

# The Impact of social media On Individual Purchase Intentions and Mental Health

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**Abstract.** Social media, as a new thing produced with the development of the network, is affecting people's daily life. It not only changes people's individual purchase choices, but also has a great impact on people's mental health. First, social media is rapidly changing consumer buying behavior. Through social media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube and Instagram, brands are able to quickly get their message across to consumers, who are more likely to trust peer recommendations than brand advertising, known as "word of mouth." The diversity and authenticity of these information greatly affect consumers' purchase intention. In addition, social media platforms facilitate the interaction between brands and consumers, enhancing consumer loyalty to the brand. At the same time, the popularity and rapid development of social media has had a profound impact on the mental health of adolescents. Teenagers are often exposed to different types of information and social interactions on social media, which can have an important impact on their mental health. Moreover there is a positive correlation between the frequency of social media use and adolescent mental health problems such as anxiety and depression, and adolescents who use social media more frequently are more likely to have mental health problems. The content, frequency and interaction mode of social media use have an important impact on adolescents' mental health.

**Keywords:** social media; individual purchase choices; mental health.

## 1. Introduction

With the massive popularity of social media and the rapid development of digital technology, Mankind have entered a highly developed digital age. As a new social platform, social media is something that people can't avoid using in the network era, and now it has become an indispensable part of individual life. Not only has it changed the way people socialize, it has also had a profound impact on individuals' purchase intention and mental health. In the field of individual consumption, social media has greatly influenced consumers' purchasing decisions through the characteristics of fast information dissemination, information authenticity and promotion by network influencers. At the same time, the personalized recommendation function of social media has also changed consumers' shopping habits. Individual purchase intention has been greatly influenced by strangers. Therefore, the impact of social media on an individual's mental health cannot be ignored. Problems such as the presentation of their lives by strangers on social media, excessive intake of information and overuse can lead to mental health problems such as anxiety and depression in individuals. Therefore, the study of the influence of social media on individual purchase intention and mental health is of great research significance for formulating effective prevention strategies and promoting the healthy growth of individuals. Therefore, an in-depth study of the influence of social media on individual purchase intention and mental health will not only help better understand the double-edged sword effect of this emerging media, but also have extremely important research value and practical significance for formulating effective prevention strategies and promoting the healthy growth of individuals. In summary, social media, as an important component of modern life, has a multidimensional impact on people's daily life that cannot be ignored. In-depth study of its internal mechanism will undoubtedly bring more positive and healthy changes to the digital life.

## **2. Introduction of Research Objects**

### **2.1. Individual Purchase Choices**

The key to enterprise marketing lies in whether it can effectively stimulate the purchase intention of individual consumers, which is directly related to the business performance of brand enterprises and the sustainability of long-term development. The purchase intention of individual consumers refers to the subjective tendency or probability of consumers to take purchase actions for a certain product or service in a specific consumption scenario, which deeply reflects consumers' interest in a specific product or service, satisfaction of demand and expected purchase choices. As a core concept in the field of consumer behavior research, purchase intention is of great reference value in predicting and analyzing the actual purchasing trend of consumers. In view of this, how to effectively predict and influence the potential purchase intention of individual consumers on the emerging and widely influential platform of social media has become a focus issue in the academic community.

### **2.2. Mental Health**

Social media not only significantly affects the purchase intention of individuals, but also has a profound impact on their mental health. As a complex concept, mental health covers the psychological, emotional and behavioral levels of the state. The specific performance of the individual has a normal level of intelligence, positive emotions, friendly interpersonal relations and good social adaptability. The relationship between social media and mental health is clearly bidirectional. On the one hand, social media may provide individuals with a platform for emotional expression, increase social interaction and efficient access to information, which have positive effects on mental health; On the other hand, overuse or inappropriate use of social media can also lead to social comparisons, anxiety, time management issues, and privacy and security concerns, which can harm an individual's mental health. Therefore, it is of great significance to study the impact of social media on mental health for individuals to use social media reasonably and maintain good mental health.

## **3. The Influence of Social Media on Purchase Intention**

Consumer purchases are influenced by evaluative information found on social media. The impact of the digital social media environment on a person's propensity to purchase has been a recurring issue in recent years. These repercussions may be classified as environmental collateral (digital environments impact activities in other unrelated contexts) or environmental effects (social media digital environments impact behavior in these environments). It is interesting to note that exposure to other consumers' choices or opinions—such as reviews and advice from others on purchases—or even just knowing about friends' lives on social media can affect future purchasing decisions [1]. This is social media's word-of-mouth effect, and it has a significant influence on customer behavior. Customers can post product reviews and their buying experiences on social media, and other customers can see and refer to this content. While a poor review can make potential customers decide not to buy the product, a positive review would encourage more people to do so. Therefore, in order to gain the trust of customers by offering superior goods and services, brands must focus on managing word-of-mouth on social media. Peer recommendations are more likely to be trusted by consumers than brand promotion, according [2]. For instance, Lamberton and Norton, have investigated how does the behavior of others influence the behavior of consumers themselves in the context of social media. Customers act favorably toward strangers in a competitive social media environment. They also discovered that when people made the same decisions online, their confidence in their own decisions did not increase if their motivations (like online reviews) differed. From a different angle, two consumer psychologists, Wilcox and Stephen, investigated the relationship between Facebook use and the contextual side effects of self-control. For example, using Facebook, even for five minutes, may reduce subsequent self-control on unrelated tasks. They discovered that consumers exhibited less

self-control when making decisions about healthy behaviors (e.g., selecting a cookie over a healthier cereal bar) after interacting with close friends on Facebook. The above research shows that, under the background of network media era, people's individual consumption behaviors are affected in ways that they would not be affected in real life. Although these influences are divided into positive and negative ones, After the research came to a conclusion that individual purchasing choices are really influenced by social media.

