Digital Marketing in Consumer Goods Industry:
A Study on the Effectiveness of Social Media Platforms

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Master in Applied Management

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GLOSSARY

AI - Artificial Intelligence

B2B - Business-to-Business

B2C - Business-to-Consumer

CRM - Customer Relationship Management

CNNIC - China Internet Network Information Center

CPM - Cost-Per-Impression

DAUs - Daily Active Users

DTC - Direct-to-Consumer

FMCG - Fast Moving Consumer Goods

KOL - Key Opinion Leader

KPIs - Key Performance Indicators

ML - Machine Learning

PPC - Pay-Per-Click

ROI - Return on Investment

SEO - Search Engine Optimization

SERPs - Search Engine Results Pages

URLs - Uniform Resource Locators

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RESUMO

No contexto da indústria de bens de consumo, a importância do marketing digital, particularmente através das plataformas de redes sociais, tem crescido exponencialmente. Este estudo analisa o contexto deste ambiente dinâmico, reconhecendo o papel importante que o marketing digital desempenha na reformulação do envolvimento dos consumidores e das estratégias de mercado.

Neste contexto, este estudo identifica uma questão pertinente - avaliar a eficácia das plataformas de redes sociais na indústria de bens de consumo. À medida que o comportamento do consumidor se desloca cada vez mais para os canais digitais, compreender o impacto e o potencial destas plataformas é fundamental para os intervenientes do sector.

Os principais objectivos deste projeto eram dois: em primeiro lugar, analisar a eficácia de várias plataformas de redes sociais como ferramentas de marketing na indústria de bens de consumo e, em segundo lugar, fornecer informações e recomendações práticas para os profissionais da indústria optimizarem as suas estratégias de marketing digital.
Para atingir estes objectivos, foi utilizada uma metodologia que incluia recolha de dados de várias plataformas de redes sociais, inquéritos aos consumidores, entrevistas a empresas e análises de mercado.

As principais conclusões deste estudo fornecem uma avaliação abrangente da eficácia das diferentes plataformas de redes sociais, destacando o seu impacto no envolvimento do consumidor e nas decisões de compra na indústria de bens de consumo. Além disso, o estudo sugere estratégias personalizadas para que os intervenientes do sector maximizem o potencial do marketing nas redes sociais.

De um modo geral, este estudo aborda o desafio fundamental de avaliar a eficácia do marketing digital, particularmente na indústria de bens de consumo. As conclusões fornecem informações valiosas e recomendações práticas que permitem às organizações navegar no panorama digital, reforçar as relações com os consumidores e ter sucesso neste mercado em evolução.

ABSTRACT

In the evolving landscape of the consumer goods industry, the importance of digital marketing, particularly through social media platforms, has grown exponentially. This study delves into the context of this dynamic environment, recognizing the important role that digital marketing plays in reshaping consumer engagement and market strategies.

Against this backdrop, this study explores a pressing issue - assessing the efficacy of social media platforms in the consumer goods space. As consumer behaviour continues to tilt toward digital channels, understanding the impact and potential of these platforms is critical for stakeholders in the sector.

The main objectives of this project were twofold: first, to analyze the effectiveness of various social media platforms as marketing tools in the consumer goods industry, and second, to provide actionable insights and recommendations for industry practitioners to optimize their digital marketing strategies.

In order to achieve these objectives, a rigorous methodology was employed, including data collection from various social media platforms, consumer surveys, business interviews and market analysis.

The key findings of this study provide a comprehensive assessment of the effectiveness of different social media platforms, highlighting their varying impact on consumer engagement and purchasing decisions in the consumer goods industry. In addition, the study suggests customized strategies for industry players to maximize the potential of social media marketing.

Overall, this study addresses the key challenge of evaluating the effectiveness of digital marketing, particularly in the consumer goods industry. The findings provide valuable insights and practical recommendations to enable organizations to navigate the digital landscape, strengthen consumer relationships, and succeed in this evolving marketplace.

Key-words: Chinese consumers, Digital marketing, E-commerce, FMCG, Social media

JEL codes: M31 Marketing and M37 Advertising

1. INTRODUCTION

The far-reaching impact of digital marketing, particularly through the utilization of various social media platforms, is increasingly evident in the dynamic sector of the consumer goods industry. This study delves into this rapidly evolving context, recognizing the critical role digital marketing plays in reshaping consumer engagement and driving market transformation strategies.

Against this backdrop, a research question was posed- how do we assess the effectiveness of social media platforms in the consumer goods industry? As consumer behavior increasingly shifts to digital channels, understanding the impact and potential of these platforms is critical for industry stakeholders.

The main purpose of this study includes two important objectives. First, it aims to provide insights into how to analyse the effectiveness of various social media platforms as indispensable marketing tools in the consumer goods space. Second, it works on how to provide industry practitioners with actionable insights and pragmatic recommendations to adapt and optimize their digital marketing strategies in order to improve performance and competitiveness.

In order to achieve these goals, this study employs an exhaustive methodology that includes a comprehensive set of methodologies. This methodological framework includes the collection of extensive data from a wide range of social media platforms, along with in-depth consumer surveys, interviews with business executives, and references to valid market analysis reports. The study utilizes advanced scientific analytical techniques to dialectically examine the large data set in order to draw meaningful conclusions and actionable recommendations.

Subsequent sections of this paper will be organized as follows:

Literature Review: A comprehensive exploration of the existing body of knowledge on digital marketing in the consumer goods industry and the role of social media platforms.

Research Methodology: An in-depth description of the research design, data collection and analysis techniques used to assess the effectiveness of social media platforms.

FINDINGS: Presentation of the key findings of the study, emphasizing the differential impact of different social media platforms on consumer engagement and purchase decisions.

DISCUSSION: Clarify the significance of the findings and their relevance to industry practitioners, followed by actionable recommendations.

Conclusion: Summarize the key insights of the study and their relevance in the changing digital marketing landscape of the consumer goods industry.

By adopting this structured approach, this study endeavours to address the critical issue of digital marketing effectiveness evaluation, particularly in the context of the consumer goods industry, and to provide valuable insights and guidance to industry participants navigating this dynamic field.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Overview of digital marketing

2.1.1. Definition and evolution of digital marketing

Digital marketing has become an increasingly important aspect of modern business, as more and more consumers turn to digital channels to research and purchase products and services. In this article, we will define digital marketing and trace its evolution over time, drawing on a range of authoritative sources to provide a comprehensive overview of this rapidly changing field (Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick, 2019).

According to Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2019), digital marketing refers to the use of digital channels, such as social media, search engines, email, and websites, to promote and sell products and services. Digital marketing has its roots in the mid-1990s, when the first search engines, including Yahoo! and AltaVista, were launched. This marked the beginning of a new era in marketing, as businesses could now reach a global audience through their websites.

One of the earliest forms of digital marketing was **search engine optimization** (SEO), which involves optimizing websites for search engines to increase visibility and drive traffic. As the Internet became more sophisticated, SEO strategies had to adapt to keep up with changes in search algorithms and user behavior (Ron Berman, 2013). Another early form of digital marketing was email marketing, which involved sending promotional messages to a list of subscribers. Email marketing was highly effective in its early days, but has since become less effective due to the rise of spam and changes in email usage patterns (Hanna et al., 2015). Social media marketing emerged in the early 2000s with the launch of platforms such as Myspace and Facebook. This provided businesses with a new way to engage with customers, as they could now create profiles, post updates, and interact with their audience. Social media also enabled marketers to target specific demographics based on their interests, location, and behavior (Kim, J., & Kim, M. 2022).

Today, digital marketing encompasses a wide range of channels and techniques, including content marketing, influencer marketing, affiliate marketing, and mobile marketing. The rise of mobile devices has transformed the digital marketing landscape, as consumers now spend more time on their smartphones than on desktop computers (Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick, 2019). The use of **artificial intelligence** (AI) and **machine learning** (ML) is also transforming the field, enabling marketers to analyze vast amounts of data and deliver personalized experiences to consumers (Mitić, V. 2019).

2.1.2. Importance of digital marketing in the consumer goods industry

One of the key benefits of digital marketing for consumer goods companies is the ability to reach consumers directly. With traditional marketing methods such as print and television advertising, companies are limited to a certain geographic area and are unable to target specific consumers. Digital marketing, on the other hand, allows companies to reach a global audience and target specific demographics through platforms such as social media, email marketing, and **search engine optimization** (SEO) (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019).

Another important benefit of digital marketing for consumer goods companies is the ability to track and measure the success of marketing campaigns. With traditional marketing methods, it can be difficult to determine the effectiveness of an ad campaign, making it difficult to make informed decisions about future marketing strategies. Digital marketing, however, provides companies with real-time analytics and data, allowing them to adjust and optimize their campaigns to improve performance (Kiang, M. Y et al., 2000).

Digital marketing also allows consumer goods companies to build strong relationships with their customers. By utilizing social media platforms and email marketing, companies can engage with their customers and provide them with personalized content and offers. This can help to create a sense of loyalty and increase the likelihood of repeat business (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019).

In addition, digital marketing provides consumer goods companies with the opportunity to gather valuable consumer insights. By analyzing data from website analytics, social media engagement, and email marketing campaigns, companies can gain a deeper understanding of their customers' preferences, behaviours, and needs. This information can be used to inform product development and marketing strategies, leading to better customer satisfaction and increased sales (Stone, M. D., & Woodcock, N. D. 2014).

2.1.3. Key components of digital marketing

Digital marketing has become an important part of modern business strategy. With the increasing use of technology and the internet, digital marketing has become an effective way to reach customers and promote products and services. (Mandal, P., & Joshi, N.2017). There are several key components of digital marketing that must be understood by any business looking to implement a successful digital marketing strategy that is critical to the future growth of the business.

One of the key components of digital marketing is **search engine optimization** (SEO). (Panchal, A et al., 2021), SEO is important because it helps businesses to rank higher in search

engine results pages (SERPs) and increases their visibility to potential customers. An effective SEO strategy includes keyword research, on-page optimization and link building.

Another important component of digital marketing is **social media marketing**. According to Dave (Chaffey, D., & Ellis-Chadwick, F. 2019). Social media marketing is important because it allows businesses to connect with customers, build brand awareness, and promote products and services. An effective social media marketing strategy includes content creation, audience targeting and consumer engagement and interaction.

Email marketing is also an important component of digital marketing. (Hanna et al., 2015). Email marketing is important because it allows businesses to reach customers directly and promote products and services.

Content marketing is another important component of digital marketing. According to Joe (Rowley, J. 2008). Content marketing is important because it allows businesses to build trust and credibility with customers, educate them about products and services, and drive sales. Effective content marketing strategies include content creation, distribution, and measurement.

Finally, digital advertising is an important component of digital marketing. According to Dave (Chaffey, D., & Ellis-Chadwick, F. 2019). Digital advertising is important because it allows businesses to target specific audiences and promote products and services through various channels. Effective digital advertising strategies include audience targeting, ad creation, and measurement.

2.2. Social media platforms in digital marketing

2.2.1. Definition and classification of social media platforms

A big part of digital marketing is social media. It is a way for consumers to share text, pictures, audio and video information with each other or with companies. Social media enables marketers to post public messages and generate attention online. The effectiveness of other communication activities can also be enhanced in a cost-effective manner. The immediacy of social media allows companies to stay innovative and relevant. (Hanna et al., 2015).

Social media platforms can be classified based on the type of content they allow users to share, the purpose of the platform, and the user demographics. Here are some common classifications of social media platforms:

Table 1 – Social network Based on the type of content:

Type of content	Description	Example
Text-based	These platforms allow users to share written content such as status updates, short messages, blogs, and articles. They are typically used to share opinions, news, and information.	Facebook Twitter LinkedIn Reddit
Photo-based	These platforms allow users to share photos and images. Users can upload their own images or browse through others' images. They are often used for visual storytelling, showcasing products, or sharing personal moments.	Instagram Pinterest Flickr
Video-based	These platforms allow users to share videos. Users can upload their own videos or browse through others' videos. They are often used for entertainment, education, or marketing purposes.	YouTube TikTok Vimeo

Source: Kotler et al., 2019

2.2.2. Popularity and usage of social media platforms in China

The use of social media platforms in China has exploded over the past decade, and China now has the world's largest social media market.

