The Influence of Social Media Sharing Behavior on Consumers' Purchase Intention The Case of Chinese Students in Malaysia

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Abstract
In recent years, the rapid growth of social media platforms has transformed the way consumers interact with brands and make purchasing decisions. Among the consumers who have embraced social media wholeheartedly are Chinese students studying abroad, who often act as early adopters of new trends and play a crucial role in shaping consumer behavior. This study investigates the effect of social media sharing behavior on Chinese students' purchase intention, with a specific focus on their experiences as international students in Malaysia. The objective of this research is to contribute to the understanding of how social media sharing behavior influences consumers' purchase intention, using Chinese students in Malaysia as a case study. The study draws upon the theory of reasoned action and the information adoption model to develop a comprehensive conceptual framework that explores the various factors influencing Chinese students' purchase intention through their social media sharing behavior. To achieve this objective, this study adopted a quantitative research methodology by designing a structured quantitative survey questionnaire to collect data from a larger sample of Chinese students studying in various universities in Malaysia. The survey aims to quantify the relationship between social media sharing behavior and purchase intention, as well as to investigate the quality of shared information, the reliability of the letter on the usefulness of the information, and the impact of information adoption on purchase intention. In this study, questionnaires will be designed through different latitudinal variables and distributed and collected online. A total of 209 questionnaires were collected and finally, the data were processed and analyzed using Spss26.0 and Amos software 26.0. Data analysis employs advanced statistical techniques, including structural equation modeling (SEM), to examine the relationships among the variables and test the proposed conceptual

model. The quantitative results provide empirical evidence that supports the influence of social media sharing behavior on Chinese students' purchase intention, confirming the significance of social media as a powerful marketing tool to influence consumer behavior. Specifically, the findings demonstrate that Chinese students' information quality and credibility in social media sharing behavior positively impact their purchase intention. Furthermore, the study identifies the perceived usefulness of shared information and information adoption towards sharing as critical factors in the relationship between social media sharing behavior and purchase intention. In conclusion, this study contributes valuable insights to both academia and marketing practitioners. By focusing on Chinese students in Malaysia as a unique and influential consumer segment, this research provides a deeper understanding of the intricate interplay between social media sharing behavior and purchase intention. The findings emphasize the significance of leveraging social media platforms to engage with this tech-savvy consumer group and encourage them to share product-related information. For marketers targeting Chinese international students, this research offers practical implications for devising effective social media marketing strategies to influence their purchase decisions.

Keywords: Social Media Sharing Behavior, Purchase Intention, Chinese Students, International Students, Malaysia.

Background
Over the past few decades, the global landscape of communication and commerce has undergone a seismic shift with the advent of digital technologies. Currently, social media is the one of most powerful consumer marketing tools available and is ubiquitously interwoven into consumers' everyday lives, changing how consumers and marketers communicate with one another (Zhao et al., 2019). A key business element of social media is that it now allows consumers to evaluate products, recommend products to contacts or friends recommend products to contacts or friends, and link current purchases to future purchases through status updates. In addition, the use of social media provides a valuable tool for businesses. A satisfied user of a product can recommend that product (good or service) to other potential users (Yogesh & Yesha, 2014).

Malaysia has emerged as a popular destination for Chinese students seeking higher education opportunities abroad. This influx of Chinese students has created a dynamic and diverse community that bridges the cultures of China and Malaysia. These students often bring with them unique perspectives, cultural backgrounds, and social networks, making them a fascinating demographic to study in the context of consumer behavior.

Chinese students in Malaysia, like many other young adults globally, are active users of social media platforms such as WeChat, Weibo, Redbook, and Instagram. These platforms serve as not only means of staying connected with friends and family but also as conduits for accessing information and forming opinions. Importantly, they offer opportunities for content creation and sharing, allowing users to disseminate their views and experiences. The influence of social media sharing on consumer purchase intention is a phenomenon of great significance to businesses and marketers. When Chinese students in Malaysia share content related to products or services, their recommendations, reviews, and endorsements can have a powerful impact on the decisions of their peers and followers, effectively acting as digital influencers. Understanding how these students engage with and shape consumer choices is essential for businesses looking to tap into this market.

Previous literature has examined the impact of social networks' characteristic factors on consumers' intentions to engage in purchasing behavior. The research demonstrates the significant impact of the environment of social media itself on consumer interaction experience and purchase intention ((Park et al., 2014; Pentina, Gammoh, et al., 2013; Pentina, Zhang, et al., 2013). Several studies have pointed out that social media influences users' purchasing decisions(Di Pietro & Pantano, 2012; Forbes, 2013; Leerapong, 2013; Sharma, 2012).

In conclusion, the dynamic interplay between social media sharing behavior and consumer purchase intention is a subject of profound relevance in the digital age. Examining this phenomenon through the lens of Chinese students in Malaysia offers a unique opportunity to explore the complexities of cultural influences, connectivity, and commerce in a globalized world. By gaining insights into how this demographic utilizes social media as a conduit for influence, we can unlock valuable lessons for businesses and marketers seeking to navigate the ever-changing landscape of consumer behavior.