The second factor is that social media influencers promote purchases by individual consumers. With the rapid development of the network world, various new media platforms have also been developed, and new forms of content output have also emerged - video blog, which mainly records daily life, came into being. In addition, with the continuous support of major content platforms, video blogging has gradually become a new method of brand marketing. From the relevant data, video blog has a very high popularity and commercial value. According to the "China Vlog Business Model and User Behavior Monitoring Report", the user scale of video blogging in China has reached 249 million in 2019, and is still growing. The emergence of video blogging is considered to be a powerful channel to promote individual purchase [3]. For example, Liljander et al. (2015), when studying young consumers' responses to product recommendations in blogs, pointed out that users spend more and more time on social media, especially blogs, and bloggers often present brands or products in a positive way, Bloggers will insert advertising messages into their video content about what they need to promote, and combine the product promotion with their own video, so that the advertisement is perfectly integrated into their video. Companies therefore often offer free products, services, gift cards, or money to bloggers in exchange for vloggers showing positive and interesting content about the product or service in their vlogs [4]. From a brand perspective, product or brand promotion through video blogging can give consumers a new experience, and at the same time, it can better communicate with individual consumers. The findings suggest that celebrity vloggers (as opposed to expert, consumer vloggers) lead to higher purchase intentions. Expert spokespersons have a stronger effect than celebrity spokespersons in reducing consumers' risk perception. The product presentation of video blog can better show product information than traditional graphics, it will reduce the risk perception of consumers.

In addition, there is a key variable in the process of social media influencers' impact on consumers' purchasing propensity, that is, the degree of fit between the characteristics of video anchors and product brands [5]. This degree of fit is reflected in the harmonious unity between the image building, personal style, and expertise in the professional field of the anchor and the brand market positioning and image. When the audience scope of the video anchor is highly consistent with the target consumer group of the product brand, the fit degree of the two sides will be significantly improved. If the image style of the anchor and the image style of the product brand echo each other, then this fit will be enhanced accordingly. The fit degree between the characteristics of video anchor and product brand has a profound impact on consumers' brand identity and image cognition. When the image characteristics, values and style orientation of the anchor complement the brand positioning and image, consumers will often associate the characteristics of the anchor with the core value of the product brand, thus enhancing the recognition of the brand value. This high degree of fit can deepen consumers' trust and goodwill towards anchor recommended products, thereby stimulating their purchase intention and enhancing brand loyalty.

#### **4. The Impact of Social Media on Mental Health**

**Positive effects:** The use of social media will make individuals more willing to establish friendship with strangers, which will make individuals more willing to participate in social activities, thus increasing social skills; The use of social media will also make it easier for individuals to obtain information about their behaviors, emotions and values from others, which will enhance individuals' social cognition of themselves and others [6]. Social media use may also affect social cognition by

changing individuals' behaviors, because social media can enhance individuals' self-efficacy toward their own social behaviors and attitudes, thus generating more self-confidence and positive emotions.

Negative effects: The use of social media not only brings convenience to people, but also brings many negative psychological effects to individuals. Frequent exposure to social media may lead to dependence on social media use, and cause certain damage to mental health. Moreover, excessive use of social media during the epidemic may also cause serious depression and psychological stress reactions [7]. These adverse effects are manifested in many aspects, for example, in terms of physical health, the more time teenagers use social media daily, the more likely they are to experience physical discomfort, including headaches, back pain, muscle aches and so on [7]. When it comes to interpersonal relationships, the longer the average daily use of social media, the more likely teens are to display excessive stress, vigilance, suspicion and jealousy. These will lead to teenagers' interpersonal tension, interpersonal skills decline. For depression, the longer the use of social media, the more likely adolescents are to feel depressed, produce bitterness, life interest is more likely to decline, and the more likely to lack motivation and vitality in work or study. For anxiety, time spent on social media is positively and negatively correlated with anxiety levels. For example, adolescents are prone to experience anxiety when facing uncertain situations, stressful events or daily trifles [6]. According to the Survey and Analysis Report on Internet Use and Network Security of Chinese Youth, the Internet penetration rate of Chinese youth has reached 55.8%, of which 75.7% use mobile phones to access the Internet [8]. This huge data shows that social media has become an indispensable part of the daily life of teenagers. At the same time, in the process of using social media, people will experience emotional problems of anxiety and depression, and anxiety and depression will further lead to social media addiction. The emergence of this addiction phenomenon may be related to the internal conflict caused by long-term use of social media. The main reason why social media is so attractive to teenagers is that it allows people to get feedback quickly [9]. "Like, comment, share and other functions will make teenagers feel social recognition and satisfaction at the first time, and this positive feedback will stimulate the brain to secrete dopamine, making people feel happy. This sense of pleasure can drive teens to constantly use social media in search of more "rewards." The downside, however, is that long-term dopamine stimulation can cause the brain to become less sensitive and require more stimulation to get the same satisfaction, which forms an addiction. That is, when the frequency of social media use is high, an individual's depression and anxiety may increase. In other words, after using social media for a long time, people will feel tired, bored and anxious, and begin to find it difficult to leave the social media life and become dependent on social media. Social media use can make it harder for people to get satisfaction from reality, and the more time people spend on social media, the harder it is to get satisfaction from reality. The use of social media can also lead to individual sleep disorders. For example, after using social media, people may open Facebook and play games before going to bed, which will lead to people's brain being active when they sleep, which will lead to sleep disorders.

