

Research on the Role of Social Media in Consumer Behavior

Yueqi Wang^{1*}, Ruiqi Ge¹

¹*Economics, Suan Sunadha Rajabhat University, Bangkok, 10300, Thailand.*

¹*New York University Shanghai; 200122, China.*

**Corresponding author. Email: yueqiw1@gmail.com*

ABSTRACT

"Grass planting" and "grass pulling" are common consumption methods among young people on social media, and now they have become new modes for merchants to market products to consumers. The development of social media, especially video social media, provides a networked communication system for the rapid development of this marketing method. Through questionnaires, in-depth interviews and data statistics, this study investigated and analyzed the young people's experiences of "planting grass" and "pulling grass" and their psychological and behavioral activities. Through questionnaire surveys and data statistics, it is found that: First, in the process of "planting grass" and "pulling grass", products with observability to stars such as skin care and beauty cosmetics are more likely to achieve "planting grass" effect. Among them, male consumers are more likely to be "planted with grass" for skin care products and female consumers are more likely to be "planted with grass" for beauty products. Second, during the process of "planting grass" and "pulling grass", most young people keep rational consumption psychology, pay great attention to product efficiency and price, and it will take a week or even a month to decide whether to "pull grass". Third, product experience is the foundation of product word-of-mouth formation and continuous marketing. The authenticity of "planting grass" is extremely important for product marketing, and a good product experience will increase the sharing probability of consumers. Fourthly, as new marketing and consumption modes, "planting grass" and "pulling grass" are novel in that they are closely integrated with social networking.

Keywords: *"Planting grass", "pulling grass", star, consumer psychology, social media.*

1. INTRODUCTION

"Planting grass" is a process of effectively recommending products to consumers, occupying consumers' minds, stimulating their inner needs and making them have a desire to buy [1]. "Grass-pulling" refers to the behavior that consumers will buy back products planted by others. Nowadays, "planting grass" and "pulling grass" widely exist on social media and are popular among young people. They have gradually changed from a common consumption mode among young people to a marketing mode of merchants, which has aroused the attention and practice of many brands. Through the marketing mode of "planting grass", many niche brands have become familiar brands to many young consumers in a short time, and the product popularity and sales volume have been improved.

As new things in internet marketing, "planting grass" and "pulling grass" have relatively few research results. From the consumer's point of view, "planting grass" is a process of producing consumption desire and making consumption behavior, and from the seller's point of view, "planting grass" is a process of marketing. Therefore, the literature on "planting grass" and "pulling grass" is mainly studied from two angles: description of consumption behavior and description of marketing mode. Firstly, "planting grass" and "pulling grass" are regarded as the study of consumption behavior. Some scholars believe that "planting grass", as a consumption mode, can easily lead to irrational consumption states such as blind obedience and impulsive consumption, which will bring about economic waste. Consumers should be advised to learn to avoid this consumption state [2]. Some scholars believe that "planting grass" has become a symbol of consumption in the new era. The popularity of "planting grass" has its deep reasons. It is not only the embodiment of human inner psychological

motivation, but also the representation of contemporary popular culture. And think that when acquaintances "plant grass", the content of "plant grass" becomes a kind of talk and a way for young people to get closer to each other[3]. Secondly, "planting grass" and "pulling grass" are regarded as marketing models. Shen[4] thinks that the essence of "grass planting marketing" is content marketing, and its core three elements are KOL (opinion leader, which can be understood as the online celebrity today), platform and content. From the marketing category, "planting grass marketing" is a kind of word-of-mouth marketing, and it can also be regarded as experiential marketing. Because of the new nature of "planting grass" and "pulling grass", many studies focus on its phenomenon description and even its phenomenon evaluation and controversy, but the research on its internal mechanism is relatively insufficient. "Grass planting" and "grass pulling" are already formed social phenomena. Analyzing its internal mechanism, especially the psychology and behavior of consumers in the process of "grass planting" and "grass pulling", will help merchants to better carry out marketing activities, which is the focus of this paper.