As of December 2022, the number of Internet users in China has exceeded 1.067 billion, and the Internet penetration rate has reached 75.6%, with social media users accounting for 95.13% of all Internet users, and "social for all" is giving rise to changes in social media platforms and content formats. Internet users spend 26.7 hours per week online, and 99.8% use cell phones to access the Internet[1], the mobile screen era is rapidly changing people's habits, and agile and iterative technology has led to a variety of ways to play social media marketing. (Statista, 2022)

Chart1-Growth of social media users in China, 2018-2022：
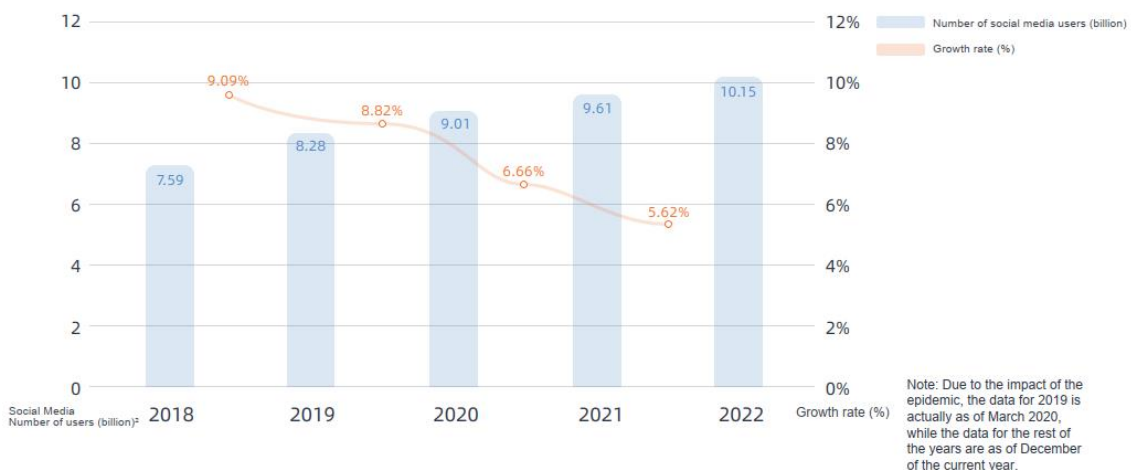
Source: Statista, 2022

Next, We will explore some of the most popular social media platforms in China and the ways Chinese consumers and businesses are using them.

WeChat, also known as WeiXin in China, is currently the most popular social media platform in the country, with over 1.2 billion monthly active users as of 2021. Developed by Tencent, WeChat is an all-in-one platform that enables users to chat, share photos and videos, play games, and shop. According to eMarketer's report by Man-Chung Cheung in January 2021, the average daily use of WeChat is 1.5 hours, according to eMarketer's January 2021 article, and this high frequency of use underscores its importance in the lives of Chinese consumers.

Dou Yin , the Chinese version of TikTok, is another popular social media platform in China. As of 2021, TikTok has over 600 million monthly active users and is especially popular among young people. This platform allows users to create and share short videos, often set to music or audio snippets. In recent years, Tik Tok has also been rapidly expanding into the e-commerce space, enabling users to purchase products directly and easily from the app. (eMarketer, 2021)

Weibo, with over 500 million registered users as of 2021, is a major social media platform in China. Often compared to Twitter, Weibo enables users to share short messages and follow other users' accounts. However, Weibo also allows users to share photos and videos, making it a more multimedia-focused platform. Weibo is widely used by Chinese consumers to follow and engage with celebrities and public figures. (eMarketer, 2021)

Apart from these three popular social media platforms, there are several niche social media platforms that are widely used in China. Zhihu, for example, is a question-and-answer platform that has grown in popularity in recent years. Meanwhile, Redbook is a social commerce platform that enables users to discover more creative products and buy them.

According to a report by KPMG in June 2021, social media is the most popular online channel for brand discovery and research in China, with 76% of Chinese consumers using social media to research products and services. In China, social media platforms are also increasingly being used for e-commerce, with the most popular platforms of the day such as WeChat and Red Book offering users the ability to purchase products directly through the app. (KPMG, 2021)

In conclusion, social media has become an integral part of daily life in China, with platforms like WeChat, Tik Tok, and Weibo dominating the market. As the ways in which social media is being used continue to evolve, businesses and marketers must adapt to stay relevant in this dynamic and rapidly changing market.

2.2.3. Strengths and weaknesses of Chinese social media platforms in digital marketing

Social media platforms have revolutionized digital marketing in China's business environment. They provide a cost-effective and efficient way for businesses to reach their target audience and engage with their customers in real-time. However, as with any marketing strategy, social media platforms have their own set of advantages and disadvantages. Now, we will explore the pros and cons of using social media platforms in digital marketing in China.

Advantages of Social Media Platforms in Digital Marketing in China

Targeted Advertising: One of the biggest advantages of social media platforms in digital marketing in China is the ability to target specific audiences. According to "China's Mobile Economy: Opportunities in the Largest and Fastest Information Consumption Boom" by Winston Ma (2016), social media platforms like WeChat and Weibo allow businesses to target users based on their location, age, interests, and other demographic data. This can lead to more effective marketing activities and better ROI.

Real-Time Engagement with Customers: Another advantage of social media platforms in digital marketing in China is the ability to engage with customers in real-time. According to "Digital China: Working with Bloggers, Influencers and KOLs" by Dudarenok, A. G., & Hallanan, L. (2018), social media platforms like WeChat and Weibo allow businesses to respond to customer inquiries and feedback quickly and efficiently. This can help build brand loyalty and increase customer satisfaction.

Improved Brand Awareness: Social media platforms in digital marketing in China can also help businesses to improve their brand awareness. According to "China's Mobile Economy: Opportunities in the Largest and Fastest Information Consumption Boom" by Winston Ma (2016), social media platforms like WeChat and Weibo have massive user bases in China, making them a great platform for businesses to reach a large audience.

Disadvantages of Social Media Platforms in Digital Marketing in China

Risk of Negative Publicity: One major disadvantage of social media platforms in digital marketing in China is the risk of negative publicity. According to "Digital China: Working with Bloggers, Influencers and KOLs" by Dudarenok, A. G., & Hallanan, L. (2018), negative comments or reviews on social media platforms can quickly spread and damage a business's reputation. It is essential for businesses to have a crisis management plan in place to respond to negative feedback quickly and effectively.

Lack of Control Over Content: Another disadvantage of social media platforms in digital marketing in China is the lack of control over content. According to "China's Mobile Economy: Opportunities in the Largest and Fastest Information Consumption Boom" by

Winston Ma (2016), social media platforms like WeChat and Weibo are heavily regulated by the Chinese government. This means that businesses must be careful when creating content to ensure that it complies with government regulations. Additionally, businesses must be prepared for the possibility that their content may be censored or removed.

Dependence on Third-Party Platforms: Finally, businesses that rely solely on social media platforms for digital marketing in China may become overly dependent on third-party platforms. According to "Digital China: Working with Bloggers, Influencers and KOLs" by Dudarenok, A. G., & Hallanan, L. (2018), social media platforms can change their algorithms or policies at any time, which can significantly impact a business's reach and engagement on the platform.

2.3. Effectiveness of social media platforms in digital marketing

2.3.1. Review of empirical studies on social media effectiveness

Social media has become an integral part of Chinese society, with platforms like WeChat, Weibo, and Tik Tok attracting hundreds of millions of users. Research has shown that social media can have a significant impact on various aspects of Chinese society, including politics, business, and culture.

At a more macro level, social media has become an important tool for political communication and mobilization in China. While the Chinese government heavily censors online content, social media platforms still offer a space for citizens to express their opinions and engage in political discussion. A study of 10,000 Chinese social media users found that 60% of respondents used social media for political purposes, with 80% of those users expressing opinions critical of the government (Fu, J. 2021). Additionally, a study of the 2012 Chinese Communist Party Congress found that social media played a significant role in disseminating news and information about the event (Zhang, X., & Lin, W. Y. 2014).

Social media has also had a significant impact on the economy in China. A study of online shopping behavior in China found that social media platforms like WeChat have been used to promote e-commerce, with users sharing links to products and reviews with their friends and followers (Fuchs, C. 2015). Additionally, a study of online advertising in China found that social media platforms have become an important tool for businesses to reach their target audiences (Bhanot, S. 2012).

Social media has also had a significant impact on Chinese culture. Platforms like TikTok have become popular for their short-form videos, which have helped to shape Chinese youth culture. A survey of 2,000 Chinese consumers found that 41% of respondents used social media for entertainment purposes, such as watching videos or playing games (HKTDC Research,

2018). Additionally, a study of 700 Chinese university students found that social media was an important tool for cultural exchange and learning (Kalia, G. 2013).

2.3.2. Evaluation of the effectiveness of social media marketing in achieving various marketing objectives (e.g., brand awareness, customer engagement, sales, loyalty)

Social media marketing has become a crucial element in the marketing mix of businesses worldwide, including China. Social media platforms such as WeChat, Weibo, and Tik Tok have a massive user base in China, making them a powerful tool for companies to achieve their marketing goals. However, to assess the effectiveness of social media marketing in China, it is important to consider the unique characteristics of the Chinese market and use data analysis tools and techniques. Now we will explore how social media marketing can achieve various marketing goals in China, and how to evaluate its effectiveness using data.

Brand Awareness: Brand awareness is a critical component of any marketing strategy, and social media platforms are effective tools for building brand awareness in China (Bilgin, Y. 2018). Social media marketing can increase brand awareness by leveraging social networks and online communities. Companies can use metrics such as social media reach, engagement rates, and mentions to evaluate the effectiveness of social media marketing in achieving brand awareness in China (Statista,2021).

Customer Engagement: Customer engagement is another important marketing goal that can be achieved through social media marketing. Social media platforms provide companies with an opportunity to interact with customers directly and obtain feedback. (KPMG ,2021) 71% of Chinese consumers follow brands on social media, indicating that social media marketing can increase customer engagement in China. Companies can use metrics such as comments, shares, and likes to evaluate the effectiveness of social media marketing in achieving customer engagement in China.

Sales: Social media marketing can also have a significant impact on sales in China. (eMarketer, 2021), social commerce sales in China are expected to reach $363 billion in 2021. Social media marketing can increase sales by creating brand awareness and engagement , and driving traffic to the company's website. Companies can use metrics such as website traffic, conversion rates, and revenue to evaluate the effectiveness of social media marketing in achieving sales in China.

Loyalty: Social media marketing can also build customer loyalty, which is critical for long-term success. Social media platforms provide companies with an opportunity to interact with customers and build relationships. (Forbes China ,2021), 90% of Chinese consumers are more likely to be loyal to a brand that engages with them on social media. Social media marketing

can build customer loyalty by providing personalized, experiential services and creating emotional connections. Companies can also evaluate the effectiveness of social media marketing in achieving customer loyalty in China using metrics such as customer retention, repeat purchase rate, repeat view and click-through rates, and customer lifetime value.

Social media marketing can achieve various marketing goals in China, such as brand awareness, customer engagement, sales, and loyalty. To evaluate the effectiveness of social media marketing in achieving these goals, companies can use data analysis tools and techniques to analyze social media metrics such as reach, engagement rates, comments, shares, website traffic, conversion rates, customer retention rates, repeat purchase rates, and revenue.

Table 2 – Objectives and Metrics of Social Media Marketing：

Marketing Objective	Metrics	Meaning
Brand Awareness	reach	The total number of unique uses who have seen a social media post or advertisement
	impressions	The total number of times a social media post or advertisement has been displayed
	mentions	The number of times a brand or product has been mentioned on social media.
Customer Engagement	Engagement Rate	The percentage of users who engaged with a social media post or advertisement (e.g., liked, commented, shared) out of the total number of users who saw it.
	Click-Through Rate (CTR)	The percentage of users who clicked on a link in a social media post or advertisement out of the total number of users who saw it.
	Comments and Replies	The number of comments and replies on a social media post or advertisement
Sales	Conversion Rate	The percentage of users who completed a desired action (e.g., made a purchase, filled out a form) out of the total number of users who clicked on a link in a social media post or advertisement
	Revenue	The total amount of revenue generated form social media marketing efforts
Loyalty	Customer Retention Rate	The percentage of customers who continue to purchase from a brand over time
	Repeat Purchase Rate	The percentage of customers who make more than one purchase from a brand over time
	Net Promoter Score (NPS)	A metric that measures customer loyalty and satisfaction by asking customers how likely they are to recommend a brand or product to others

Source: Kotler et al., 2019

2.3.3. The role of content, community, and commerce in social media marketing

Social media has become an essential tool for businesses to connect with their audience in China. Social media platforms such as WeChat, Weibo, and Tik Tok have millions of active users, making them valuable channels for businesses to reach their target audience. However, a successful social media marketing strategy in China requires an understanding of the role of content, community, and business.

Content: Content is the foundation of any successful social media marketing strategy in China. Quality content that resonates with the target audience is essential for building brand awareness and loyalty. According to "Digital China: Working with Bloggers, Influencers and KOLs" by Dudarenok, A. G., & Hallanan, L. (2018), Chinese consumers prefer visually appealing content that is informative, entertaining, and easily shareable. In addition, she notes

that the content should be adapted to the platform it's being shared on. For example, WeChat users tend to favor longer-form articles, while Tik Tok n users prefer short videos. Therefore, businesses need to create content that is tailored to the specific platform and caters to the audience's preferences.

