

The Effects of Chinese Social Media on Consumer Decision-Making in the Pet Industry

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Abstract: The essence of social media lies in its promotion of participation, openness, communication, and community-based interactions, empowering individuals to both create and distribute content. The era when social media is pervasive in all aspects of people's lives cannot be ignored. Approximately 1.02 billion people in China were using the internet as of January 2022, compared to around 307 million users in the United States. As of January 2023, global social media usage reached 59%. This number is expected to grow as less developed digital infrastructure builds and the availability of inexpensive mobile devices increases. Pet consumer habits are no exception to the impact. Chinese social media was chosen for research due to East Asia's status as a mobile-first market. It holds the top position in global mobile social network penetration. This proposal aims to study the behavior of pet consumers in the Chinese social media environment and explore in depth how social media affects their pet consumption decisions. The study will survey Chinese people living in Australia through the questionnaire. In the questionnaire, the Chinese social media usage habits and consumption habits of pet users were quantitatively collected. By discussing the behavior habits of pet consumers on social media platforms and analyzing the consumption status and trends of the pet consumption market, this paper provides valuable data and strategic suggestions for enterprises, policy makers and academia in the pet consumption market in the context of China's social media platforms.

Keywords: Chinese social media, Communication, Consumption Status, Market Trends, Pervasiveness, Pet Consumer, Pet Consumption, Decisions, Social Media Strategic Suggestions.

1. Introduction

Today, in the digital era, social media has become the main platform for information dissemination, social interaction, and cultural expression. In this context, pet consumption behavior in the context of social media has gradually garnered attention (*Insights into the 2023 Pet Economy and Social Media Marketing Trends*, 2023). Exploring the consumption behavior of pet owners on Chinese social media is the main objective of this study. The goal is to elucidate the influence of social media on their consumption patterns and reveal the behavioral trends observed on these platforms.

1.1. Background

The pet industry, as a diversified and growing field, is rapidly emerging in China. The popularity of social media is changing the way people obtain pet-related information and product recommendations, which holds significant sway over the behavior of pet consumers. This digitized social interaction is becoming a bridge between pet owners and between pet owners and businesses (Xiao et al., 2021).

1.2. Research Questions

In this context, the research will focus on the three questions:

How does social media influence pet consumers' purchasing decisions in Chinese social media?

What is the impact of social media on the purchasing behavior and preferences of Chinese pet consumers?

What are the differences in the behavior and preferences of pet consumers on different social media platforms?

These three issues involve the role of social media in shaping the pet industry pattern, influencing the promotion of pet products and services, and constructing pet owner consumption habits. By delving deeper into these questions,

the comprehensive impact of social media on pet consumption is expected to be revealed.

1.3. Research Purpose and Scope

This study will comprehensively explore the role of social media in pet owners' shopping decisions, as well as their behavior patterns. Understand the influence mechanism of social media on Pet-related consumer habits and provide strategic guidance for related industries and enterprises. This study will also compare the differences among various social media platforms, as well as the changes in pet consumers' behavior and preferences on these platforms.

1.4. Key Terms

In the study, key terms listed in Table 2 will be defined and used to facilitate understanding and interpretation of pet consumer behavior.

Pet Consumer Behavior

Refers to the behavior and attitudes exhibited by pet owners when purchasing, using, and consuming pet products and services.

Social Media Influence

Measures the level of attention, interaction, and engagement of pet owners on social media platforms.

Purchase Decision

The process through which pet owners make decisions when buying pet products or services.

1.5. Limitations on the Scope of the Study

However, it is worth noting that the scope of this study is limited by time and resources. The study will mainly focus on the consumption habits on major social media platforms in China, while comparative analysis of the situation in other countries or regions awaits further research. This study will focus on major social media platforms such as WeChat,

Weibo, DouYin, Xiaohongshu (2022 *Trends and Insights Report on Mainstream Social Media Platforms*, 2022), while other smaller social media may not be analyzed.

