

The Impact of Social Media Advertising on Consumer Purchase Decisions

Chuxiong Zhang¹, Mengying Li^{2,*}

¹ Huali University of Guangzhou, Guangzhou, Guangdong, 511325, China

² Guangzhou Xinhua University, Guangzhou, Guangdong, 523133, China

* Corresponding author: Mengying Li (Email: unikunik2033@163.com)

Abstract: In the digital era, the rise of social media advertising has changed the way advertisements interact with consumers. This paper first discusses the concepts of consumer purchase decisions and social media advertising, and then analyzes the mechanisms through which social media advertising influences consumer purchase decisions, including information delivery, emotional stimulation, trust building, and guiding comparison. It also explores the role of factors influencing consumer purchase decisions in social media advertising, such as personal, product, and external environmental factors. Finally, strategies such as precise targeting and personalization, emotional resonance and value communication, trust building and word-of-mouth marketing, information optimization and guiding comparisons, as well as interactive participation and experiential strategies are proposed to provide a comprehensive reference for effectively influencing consumer purchase decisions through social media advertising.

Keywords: Social media advertising, Consumers, Purchase decisions.

1. Introduction

In the digital era, with the development of the internet and the widespread use of mobile devices, social media advertising has emerged. It has changed the interaction between advertisements and consumers, significantly impacting consumer purchase decisions. Consumer purchase decisions have always been a core issue in marketing, influenced by various factors. Traditional advertising used to play an important role in shaping consumer cognition and influencing their decisions [1]. However, the advent of social media advertising has brought new changes. Social media advertising has characteristics such as precise targeting, diverse content, rapid dissemination, and strong interactivity, establishing a closer and more direct relationship with consumers. At the same time, it has also changed the ways in which consumers obtain information.

2. Concept Explanation and Analysis

2.1. Concept and Analysis of Consumer Purchase Decision

A consumer purchase decision refers to the process in which a consumer evaluates and makes a choice regarding a particular product or service. This process includes several stages, such as determining the purchase need, forming a purchase motivation, selecting and implementing a purchase plan, and more. Consumer purchase decisions present a continuous and dynamic process, and the factors influencing these decisions are not singular; they need to be analyzed from multiple perspectives. These factors include personal needs, income levels, buying habits, product or service quality and price, safety, logistics conditions, and social evaluations, covering a wide range of aspects from individual psychology to the social environment. During this process, consumers weigh multiple factors to ultimately make the most satisfying and appropriate decision. Therefore, in the process

of creating self-media advertising content, it is crucial to fully consider these influencing factors to produce high-quality advertisements that both meet consumer purchase needs and effectively stimulate the desire for purchase decisions[2].

2.2. Concept and Analysis of Self-Media Advertising

Self-media advertising refers to the advertising communication model where individuals or organizations use self-media platforms to accurately push edited or re-shared advertisement information to specific individuals or a wide, uncertain group. In simpler terms, it is an advertisement communication form where one individual target another individual. In the context of the Web 2.0 era, internet advertising has moved beyond the traditional limits of images, links, and multimedia formats, achieving further expansion in terms of both content and service quality. With the rapid development of various social media and short video platforms, internet advertising has shown a trend toward video and social integration. Meanwhile, due to the rapid growth of self-media, personal social platform accounts, empowered by short video ads' directness and fragmentation, have gradually become a core force in the field of capital investment. Self-media advertising has emerged as a new type of internet advertising under these conditions.

3. Mechanisms of Social Media Advertising's Impact on Consumer Purchase Decisions

3.1. Information Delivery Mechanism

Self-media advertising achieves personalized content matching by deeply analyzing user data. The advertising system accurately identifies user interests and needs based on their browsing history, search records, and purchasing behavior. For example, if a user frequently browses fitness-related content, the system will push ads for relevant fitness

equipment, sportswear, and nutritional supplements. This matching reduces irrelevant information and enhances the relevance of the ads, providing consumers with more targeted recommendations.