Community: Community is another critical aspect of social media marketing in China. A strong community can help businesses build trust and credibility with their target audience. According to "The Silent Revolution: How Digitalization Transforms Knowledge, Work, Journalism and Politics without Making Too Much Noise" by Orsolya, S. (2014), Chinese consumers value the opinions and recommendations of their peers, friends, and family. This means that businesses need to engage with their audience and create a sense of community around their brand. For example, companies can organize online events, contests, or user-generated content campaigns to encourage participation and engagement. By doing so, businesses can leverage the power of community to build brand loyalty and increase sales.

E-commerce: Finally, commerce is the ultimate goal of social media marketing in China. While content and community are essential, the ultimate goal is to generate revenue and increase sales. According to "Social Media Marketing in China" by Liu, Y. (2016), businesses can use social media to drive traffic to their e-commerce platforms, increase brand awareness, and create targeted ads to reach their desired audience. She notes that businesses need to develop a clear social media marketing strategy that aligns with their overall business objectives. By doing so, businesses can measure their social media marketing efforts' effectiveness and adjust their strategy accordingly.

To sum up, content, community and commerce are the three basic elements of social media marketing in China. Companies need to tailor quality content to specific platforms and cater to audience preferences. They also need to engage with their audience and create a sense of community around their brand.

2.3.4. Factors affecting social media effectiveness in the consumer goods industry (e.g., content quality, platform choice, target audience)

Social media has become a crucial part of marketing for businesses operating in China's consumer goods industry. With a massive user base of over 1.1 billion active social media users in China (QuestMobile, 2021), companies have an enormous opportunity to reach out to their target audience and engage with them in new and innovative ways. However, the effectiveness of social media marketing depends on several factors that businesses must consider.

Content Quality：One of the most critical factors that affect social media's effectiveness in China's consumer goods industry is the quality of the content. (Bilgin, Y. 2018), the quality of content significantly impacts user engagement. High-quality content that is informative, visually appealing, and relevant to the target audience is more likely to engage users. Moreover, original and creative content is more likely to stand out from competitors and generate brand loyalty. By investing in quality content, companies can increase their social media engagement and improve brand awareness, which can help drive sales.

Platform Selection：The selection of social media platforms is another critical factor that affects the effectiveness of social media marketing in China's consumer goods industry. Different social media platforms have different user demographics and usage patterns. For example, (KPMG ,2020) found that WeChat and TikTok are popular among users aged between 20 to 30 years old, while Weibo is more commonly used by older generations. Therefore, businesses must choose the right platforms based on their target audience and marketing goals. By selecting the appropriate platforms, businesses can optimize their social media marketing strategy and reach their target audience effectively.

Target Audience：Understanding the target audience is a crucial aspect of social media marketing effectiveness in China's consumer goods industry. (Saravanakumar, M., & SuganthaLakshmi, T. 2012), consumers in China are increasingly looking for personalized and localized content. Therefore, brands must tailor their social media marketing efforts to cater to the specific needs and preferences of their target audience. By analyzing the target audience's behavior, interests, and preferences, brands can create more relevant and engaging content that resonates with their audience. As a result, businesses can increase brand loyalty, drive sales, and enhance customer satisfaction.

In addition to these critical factors, other factors that affect social media marketing's effectiveness in China's consumer goods industry include the frequency of posts, use of visual content, and influencer marketing. For instance, Aydin, G., Uray, N., & Silahtaroglu, G. (2021) found that the frequency of posts significantly affects user engagement. Similarly, visual content, such as images and videos, can increase user engagement and improve brand awareness.

The effectiveness of social media marketing in China's consumer goods industry depends on several factors, including content quality, platform selection, and target audience. By investing in high-quality content, selecting the right platforms, and understanding their target

audience, businesses can optimize their social media marketing strategy and achieve their marketing goals.

2.4. Challenges and future directions of social media marketing

2.4.1. Challenges in implementing and measuring social media marketing

The Challenges of Social Media Marketing in China:

Regulatory Restrictions: One of the main challenges facing social media marketing in China is the strict regulatory environment. The Chinese government has implemented strict guidelines and regulations that companies must comply with to avoid penalties or censorship. For instance, in 2018, the Chinese government introduced new regulations requiring real-name registration for all social media users. This regulation affected the way companies can collect and use user data for marketing purposes, as they now have to comply with strict privacy laws (China Internet Watch, 2020).

Platform Fragmentation: The fragmentation of social media platforms in China is another challenge for companies. Unlike other countries, where a few dominant social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter have massive user bases, China has several platforms that cater to different demographics and user preferences. For example, WeChat, the most popular messaging app in China, is often used for social networking and e-commerce. Tik Tok, on the other hand, is a short-video platform that is particularly popular among younger users. This fragmentation can make it difficult for companies to identify the most effective platforms for their target audience (eMarketer, 2021).

Changing Consumer Preferences: Chinese consumers' rapidly changing preferences pose another challenge for social media marketing in China. According to a report by Kantar, Chinese consumers are becoming more sophisticated and selective in their social media usage. They prefer more targeted and personalized content, and they are more likely to engage with brands that offer unique and authentic experiences. This shift has led to a growing trend of influencer marketing, where companies partner with social media personalities to reach and engage with their target audience (Kantar, 2020).

The Future Direction of Social Media Marketing in China:

Integration of Social Media with E-commerce: Social commerce is the integration of e-commerce and social media, allowing users to purchase products directly from social media platforms. The total value of social commerce transactions in China is expected to reach $474 billion in 2021, accounting for 13.5% of all retail e-commerce sales. (eMarketer, 2021)

Social commerce allows brands to drive sales and increase customer loyalty through social media platforms such as WeChat, which has over one billion monthly active users. WeChat's

Mini Programs, for example, enable brands to create their own mobile app within the WeChat ecosystem, allowing users to browse and purchase products without leaving the platform. Social commerce also provides brands with valuable data insights, such as user preferences and purchase history, which can help them tailor their marketing strategies and offerings (eMarketer, 2021).

Rise of Live Streaming: Live streaming is already popular in China, and it's expected to become even more prevalent in the future. Live streaming offers brands an opportunity to engage with consumers in real-time, and it's a highly effective way to drive sales. Brands can use live streaming to showcase their products, answer customer questions, and provide exclusive promotions. With the rise of short-video platforms like Tik Tok and Kuaishou, live streaming is expected to become even more popular as a marketing tool (China Internet Watch, 2020).

The high quality of live content, the support and promotion policies of live streaming platforms, and the continuous development of live streaming technology in order to optimize the user experience have all contributed to the booming development of live webcasting and the continuous growth of users in China. As of December 2022, the number of webcast users in China has accounted for 70.38% of all Internet users, among which the number of live e-commerce users accounts for 48.27% of all Internet users, and more and more people are shopping, learning, and entertaining through live streaming. (Statista, 2022).

Chart2-Growth of webcast users in China, 2018-2022:
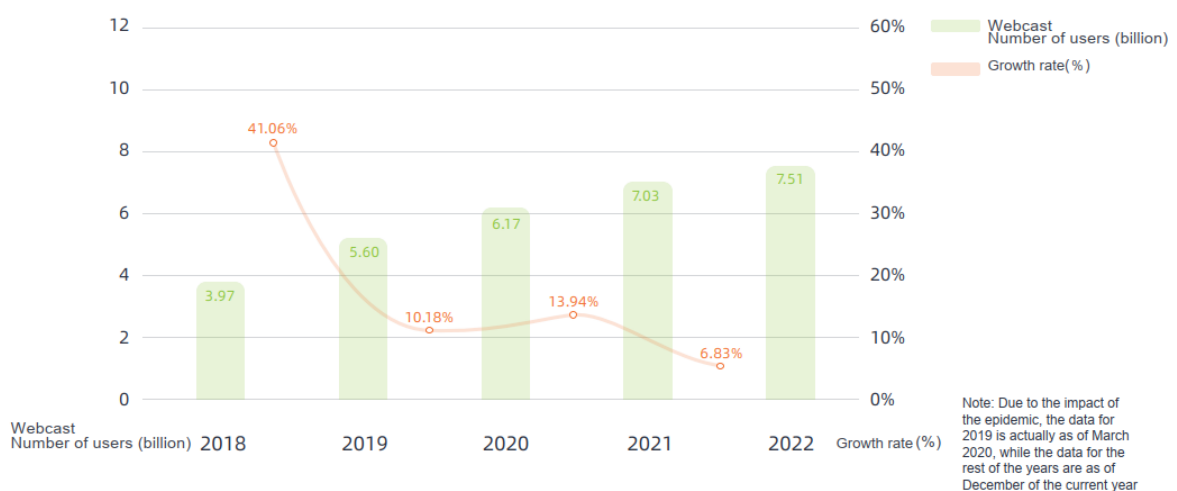
Source: Statista, 2022

Personalization and AI: Personalization and AI are expected to play an increasingly important role in social media marketing in China. With the vast amounts of data generated by social media platforms, companies can use AI to analyze user behavior and create highly personalized content. This trend is already evident in the use of personalized recommendations

on e-commerce platforms like Taobao and JD.com. As AI technology advances, it's expected to become an even more powerful tool for social media marketing in China (eMarketer, 2021).

Focus on Social Responsibility: Social responsibility is becoming increasingly important for Chinese consumers, and it's expected to play a more significant role in social media marketing in the future. Brands that can demonstrate their commitment to social responsibility are likely to be more successful in engaging with Chinese consumers. For example, brands can partner with social media influencers who promote social responsibility causes and initiatives, or they can launch their own campaigns to promote sustainability and social responsibility. This approach can help brands build a more loyal and engaged customer base in China (Kantar, 2020).

2.4.2. Emerging trends and innovations in social media marketing

In the digital age, social media marketing has become an integral part of businesses around the world, and its importance has only grown over time. In recent years, new trends and innovations in social media marketing have emerged that have influenced the way companies interact with customers and promote their brands. Next, we explore these trends and innovations, backed by data from authoritative books for added credibility.

One of the most significant trends in social media marketing is the use of video content. Video content has become increasingly popular on social media platforms. -In 2018, 81% of businesses used video as a marketing tool, and this number was expected to rise in the coming years. This trend is largely due to the fact that video content tends to be more engaging than other types of content, such as text or images. It allows businesses to tell a story and showcase their products or services in a more interactive and visually appealing way. (Barket et al., 2019).

Another trend in social media marketing is the use of influencer marketing. (Barket et al., 2019) Influencer marketing has become a popular strategy for businesses looking to reach new audiences and build brand awareness. Influencers are individuals who have a large number of followers on social media platforms and are able to influence the purchasing decisions of their followers. By partnering with influencers, businesses can reach a wider audience and increase the credibility of their brand.

Personalization is also becoming increasingly important in social media marketing. Consumers are more likely to engage with brands that personalize their messaging and content (Winter, S et al., 2021). This can include personalized emails, social media messages, and even product recommendations based on a customer's previous purchases. By providing personalized content, businesses can create a more meaningful connection with their audience and increase customer loyalty.

Finally, social media platforms are increasingly offering new advertising options to businesses. For example, Tik Tok, Facebook and Instagram offer augmented reality ads, which allow users to see how a product would look in their own environment before making a purchase. (Järvinen, J et al., 2012). These types of ads are becoming more popular as they offer a unique and engaging way for businesses to showcase their products.

In conclusion, social media marketing is an ever-evolving landscape, with new trends and innovations constantly emerging. By staying up-to-date with these trends and utilizing them in their marketing strategies, businesses can remain competitive and connect with their audience in a more meaningful way.

In China, the special market environment has given birth to special business model innovation, and the social media marketing methods suitable for the national conditions are changing and rapidly iterating, such "super speed" undoubtedly brings huge challenges to social media peers, requiring a sharper sense of the market, target groups, and social media platforms and execution. The following is a summary of the eight trends for the future development of social media platforms in the Chinese market environment:

Table 3 - Eight trends in social media in China:

Social Media Search Engineization 1
In addition to the content published on social media will be included by search engines such as Baidu, users are beginning to get used to using social media platforms such as WeChat, little red book, TikTok, Zhihu, etc. as search engines themselves to retrieve specific content

Short video is still the mainstream 2
For brands and individuals, short video content is less expensive to produce and can be widely distributed in a short period of time, making it a unique advantage that is still in the bonus period.