This paper introduces the topic of this study, as well as the background and significance of the topic. Through the literature review, relevant research and theories are reviewed. The methods and data collection methods used in the study are outlined, and the results are displayed and explained. Through in-depth analysis and discussion of the research findings, the research results are summarized and suggestions for the future development of the pet industry are provided. This paper also integrates practical brand demands, making the research more practical and instructive.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Literature Review Process

The objective of this literature review is to enhance the understanding of the consumption habits in the social media of the pet industry. To achieve this goal, this research work involves a systematic compilation of over 20 search keywords and terms, with a particular focus on retrieving relevant literature regarding the pet economy's size, trends, consumer behaviors, preferences, and purchase decisions. The resources were accessed through the Adelaide online library and Google Scholar.

By obtaining original research reports from academic journals, the author was able to access authoritative and in-

depth research findings in the field of the pet economy. These research reports are derived from grey literature or have undergone peer review, possess high credibility and academic value, aiding in the establishment of the research's theoretical foundation and empirical data.

Furthermore, the author also gathered secondary data, which may include statistical figures cited in previous studies, market reports, and industry trend analyses. These data provide additional quantitative support and background information for the research, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of the current status and development trends in the pet economy domain.

In the process of reviewing literature, the author focuses on selecting studies that focus on the effect of social media on pet owners' consumption behavior. The author conducted selection based on the methodological quality of the research, the credibility of empirical studies, and the relevance of the studies.

2.2. Literature Research

After the collection, the author systematically sorted out the academic literature on related topics, using cluster analysis to find the hidden relationships, differences, and commonalities of consumer research on pet consumption groups.

As shown in Table 1, the findings of the literature review can lay a solid foundation for further research on potential pet consumption trends and limitations.

Table 1. Findings of Literature

Content	Source
The researchers found that the relationship between pet owners and their pets was the key factor and the most common variable influencing pet food purchase behavior. The more pet owners anthropomorphize their pets, the more health, nutrition, quality, freshness, and taste food they will serve.	Ridgway et al. (2008) , Kirk (2019), Chen, Hung & Peng (2012)
The direct and indirect experience of pet food by pet owners is positively related to the level of product information stored in their memory and their self-assessment of this knowledge, that is, the objective and subjective perception of pet food by pet owners affect their choice. Subjective and objective knowledge determines pet owners' choice of pet product convenience and natural ingredients.	Rombach & Dean (2021)
The socio-demographic background of pet owners has a positive or negative impact on the convenience, cost-effectiveness, and health claims of pet food. For example, the age of pet owners is negatively correlated with the convenience of pet products.	Hirschman (1994)
Various types of social media influencers spread pet-related content. More than 60% of pet owners post pet-related content on social media platforms at least twice a week, while 17% have registered a exclusive social media account for their pets.	(W n.d.), Petcare (2016)
Jacobson et al. pointed out that, pet influencers endorse or present even just display products and use them in their daily lives, which will spark their fans' interest to buy similar products.	Jacobson, Hodson & Mittelman (2022)
Trends in human food consumption, such as calorie intake, are also transitioning into the pet world. In 2021, there was a growth of over 110% in searches for "low-calorie pet food" on Amazon in the United States. Searches for organic pet food, a popular term across almost all consumer categories, increased by 35%. New sales opportunities can also be observed in CBD pet food.	Bedford (2023b)

The literature reviewed roughly depicts the relationship between various types of variables and pet consumption habits and consumption levels.

2.3. Identify Trends and Research Gaps

Through the review of literature, social media research on pet owners' consumption behavior presents the trends and gaps.

Trends

Literature consistently indicates that social media plays a significant role in influencing pet owners' shopping decisions, brand loyalty, and consumption behavior. An increasing number of pet owners use social media platforms to obtain product information, share their shopping experiences, and be influenced by others (Jacobson et al., 2022). According to market research, among various types of social media

influencers, pet influencers have the highest engagement rates. A survey conducted by the world's largest pet care company revealed that 65% of pet owners exhibit a frequency of posting pet-related content on social media platforms at least twice a week, and 17% of pet owners have dedicated social media accounts focused on their pets (Petcare, 2016).