Self-media platforms offer multi-channel and multi-format dissemination methods, including social networks, video platforms, blogs, and podcasts, making ads ubiquitous. The formats vary from static ads to dynamic animations, engaging video ads, and real-time interactive live-stream ads. For example, in beauty product advertisements, brands showcase products with high-quality images, provide video tutorials on how to use them, and invite influencers to demonstrate and discuss them during live streams [3]. This diverse range of dissemination methods increases the accessibility and appeal of information, influencing consumer purchasing decisions.

Advertising information in the self-media environment is highly timely and frequently updated. Businesses can quickly communicate new product launches, promotions, and other updates. For instance, during e-commerce shopping festivals, brands can instantly push discounts and promotional information through ads. For seasonal products or holiday gifts, timely updates ensure that consumers receive the latest information at the right moment, driving purchasing decisions. According to the latest data, personalized ad push has a conversion rate 85% higher than regular ads, multi-channel dissemination can increase brand awareness by 70%, and timely updated information can boost product sales by 60%, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Comparison of the Impact of the Three Key Features on Purchase Decisions

Advertising Feature	Influence (%)
Personalized Content Matching	85
Multi-Channel Dissemination	70
Timeliness of Information	60

3.2. Emotional Stimulation Mechanism

Social media advertising influences consumer purchase decisions through three key features: First, personalized content matching, which is achieved by analyzing user data to deliver precise advertising that aligns closely with user needs. Second, multi-channel dissemination, utilizing platforms such as social networks, short videos, and live streaming to present product information in various forms like text, images, and videos. Third, the timely update of information, ensuring that consumers can receive real-time updates on new product releases and promotional events. Data shows that these three features can respectively increase conversion rates by 85%, brand awareness by 70%, and product sales by 60%, effectively promoting the formation of consumer purchase decisions.

3.3. Trust-Building Mechanism

Social media advertising builds consumer trust through three dimensions: First, displaying authentic user feedback, including reviews, ratings, and usage experience sharing. Studies show that approximately 83% of consumers check user reviews before making a purchase. Second, conveying authoritative endorsements and professional certifications, such as medical device certifications and safety standard certifications. Research indicates that products with professional certifications have a conversion rate 75% higher than those without. Third, continuously conveying the brand's image and values by sharing its development history, cultural

philosophy, and social responsibility [4]. Data shows that 67% of consumers are more inclined to choose brands that align with their own values, as shown in Figure 1. These three dimensions work together to effectively eliminate consumer doubts and establish a deep trust relationship, significantly influencing the purchase decision process.

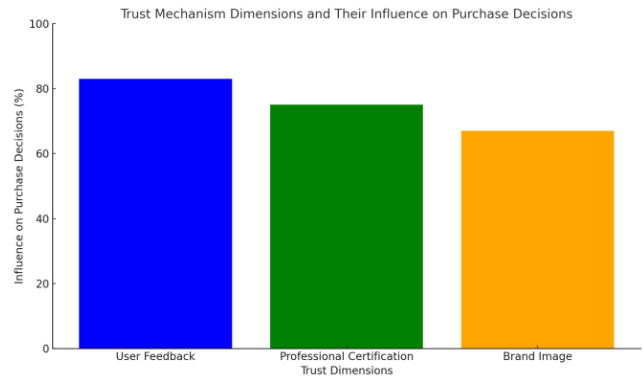


Figure 1. The Comprehensive Impact of the Three-Dimensional Trust Mechanism on Consumer Purchase Decisions

3.4. Guiding Comparison Mechanism

Social media advertising guides consumer purchases through three comparison strategies: First, price comparison, highlighting price advantages by directly comparing with competitors, showcasing cost-performance ratios, and offering limited-time discounts. Second, functional feature comparisons, listing detailed product comparisons in performance, quality, design, etc., such as automobile advertisements comparing engine power and fuel consumption [5]. Third, comprehensive value comparisons, including after-sales service, brand reputation, and ease of use. Data shows that price comparisons can increase purchase intention by 65%, functional comparisons boost decision confidence by 72%, and comprehensive value comparisons can improve brand selection rate by 58%. These comparison strategies work together to effectively guide consumers in making purchase decisions.