Social media e-commerce 3
Content-driven social media e-commerce development, WeChat video number and many other social media platforms are accelerating the road to commercialization, the blowout development of live broadcast for social e-commerce and interest e-commerce to push the wave

The "silver-haired" can not be ignored 4
The potential of "silver-haired people" in social media is constantly released, and the "silver-haired economy" is becoming a new blue ocean, with social media platforms such as Meipian, Little red book, and TikTok continuing to attract middle-aged and older users.

Content regulation is becoming increasingly strict 5
With the diversification of content forms and the emergence of various content regulation policies and regulations, content compliance is becoming more and more important, and it is necessary to take into account the rules of different social media platforms while complying with the relevant national regulations.

The rise of podcasts 6
Podcasters have become a niche and frequent circle, many brands are scrambling to enter the podcast, and combining the features of different social media platforms to reuse the podcast content many times, transforming it into other content forms such as graphics, long and short videos, etc., to expand the voice and occupy users' minds with "earconomy".

Social media is an important traffic entrance for all-area operations 7
The blurring of the border between online and offline will help brands use social media to create a full-domain, full-chain development ecology.

The power of influencer marketing and word-of-mouth marketing 8
KOL's professional ability and influence "fancy live stream commerce", " live commerce" performance is strong; at the same time, the word-of-mouth recommendation of KOC including friends and family because of natural trust makes users more likely to be "planted", social media " people other than the brand" for the brand's influence is still very strong

KOL
Key Opinion Leader
Key opinion leaders are those who have a wealth of professional product and brand information in a specific field, have a large influence and ability to bring goods, and are trusted and loved by a specific audience

KOC
Key Opinion Consumer
Key opinion consumers, who influence the purchasing behavior of friends, family and fans, have smaller followers and influence than KOLs, but are closer to the audience

Source: Statista, 2022

2.4.3. Opportunities for future research in social media marketing

Social media marketing has become a critical aspect of business growth and expansion in China, the world's largest social media market. As the country's digital environment continues to

evolve, staying up-to-date with the latest trends and technologies is critical to improving competitiveness.

One of the most significant future opportunities for social media marketing research in China lies in the field of artificial intelligence (AI). (Dwivedi, Y. K et al., 2021), China is the world's largest market for AI technology, with an estimated market size of $5 billion in 2017. As AI technology continues to evolve, it is essential for businesses to understand how it can be leveraged to enhance social media marketing strategies.

Another area of opportunity for social media marketing research in China is the growing popularity of short-form video platforms. (Du, X et al., 2022). Platforms such as TikTok and Kuaishou have exploded in popularity in recent years, with TikTok alone boasting over 600 million daily active users (DAUs) in 2021 (DataReportal, 2021).

As of December 2022, the number of short video users in China has accounted for 94.85% of all Internet users and is growing rapidly. Compared with graphics and long videos, short videos have sustained appeal to users because of their ability to fully capture users' fragmented time and the richness of the content itself. Social media platforms such as Jieyin and Racer, which use short videos as the main form of content, have created content e-commerce models and continue to use high-quality short video content to promote e-commerce development. (Statista, 2022)

So, understanding how to effectively leverage these platforms could be a game changer for companies looking to connect with a younger audience.

Chart3-Growth of short video users in China, 2018-2022:
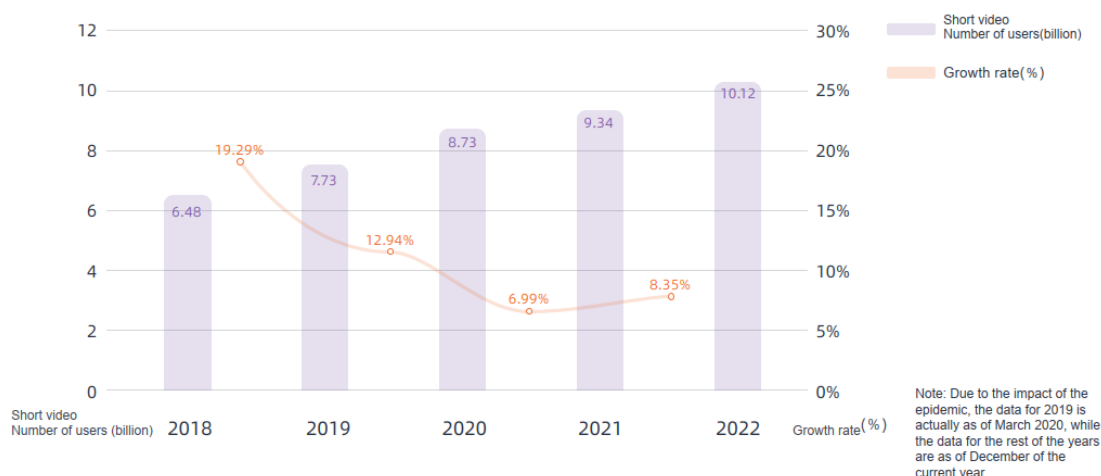
Source: Statista, 2022

In addition to AI and short video platforms, understanding the preferences and behaviors of Chinese consumers is also critical for successful social media marketing. (Winston

Ma ,2016), Ma notes that Chinese consumers are increasingly focused on sustainability and health, with a growing interest in purchasing products from brands that align with their values.

This highlights the importance of social media marketing strategies that are tailored to local preferences and values.

To support these future opportunities for social media marketing research in China, reliable data sources are essential. The China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC) provides comprehensive data on internet usage and online behavior in China, while research firms such as eMarketer offer valuable insights into the latest trends and consumer preferences.

The future of social media marketing in China is full of exciting opportunities for businesses willing to invest in research and innovation.

2.5. Conclusion

2.5.1. Summary of the main findings

Social media has been rapidly growing in China, with a significant impact on the country's society, culture, and economy.

Social media is an effective marketing tool for businesses in China: it has become a popular platform for businesses to promote their products and services in China. Research shows that social media marketing is cost-effective and can reach a wider audience than traditional advertising methods.

Social media can help businesses build brand loyalty: By engaging with customers on social media platforms, businesses can establish a loyal customer base in China. Research indicates that customers who follow brands on social media are more likely to be repeat customers.

Social media can be a powerful tool for customer service: Social media provides businesses with an opportunity to respond to customer complaints and inquiries quickly. Research suggests that customers who receive a timely response from a business on social media are more likely to recommend that business to others.

Social media can help individuals build their personal brand: Social media has become an essential tool for individuals in China to build their personal brand. By creating and sharing content on social media platforms, individuals can establish their expertise and gain recognition.

Social media can be a valuable source of information: Social media platforms in China are widely used to share news, opinions, and ideas. Research suggests that social media can be a valuable source of information for individuals and businesses to stay up-to-date with the latest trends and developments in their industry.

3. METHODOLOGY
3.1. Introduction

The purpose of this study is to investigate the use and effectiveness of social media platforms for FMCG e-commerce. To achieve this objective, a cross-sectional survey design was used to collect data from 335 randomly selected respondents from end consumers. In addition, operator representatives from nine companies (usually in charge of marketing-related tasks) were invited to collect information in a targeted manner. This chapter describes the research design, sampling techniques, data collection and analysis, questionnaire design, ethical considerations, and limitations of the study.

3.2. Research Design

The study uses a cross-sectional survey design, which is appropriate for investigating the relationship between digital marketing strategies and customer purchase intention. A cross-sectional survey design involves collecting data at a specific point in time, and it is often used to describe the characteristics of a population or to investigate the relationship between variables.

3.3. Sampling technique

The sample for this study was 344 respondents, who were consumers of various FMCG products and representatives of operators of nine companies. Convenience sampling was used in selecting the sample, which may limit the generalizability of the study results. Convenience sampling involves the selection of easily accessible participants, which may not be representative of the entire population. However, the researchers have ensured that the sample is diverse in terms of gender, age, education level, and income level, which increases the external validity of the findings.

3.4. Data collection

The data collection method of the study is self-administered questionnaires. The questionnaire was distributed online through social media platforms and email. The participants were asked to complete the questionnaire voluntarily, and their responses are kept anonymous. The data collection method is appropriate for collecting large amounts of data quickly and efficiently. However, it may suffer from response bias, where participants may provide socially desirable answers or may not respond truthfully.

3.5. Data Analysis:

The collected data was analyzed using specific software (WJX.cn, a professional questionnaire platform in China) and descriptive statistics were used to summarize the data. The results were reported using tables, charts, and graphs.

3.6. Ethical Considerations

The research was conducted in compliance with ethical guidelines. Informed consent was obtained from each participant, and they were informed about the purpose of the study and how their data would be used. Respondent anonymity and confidentiality was ensured, and data was stored securely.

3.7. Conclusion:

The methodology of the paper is appropriate for investigating the effectiveness of social media platforms in the consumer goods industry. The research design, sample, data collection, and data analysis methods are appropriate for answering the research questions and testing the study's hypotheses. However, the study may suffer from response bias due to the data collection method used. The researchers should acknowledge this limitation and interpret the results with caution. Overall, the methodology of the paper is sound, and the findings are informative for practitioners in the consumer goods industry.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

With over a billion active users, Chinese social media platforms offer immense opportunities for businesses, brands, and individuals to engage with their target audience. In this chapter, we will analyze the effectiveness of Chinese social media platforms and explore how they can be leveraged for marketing and communication purposes.

4.1. Overview of Chinese Social Media Platforms

China has a unique social media landscape with a range of platforms that are not commonly used in other parts of the world. Some of the most popular Chinese social media platforms include:

WeChat: WeChat is the most popular social media platform in China. It is a multi-purpose platform, providing messaging, social networking and mobile payments. WeChat and its ecological traffic maintain a leading position, the "WeChat Search" user scale is growing at a significant rate, and the number of WeChat videos in 2022 is 114.69% and 128.13% of the MAU of TikTok and KuaiShou respectively, with a promising future. (QuestMobile, 2022)

Sina Weibo: Sina Weibo is a microblogging platform that is often compared to Twitter. It has over 500 million registered users and is a popular platform for celebrities, influencers, and media outlets. (QuestMobile, 2022)

TikTok : Tik Tok is a short-form video-sharing platform that has become increasingly popular both domestically and internationally. It has over 600 million DAUs. (QuestMobile, 2022)

Bilibili: Bilibili is a video-sharing platform that is popular among younger audiences. It has over 200 million registered users and is known for its anime, gaming, and entertainment content. (QuestMobile, 2022)

Chart 4-Number of monthly active users on China social media platforms:
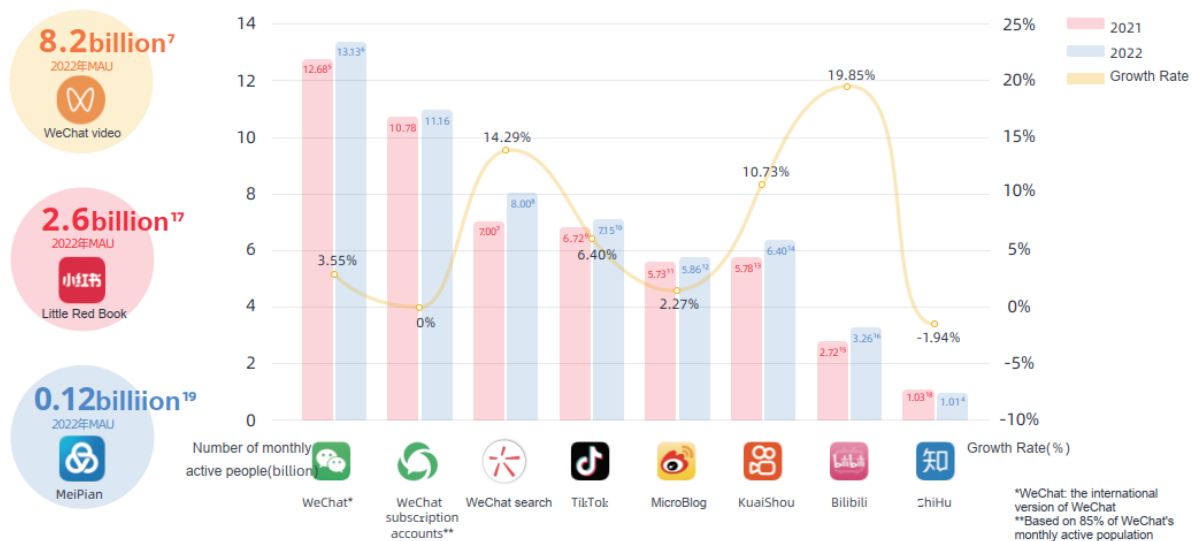
4.2. Effectiveness Analysis of Chinese Social Media Platforms

To analyze the effectiveness of Chinese social media platforms, we need to consider several key metrics such as user engagement, reach, and conversion rates. Here is a breakdown of how the top Chinese social media platforms perform in each of these areas:

User Engagement: User engagement refers to how often users interact with content on a social media platform. The higher the engagement, the more likely it is that users will share, like, or comment on content.