2.4. Advancing Thinking

With the deepening of the research, the literature has been re-examined many times, solidifying the author's belief that there is a lack of research in subdividing the study of consumer groups in the context of social media. Different factors influencing consumer decision-making for various products have been identified (Ding, 2021). Research gaps still exist regarding pet consumption and the impact of social media platforms. This study aims to fill the research gap and

helps to understand the behavior of pet owners more comprehensively in the digital age, providing direction for brand market development.

3. Method

3.1. Experimental Framework

The quantitative research was designed to explore the pet-related consumer habits on Chinese social media. This design aims to collect large-scale data and identify the relationship between variables through statistical analysis.

Theoretical framework of social constructivism

People's behavior and opinions are the result of the construction of social and cultural environments. In the social media environment, pet consumers' behavior is shaped by the information, opinions, and social influences on social media. The framework of social constructivism gives some ideas on the process by which pet consumer behavior is shaped and influenced by the social media environment. Under the theoretical framework of social constructivism, the limitations of quantitative questionnaire surveys are also prominent. However, due to limited research time, it is not possible to adopt a mixed form. This study may not provide insight into individual experiences and opinions, but according to the purpose of this study, quantitative research is sufficient to give a general view of social media among pet consumers, which is instructive.

3.2. Relevant Conceptual Framework and Basic Theory

This study will refer to relevant conceptual frameworks and theories in the fields of consumer behavior, social media influence, consumer psychology, and digital marketing to help interpret the research results. The theoretical and conceptual models will be constructed. Research Theoretical Framework will be used to describe and explain the behavior and influencing factors of pet consumers in the social media.

Research Theoretical Framework

Philosophy: Social Constructivism

Reasoning Type: Deduction

Methodology: Quantitative Analysis

Data: Cross-sectional

3.3. Strategies for Data Collection

The process of collecting data incorporated the use of a structured questionnaire, which was distributed online to facilitate data collection.

The questionnaire was created using the Qualtrics and was distributed in two rounds in the Chinese community and pet community (involving a total of 280 people). The second round improved data quality, resulting in 115 responses, out of which 84 completed the questionnaire, 51 provided valid data, and 31 stopped halfway, for a response rate of approximately 18.21%.

3.4. Setting of Key Variables and Data Collection

In the questionnaire, all questions are set as mandatory. For each dimension, the measurement methods and tools listed in Table 2 are evaluated separately to ensure that they can effectively collect the required data, have good measurement characteristics (such as reliability and validity), and can meet the research objectives.

Research Question 1, How does social media influence pet consumers' purchasing decisions in Chinese social media?

Relevant Theories

Social Media, Consumer Decision-Making, Social Influence

Conceptual Model

Social Media Environment: Behaviors of pet consumers on social media platforms.

Social Media Influence: Influence of information, opinions, etc., on pet consumer behaviors.

Research Question 2: What is the impact of social media on the purchasing behaviour and preferences of Chinese pet consumers?

Relevant Theories

Social Media Influence, Consumer Behavior, Purchase Decision

Conceptual Model

Pet Consumer Behavior: Purchase behavior, usage attitudes.
Purchase Decision: Information search, comparison, evaluation.

Research Question 3: What are the differences in the behaviour and preferences of pet consumers on different social media platforms?

Relevant Theories

Social Media Platform, Consumer Behavior Difference

Conceptual Model

Comparison of Social Media Environments: Differences in behaviors and interactions of pet consumers on different social media platforms.

3.5. Data Analysis Methods

Before data analysis, the data is preprocessed through the procedures. These steps help ensure the accuracy and consistency of the data, laying the foundation for data analysis.

After data cleaning and preprocessing, SPSS will be used to analyze the data.

3.5.1. Descriptive Statistical Analysis

Descriptive statistical analysis of collected data, including calculation of averages, Standard Deviations, frequencies, and percentages, etc., to understand the overall picture of consumer behavior and preferences on social media platforms.

3.5.2. Correlation Analysis

By calculating correlation coefficients (such as the Pearson correlation coefficient) to study the relationship between consumer social media usage frequency (Q5) and whether they refer to social media content (Q7, Q13, Q14) when purchasing products.