As a new thing in marketing, "planting grass" and "plucking grass" are new consumption models. However, the research on their complete operation mechanism, especially on the changes of young people's psychology and behavior in this consumption process, is relatively insufficient. This study focuses on the psychological and behavioral process of consumers in the process of "planting grass" and "plucking grass" to reveal the generation mechanism of "planting grass" and "plucking grass". In order to understand its complete operation mechanism, especially the basic logic of consumers' psychological and behavioral changes in the marketing process, we can master the marketing mode of "planting grass" and "pulling grass" more skillfully and improve the marketing effect.

Based on the above research objectives, this study tries to master the young people's consumption psychology and behavior through questionnaire survey and data analysis, which will not only help businesses to better understand the young people as consumers and carry out targeted marketing activities, but also help to guide the young people's consumption psychology and behavior.

2. THEORETICAL MODEL CONSTRUCTION AND RESEARCH RESULTS

2.1. Theoretical Model Construction

In this study, questionnaires were designed and posted on the internet in order to accurately grasp the psychological state and behavior patterns of netizens in the process of planting grass and pulling weeds. The

interview questions were designed according to the five steps in the AISAS model, and some consumers with rich experiences of "planting grass" and "pulling grass" were randomly selected on the Internet, and they were asked to answer questions according to their experiences of "planting grass" and "pulling grass" by stars, so as to summarize the factors affecting consumers' "planting grass" and "pulling grass".

The design of the interview content is divided into five parts: attention, interest, search, action and sharing. During the interview, the respondents' answers mainly focus on three aspects: the characteristics of the star itself, the characteristics of the star's "notes on planting grass" and the product itself. According to the summary of the interview content, this study thinks that in the process of "planting grass", searching, "pulling grass" and sharing, the six factors that will affect consumers' psychology and behavior are the star's popularity, star's professionalism, star's explanation form, star's explanation detail, product efficacy and product brand awareness. These six influencing factors are regarded as the dependent variables of this research model.

2.2 Research Hypothesis

2.2.1. The Influence of Celebrity Popularity on Consumer Behavior

Demonstration process: ask questions-find arguments, explain reasons-draw conclusions.

Fame indicates the degree to which an organization or an individual is known by the public and the depth and breadth of social influence, and it is also a measure to evaluate the fame of an organization or individual. Stars have always been regarded as public figures, and their popularity is relatively high. During the interview, some interviewees thought that they were more likely to be "planted with grass" by high-profile stars. Moreover, when interviewees "plucked grass" and shared their experiences in using the "planted with grass" products of high-profile stars, they would get many people's attention, which made them more willing to share[5]. Therefore, this study puts forward the following assumptions based on the interview results:

H1a: The popularity of stars positively affects consumers' search behavior.

H1b: The popularity of stars positively affects consumers' buying behavior.

H1c: The popularity of stars positively affects consumers' sharing behavior.

2.2.2. The Impact of the Star's Professionalism on Consumer Behavior

Professionalism refers to the degree to which a person

or an organization's own rich knowledge is perceived by others. Some interviewees think that when stars explain a product more professionally, they will trust them more [6]. Based on the interview, this study puts forward the following assumptions:

H2a: Stars' professionalism positively affects consumers' search behavior.

H2b: Stars' professionalism positively affects consumers' buying behavior.

H2c: Stars' professionalism positively affects consumers' sharing behavior.

2.2.3. The Influence of the Star's Explanation on Consumers' Behavior

Explanatory form refers to the way in which a star describes an item or thing. When stars explain a product, they adopt four forms: text, picture, video and live broadcast. The presentation mode of "notes on planting grass" is the visual clue of "notes on planting grass". Different explanation methods will have different effects. Among the four information presentation modes adopted by stars, live broadcast is the most abundant and the words are the least.

Interviewees believe that when stars adopt rich presentation methods, they can have a deeper understanding of products, trust recommenders and products more, and are easy to be planted with grass[7]. Therefore, this study puts forward the following assumptions:

H3a: Stars' rich explanations positively influence consumers' search behavior.