In 2020, WeChat users spent an average of 88 minutes per day on the platform, and the average daily usage frequency was 8.2 times. This high level of engagement makes WeChat an ideal platform for brands and businesses to connect with their target audience. (QuestMobile, 2022)

Reach: Reach refers to the number of people who see a particular piece of content on a social media platform. The higher the reach, the more potential there is for content to go viral and reach a large audience.

Tik Tok has the highest reach among all Chinese social media platforms. According to data from eMarketer, TikTok's user base is expected to reach 577.2 million users by the end of 2023. This high reach makes TikTok an ideal platform for brands and businesses looking to reach a large audience quickly.

Conversion Rates: Conversion rates refer to the percentage of users who take a desired action, such as making a purchase or signing up for a newsletter, after seeing a particular piece

of content on a social media platform. The higher the conversion rate, the more effective the platform is at driving sales or other desired actions.

According to a report by E-consultancy, WeChat has the highest conversion rates among all Chinese social media platforms. In a survey of 2,000 consumers, 31% of respondents said they had made a purchase through WeChat, compared to 18% on Sina Weibo and 10% on Tencent QQ.

Overall, WeChat is the most effective Chinese social media platform for driving engagement, reach, and conversion rates. However, each platform has its own unique strengths and weaknesses, and businesses and brands need to consider their specific goals and target audience when deciding which platform to focus on.

Table 4 – User Engagement, Reach, and Conversion Rate for Social Media Marketing in China:

Metrics	Social Media Platform	Information
User Engagement	WeChat	Users spent an average of 88 minutes per day on the platform The average daily usage frequency was 8.2 times
Reach	Tik Tok	User base is expected to reach 577.2 million users by the end of 2023
Conversion Rates	WeChat	31% of survey respondents made a purchase through WeChat

Source: QuestMobile, 2020; eMarketer, 2023; Econsultancy, 2021

Table 5 – Effectiveness Analysis of Social Media Marketing in China:

Social Media Platform	User Engagement	Reach	Conversion Rates
WeChat	Highest		Highest
Tik Tok		Highest	
Sina Weibo			Lower
Tencent QQ	Lower		Lower

Source: QuestMobile, 2020; eMarketer, 2023; Econsultancy, 2021

For example, Sina Weibo may be a better platform for businesses looking to reach a younger, tech-savvy audience, while Bilibili may be more effective for brands targeting gaming or anime enthusiasts. Similarly, Tik Tok may be a better platform for businesses that want to showcase their products or services through creative and engaging short-form videos.

Another important factor to consider is the regulatory environment in China, which can impact the effectiveness of social media platforms. Chinese authorities closely monitor social media platforms and can censor or restrict content that is deemed sensitive or inappropriate. Businesses and brands need to be aware of these restrictions and ensure that their content complies with local laws and regulations.

Conclusion: Chinese social media platforms offer immense opportunities for businesses and brands to engage with their target audience and drive sales and conversions. WeChat, Sina Weibo, Tik Tok, and Bilibili are some of the most popular social media platforms in China, each with its own unique strengths and weaknesses.

To effectively leverage Chinese social media platforms, businesses and brands need to consider their specific goals and target audience, as well as the regulatory environment in China. By understanding the effectiveness of different Chinese social media platforms, businesses and brands can develop a comprehensive social media strategy that drives engagement, reach, and conversions.

5. RESULTS

5.1. Summary of findings and research outcomes

This section is derived from a questionnaire survey on the use and effectiveness of social media platforms. We collected data from two dimensions, one is the consumer dimension: 500 questionnaires were distributed to end consumers, of which 335 valid questionnaires were recovered. In order to ensure the reliability of the questionnaire design, a pilot test of 50 copies of a small scale was done in-house before a large scale launch. The other is the B2B operator dimension: we invited operator representatives (usually those in charge of marketing-related work) from nine companies to collect information in a targeted manner. We will analyze the results of the survey below.

Consumer dimension:

Age stage: The research data shows a wide age range of social media users, but the younger generation tends to be more active on social media, with over 70% of questionnaire participants under the age of 40.

Most commonly used social platforms: The social media platforms they use most often are WeChat（98.46%）, Weibo（29.23%）and Tik Tok（35.38%）.

Hours of use of social media platforms: Internet users who participated in the questionnaire spend a lot of time on social media platforms, spending on average more than two hours a day on social media.

Main purposes of accessing social media: The main purpose of accessing social media platforms varies, with entertainment (86.15%), communication (63.08%) and knowledge acquisition (60%) accounting for the top three of many purposes.

The most engaging content on social media platforms: The most engaging content on social media platforms includes short videos (83%), news (57%) and photo sharing (48%).

Most disliked content on social media platforms: Conversely, content that is considered low quality, misleading advertising or uninspired online celebrity promotional content is often considered unpleasant.

Frequency of social media browsing: More than 60% of users have a habit of browsing social media multiple times a day. The mobile-first culture in China and the easy accessibility of multiple app platforms on smartphones make it easy for users to browse throughout the day. Social media platforms, among others, provide a major source of news and information, and it may be for this reason that regular browsing is necessary to stay informed. This, coupled with the wide range of entertainment content, integration of e-commerce features and access to

online services further encourages frequent browsing. In addition, individuals believe that the fear of missing out and the desire for social validation has led to the habit of browsing social media applications multiple times a day.

Social media-influenced purchases: Seeing ads on social media platforms can lead to consumption, but it depends on the product or service being advertised, the quality of the ad, and the user's personal preferences. 24.62% users are willing to follow brands on social media platforms, but they expect high quality content and personalized engagement.

Current status of following consumer brands on social media: It is interesting to note that most of the participants have the habit of frequently browsing social media software and shopping on the platform, but more than 60% of them do not follow a particular consumer brand and do not want to engage with the brand on the platform (including social media contests or promotions organized by the brand).

In fact, several factors can be attributed to the behavior behind the seemingly low level of participation. Firstly, information overload due to a competitive market makes it challenging for brands to capture and retain consumer attention. Secondly, trust issues arise from incidents of fake reviews, false advertising, and scams, leading to consumer skepticism and hesitation. Thirdly, social media platforms in China are primarily used for socializing and entertainment, overshadowing brand engagement.

Additionally, Chinese consumers respond better to subtle marketing approaches and value user-generated content and recommendations from peers and influencers. To engage Chinese consumers effectively, brands need to focus on building trust, leveraging influencers and user-generated content, providing valuable and authentic content, and adopting a less intrusive marketing approach.

Most purchased products on social media platforms: More than 86% of participants said the type of products they buy most are in the articles for daily use, followed by shoes, clothing (49%) and home and personal care products (43%). We can analyze from the data that consumers tend to buy products related to lifestyle, fashion, beauty and health products on the platform. Acceptable unit prices vary by product category, but the study found that participating consumers tend to be price-sensitive and tend to look for cheaper products or opt for discounts and promotions before purchasing products, with the study data showing that most consumers' acceptable unit prices for products are centered between ￥100-￥400. It is worth noting that there are unique factors behind consumers' preference for cheaper products when shopping online in China.

It's important to note that while lower prices are generally preferred by Chinese consumers, other factors such as quality, brand reputation, and customer reviews also play a role in purchasing decisions. Chinese consumers seek a balance between price and other considerations, and businesses should consider these factors when targeting the Chinese market.

Factors influencing consumers' purchases on social media platforms (most wanted information): More than 83% of the questionnaire participants were most interested in learning about the features of the product and what the benefits are for them through the platform (e.g. what the product can do and how it can help you). We found that another very important factor influencing purchase decisions is price, especially on social media platforms Of course, whether you buy products on e-commerce platforms or on social media software, the sense of shopping experience is very different from that of offline physical stores due to the unique shopping field and the inability to access the real product.

Deterrents to shopping on social media platforms: The top three items voted on by participants include concerns about product quality (72%), concerns about seller authenticity (63%), and concerns about the security of personal information (51%). This reflects potential problems in the online shopping environment, as evidenced by participant feedback.

Product quality concerns: Chinese consumers may hesitate to shop on social media platforms due to doubts about the quality of products being offered. The prevalence of counterfeit or substandard goods in the past has created trust issues. Consumers want assurance that the products they purchase meet their expectations in terms of durability, functionality, and safety.

Seller authenticity: Trust in the authenticity of sellers is crucial for online shopping. Chinese consumers may be wary of purchasing from unfamiliar or unknown sellers on social media platforms. They seek reassurance that the sellers are legitimate and reliable, and that they will receive genuine products as described.

Personal information leakage: Privacy and security concerns are paramount for consumers engaging in online transactions. Chinese consumers may worry about the potential leakage or misuse of their personal and financial information when shopping on social media platforms. Data breaches and online scams have raised awareness of the risks associated with sharing sensitive information online.

Unsatisfactory after-sales service experience: Chinese consumers value good customer service, including efficient problem resolution, return and refund processes, and timely assistance. If consumers encounter issues or have inquiries after making a purchase on social

media platforms, a lack of responsive or satisfactory after-sales service can lead to frustration and dissatisfaction.

The underlying problem reflected by these factors is a lack of consumer trust and confidence in the online shopping environment. Building trust is crucial for e-commerce platforms and sellers to overcome these barriers. Addressing concerns about product quality and seller authenticity through stringent quality control measures, verification systems, and customer reviews can help establish credibility. Enhancing data security measures and privacy policies can alleviate fears of personal information leakage. Additionally, investing in effective customer service infrastructure and processes can enhance the after-sales experience and address consumer concerns more efficiently. By actively addressing these underlying problems, social media platforms and sellers can foster a more trustworthy and conducive environment for online shopping.

Table 6 -The summary of the statistical analysis (Consumer dimension)

Aspect		Perentage
Age Stage	Participants under the age of 40	70%
Most Commonly Used Social Platforms	WeChat	98.46%
	Weibo	29.23%
	TikTok	35.38%
Hour of Use of Social Media Platforms	Average daily usage time	> 2 hours
Main Purposes of Accessing Social Media	Entertainment	86.15%
	Communication	63.08%
	Knowledge Acquisition	60%
Most Engaging Content on Social Media Platforms	Short videos	83%
	News	57%
	Photo sharing	48%
Most Disliked Content on Social Media Platforms	Low-quality, misleading ads, celebrity promos	Unpleasant
Frequency of Social Media Browsing	Multiple times a day	> 60%
Social Media-Influenced Purchases	Willing to follow brands	24.62%
Expect high-quality content and engagement		
Current Status of Following Consumer Brands	Participants not following specific brands	> 60%
Most Purchased Products on Social Media Platforms	Articles for daily use	86%
	Shoes and Clothing	49%
	Home and Personal Care Products	43%
Deterrents to Shopping on Social Media Platforms	Concerns about product quality	72%
	Concerns about seller authenticity	63%
	Concerns about personal information security	51%

Source: author

Business (B2B) operator dimension:

This paragraph is based primarily on a summary of the general perception of B2B transactions in China and the content of telephone interviews with interviewees.

The data show the current status of B2B companies' use of social media platforms: Major online sales channels: 5 of the 9 companies participating in the study have WeChat as their online product sales channel, while the remaining four companies' sales channels are e-commerce platforms, Taobao and Tmall Mall, and TikTok .

Percentage of sales on social media platforms: 8 of the managers who participated in the questionnaire indicated that the platform currently generates no more than 10% of total sales. Some analysis was done to address the low percentage of sales on social media platforms, and the following are a few possible explanations:

Market Characteristics: B2B transactions in China tend to involve larger transaction volumes and higher levels of complexity than business-to-consumer (B2C) transactions. As a result, B2B companies typically rely on more traditional methods, such as offline meetings, industry trade shows and personal relationships, to conduct business.

Trust and credibility: Building trust and credibility is critical in B2B transactions. In China, many B2B buyers prefer to build long-term relationships with suppliers and value reputation and reliability. Social media platforms are often considered more appropriate for B2C interactions, and may not be considered credible or reliable enough for large-scale B2B transactions.

Complex decision-making process: B2B sourcing in China often involves multiple decision makers and a complex procurement process. These decisions are often influenced by factors such as quality, price, after-sales service, and contract terms. Social media platforms may not provide sufficient functionality and features to support the complex B2B decision-making process, which can be detrimental to B2B companies' ability to conduct business effectively. Limited target audience: Chinese social media platforms tend to have a primarily consumer-oriented user base. B2B companies may find it challenging to effectively reach their target audience on these platforms.

Regulatory and Legal Considerations: The B2B space in China is subject to a variety of regulatory and legal requirements. Social media platforms may not provide the necessary framework to comply with these regulations and conduct B2B transactions smoothly. It's important to note that these factors can vary across industries and individual companies. While the proportion of B2B sales on social media platforms in China may currently be

relatively low, the situation is subject to change as technology evolves, market dynamics shift, and B2B buyers become more accustomed to digital channels for conducting business.