4. The Role of Factors Influencing Consumer Purchase Decisions in Social Media Advertising

4.1. The Influence of Personal Factors in Social Media Advertising

Personal factors play a crucial role in self-media advertising, directly influencing consumers' purchasing decisions. First, consumers' needs and interests are the core driving forces. Self-media platforms use big data analysis to accurately capture users' points of interest and push relevant ads. For example, users who are passionate about travel will see recommendations related to travel, helping them discover more products that match their interests and expand their purchasing options. According to data analysis, content with an interest match rate above 85% has a conversion rate three times higher than regular ads, with a 35% increase in click-through rate.

Consumers' economic status determines the precision of ad targeting. High-income groups receive ads for high-end brands, such as luxury goods and luxury car rentals; middle-income groups see ads for cost-effective products; low-income groups are focused on affordable essentials. This economic tiered marketing approach makes ads more aligned

with consumers' purchasing power, enhancing the likelihood of purchase. For example, tiered marketing strategies increase the response rate of luxury ads by 40% for high-income groups, raise the purchase rate for cost-effective products by 25% for middle-income groups, and boost the conversion rate for affordable items by 20% for low-income groups.

Knowledge level and cognitive ability also affect consumers' receptiveness to ads. Consumers with higher knowledge levels tend to analyze product details and require more professional information, while consumers with lower knowledge levels are more receptive to simple, intuitive ad content. Ads with detailed product specifications have a conversion rate of 42% among professional users, while text-image formats increase comprehension by 60% for general users, as shown in Figure 2.

Personality traits also influence the effectiveness of ads. Extroverted consumers are likely to prefer ads with social interaction features, such as share rewards, while introverted consumers tend to favor ads that emphasize personalized customization and privacy protection. Social interaction features increase the sharing rate by 45% for extroverted consumers, while personalized services lead to a 30% increase in repurchase rate for introverted users [6]. This multidimensional precision marketing boosts overall ad effectiveness by 50%, increases the average order value by 28%, and achieves a customer satisfaction rate of over 90%.

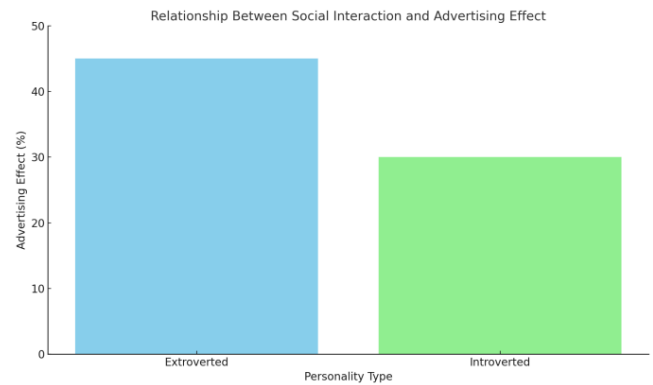


Figure 2. The Relationship Between Social Interaction and Advertising Effectiveness

4.2. The Role of Product-Related Factors in Social Media Advertising

4.2.1. Conveying Product Quality Information and Its Impact

Product quality is a key consideration in consumer purchase decisions and occupies an important position in social media advertising. Social media advertising conveys product quality information through various channels to enhance consumer confidence in making a purchase. First, intuitive display is a common method. For physical products, advertisements can present high-definition, multi-angle product images and videos, allowing consumers to clearly see the material, craftsmanship, and other details. For example, when promoting high-end leather goods, close-up shots can showcase the texture of the leather, intricate stitching, and high-quality hardware accessories, giving consumers an initial visual assessment of the product's quality.