H3b: Stars' rich explanations positively influence consumers' purchasing behavior.

H3c: Stars' rich explanations positively influence consumers' sharing behavior.

2.2.4 The Influence of the Detailed Degree of Star Explanation on Consumer Behavior

The level of detail is the level of detail when a star describes an item or event. Most interviewees prefer more detailed information, because it can help them to know more about an item or thing, and when stars share more detailed notes on planting grass, they will get more praise and collections. Therefore, this study puts forward the following assumptions:

H4a: The detailed degree of star explanation positively affects consumers' search behavior.

H4b: The detailed degree of star explanation positively affects consumers' purchasing behavior.

H4c: The detailed degree of star explanation positively affects consumers' sharing behavior.

2.2.5 The Influence of Brand Awareness of Products on Consumer Behavior.

The brand represents consumers' familiarity with the brand, is a standard for evaluating the prominence of products in consumers' minds, is an important symbol for distinguishing products, and is also an important factor affecting consumers' choice of products. Some interviewees indicated that among similar products, they believed more in products of high-profile brands. When a star "grows grass", if the brand of the product has a high popularity, it will increase his affection for the product [8]. Therefore, this study puts forward the following assumptions:

H5a: Brand awareness of products positively affects consumers' search behavior.

H5b: Brand awareness of products positively affects consumers' purchasing behavior.

H5c: Brand awareness of products positively affects consumers' sharing behavior.

2.2.6 The Effect of Product Efficacy on Consumer Behavior

Efficacy refers to the degree to which a thing meets people's needs, and it is a standard used to measure the usefulness of products. From the root point of view, goods are needed because they can meet the needs of consumers. Most interviewees said that when stars "plant grass", they pay more attention to the efficacy of products, and only when the efficacy of products meets their requirements will they have a desire to buy them. Therefore, this study puts forward the following assumptions:

H6a: The efficacy of products positively affects consumers' search behavior.

H6b: The efficacy of products positively affects consumers' purchasing behavior.

H6c: The efficacy of products positively affects consumers' sharing behavior.

2.3 Research Design

In this study, six influencing factors and three dependent variables extracted from the interview were measured, so as to design the scale of the questionnaire, so as to carry out the questionnaire pre-test and formal investigation.

The questionnaire of this study is mainly divided into three parts. The first part, from the first question to the fifth question, mainly focuses on the statistics of basic information, including gender, age, monthly income, occupation and so on. The second part is the investigation of the behavior habits of the respondents in the process of

"planting grass" and "pulling grass", which is mainly carried out according to the five processes of the AISAS model in turn, from Question 6 to Question 30. The third part is the measurement scale, which is mainly used to summarize the influencing factors of consumers in the process of "planting grass" and "pulling grass", and verify whether the hypothesis is correct, which is the core part of the whole questionnaire. Because jumps are set in several topics in the second part, only the questionnaires filled out by consumers who have been "planted with grass" by stars and searched for information about products, and then "pulled grass" and shared them are considered as valid questionnaires.

The first part and the second part are mainly multiple-choice questions, including single choice and multiple choice. In the third part, the Likert Five Scale, which is often used by researchers, is used. From "1" to "5", means disagree, disagree, generally agree, agree very much, and count at the same time, so as to facilitate later data analysis.

2.4 Data Analysis And Hypothesis Testing

In the valid questionnaires received, the proportion of men and women is basically balanced, and the number of men and women is about 50%. Because the consumption mode of "planting grass" is common among young people, in the valid questionnaires received, the age of the respondents is between 21 and 30 years old, accounting for 91.57% of the respondents. 46.08% of the respondents are students, and the rest are mostly freelancers and employees of enterprises and institutions. The educational background of the respondents is mostly undergraduate, accounting for 71.99% of the total. Because most of the respondents are students, the monthly income is mostly between 1000 yuan and 3,000 yuan.