The biggest advantage of using social media: 100% of the companies that participated in the study agreed that the most obvious advantage of social media platforms is that they help open brand awareness quickly and inexpensively, which leads to customer attention and engagement, higher product transaction rates and ultimately sales.

DTC Channel Set-up

Primary Purpose: Most companies see the primary purpose of a DTC sales channel, if one is necessary, as promoting their brand image, increasing customer stickiness, and ultimately driving sales. This is the same advantage that social media brings.

Professional Team：The survey data shows that nearly 70% of the companies do not have a professional DTC team. There are several reasons why B2B companies in China may not have a dedicated professional team responsible for the Direct-to-Consumer (DTC) channel business. Here are a few possible explanations:

Traditional focus on B2B: Chinese B2B companies typically focus on business-to-business transactions rather than direct consumer interactions. Their business models, resources and expertise may be geared primarily toward serving other businesses, such as wholesalers, distributors or retailers.

Resource allocation: Chinese B2B companies often have limited resources, especially in terms of staff and budget. They may prioritize resource allocation to B2B sales, relationship management, supply chain operations, and other areas they consider more important to their business.

Complex sales and service requirements: B2B transactions are typically characterized by complex sales processes, customized solutions, and dedicated after-sales service. B2B companies may view the DTC channel as less capable of meeting these complex requirements than traditional B2B channels.

Market Perceptions and Needs: They may believe that their customers prefer to buy through established B2B channels or have specific requirements that can be better addressed through B2B interactions. This perception can make them reluctant to invest in a dedicated team for the DTC channel.

It's important to note that the significance of the DTC channel in China is growing, driven by changing consumer behaviors, e-commerce trends, and digital transformation. As B2B

companies recognize the potential of the DTC channel and the need to engage with individual consumers, they may start to establish dedicated teams and allocate resources accordingly.

Channel Differences： When asked what the difference between the DTC channel and other channels is (in terms of product and pricing strategy), more than the average manager's answer was vague ("not sure" defaulted to "no difference"). This feedback also illustrates some of the doubts that some Chinese companies have about this channel. The Direct-to-Consumer (DTC) channel in China differs from other channels, such as traditional retail or wholesale, in terms of product and pricing strategy. However, some people may find it challenging to distinguish between these channels due to certain factors:

Overlapping Product Offerings: While DTC brands may focus on unique or niche products, there can still be overlap with products available through traditional channels. Established brands may also adopt DTC strategies alongside their existing distribution networks. This overlapping product offering can blur the distinction between channels.

Multi-Channel Approach: Many brands in China adopt a multi-channel approach, combining DTC sales with traditional channels. They may sell products through their own websites, physical stores, social media platforms, and third-party retailers simultaneously. This integration of channels can make it difficult for consumers to differentiate between them.

Lack of Awareness: Some consumers may not be familiar with the DTC concept or may not actively seek out DTC brands. As a result, they may not perceive significant differences in product and pricing strategies between DTC and other channels.

Marketing and Branding: DTC brands often emphasize their unique selling propositions, storytelling, and direct consumer engagement as part of their marketing and branding strategies. However, other channels can also employ similar marketing tactics, making it harder for consumers to differentiate between them solely based on product and pricing strategies.

In summary, while there are differences in product and pricing strategies between the DTC channel and other channels in China, the existence of overlapping products, multi-channel approaches, lack of awareness, and similar marketing tactics can contribute to the perception that there is no significant distinction between them. However, a deeper analysis of the business models, supply chain dynamics, and consumer interactions can help identify the specific differentiating factors.

Establishing a membership system: Through the research, nearly half of the company managers are establishing a membership system to maintain and operate the company's customers (consumers). Of course, through the interviews, we also learned that companies that

have not established a membership system believe that it is unclear whether membership will bring significant benefits to the company and have the intention to try it. In response to the questionnaire responses, we analyzed the potential advantages and challenges of establishing memberships in B2B companies to operate with existing consumers:

Benefits of establishing a membership system for B2B companies:

Customer loyalty and retention: A membership system can increase customer loyalty by providing exclusive benefits and privileges to members. It allows B2B companies to cultivate long-term relationships with their existing consumers, resulting in repeat business and higher customer retention rates.

Personalized experience: With a membership system, B2B companies can collect data and insights about their customers' preferences, purchase history and behavior. This information enables personalized marketing, product recommendations and customized services, creating a more engaging and relevant experience for members.

Upsell and cross-sell opportunities: By analyzing member data, they can increase average order value and drive additional revenue by offering relevant products, upgrades or additional services to members based on their specific needs and buying patterns.

Challenges in building membership systems for B2B companies:

Value proposition: B2B companies need to clearly define the value proposition of their membership programs to encourage customers to join and actively participate. They must offer compelling benefits and privileges that align with their customers' needs and preferences.

Data privacy and security: Managing customer data and ensuring data privacy and security are critical challenges. B2B companies must comply with relevant data protection regulations and have robust systems and processes in place to protect member information.

Operational complexity: Implementing and managing a membership system requires infrastructure, resources and operational capabilities. B2B companies must invest in the right technology platforms, data management systems and skilled personnel to handle membership operations effectively in the market.

Challenges of selling through social media platforms: Chinese B2B companies face several challenges when selling through social media platforms, including:

Difficulty measuring ROI: 44%: Measuring the return on investment (ROI) for social media campaigns can be challenging, especially for B2B companies. Attribution and tracking mechanisms may not be as robust on social media platforms, making it difficult to determine the direct impact of social media efforts on sales and revenue.

Difficulty reaching target audiences（44%）: Social media platforms in China may have limitations when it comes to precise targeting options for B2B companies. It can be challenging to reach the specific decision-makers and professionals who are interested in their products or services, resulting in lower conversion rates and wasted ad spend.

Inability to keep up with algorithmic changes（33%）: Social media platforms frequently update their algorithms, which can affect the visibility and reach of B2B content. B2B companies may struggle to stay updated with these changes and adjust their strategies in a timely manner, leading to decreased organic reach and engagement.

Difficulty creating attractive content（33%）: B2B products and services often require more technical and complex explanations, making it challenging to create visually appealing and engaging content for social media platforms. B2B companies may struggle to present their offerings in a visually compelling way, leading to lower audience engagement.

Difficulty gaining trust（11%）: Establishing trust is crucial for B2B transactions, but building trust solely through social media can be difficult. B2B buyers often require more in-depth information, references, and personal connections to feel confident in their purchasing decisions.

Future investment plans for social media platforms: The data shows that some participants maintain their current level of investment, some reduce their investment, some have no investment plans, and only 2 of the 9 people who participated in the poll said they would continue to invest. From the feedback, it is clear that some Chinese B2B companies are traditionally more conservative in their investment plans for their sales strategies on social media platforms. This conservatism can be attributed to several factors, including concerns about the effectiveness of social platforms for B2B sales, the complexity of B2B products and services, and a focus on traditional sales channels.

That being said, the landscape of B2B sales is continuously evolving, and social platforms are becoming increasingly important for businesses of all types. As more B2B companies recognize the potential benefits of leveraging social platforms, it is likely that the trend of investment in this area will continue to improve.

It's important to note that individual company strategies and industry-specific factors will also influence the pace and extent of investment in social platforms. Some B2B companies may continue to be more cautious in their approach, while others may adopt a more aggressive stance.

Table 7 -The summary of the statistical analysis (Business (B2B) operator)

Aspect		Percentage
Major Online Sales Channels	WeChat	55.56%
	E-commerce platforms(Taobao and Tmall)	44.44%
	TikTok	11.11%
Percentage of Sales on Social Media Platforms	≤10% of total sales	88.89%
Biggest Advantage of Using Social Media	Quick and inexpensive brand awareness	100%
DTC Channel Set-up	No professional DTC team	66.67%
Channel Differences	Uncertain, not sure if there's a difference	> 50%
Challenges of Selling Through Social Media	Difficulty measuring ROI	44%
	Difficulty reaching target audiences	44%
	Inability to keep up with algorithmic changes	33%
	Difficulty creating attractive content	33%
	Difficulty gaining trust	11%
Future Investment Plans for Social Media	Continuing to invest	22.22%

Source: author

5.2. Medium to long-term future action plan

By following this action plan and demonstrating the positive impact of social media platforms on corporate marketing campaigns, the consumer goods industry can leverage the power of digital marketing to reach a wider audience, drive engagement, and ultimately increase sales and brand loyalty.

Table 8 – Future Action Plan：

Step1	Conduct Market Research and Identify Target Audience
1.1	Analyze the target consumer goods companies and identify the key products or services to be promoted through social media.
1.2	Use social media listening tools to monitor discussions about consumer goods, industry trends, and competitors.
1.3	Segment and identify the target audience based on demographics, interests, and online behavior.
Step 2	Set Clear Marketing Objectives
2.1	Define specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) marketing objectives.
2.2	Align marketing objectives with the overall business goals, such as increasing brand awareness, driving website traffic, generating leads, and boosting sales.
Step 3	Choose Appropriate Social Media Platforms
3.1	Evaluate different social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, TikTok) and select the ones that align best with the target audience and marketing objectives.
3.2	Consider the types of content each platform supports and tailor the marketing strategy accordingly.
Step 4	Create Engaging Content
4.1	Develop a content strategy that resonates with the target audience and aligns with the brand's image.
4.2	Create high-quality visuals, videos, and written content that evoke emotions and encourage engagement.
4.3	Integrate user-generated content (UGC) to build authenticity and trust.
Step 5	Implement Paid Advertising Campaigns
5.1	Utilize social media advertising tools to target specific audience segments.
5.2	Set a budget and allocate funds to different social media platforms based on their effectiveness and potential reach.
5.3	A/B test various ad formats and targeting options to optimize ad performance.
Step 6	Monitor and Analyze Performance
6.1	Use social media analytics tools to track the performance of marketing campaigns and gather relevant data (e.g., impressions, clicks, conversions, engagement rates).
6.2	Continuously monitor campaign progress and make data-driven adjustments as necessary.
6.3	Measure the return on investment (ROI) for each campaign to assess its impact on corporate marketing activities.
Step 7	Engage with the Audience
7.1	Respond to comments, messages, and mentions promptly to show that the brand values customer feedback.
7.2	Encourage discussions, polls, and user participation to foster a sense of community around the brand.
7.3	Collaborate with influencers and brand advocates to extend the brand's reach and credibility.
Step 8	Leverage Social Media for Customer Support
8.1	Provide customer support through social media channels, addressing inquiries and resolving issues.
8.2	Use social media as a platform to showcase positive customer experiences and testimonials.
Step 9	Measure Impact on Corporate Marketing Activities
9.1	Compare social media marketing data with traditional marketing efforts (if applicable) to highlight the benefits of digital marketing.
9.2	Collect feedback from the sales team, customer service, and other relevant departments to gauge the impact of social media marketing on their activities.
Step 10	Compile Case Studies and Reports
10.1	Create comprehensive case studies and reports showcasing successful social media marketing campaigns and their impact on corporate marketing activities.
10.2	Present the findings to relevant stakeholders, including management, marketing teams, and investors.

Source: author

6. IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

6.1. Implications for the consumer goods industry

The impact of social media platforms in digital marketing on the Chinese consumer goods industry has been significant, with businesses leveraging these platforms to reach new customers, build brand awareness, and increase sales. In this chapter, we will explore the impact of social media platforms in digital marketing on the Chinese consumer goods industry.

At a macro level, the recommendations for the future use of social media platforms in digital marketing in China are consistent with the core principles of successful digital marketing. These principles include knowing your target audience, creating engaging content, leveraging influential marketing, using data to inform strategy, and staying abreast of emerging trends. A few specific recommendations are listed below:

Table 9 – Suggestions for improving the impact of social media platforms on business

Personalization	The research should explore how brands can effectively personalize their marketing strategies, including the use of AI and machine learning, to deliver more relevant and engaging experiences to consumers.
Mobile optimization	The research should examine how brands can effectively optimize their websites and digital marketing strategies for mobile devices, including the use of mobile-specific content and mobile-first design.
Social media advertising	The research should explore the effectiveness of different types of social media advertising, such as sponsored posts, display ads, and video ads, and how brands can effectively leverage social media advertising to reach their target audiences.
Content marketing	The research should examine the effectiveness of different types of content, such as blog posts, infographics, and videos, and how brands can effectively leverage content marketing to drive business growth.
Customer engagement	The research should explore how brands can effectively engage with their customers through social media, email marketing, and other digital channels, as well as the impact of customer engagement on brand loyalty and advocacy.
Search engine optimization (SEO)	The research should examine the effectiveness of different SEO techniques, including keyword research, on-page optimization, and link building, and how brands can effectively leverage SEO to drive traffic and conversions.
Attribution modeling	The research should examine different attribution models, including first-touch, last-touch, and multi-touch attribution, and how brands can effectively use attribution modeling to better understand the impact of their marketing efforts.