Q5: Social Media Usage Frequency

The majority of respondents (92.16%) use social media every day. Respondents who use social media infrequently are nearly nonexistent.

Q7: Using Social Media for Pet Product and Service Information

Most respondents (39.22%) consider it possible. A significant number of respondents (39.22%) are definite about using social media for pet product and service information.

Q13: Referring to Other Consumers' Reviews and Ratings When Purchasing

A majority of respondents are either absolutely (39.22%) or possibly (33.33%) influenced by other consumers' reviews and ratings.

Q14: Preference for Brands Recommended by Other

Consumers During Purchases

A combined majority of respondents are either possibly (39.22%) or absolutely (35.29%) inclined to choose brands recommended by other consumers.

3.5.3. Linear Regression Analysis

Using the Linear Regression model to study pet-related consumer habits on Chinese social media. Regression analysis will help determine the relationship between these variables, including regression coefficients, significance level, and predictive power. This analysis mainly focuses on the Q17 questionnaire results shown in Figure 1 and the Q18 questionnaire results shown in Figure 2.

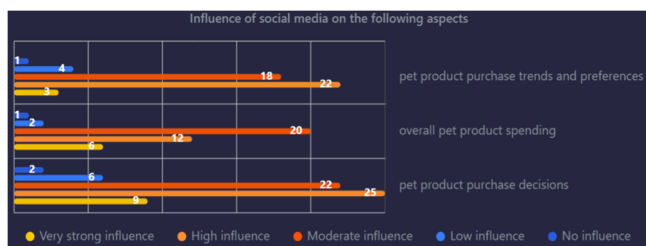


Figure 1. Survey Results for Question Q17

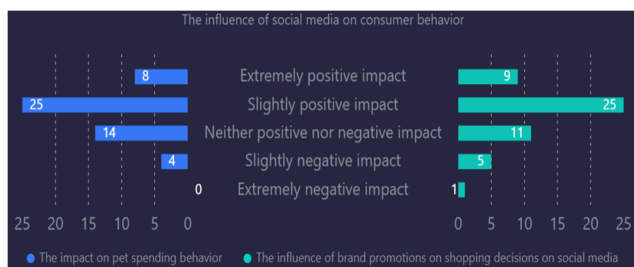


Figure 2. Survey Results for Questions Q18 and Q19

3.6. Sampling Strategy and Response Rate

Sampling strategy

Random sampling strategy is used to help reduce sample selection bias to ensure that the sample is representative, and the results are more general.

Response rate

Surveys conducted within online communities usually have a lower response rate because participants may be more likely to ignore or not respond to the survey in an online environment. About 18.21% of the respondents in this survey provided valid data for the distributed questionnaire. Although the exposure of the questionnaire cannot be confirmed, considering that the minimum requirement of 50 sets of valid data collection has been met, the results of this study questionnaire are considered valid and reliable.

4. Results

4.1. Demographic Features

In the study, collecting demographics feature data from respondents can better understand their background and characteristics.

Key demographic features and findings

Gender differences: Among the respondents, men accounted for 23.53% (12 people) and women accounted for 76.47% (39 people).

Age distribution: The age distribution within the sample is relatively even, with no significant age concentration. The median age is 35-44 years, with an average age of approximately 39.23 years, indicating that most respondents

are in their middle years. The most common age group is 25-34 years, indicating its prevalence within the sample.

Frequency of Social Media Use: Most respondents (92.16%) use social media every day. Respondents who use social media infrequently are nearly nonexistent.

Daily Time Spent on Social Media: Respondents spend approximately 3 hours on social media each day. The median is 3.5 hours, indicating that half of the respondents spend less than 3.5 hours on social media daily. The relatively low standard deviation suggests a relatively consistent distribution of usage time among most respondents.

4.2. Research Question 1

Important Findings

Data Analysis shows that there is a correlation between the frequency of social media use and consumers' decision-making behavior in purchasing pet products and services. Social media plays an important role in providing information and advice, which affects consumers' purchasing decisions. Specifically, the correlation coefficient value is negative, indicating that as the frequency of social media use increases, consumers are more likely to use social media to obtain pet product and service information ($r = -0.304$, $p = 0.05$), more likely to refer to other consumers' reviews and evaluations when purchasing ($r = -0.392$, $p = 0.01$), and more likely to choose brands recommended by other consumers ($r = -0.369$, $p = 0.01$). These results provide strong evidence for understanding how social media affects pet consumers' purchasing decisions.