## 5. Discussion and Suggestion

Through the above research and analysis, it is not difficult to find that social media has a large and profound impact on individual purchase intention and mental health in contemporary society. In terms of individual purchase intention, the word-of-mouth effect of social media undoubtedly plays an important role. Consumers tend to rely on authentic feedback from family and friends or online communities, and this positive word-of-mouth information greatly influences their purchasing decisions. At the same time, influential figures on online social media, such as well-known bloggers and key opinion leaders, promote products through their extensive fan base and strong influence, further stimulate consumers' desire to buy, and effectively promote product marketing and sales growth. However, the impact of social media on mental health presents a complex "double-edged sword" feature. On the one hand, it provides people with a new social platform, greatly improves people's social skills, and broadens the boundaries of social cognition. Through social media, people

are able to cross geographical and cultural boundaries, connect with people around the world, share bits and pieces of life, and gain a sense of belonging and identity. This way of socializing across time and space not only enriches people's lives, but also promotes cultural exchange and integration. On the other hand, excessive reliance on or abuse of social media can also lead to a number of mental health problems. Long-term virtual socialization may lead to the deterioration of real social ability, and excessive attention to other people's living conditions may lead to anxiety, depression and other negative emotions. In addition, false information and negative statements on social media may also have a negative impact on individuals' psychology, further aggravating their psychological burden. Therefore, in the context of today's network era, how to properly use social media has become an unsolved problem. In terms of purchasing decisions, consumers should learn to think rationally, treat information on social media carefully, and avoid making wrong consumption choices due to blindly following the trend or being influenced by false publicity. At the same time, the government and relevant agencies should also strengthen the supervision of social media platforms, crack down on false propaganda and misleading advertising, and protect the legitimate rights and interests of consumers. At the mental health level, individuals should reasonably plan their social media use time and avoid excessive addiction. The government can issue relevant laws and regulations to regulate the content and functional design of social media platforms to reduce the negative impact on teenagers [9]. In addition, for individuals who have mental health problems, they should seek professional psychological counseling or the help of psychologists in a timely manner, and establish healthy social media use habits and psychological adjustment ability through scientific methods. To sum up, social media not only plays a positive role in contemporary society, but also brings many challenges. Only when individuals learn to use social media correctly and rationally can they make full use of its advantages in the era of information explosion while effectively avoiding its potential negative effects. This requires not only individual consciousness and efforts, but also the cooperation and promotion of the government, society and science and technology enterprises. Only in this way can people achieve a harmonious coexistence between people and technology in this era full of opportunities and challenges.

## 6. Conclusion

In conclusion, social media has begun to play a very important role in modern society, which not only changes individual consumption habits, but also affects people's mental health. Social media has shown a powerful influence on individual purchase intentions. As a fast channel of information dissemination, it enables the evaluation and comment of products or services to spread quickly, and has a significant impact on the purchase decision of potential consumers. Positive evaluation can enhance consumers' trust in products or services and stimulate their desire to buy; Negative reviews, on the other hand, can raise doubts and reduce willingness to buy. However, social media also affects mental health. On the one hand, social media provides people with a platform for self-expression and social interaction, which helps to strengthen individual self-identity and social connection. Positive feedback and social interaction can boost self-confidence and bring emotional support and satisfaction to the individual. On the other hand, comparisons, envy and admiration on social media can also have a negative impact on an individual's self-esteem. Too much attention to the lives of others may lead to a decline in self-worth, resulting in depression. In addition, negative messages, cyberbullying and inappropriate content on social media can also have a negative impact on an individual's emotional health, leading to increased feelings of anxiety, loneliness and depression. In conclusion, the influence of social media on individual purchase intention and mental health is profound and complex. It not only provides individuals with convenient access to information, but also brings potential mental health risks. Therefore, when using social media, individuals need to maintain a rational and critical attitude and make decisions based on their own needs and actual situations. At the same time, families, schools and society should also strengthen education and guidance for teenagers to help them use social media more healthily and protect their mental health.

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