Source: author

6.2. Limitations of the study

The use of digital marketing in the consumer goods industry is an area of active research, and the effectiveness of social media platforms in this context is a topic of interest. However, this study has several limitations that should be addressed.

Limited generalizability: Research on the effectiveness of social media platforms in digital marketing has focused on specific industries or products; therefore, the findings may not be generalizable to all industries. In addition, the effectiveness of social media platforms may vary across demographics, regions, or cultures.

Lack of standard metrics: The lack of standard metrics to measure the effectiveness of digital marketing on social media platforms is a significant limitation. Metrics such as number of impressions, reach, engagement and conversion rates can vary across platforms and campaigns, making it difficult to compare the effectiveness of different campaigns or platforms.

Limited data availability: Data used to evaluate the effectiveness of digital marketing on social media platforms is often limited, and researchers may not have access to all relevant data. This limitation can affect the accuracy and validity of the study results.

Limited control over variables: Conducting controlled experiments in a digital marketing context is challenging due to the inability to control variables such as user behavior and platform updates. These variables can affect the results of a study and make it difficult to draw definitive conclusions.

Self-selection bias: Consumers who engage in digital marketing campaigns on social media platforms may differ from those who do not, resulting in self-selection bias. This bias may lead to an overestimation of the effectiveness of digital marketing campaigns.

Short-term focus: Many studies on the effectiveness of digital marketing on social media platforms have a short-term focus, with results measured immediately after the campaign ends. However, the long-term effects of these campaigns can be more important to businesses but difficult to monitor.

In summary, the effectiveness of social media platforms in digital marketing in the consumer goods industry is an area of active research, but several limitations should be noted when interpreting the findings. These limitations include lack of generalizability, standard metrics, data availability, control for variables, self-selection bias, and short-term focus.

6.3. Suggestions for future research

Based on the future development, we would like to give a few different dimensions that can be used to analyze the proposed future use of social media platforms in digital marketing in China:

Table10- Future Research Suggestions

Research Proposals	
Demographic Dimension	By analyzing demographic data, brands can make informed decisions about which platforms to use and how to tailor their content to specific audience segments.
Geographic Dimension	By understanding regional differences, brands can create targeted marketing campaigns that resonate with local audiences.
Content Dimension	By creating content that aligns with local preferences, brands can build stronger connections with Chinese consumers.
Platform Dimension	Brands need to keep up-to-date with changes in the social media landscape and adjust their digital marketing strategies accordingly.
Technology Dimension	By embracing technology, brands can gain a competitive edge in China's digital landscape.

Source: author

6.4. Conclusion

The study emphasizes the growing importance of digital marketing in the consumer goods industry, highlighting its ability to target and engage Chinese consumers through various online channels. It delves into the landscape of Chinese social media platforms, such as WeChat, Weibo, and Tik Tok, and examines their popularity, user demographics, and unique features that make them suitable for digital marketing campaigns.

Understanding the preferences, behaviors, and expectations of Chinese consumers is crucial for effective digital marketing. The research emphasizes the need for thorough market research to tailor campaigns that resonate with the target audience. It also highlights the significance of leveraging key opinion leaders (KOLs) and influencers in Chinese social media platforms to enhance brand visibility and credibility.

Crafting compelling and culturally relevant content is another key aspect covered in the study. It emphasizes the importance of creating content that aligns with Chinese consumers' interests, values, and aspirations. The research explores successful content strategies, including storytelling, interactive campaigns, and user-generated content, which can effectively engage Chinese consumers and drive brand loyalty.

Data analytics plays a critical role in evaluating the performance of digital marketing campaigns. The study emphasizes the significance of measuring key metrics and analyzing consumer behavior to optimize strategies and achieve better results. It provides insights into effective data analytics practices and tools for monitoring campaign performance and understanding consumer preferences.

The study also highlights the necessity of a mobile-first approach in digital marketing due to the prevalence of mobile internet usage in China. Adapting campaigns for mobile devices and utilizing features like QR codes and mobile payment integration can enhance consumer engagement and drive conversions.

In conclusion, "The Application of Digital Marketing in the Consumer Goods Industry: Effective Analysis of Chinese Social Media Platforms" underscores the importance of understanding the unique characteristics of Chinese social media platforms and tailoring digital marketing strategies to effectively engage Chinese consumers. By leveraging influencers, crafting culturally relevant content, utilizing data analytics, and adopting a mobile-first approach, companies can achieve success in the competitive Chinese consumer goods market.

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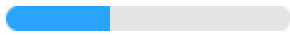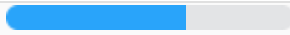
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8. APPENDICES
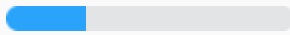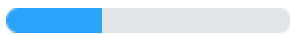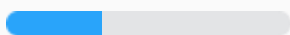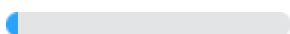
Sample survey questionnaire and survey results

A questionnaire about the application of social media platforms
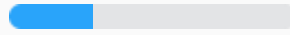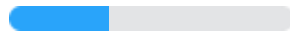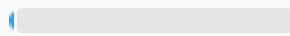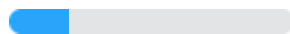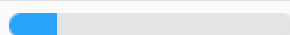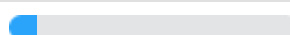
1. What is your gender? (single option)

Option	Proportion	
a. Male		36.92%
b. Female		63.08%
The number of valid fillings	335	
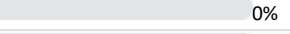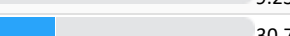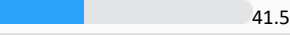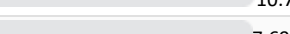
2. What age group are you currently? (single option)

Option	Proportion	
a. < 20		0%
b. 20 - 30		27.69%
c. 30 - 40		33.85%
d. 40 - 50		33.85%
e. > 50		4.62%
The number of valid fillings	335	

3. What social platforms do you most frequently use? (Multiple choices：Voting Questions)
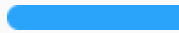
Option	Proportion	
a. WeChat		98.46%
b. Microblog		29.23%
c. Toutiao /Tik Tok		35.38%
d. KuaiShou		1.54%
e. Little red book		21.54%
f. bilibili		16.92%
g. other		9.23%
The number of valid fillings	335	

4. On average, how much time do you spend on social platforms every day? (Single choice)
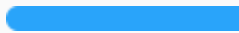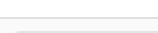
Option	Proportion	
a. < 30min		0%
b. [30min, 1h]		9.23%
c. [1h, 2h]		30.77%
d. [2 h, 4 h]		41.54%
e. [4 h、6 h]		10.77%
f. [6 h, 8 h]		7.69%

The number of valid fillings	335

5.　What are your main purposes for visiting these social platforms? (multiple choices)

Option	Proportion
leisure and entertainment	86.15%
access to knowledge, broaden your knowledge	60%
search for some products I like	43.08%
Show yourself and become a popular in social media.	1.54%
Communication between friends	63.08%
Obtain various gossip information	23.08%
The number of valid fillings	335
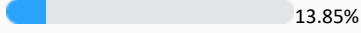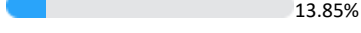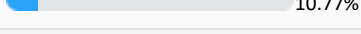
6.　What kind of content do you find most engaging and enjoyable on social media platforms?

Option	Proportion
Photos	47.69%
Videos	83.08%
Text-based posts	38.46%
Live streams	10.77%
Product promotions	3.08%
Influencer content	3.08%
News articles	56.92%
Other (please specify)	1.54%
The number of valid fillings	335
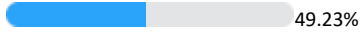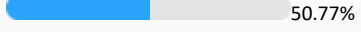
7.　What type of content do you find least interesting or dislike the most on social media platforms? (multiple choices：Voting Questions)

Option	Proportion
Photos	10.77%
Videos	12.31%
Text-based posts	13.85%
Live streams	40%
Product promotions	73.85%
Influencer content	53.85%
News articles	12.31%
Other (please specify)	1.54%
The number of valid fillings	335
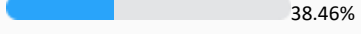
8. How often do you see FMCG products being advertised on social media? (single option)

Option	Proportion
Multiple times per day	61.54%
Once per day	13.85%
A few times per week	13.85%
Rarely or never	10.77%
The number of valid fillings	335
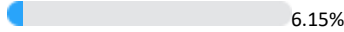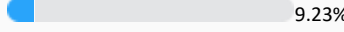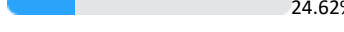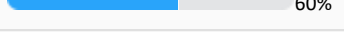
9. Have you ever made a purchase of an FMCG product as a result of seeing an advertisement on social media? (single option)

Option	Proportion
Yes	49.23%
No	50.77%
The number of valid fillings	335

10. Have you ever made a purchase of an FMCG product based on recommendations or reviews you saw on social media? (single option)
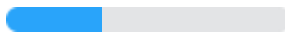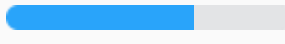
Option	Proportion
Yes	61.54%
No	38.46%
The number of valid fillings	335

11. How often do you follow FMCG brands on social media? (single option)
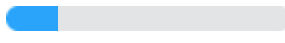
Option	Proportion
Multiple brands, multiple times per day	6.15%
One or two brands, once per day	9.23%
A few brands, a few times per week	24.62%
Rarely or never	60%
The number of valid fillings	335

12. Have you ever engaged with an FMCG brand on social media (e.g. liked, commented, shared a post)? (single option)
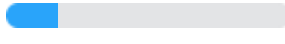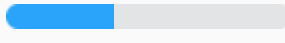
Option	Proportion
Yes	33.85%
No	66.15%
The number of valid fillings	335
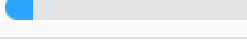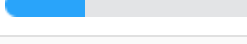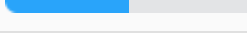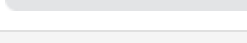
13. Have you ever participated in a social media contest or promotion offered by an FMCG brand? (single option)

Option	Proportion
Yes	18.46%
No	81.54%
The number of valid fillings	335
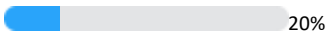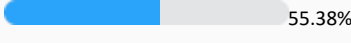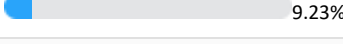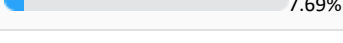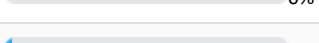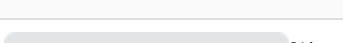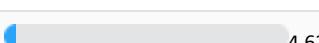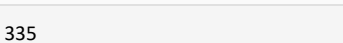
14. If there is any content or product that interests you, would you like to participate in some offline interactions organized by merchants according to the platform's guidelines? (single option)

Option	Proportion
Yes	18.46%
Not willing	38.46%
Not sure	43.08%
The number of valid fillings	335
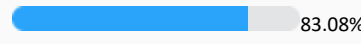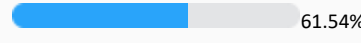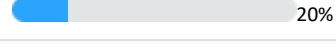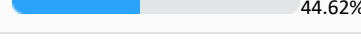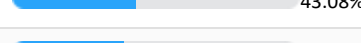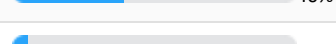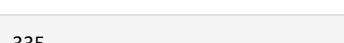
15. What kind of goods are you more willing to place an order for on social platforms? (Multiple choice: Voting Questions)

Option	Proportion
daily necessities	86.15%
beauty makeup	33.85%
shoes and clothes	49.23%
electrical apparel	9.23%
food and beverage	27.69%
home and personal care products	43.08%
luxury	0%
The number of valid fillings	335

16. If you place an order on a social platform, what is the range of unit price you can generally accept? (single option)

48

Option	Proportion
< 100 yuan	20%
100-400 yuan	55.38%
400-700 yuan	9.23%
700-1000 yuan	7.69%
1000-1300 yuan	0%
1300-1600yuan	3.08%
1600-1900yuan	0%
> 2000 yuan	4.62%
The number of valid fillings	335

17. When you are considering buying a product on a social media platform, which of the following information are you most interested in knowing about the product before making a purchase? (Multiple choice)

Option	Proportion
Product specifications (e.g. size, weight, color, materials)	63.08%
Product features and benefits (e.g. what the product can do, how it can help you)	83.08%
User reviews and ratings	58.46%
Price and discounts	61.54%
Shipping and delivery information	20%
Seller or brand reputation	44.62%
Return and refund policies	43.08%
Product demonstrations or tutorials (e.g. how-to videos)	40%
Other (please specify)	6.15%
The number of valid fillings	335