The scale of this study is designed with reference to many mature scales, and has been revised several times according to the actual situation, so it has good content validity. Next, it mainly tests the construct validity of the questionnaire. After measuring the overall validity of the scale, the KMO value is 0.974, and the significance is 0, less than 0.01, which shows that the validity is very good and suitable for factor analysis. In order to measure the validity of the scale more accurately, this study will continue to measure the reliability of predictive variables and outcome variables, and make further factor analysis.

2.4.1 Correlation Analysis

The main purpose of correlation analysis is to make a preliminary test on the research hypothesis and determine whether there is a correlation among variables. If there is no correlation among the variables in the hypothesis, there is no statistical significance. The data are imported into SPSS software, and Pearson test method is adopted.

Pearson correlation coefficient is between - 1 and 1. The closer the absolute value is to 1, the stronger the correlation between variables is. Coefficient less than 0.3 means that the correlation is weak or irrelevant.

Star popularity, star professionalism, star explanation way, star explanation detail, product efficacy, product brand awareness and search behavior are all significant, and the correlation coefficient values are 0.758, 0.726, 0.780, 0.766, 0.760 and 0.788 respectively, which means star popularity, star professionalism, star explanation way, star explanation detail and product efficacy. The correlation coefficients between the six predictive variables and search behavior can be arranged in descending order as follows: product brand awareness, star explanation way, star explanation detail, product efficacy, star awareness and star professionalism.

Star popularity, star professionalism, star explanation way, star explanation detail, product efficacy, product brand awareness and purchase behavior are all significant, and the correlation coefficient values are 0.739, 0.710, 0.721, 0.698, 0.702 and 0.744 respectively, which means star popularity, star professionalism, star explanation way, star explanation detail and product efficacy. The correlation coefficients between the six predictive variables and purchase behavior can be arranged in descending order as follows: product brand awareness, star awareness, star explanation way, star professionalism, product efficacy and star explanation detail.

Star popularity, star professionalism, star explanation way, star explanation detail, product efficacy, product brand awareness and sharing behavior are all significant, and the correlation coefficient values are 0.710, 0.689, 0.742, 0.665, 0.694 and 0.731, respectively, and the correlation coefficient values are all greater than 0, indicating star popularity, star professionalism and star explanation way. The correlation coefficients between the six predictive variables and sharing behavior can be arranged in descending order as follows: star explanation way, product brand awareness, star awareness, product efficacy, star professionalism/star explanation detail.

2.4.2 Regression Analysis

Based on correlation analysis, linear regression analysis of data is conducted in this study, in order to determine the causal relationship among the variables in the hypothesis. It is assumed that the six predictive variables are divided into three categories: star characteristics, recommended information characteristics and product characteristics, and the regression analysis will also be carried out according to this classification, including star characteristics and result variables, recommended information characteristics and result variables, and product characteristics and result variables.

Table 1 Regression Analysis of Star Characteristics And Search Behavior

	Nonstandard coefficient		Normalization coefficient	t	p	VIF	R2	adjustive R2	F
	B	Standard error	Beta						
constant	1.372	0.280	-	4.8955	0.000*	-	0.642	0.637	F (2,329)=293.724,p=0.000
popularity	0.315	0.038	0.489	10.199	0.000*	2.098			
professionalism	0.368	0.046	0.375	7.806	0.000*	2.098			
* p<0.05 ** p<0.01(Dependent variable: search behavior.)									

Table 2 Regression Analysis of Star Characteristics And Purchase Behavior

	Nonstandard coefficient		Normalization coefficient	t	p	VIF	R2	adjustive R2	F
	B	Standard error	Beta						
constant	1.605	0.438	-	3.672	0.000**	-	0.615	0.609	F (2,329)=257.888 p=0.000
popularity	0.463	0.048	0.476	9.472	0.000**	2.097			
professionalism	0.548	0.075	0.364	7.403	0.000**	2.098			
* p<0.05 ** p<0.01(Dependent variable: purchase behavior.)									