Analysis Method

Correlation analysis was used to explore the correlation between social media usage frequency and purchasing decisions. Correlation analysis is an effective method for measuring the strength and direction of the relationship between variables. There is a correlation between Q5 (social media usage frequency) and Q7 (whether to use social media to obtain pet product and service information), Q13 (whether to refer to other consumers' reviews and evaluations when purchasing), and Q14 (whether to choose brands recommended by other consumers when purchasing), and these correlations are statistically significant.

Data Support

The correlation between Q5 and Q7, Q14, and Q13 was examined using correlation analysis, and the strength of the correlation was represented by the Pearson correlation coefficient, Table 2 shows the results of the correlation analysis, supporting this finding.

Table 2. Pearson correlation - standard format

Pearson correlation - standard format	
	Q5
Q7	-0.304*
Q14	-0.392**
Q13	-0.369**
* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$	

A significant negative correlation was observed between Q5 and Q7, with a correlation coefficient value of -0.304 at a significance level of 0.05.

Similarly, there was a significant negative correlation between Q5 and Q14, with a correlation coefficient value of -0.392 at a significance level of 0.01.

Furthermore, a significant negative correlation was identified between Q5 and Q13, with a correlation coefficient value of -0.369 at a significance level of 0.01.

4.3. Research Question 2

4.3.1. Analysis 1

Important Findings

The analysis results show that Q17-1 (the degree of influence of social media on pet product purchase decisions) and Q17-3 (the degree of influence of social media on pet product purchase trends and tendencies) have a significant positive impact on Q18 (positive and negative effects on pet spending behavior). Linear Regression Analysis As shown in Figure 3, the regression coefficient of Q17-1 (the degree of influence of social media on pet product purchase decisions) is 0.503 ($t = 3.374, p = 0.001 < 0.01$), and the regression coefficient of Q17-3 (the degree of influence of social media on pet product purchase trends and tendencies) is 0.379 ($t = 3.147, p = 0.003 < 0.01$). This means that pet consumers are more likely to show positive spending behavior when they believe that social media has a high influence on their pet product purchase decisions and tendencies.

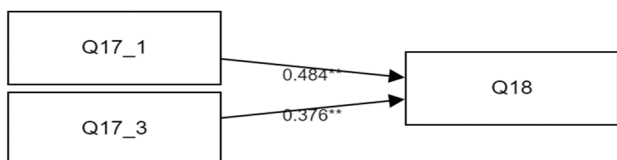


Figure 3. Model

Analysis Method

Linear Regression analysis was employed to investigate the impact of social media on consumer patterns within the pet industry. This method, well-suited for examining the relationship between independent and dependent variables, yielded the following model formula: $Q18 = 0.689 + 503Q17_1 + 379Q17_3$. The model's R-square value of 0.595 suggests that independent variables Q17_1 and Q17_3 can account for 59.5% of the variation in the dependent variable Q18.

The F-test results indicate that the model successfully passed the F-test ($F = 22.975, p = 0.000 < 0.05$), signifying that at least one independent variable significantly influences the dependent variable Q18. Furthermore, the multicollinearity test results reveal that all Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values in the model are below 5, indicating an absence of collinearity issues. The Durbin-Watson (D-W) value, close to 2, suggests no autocorrelation and no correlation between sample data in the model.

Data Support

Table 3 shows the results of the Linear Regression analysis, supporting this finding.