18. When it comes to buying products through social media platforms, which of the following factors do you think could prevent or discourage you from making a purchase? (Multiple choice)
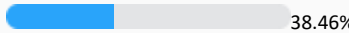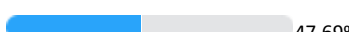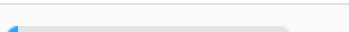
Option	Proportion
Concerns about the security of my personal information (e.g. credit card details)	50.77%
Concerns about the reliability and authenticity of the product or seller	63.08%

Difficulty in navigating the social media platform or finding the product I want		29.23%
Lack of trust in the payment process (e.g. payment options, payment confirmation)		40%
Uncertainty about the product's quality or suitability		72.31%
High shipping or handling fees		40%
Long delivery time		38.46%
Complicated or restrictive return policies		43.08%
Other (please specify)		4.62%
The number of valid fillings	335	

19. On a scale of 0 to 10, how likely are you to recommend buying products through social media platforms to a friend or family member? (single option)
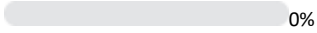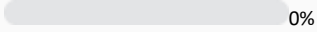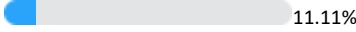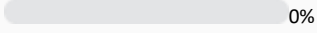
Option	Proportion	
0: Not at all likely to recommend		21.54%
1		6.15%
2		9.23%
3		10.77%
4		9.23%
5		18.46%
6		6.15%
7		7.69%
8		3.08%
9		4.62%
10: Extremely likely to recommend		3.08%
The number of valid fillings	335	

20. If a friend recommends a product to you through a social media platform, which of the following best describes your intent to purchase the product? (single option)
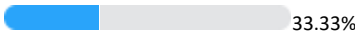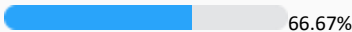
Option	Proportion	
I would definitely buy the product based on my friend's recommendation.		9.23%
I would be likely to buy the product, but I would do some research and read reviews before making a final decision.		38.46%
I would be somewhat interested in the product, but I would need more information before deciding to buy it.		47.69%
I would not be interested in buying the product, even if my friend recommended it.		4.62%
The number of valid fillings	335	

A questionnaire about the application of social media platforms(B2B company)
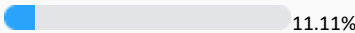
1. Which industry do you belong to? (single option)
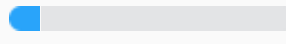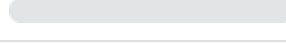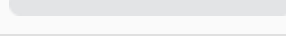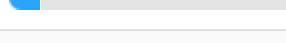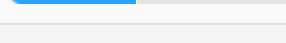
Option	No.	Proportion	
Food and Beverage	0		0%
Personal Care and Beauty	0		0%
Household and Cleaning	1		11.11%
Household appliances	0		0%
Industry / Technology / Manufacturing	8		88.89%
The number of valid fillings	9		

2. Do you currently sell your products through social media platforms? (single option)
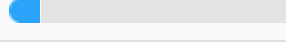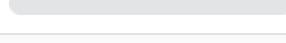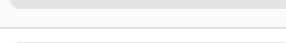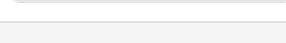
Option	No.	Proportion	
Yes	3		33.33%
No	6		66.67%
The number of valid fillings	9		

3. Which social media platforms do you primarily use to sell your products? (Select all that apply)
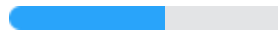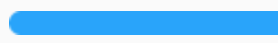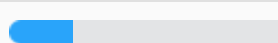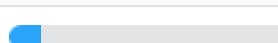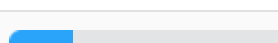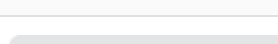
Option	No.	Proportion	
WeChat/Friends Circle	5		55.56%
Weibo	1		11.11%
Today's headlines/Tiktok	2		22.22%

Little Red Book	1		11.11%
blibli	0		0%
Poizon(得物)	0		0%
Baidu	1		11.11%
Others: TaoBao/JD.com	4		44.44%
The number of valid fillings	9		
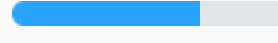
4. What percentage of your overall sales comes from social media platforms? (single option)
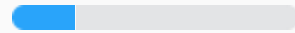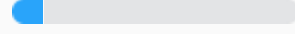
Option	No.	Proportion	
0-10%	8		88.89%
11-25%	1		11.11%
26-50%	0		0%
51-75%	0		0%
76-100%	0		0%
The number of valid fillings	9		

5. What benefits have you experienced from selling through social media platforms? (multiple choices)
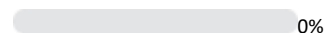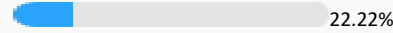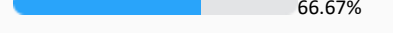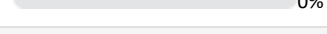
Option	No.	Proportion	
Increased sales	5		55.56%
Improved brand awareness	9		100%
Increased customer engagement	4		44.44%
Enhanced customer experience	2		22.22%
Improved customer retention	1		11.11%
Increased customer loyalty	2		22.22%
Other (please specify):	0		0%
The number of valid fillings	9		

6. What are the main purposes of your company's DTC channel? (multiple choices)
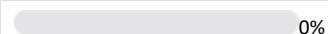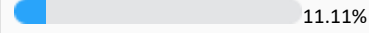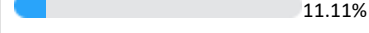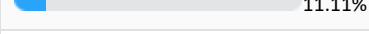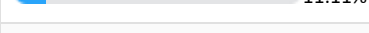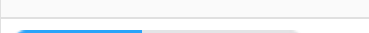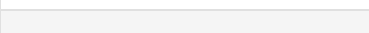
Option	No.	Proportion	
promotion the brand image	7		77.78%
increase sales	6		66.67%
expand consumer groups	5		55.56%

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understand consumer preferences	2	22.22%
increase consumer viscous and loyalty	4	44.44%
collect user requirements for product innovation iteration	1	11.11%
The number of valid fillings	9	
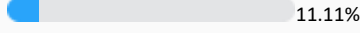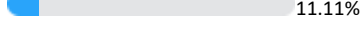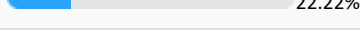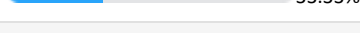
7. What is the age distribution of the main consumers of your company's products in social media platforms? (multiple choice)

Option	No.	Proportion
Under 18 years of age	0	0%
18-25 years old	2	22.22%
25-35 years old	7	77.78%
35-50 years old	6	66.67%
Over 50 years old	0	0%
The number of valid fillings	9	
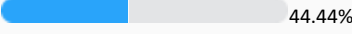
8. What is the unit price of your company's products in social media platforms? (single option)

Option	No.	Proportion
within 50 yuan	0	0%
within 100 yuan	1	11.11%
within 200 yuan	1	11.11%
within 500 yuan	1	11.11%
within 1000 yuan	1	11.11%
1000 yuan of above	1	11.11%
No products are sold on social media	4	44.44%
The number of valid fillings	9	
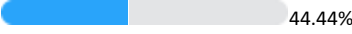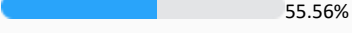
9. What is the spending power of your consumer group in social media platforms? (single choice)

Option	No.	Proportion
the monthly consumption of 200 yuan or less	2	22.22%
the monthly consumption of 500 yuan or less	1	11.11%
the monthly consumption of 1000 yuan or less	1	11.11%
month consumption of 1000 yuan of above	2	22.22%
other	3	33.33%
The number of valid fillings	9	
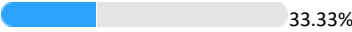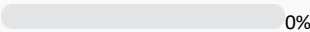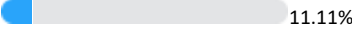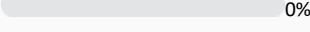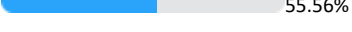
10. Has your company conducted analysis and research on consumer group portraits and has preliminary consumer group portrait assets? (single option)

Option	No.	Proportion
have	5	55.56%
no	4	44.44%
The number of valid fillings	9	
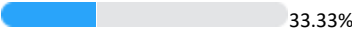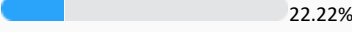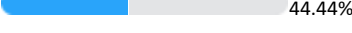
11. Has your company established a membership system to operate existing consumers? (single option)

Option	No.	Proportion
have	4	44.44%
no	5	55.56%
The number of valid fillings	9	

12. How long is the re-purchase cycle of your company's products in social media platforms? (single choice)
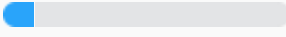
Option	No.	Proportion
within 1 month	3	33.33%
thought two months	0	0%
thought 3 months	1	11.11%
within 4 months	0	0%
more than half a year	5	55.56%
The number of valid fillings	9	

13. Do consumers of your company have high brand loyalty to your company? (single choice)
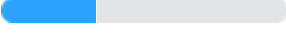
Option	No.	Proportion
high	3	33.33%
low	2	22.22%
not sure	4	44.44%
The number of valid fillings	9	

14. Where is the main geographical distribution of your company's consumer group in social media platforms? (multiple choices)
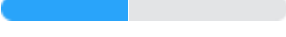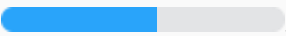
Option	No.	Proportion
first-tier cities (ShangHai\ BeiJing\ShenZhen\GuangZhou...)	7	77.78%
second and third tier cities (HangZhou\NanJing\WuHan\ChengDu\SuZhou...)	4	44.44%
the villages and towns	1	11.11%

other	1	11.11%
The number of valid fillings	9	
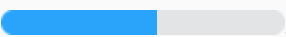
15. Does your company have a professional team responsible for DTC channel business? (single option)

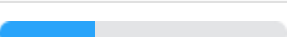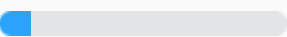| Option	No.	Proportion
yes	3	33.33%
no	6	66.67%
The number of valid fillings	9	
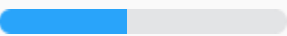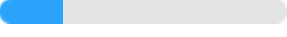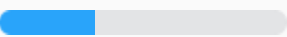
16. Has your company ever created special products (wildly popular products) for social platform channels? (single option)

Option	No.	Proportion
Yes	4	44.44%
no	5	55.56%
The number of valid fillings	9	

17. Is there any differentiation between DTC channel and other channels in your product & price strategy? (single option)
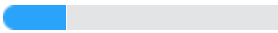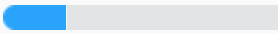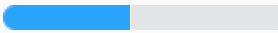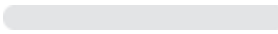
Option	No.	Proportion
Yes	4	44.44%
no	5	55.56%
The number of valid fillings	9	

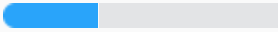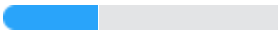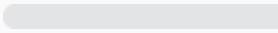18. What challenges have you faced when selling through social media platforms? (multiple choices)

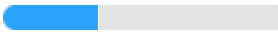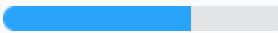| Option	No.	Proportion
Difficulty in measuring ROI	4	44.44%
Difficulty in reaching target audience	4	44.44%
Increased competition from other businesses	2	22.22%
Keeping up with algorithm changes	3	33.33%
Difficulty in creating engaging content	3	33.33%
Other (please specify):	1	11.11%
The number of valid fillings	9	

19. On a scale of 1-5, how challenging is it for you to keep up with social media algorithm changes?

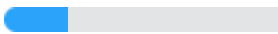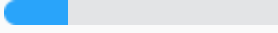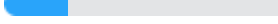| Option	No.	Proportion
1: Not at all challenging	2	22.22%
2: Slightly challenging	2	22.22%
3: Moderately challenging	1	11.11%
4: Very challenging	4	44.44%
5: Extremely challenging	0	0%
The number of valid fillings	9	

20. On a scale of 1-5, how confident are you in measuring the ROI of your social media sales efforts? (single option)

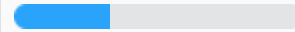| Option	No.	Proportion
1: Not at all confident	3	33.33%
2: Slightly confident	3	33.33%
3: Moderately confident	3	33.33%
4: Very confident	0	0%
5: Extremely confident	0	0%
The number of valid fillings	9	

21. Do you have a dedicated team or individual responsible for managing your social media sales strategy? (single option)

Option	No.	Proportion
Yes	3	33.33%
No	6	66.67%
The number of valid fillings	9	

22. What are your plans for future investment in social media sales strategy? (single option)

Option	No.	Proportion
Increase investment	2	22.22%
Maintain current investment level	2	22.22%
Decrease investment	2	22.22%

No plans to invest in the future	3	33.33%
The number of valid fillings	9	