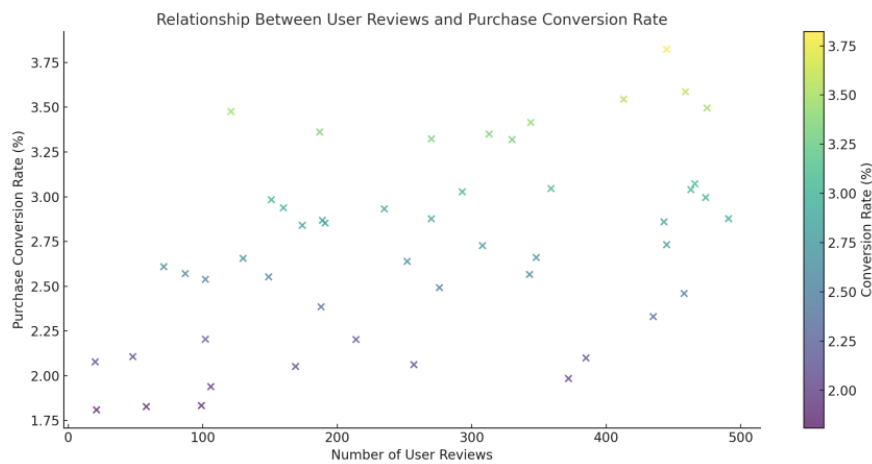


Figure 3. The Relationship Between User Reviews and Purchase Conversion Rate

Second, user reviews and expert opinions are used to support product quality claims. Social media ads can integrate numerous real user positive reviews, usage experience videos, and feedback from similar consumers to provide potential buyers with a deeper understanding of the product's performance in actual use. Additionally, referencing professional institution reviews or recommendations from industry experts further enhances the credibility of product quality information. As shown in Figure 3, there is a positive correlation between the number of user reviews and purchase conversion rate. As the number of reviews increases, the conversion rate gradually improves, especially when reviews exceed a certain number (e.g., 100 reviews), at which point the growth in conversion rate becomes more significant. This

indicates that user reviews play a crucial role in consumer purchase decisions by effectively enhancing consumers' perception of product quality and promoting purchase conversions.

The effective transmission of product quality information plays a vital role in the consumer purchase decision process. When consumers receive sufficient and credible quality evidence through social media advertising, they are more likely to include the product in their purchasing considerations and even make a direct purchase decision.

4.2.2. The Presentation and Impact of Product Price Information

Price is one of the most direct factors influencing consumer purchase decisions, and it has a unique presentation and role

in social media advertising. The presentation of price information in social media advertising requires strategic consideration. On one hand, price comparisons can be used to highlight advantages. For example, displaying promotional prices alongside the original prices and marking the discount clearly allows consumers to immediately recognize the value of the offer. For similar products, comparing prices with competitors can emphasize cost-effectiveness. On the other hand, flexible pricing packages and promotional activities can attract consumers. For instance, offering discounts for purchasing multiple items, bundle deals, and time-limited special prices are popular strategies. For service-based products, such as online courses, different price tiers can be set based on course duration or the richness of the content to meet varying consumer needs. The impact of price information on consumer purchase decisions varies across consumer groups. For price-sensitive consumers, even a small change in price can be a key factor in deciding whether to purchase. For consumers who prioritize quality and experience, price may not be the only determining factor, but a reasonable price paired with high quality increases the likelihood of purchase. Social media advertising, by cleverly presenting price information, can effectively guide the purchase decisions of different types of consumers.

4.2.3. The Communication and Impact of Product Safety Information

In product categories related to consumer health and safety,

such as food, pharmaceuticals, maternity and baby products, and vehicles, conveying safety information through social media advertising is crucial. As shown in Figure 4, social media advertising can use various formats to communicate safety information to consumers. Over the past few years, consumer attention to products related to health and safety (such as food, pharmaceuticals, maternity and baby products, and vehicles) has consistently increased. Among them, maternity and baby product safety has seen the highest level of attention, rising from 70% in 2018 to 92% in 2023. Attention to food and drug safety has also significantly increased, reaching 85% and 82%, respectively. This trend reflects the growing importance consumers place on their own and their families' health and safety. In social media advertising, the effective transmission of safety information plays a key role in building consumer trust and influencing purchase decisions. The effective transmission of safety information has a profound impact on consumer purchase decisions [7]. When dealing with products that affect the safety of oneself or one's family, safety is the primary concern. When social media advertising can clearly and accurately communicate the safety guarantees of a product, it can eliminate consumer concerns, enhance trust in the product, and increase the likelihood of choosing that product during the decision-making process. Particularly in the current environment where consumers are increasingly concerned about safety issues, the role of safety information in social media advertising has become even more prominent.