Table 3 Regression Analysis of Star Characteristics And Sharing Behavior

	Nonstandard coefficient		Normalization coefficient	t	p	VIF	R2	adjustive R2	F
	B	Standard error	Beta						
constant	1.492	0.297	-	4.985	0.000*	-	0.568	0.559	F (2,329)=217.258,p=0.000
popularity	0.285	0.034	0.457	8.597	0.000*	2.098			
professionalism	0.355	0.049	0.396	7.046	0.000*	2.098			
* p<0.05 ** p<0.01(Dependent variable: purchase behavior.)									

Star popularity has a significant positive impact on search behavior, purchase behavior and sharing behavior. Professionalism of stars also has a significant positive

influence on search behavior, purchase behavior and sharing behavior.

Star's way of explaining will have a significant positive influence on search behavior, purchase behavior and sharing behavior. Star's explanation will have a significant positive impact on search behavior, purchase behavior and sharing behavior.

Product efficacy has a significant positive impact on search behavior, purchase behavior and sharing behavior. Brand awareness has a significant positive impact on search behavior, purchase behavior and sharing behavior.

3. DISCUSSION

The "attention" link in the AISAS model is the stage of establishing contact between consumers and products. Consumers need to pay attention to the star and the product before being "planted with grass" by the star. The survey found that the "grass-planted" consumers pay attention to the stars and their recommended products after their own needs and when they actively search or are recommended by social platforms.

There are many product categories of the star "planting grass", including the products that most young people need, which is in line with what contemporary young people often say, "Everything can plant grass". However, the products with better "grass planting" effect and more grass planting are skin care products, beauty products and clothing, all of which are highly observable products with the function of improving appearance. Among them, 65.66% of the respondents were "planted with grass" for skin care products, accounting for the highest proportion, and about 50% of consumers were "planted with grass" for beauty products and clothing. At the same time, the respondents indicated that they would not notice a product until they had a demand for it, which indicated that being "planted with grass" was actually a collaborative process of consumer demand and marketing recommendation. The marketing effect of appearance products is not only because of its observability on stars, but also because young people have a strong demand for appearance products themselves. After cross-analysis of gender and this topic, it was found that among the investigated male consumers, the most people were "planted with grass" skin care products by stars, accounting for 59.39% of all male respondents.

Personalized platform recommendation in the era of big data enables consumers to quickly find more favorite products. 36.14% of the respondents were "planted with grass" by stars in the process of actively searching for the required products, which is almost equal to the number of respondents who were "planted with grass" through platform recommendation, which shows that consumers are more active today. The personalized recommendation can make accurate "grass planting marketing" for consumers. Most respondents noticed the star's "grass planting" products because of the recommendation of the network platform, accounting for 45.48% of the total.

Nowadays, the system of network platform records the browsing history of users on the platform, calculates the behavior characteristics of users, and makes personalized recommendations based on them, so users receive what they like to see.

Through the investigation, it can be found that interpersonal communication has little influence on "planting grass" in the attention link, mainly because of the attention caused by network communication, which is consistent with Rogers' finding that mass communication has a great influence on the cognition of innovative projects. Among the respondents, only 18.37% will notice the products recommended by stars because of the recommendations of people around them. This is because the convenience and rich content of the Internet make consumers expand their choices, so they are more inclined to shop online.

After arousing consumers' interest through "planting grass", the stars provide consumers with psychological motivation to understand the product, and they often search for other information they want to know through other channels, thus providing a guarantee for purchase. The "search" stage is an important link in AISAS model and a decisive link for consumers to decide whether to "pull weeds", which mainly reflects the autonomy of consumers in the Internet era, and can actively obtain information through the Internet, which is also the difference between AISAS model and AIDMA model. E-commerce platform is the preferred channel for respondents to search, and their main purpose is to verify the quality of products through searching. After searching, most respondents think that the descriptions of products by stars are basically consistent with the information they searched, which is worthy of trust.

