintain a positive reputation, and enhance their personal charisma and marketing professionalism. Popularity is an accumulation and precipitation process that occurs over time. Only effective operation planning can yield positive results. This necessitates that Internet celebrities carefully position themselves during the marketing process, establish their target audiences rationally, and create a personality that fits them. Internet celebrities should pay more attention to their personal appearance to enhance their personal appeal. On the basis of their externally enchanting appearance, they should accumulate knowledge and improve their literacy, as well as their internal personality charisma. Finally, obtaining professional knowledge is essential, which necessitates Internet celebrities to maintain a certain knowledge accumulation and self-opinion for the products they promote, as well as to offer users professional recommendations and product presentations.

2. During the process of Internet celebrity marketing, it is necessary to focus more on the interaction with users. During live stream marketing, Internet celebrities should not solely concentrate on presenting products and expressing themselves; instead, they should devote more attention to the interaction with users during the live streaming process, reduce the gap between users and users in the marketing process, and use more relatable content to resonate with users and improve the enjoyment of their own live stream. To avoid direct conflict with users, Internet celebrities should also recognize the need for moderation in their interactions with them. Simultaneously with enhancing the interestingness of e-commerce marketing, they must also remain alert to avoiding dreariness.
3. Strengthen the cooperation between Internet celebrities and e-commerce platforms. Internet celebrities offer users more professional product presentations and recommendations, as well as exciting and engaging live streams, whereas e-commerce platforms provide users with superior products and after-sales service. Through the combined efforts of both parties, users can have an exceptional experience throughout the entire purchasing process, thereby enhancing their trust. Concomitantly, e-commerce platforms should concentrate on enhancing their own product quality, focusing on product excellence, bolstering after-sales service, and boosting user satisfaction and loyalty. Instead of focusing solely on the timeliness of products, such as pursuing the latest and most fashionable products, they should pay attention to most important aspect for a product: the quality issue. In addition, the Internet celebrity marketing process requires strict adherence to industry best practices, the formulation of reasonable industry development plans, and the endorsement of the healthy and well-organized expansion of the Internet celebrity e-commerce industry.

Future Work

Internet celebrity is going to play a more important role in the future beyond the domain of marketing. There will be many real cases that can be obtained and used to verify Internet celebrities’ roles in marketing, so using big data from social network platforms to prove a conceptual model is our next step to further the analysis. Other factors such as different platforms that focus on transactions, social interactions, or information, and different types of Internet celebrities who are welcome by entertainment, selling, culture, or sport, can be segmented for deep study.

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DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.
REFERENCES


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