Table 3. Linear Regression Analysis Results

Linear Regression Analysis Results (n=51)							
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	p	Collinearity Diagnostics	
	B	Standard Error	Beta			VIF	Tolerance
Intercept	0.686	0.371	-	1.849	0.071	-	-
Q17_1	0.484	0.122	0.474	3.982	0.000**	1.675	0.597
Q17_3	0.376	0.119	0.377	3.171	0.003**	1.675	0.597
R-Square				0.594			
Adjusted R-Square				0.577			
F				F (2,48)=35.135,p=0.000			
Durbin-Watson Statistic				1.975			
Dependent Variable: Q18							
* p<0.05 ** p<0.01							

4.3.2. Analysis 2

Important Findings

The analysis results show that Q17-1 (the degree of influence of social media pet product purchase decisions) and Q19 (the influence of brand promotion activities on social media on purchase decisions) have significant positive effects. Linear Regression Analysis As shown in Figure 4, Q17_1 has a significant impact on Q19. Further analysis shows that Q17_1 regression coefficient is 0.927 ($t = 9.154, p = 0.000 < 0.01$), which means that Q17_1 has a significant positive impact on Q19. This means that social media has a significant positive impact on pet product purchase decisions, especially in terms of purchase decisions.

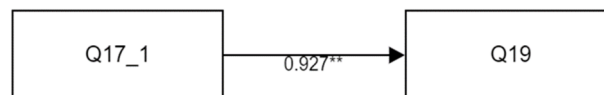


Figure 4. Model

Analysis Method

Linear Regression analysis used to explore the influence of social media on consumer patterns in the pet industry.

The formula of the model is as follows: $Q19 = 0.471 + 0.927 * Q17_1$, and the R-square value of the model is 0.631, indicating that the independent variable Q17_1 can explain 63.1% of the variation in the dependent variable Q19. This high R-square value implies that social media has significant explanatory power for pet product purchase decisions.

At F-test, the model passed the test ($F = 83.794, p = 0.000 < 0.05$), which means that Q17_1 had a significant impact on Q19. Further analysis showed a regression coefficient of 0.927 for Q17_1 ($t = 9.154, p = 0.000 < 0.01$), which means that Q17_1 had a significant positive impact on Q19.

Data Support

Table 4 shows the results of the Linear Regression analysis, supporting this finding.

Table 4. Linear Regression Analysis Results

Linear Regression Analysis Results (n=51)							
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	p	Collinearity Diagnostics	
	B	Standard Error	Beta			VIF	Tolerance
Intercept	0.471	0.363	-	1.298	0.2	-	-
Q17_1	0.927	0.101	0.794	9.154	0.000**	1	1
R-Square				0.631			
Adjusted R-Square				0.623			
F				F (1,49)=83.794,p=0.000			
Durbin-Watson Statistic				1.705			
Dependent Variable: Q19							
* p<0.05 ** p<0.01							

4.4. Research Question 3

Important Findings

As shown in Table 16, there are significant differences in the behavior and interaction of pet consumers on different social media platforms. Pet consumers have different usage preferences and interaction methods on different platforms, reflecting the diversity of social media platforms.

Analysis Method & Data Support

Descriptive statistics, comparative analysis, and cross-analysis were used to compare the behavior and interaction of pet consumers on different social media platforms. This includes statistical indicators such as frequency distribution, mean, and Standard Deviation.

Through cross-analysis, there are differences in preferences on some platforms. This can be used to verify or deepen the research findings of pet consumption groups on different social media platforms and helps to understand the correlation between different behaviors.

4.5. Consumer Trends

These Statistical Data indicate that most respondents tend to choose higher options involving online pet spending amount, influencer accounts, and online purchase frequency. The mean is slightly higher than the median, which may be because some respondents chose higher options. Standard Deviation indicates that there is relatively little change among respondents in these areas, indicating a relatively consistent consensus.

5. Discussion

In this section, the research results will be explained and summarized. The limitations of the research design and data will be considered.

5.1. Explanation of Research Findings

This study aims to investigate the influence of social media on consumer patterns in the pet industry. The explanations provide a deep understanding of the mechanisms behind the research findings and provide important leads for further exploring the role of social media in Chinese pet consumer behavior.

-There is a significant correlation between social media usage frequency and consumer decision-making behavior when purchasing pet products and services.

This indicates that social media plays a crucial role in providing information and recommendations, influencing consumer purchasing decisions. Specifically, as social media usage frequency increases, consumers are more likely to use social media to gather information about pet products and services, refer to other consumers' comments and evaluations, and prefer brands recommended by other consumers. These results provide compelling evidence of how social media influences pet consumers' purchasing decisions.