Consumers participated in the "grass planting marketing" through network channels, and after being "planted with grass" by stars, they further learned about other information about the products. If they discovered that the products could meet their needs, they proceeded to the purchasing stage, namely "weeding," which was the merchants' main goal in the "grass planting marketing." Favorite products are the primary factor of "weeding", and e-commerce platforms are the main channel of "weeding". Consumers' "weeding" is delayed, and the use of products affects the experience of "weeding".

4. CONCLUSION

This research is innovative in the research object. "Grass planting" and "grass pulling" are new phenomena in recent years. As far as the current research situation is concerned, the research results of "grass planting" and "grass pulling" are few, and the research articles pay attention to the description of superficial phenomena, but lack the research results of consumers' psychological and

behavioral changes in the process of "grass planting" and "grass pulling". This research plan uses in-depth interviews, questionnaires and statistical analysis methods to study the psychology and behavior of consumers who are "grass-planted" and "grass-plucked" by stars, and to explore the factors that influence young people's "grass-planted" and "grass-plucked" by stars, and to reveal the formation mechanism of "grass-planted" and "grass-plucked".

First, the product effect and the observability of the "grass-planting" people are the primary factors that determine the "grass-planting" effect, that is, attract consumers' attention. As young people, in the process of "planting grass" and "pulling grass", the products that can improve their appearance, such as beauty cosmetics, are the ones that are most "planted" by stars. Among them, male consumers are more likely to be "planted with grass" for skin care products and female consumers are more likely to be "planted with grass" for beauty products. Second, the process of "planting grass" and "pulling grass" is not just the relational marketing promoted by idolizing or stars as imagined in daily life. Consumers are more concerned about the quality of products, among which women are more concerned about efficacy and men are more concerned about price. Moreover, they will spend a week or even a month thinking about whether to "pull grass" and belong to rational consumers. Third, those who are "planted with grass" have a good experience of the products, which further shows that "planting grass" and "pulling grass" are the result of the joint action of stars and products. Stars play an obvious role in informing and attracting attention, but the use and experience of products have a great right to speak in the process of "planting grass" and "pulling grass". Fourthly, "planting grass" and "pulling grass" are not only consumption processes, but also social processes. Those who are "planted with grass" in the process of consumption think that they are rational product discriminators, while the social process brings them a sense of identity, which has the motivation and effect of enhancing friendship. This makes "planting grass" and "pulling grass" different from the previous consumption process, that is, the individualization and single process of product purchase and experience. The combination of consumption process and social process makes "planting grass" and "pulling grass" in a continuous dynamic negotiation process, and makes the consumption behavior of products have the characteristics of collective behavior.

REFERENCES

[1]Shen J.X. , (2019)The marketing way of "planting grass" for consumer goods brands under the new media environment. *New Media Research*, 5(06):68-69.

- [2]Hong Y.,(2020) Analysis of "grass economy" in the media era. *Audiovisual*, 02:169-170.
- [3]Wang S.F., (2019)Are you easy to "plant grass" in the Internet age? *Shanghai Informatization*, 07:75-77.
- [4]Shen J.X., (2019)The marketing way of "planting grass" for consumer goods brands under the new media environment. *New Media Research*,5(06):68-69.
- [5]Wong Frankie Ho Chun, et al. (2021)"Consuming Information Related to COVID-19 on Social Media Among Older Adults and Its Association With Anxiety, Social Trust in Information, and COVID-Safe Behaviors: Cross-sectional Telephone Survey.." *Journal of medical Internet research* 23.2.
- [6]Shin J., et al. (2020)"How Do Partisans Consume News on Social Media? A Comparison of Self-Reports With Digital Trace Measures Among Twitter Users." *Social Media + Society* 6.4.
- [7]Lee J., (2020)"“Friending” Journalists on Social Media: Effects on Perceived Objectivity and Intention to Consume News." *Journalism Studies* 21.15.
- [8]Elaine W., et al. (2020)"“Consuming Good’ on Social Media: What Can Conspicuous Virtue Signalling on Facebook Tell Us About Prosocial and Unethical Intentions? ." *Journal of Business Ethics* 162.5.