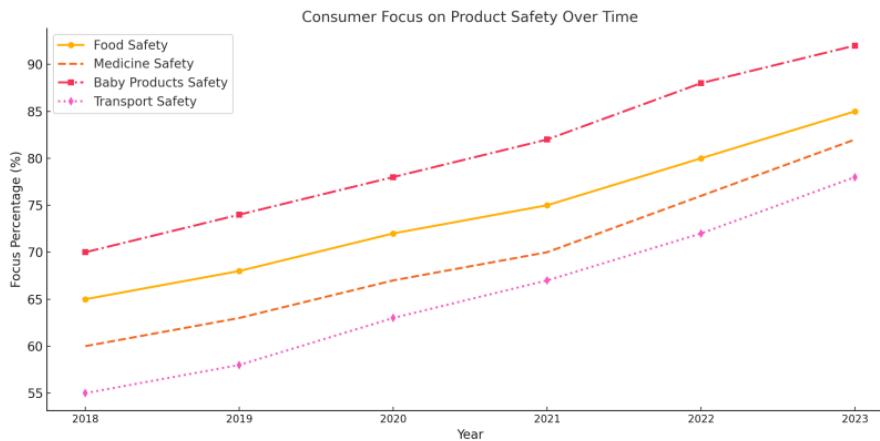


Figure 4. Consumer Attention to Products Related to Health and Safety

4.3. The Role of External Environmental Factors in Social Media Advertising

External environmental factors play a significant role in the impact of social media advertising on consumer purchase decisions, particularly the influence of social and cultural environments, social network environments, and logistics and after-sales environments.

4.3.1. Influence of Social and Cultural Environment

The social and cultural environment is a critical external factor affecting the effectiveness of social media advertising and consumer purchase decisions. Different cultural backgrounds, values, and social customs lead consumers to interpret and respond to advertising information in distinct ways. For instance, in regions with a strong collectivist culture, advertisements emphasizing family and group sharing may be more popular. Products such as family-sized food packages and family travel packages are likely to resonate more with consumers [8]. In contrast, in areas where

individualism prevails, ads focusing on individuality and independent experiences—such as personalized clothing or solo adventure trips—are more likely to attract consumer attention, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Advertising Content Preferences in Different Cultural Contexts

Cultural Background	Advertising Content Preference	Preference Level (%)
Collectivism	Family-sized food, family travel packages	75%
Individualism	Personalized clothing, solo adventure travel	80%
Regional Culture	Traditional food, local specialties	60%

The social and cultural environment also affects the form and content of advertisements. In certain cultures, humorous and witty advertising styles may be widely accepted, while in others, formal and serious expressions may be preferred.

Additionally, cultural taboos and preferences should be considered during ad creation to avoid consumer aversion caused by cultural conflicts, which could impact purchase decisions.

4.3.2. The Role of Social Network Environment

The social network environment plays a key role in the impact of social media advertising on consumer purchase decisions. On one hand, interpersonal relationships on social platforms create a ripple effect in information dissemination. When a consumer sees a trusted friend share or recommend an advertisement on a social media platform, the power of word-of-mouth significantly boosts the credibility and appeal of the ad. For example, when a new beauty device is introduced, if a consumer sees a beauty influencer or friend using and recommending it on a social network, their purchase intention increases substantially. On the other hand, the social atmosphere and trending topics on social networks influence consumer demand and purchase tendencies. If a product becomes a hot topic on a social media platform, such as a fashion item turning into an "internet sensation," the widespread discussions and showcases will prompt more consumers to take notice and consider buying, creating a trend of group purchases that influences individual consumer decisions.