-The influence of social media on pet product purchase decisions and trends is positively correlated with consumer positive spending behavior.

When consumers perceive a significant impact of social media on their pet product purchase decisions and trends, they tend to exhibit more positive spending behavior.

-The impact of social media on pet product purchase decisions is positively correlated with the influence of brand promotional activities on social media.

This implies that social media has a significant positive impact on purchase decisions, especially in terms of purchasing behavior.

-Analysis of different social media platforms reveals significant differences in the behaviors and interaction patterns of pet consumers.

Pet consumers exhibit varying preferences and behaviors on different platforms, reflecting the diversity of social media platforms.

-Many respondents expect their online pet-related expenditures and engagement with online content to either remain stable or increase in the near future.

This reflects a positive outlook towards online activities related to pets.

5.2. Study Design and Outcome Evaluation

This study was designed using a structured online questionnaire distributed through the Qualtrics platform, targeting Chinese and pet online communities living in Australia. Although the response rate was about 18.21%, the

collected data provided valuable insights into Chinese pet consumer behavior on social media platforms. Data Analysis used appropriate statistical methods such as correlation analysis and Linear Regression to analyze the data and draw meaningful conclusions.

However, it needs to be acknowledged that there are still potential biases and limitations in the interpretation and understanding dimensions of research results upon re-examining the literature. The specific limitations are as Table 5 shows.

Table 5. The limitations in interpreting the research results.

Limitations	The limitations in interpreting the research results
Effects of Pet-Owner Relationships	Pet consumer behavior and habits may be influenced by the relationship between pets and pet owners. Factors such as different types of pets, pets' age and gender, and pet owners' emotional connections may affect consumers' behavior on social media. This study did not delve into these factors, so it was not possible to provide a complete analysis of the impact of the following pairs of survey results between pets and pet owners.
Complexity of Consumer Habits Analysis	Consumer habits are complex and influenced by multiple factors. This study only focuses on some factors related to social media and pet consumption, but does not consider other factors that may affect consumer habits, such as economic factors, cultural background, pet types, etc. Therefore, the research results can only provide insights into specific factors but cannot comprehensively explain all aspects of consumer habits.
Extensiveness of Pet Consumer Analysis	This study may not represent the habits and behaviors of all pet consumers. The group of pet consumers is broad, including people of different ages, cultures, and social backgrounds, so the research results may vary among different subgroups.

Considering these limitations, future research directions should consider addressing the limitations in current research and further exploring the influence of social media on consumer patterns in the pet industry.

6. Conclusion

This study delves into the effect of social media on pet-related consumer habits, with a particular focus on consumer purchasing decisions and differences across social media platforms.

6.1. Research Results

The research results reveal the important influencing factors of social media on the behavior of individuals in the pet ownership market. The significant negative correlation indicates a close connection between the frequency of social media use and pet product purchasing decisions, emphasizing the key role of social media in providing information and advice. In addition, the positive correlation between the degree of social media impact on purchasing decisions and active spending behavior highlights the far-reaching impact of this platform. At the same time, the positive correlation between the degree of social media impact on purchasing decisions and the impact of brand promotions on purchasing decisions highlights the strategic importance of promotions in shaping consumer preferences. The differences in behavior on different social media platforms reflect the diversity of these platforms, forming diverse consumer preferences. Looking to the future, pet owners have a positive outlook on increasing online participation and pet-related spending, indicating a promising trend.

These research results provide valuable insights for businesses and marketers to make strategic decisions in China's pet consumption sector, achieve effective market penetration and consumer engagement.

6.2. Limitations

The limitations of the research methods and results in the actual process of the study are also worth highlighting to help better evaluate the reliability of the results of this study.

Table 6 shows the limitations of the research methods and

results in the actual process of the study are also worth highlighting to help better evaluate the reliability of the results of this study.

Table 6. The overall limitations of the study.