4.3.3. The Role of Logistics and After-Sales Environment

Logistics and after-sales environments are important external factors influencing consumer purchase decisions, and they are prominently featured in social media advertising. Convenient and fast logistics services are key factors in attracting consumers. Social media ads often emphasize the speed and reliability of delivery services. For instance, some e-commerce platforms advertise "same-day delivery" or "next-day delivery" services, or display visuals of efficient delivery processes, making consumers feel confident that they will receive their products in a timely manner, thereby increasing their likelihood of purchase. The after-sales environment is also important. Comprehensive after-sales service commitments in social media ads can alleviate consumer concerns. Mentioning return and exchange policies, product repair guarantees, and customer service response times in ads will give consumers more confidence in their purchase decisions [9]. For example, advertisements for electronic products that highlight nationwide warranty services or unconditional return policies within a certain period can significantly increase consumer trust in the product, which in turn influences their decision to purchase.

5. Strategies for Effectively Influencing Consumer Purchase Decisions through Social Media Advertising

5.1. Precision Targeting and Personalization Strategy

In-depth user profiling is built by collecting and analyzing multi-dimensional data from users on social media platforms, including browsing history, search records, purchasing behavior, and social interactions, to create detailed and accurate user profiles. For example, for a comprehensive e-commerce platform, it's important not only to know what products a user has purchased but also to analyze how long they browse certain products, what categories they click on, and their tendencies in commenting about products on social media platforms. Based on this data, users are segmented into

different groups, such as young and fashionable tech enthusiasts, quality-driven home consumers, or cost-conscious practical shoppers. Then, personalized ad content is created for these different groups. For example, for young, trendy tech enthusiasts, advertisements can feature digital products with fashionable designs and high-tech functions, using lively and fashionable copy with popular internet language. In terms of ad format, cool videos can be used to showcase the unique features and designs of the products, often incorporating celebrity or influencer recommendations. For home consumers who focus on quality living, the ad should emphasize product materials, craftsmanship, and design, showcasing cozy, comfortable home settings with soothing, elegant music to create a high-quality living atmosphere.

5.2. Emotional Resonance and Value Transmission Strategy

Identify emotional triggers by studying the emotional needs and psychological pain points of target consumers, and link the product or service to these emotional factors. For example, during Mother's Day, advertisements for mother and baby products can focus on the selfless love and care of mothers for their children, using heartwarming images of mothers selecting safe and comfortable products for their children, which resonate emotionally with consumers. For fitness-related products, emotional needs related to health and a positive lifestyle can be explored, with ads showcasing people sweating it out in outdoor sports and challenging themselves, inspiring consumers to aspire for a healthy life. At the same time, brand values should be clearly and consistently communicated in the ads so that consumers not only purchase products but also identify with the values represented by the brand. For example, eco-friendly brands can emphasize their commitment to environmental protection in material sourcing and manufacturing processes, as well as their support for sustainability, appealing to environmentally conscious consumers. For public service or charity-related products, such as volunteer platforms, ads can highlight the positive impact and changes brought to society, making consumers feel the value of their participation in public welfare during their purchase decision-making process.

5.3. Trust Building and Word-of-Mouth Marketing Strategy

In social media advertising, actively display real user reviews, feedback, and usage cases. Various forms such as user review screenshots, video shares, and star ratings can be used. For example, ads for online education platforms can show the improvement in students' grades before and after the course, positive feedback on course content and instructors, and students sharing their learning experiences through videos. For physical products like cosmetics, ads can show before-and-after photos, consumer reviews on product effects and quality, allowing potential customers to see the actual results and build trust in the product. Collaborating with influential opinion leaders within the target consumer group to create social media ads, such as industry experts, popular bloggers, and influencers, can have a significant word-of-mouth effect[10]. For example, a beauty brand working with a well-known beauty blogger can have the blogger co-create content, posting trial videos and sharing product recommendations on social media platforms. This can quickly increase the product's visibility and credibility.