Limitations	The overall limitations of the study.
Sample Size	The sample size in the study is relatively small, with 51 respondents, which may limit the representativeness and generality of the data in quantitative research. A larger sample size may provide more convincing results and reduce the impact of sampling errors. Due to the limited sample size, the extrapolation ability of the research results may be limited.
Geographic Limitations of Pet Consumers	The sample of this study only includes Chinese pet owners living in Australia and does not consider pet consumers living in China. This sample limits the external validity of the study, as the Chinese social media context and consumption habits may vary among pet owners living in different geographic locations. Future research may consider expanding the sample range to include pet owners in Chinese mainland to compare the behavior and habits of pet owners in different geographic locations on social media to gain more comprehensive insights.
Limitations of Quantitative Analysis	The study used quantitative analysis methods. Although these methods provide useful information about consumer behavior and habits, they also have some limitations. For example, they cannot provide a deep understanding or explanation of why consumers make certain choices, or when social media has the greatest impact on them. Qualitative methods, such as in-depth interviews, can help fill in the gaps in this information and provide a more comprehensive understanding.
Qualtrics Questionnaire Tool	The Qualtrics questionnaire tool was used during the Data Acquisition process, which is an online survey platform. Although it provides a convenient way to collect data, there may be some potential limitations. For example, respondents may answer incompletely or provide inaccurate information due to unfamiliarity with the online questionnaire. In addition, the design and question setting of the Qualtrics tool may have an impact on respondents' responses. Researchers strive to reduce the impact of these potential biases when designing the questionnaire, but still need to interpret the results with caution.

Overall, these findings emphasize the important impact of social media on Chinese pet consumer behavior. However, the study also has some limitations, including limited sample size, limited study of the interrelation between pets and pet owners, and limited to Chinese pet owners in Australia. In addition, the study mainly used quantitative methods, and the use of Qualtrics questionnaire tools may introduce potential biases. Future research should consider expanding the sample size and combining qualitative and quantitative methods to consider more variables to provide a more comprehensive understanding of consumer behavior on social media. Cross-cultural comparative research can also reveal differences and commonalities in social media behavior in different cultural backgrounds.

7. Recommendations

Based on the research results, Table 7 provides the following recommendations to facilitate relevant businesses and brands in better meeting the needs of Chinese pet consumers in the social media environment.

Table 7. Recommendations

Recommendations	Suggestions	Explanation
By increasing brand visibility and providing valuable information, guide consumers to make positive purchasing decisions.	Utilize Celebrity Pets	Brands can actively seek collaborations with well-known pets on Chinese social media, such as internet-famous pets, to enhance online visibility.
	Create Educational Content	Pet product and service providers can regularly publish educational content on pet care, health, and training to assist consumers in making informed purchasing decisions.
By actively engaging in social media topics and employing data-driven strategies, gain in-depth insights into consumer needs and enhance brand influence.	Engage in Trending Topics	Brands can regularly participate in popular pet topics and challenges to establish a closer connection with Chinese pet consumers.
	Collaborate with Social Media Platforms	Pet brands and service providers can actively seek collaboration with Chinese social media platforms to jointly conduct promotional activities or offer special features.
	Data-Driven Strategy	Brands can utilize data analysis tools to gather information about Chinese social media user behavior, guiding content and advertising strategies.
Implement cross-platform comparisons and customized content strategies to flexibly adapt to the characteristics of audiences on different platforms.	Adapt Content Types and Styles	Tailor content types and styles according to the characteristics of each social media platform. For instance, visual appeal may be more crucial for a photo-sharing platform, while text-driven content might be more suitable for Weibo.
	Optimize Timing and Frequency	Consider the times when users are most active on different platforms and their usage frequencies to determine when to publish content for maximum attention and engagement.

By implementing these recommendations, brands and pet product providers can better meet the needs of Chinese pet consumers in the social media environment, enhancing their brand visibility and market share. Additionally, future research can continue to explore this field to gain a deeper understanding of the impact of Chinese social media on pet consumer behavior, promoting the sustainable development of the pet industry in China. These recommendations

contribute to meeting the needs of Chinese pet consumers and the pet industry, thereby improving their market competitiveness.

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