5.4. Information Optimization and Comparative Guidance Strategy

In social media advertising, it is important to convey key product or service information, such as features, specifications, price, and promotional offers, in a clear and concise manner. However, simplicity does not mean oversimplification, and it's crucial to ensure the information is comprehensive. For instance, in an advertisement for a smartphone, in addition to showing the design and main features, it should also mention processor performance, memory capacity, camera specifications, battery life, operating system features, as well as price and promotional details such as installment payments or free gifts. Furthermore, the presentation order should be strategically arranged based on product features and consumer interests, with the most important information highlighted. Helping consumers compare products or services among many similar options and guiding them to make a choice favorable to the advertised product can be done through comparison tables, graphical analyses, etc. These tools can compare the product with competitors based on key metrics. During the comparison process, it's essential to present information fairly and objectively while emphasizing the product's strengths. For example, in an advertisement for a travel booking platform, it may compare hotel prices, available room types, user reviews, and additional services (such as free breakfast, airport transfers, etc.) across different platforms, clearly showing the advantages of booking on this platform, thereby influencing consumer purchasing decisions.

5.5. Interactive Participation and Experiential Strategy

Adding interactive elements to social media ads, such as polls, sweepstakes, quizzes, or mini-games, can increase consumer engagement. For example, a food brand could organize a giveaway where participants answer questions about the product's flavor or ingredients. This not only attracts consumer attention but also helps them learn more about the product during the process. A car brand could run a poll where consumers choose their favorite car color or configuration, using the results to adjust subsequent marketing campaigns, while making consumers feel their opinions are valued. Offering immersive experiences through technologies like VR/AR, or providing sample products or trial courses, gives consumers a hands-on experience. For instance, a home renovation company might use VR to let consumers experience different styles of home decor virtually, allowing them to envision their post-renovation home environment. A cosmetics brand could offer sample-sized products, letting consumers try the texture, fragrance, and effects of a product before purchasing the full-size version. This experiential strategy helps consumers better understand the product or service, influencing their purchasing decisions.

6. Conclusion

Social media advertising has become a key force in influencing consumer purchase decisions in the digital market. By precisely delivering information, stimulating emotions, building trust, and guiding comparisons, it profoundly affects consumer decision-making. Additionally, various influencing factors play significant roles in advertising transmission, providing a foundation for advertising strategies. Moving forward, social media advertising must continue to innovate and optimize, flexibly applying different strategies to meet consumer needs and achieve precise marketing, thereby enhancing business competitiveness and creating greater commercial value. With technological advancements and market evolution, social media advertising will play an increasingly important role in the marketing field.

References

- [1] Gao Ming. Principles of Advertising and Visual Communication [M]. Shanghai: Wenhui Press, 2008.
- [2] Yang Yilin. Research on the Impact of Social Media Advertising Information on Consumer Behavior [D]. Zhejiang Media College, 2024.
- [3] Xu Xinwen, Wu Xinran. Research on the Impact of Short Video Marketing on Consumer Purchase Decisions [J]. *Modern Marketing (First Issue)*, 2024, (08): 170-172.
- [4] Liu Xiangning, Zhou Lingyu. Research on the Impact of Short Video Marketing on Consumer Purchase Decisions [J]. *Era Economics and Trade*, 2023, 20(05): 127-130.
- [5] Dou Jiale, Huang Yingxin. Regulation Failure of Social Media Advertising and the Construction of a Multi-Party Regulation System: An Exploratory Study Based on In-depth Interviews with Social Media Influencers [J]. *Journalism University*, 2018(05): 117-123 + 152.
- [6] Zhu Tong. Analysis of the "Internet Celebrity" Marketing Model in the New Media Era [J]. *Commercial Economics Research*, 2017, (21): 60-62.
- [7] Liu Xinzi. The Influence of Advertising on Consumer Decision-Making and Behavior [J]. *Business*, 2016, (23): 228-229.
- [8] Kang Chuying. Research on Micro-Advertising Communication Strategies in Social Media Sharing and Dissemination Platforms [J]. *Journalism World*, 2014(17): 59-63.
- [9] Dai Yumei. A Communication Study of Social Media [J]. *Journalism and Communication Research*, 2011, 18(05): 4-11 + 109.
- [10] Gao Chi, Lu Zhimao. Analysis of the Development Trend and Characteristics of Online Advertising [J]. *Journal of Harbin Institute of Technology (Social Science Edition)*, 2003, (02): 122-125.