Underpinning theory
The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) is a widely recognized social psychological theory that was developed to understand and predict human behavior, particularly in the context of decision-making. It was first introduced by Martin Fishbein and Icek Ajzen (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Fishbein, 1967) and has since been influential in various fields, including psychology, communication studies, marketing, and public health(Armitage & Conner, 2001; Blue, 1995; Paul et al., 2016; Sheppard et al., 1988). TRA was initially developed as an extension of the earlier Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). Fishbein and Ajzen aimed to provide a comprehensive framework for understanding and predicting behavior by considering two key components: attitudes and subjective norms. Behavioral attitude refers to the individual in the implementation of a certain target behavior held by the emotions, including positive emotions or feelings and negative emotions or feelings, this emotion or feeling is the individual's subjective cognition of the results of the behavior as well as the value of the prejudgment; subjective norms is the group of the group on the individual to produce a sense of group pressure, the individual in the implementation of a certain behavior will be taken into account in the group's evaluation of this behavior. The theory proves that an individual's willingness to act will be influenced by the surrounding group's evaluation of the behavior and his or her own judgment of the behavior (Breckler & Wiggins, 1989; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1977). Hansen et al (2004) used the Theory of Reasoned Behavior and the Theory of Planned Behavior to study consumers' online purchase intention in their study and pointed out that this theory is perfectly suitable for the prediction of online behavior. Yu et al. (2008)pointed out that the theory of rational behavior is widely studied and used in the field of social behavior and behavioral intention. The researchers also examined TRA and purchase intentions in different cultural contexts (Zhao et al., 2019).

The information acceptance model suggests that the main factors affecting the usefulness of information include information content quality and information source reliability, where information content quality represents the central path, a measure of the information content itself, encompassing truthfulness, accuracy, timeliness, and completeness(Bailey & Pearson, 1983); and information source reliability is the fringe path, generally classified as professionalism, reliability, and attractiveness, which is the user's judgment of whether or not the source of information is trustworthy. Both have a direct impact on the user's judgment of whether the information is useful or not (Yin et al., 2020). Initially, the model was used to

explain consumers' intentions and reasons for receiving information, especially pushed information. Due to the generalizability of the model, it has been widely used in the study of consumers' acceptance of new things and the degree of processing of product information, and nowadays it is used not only in the study of the acceptance of new systems and technologies but also in the study of the acceptance of new forms of consumption such as online shopping and e-commerce.

Sharing behavior is a common information behavior in social media, and it is also an important form of information dissemination nowadays, which has received extensive attention from academics (Zh & Li, 2022). Users can use social media to share information by posting news, commenting on other people's movements, and so on (Liu & Wang, 2022). The growth of social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, WeChat, Weibo, etc. has provided consumers with great opportunities to share and disseminate relevant product or brand information and content. As a result, consumers are more informed and interested in information about product features before purchasing any product. This phenomenon suggests that social media marketing and consumer engagement play an important role in providing information to other users, thus helping them to form buying preferences and choices (Husnain & Toor, 2017).

Conceptual Framework

Initially, the theory of rational behavior and the technology acceptance model were used to explain users' actual acceptance intentions. The theory of rational behavior states that beliefs influence attitudes and intentions. Therefore, this research integrates the information acceptance model and theory of reasoned action to build a model path. In the research model of this paper, the foremost factors are information features of social media sharing behavior, the reference model selects quality and source trust to reflect the degree of goodness of the features', perceived usefulness is the usefulness of the information features of the sharing behavior, user attitude is the information acceptance, and behavioral intention is the willingness to buy.

Hypotheses Development

Information Quality

Information quality refers to the persuasiveness of the message (Bhattacherjee & Sanford, 2006). Sussman and Siegal (2003), in their model of information quality and information adoption, point out that the individual's acceptance of extrinsic information mainly stems from the content and quality of the information itself, and that this information quality characteristic has a significant positive influence on the information receiver and improves the effect of information dissemination and persuasion. For example, many scholars, such as Park and Lee foreign countries and Yang Shuang in China, have stated in their articles that there is a positive correlation between information quality and perceived usefulness. Peng and Shi (2018) argue that the quality of eWOM information is positively proportional to the usefulness of the message, that is, the higher the quality of the word-of-mouth statements, the more helpful consumers will find the message. Ehasn (2020) also obtained the same result as that of the same results of Peng Lan. Wang et al (2017) studied the factors influencing the adoption behavior of personalized recommendations by mobile commerce users and further found that the quality of recommendation information affects the willingness to use personalized recommendations by influencing the perceived usefulness. The information acceptance model (Bhattacherjee & Sanford, 2006) identifies factors that have a significant

impact on the usefulness of information, including the quality of the information content and the reliability of the information source. These two factors add to the direct effect of information usefulness as perceived by the consumer. As a result, the following hypothesis is proposed

H1: There is a positive relationship between information quality and information usefulness.

Information Credibility
Information credibility is an initial factor in the personal persuasion process and refers to the perception of information credibility by the recipient of the information, positioned as a trustworthy source (Cheung et al., 2008; Leong et al., 2021; Wathen & Burkell, 2002). Information credibility is recognized as a major determinant in the consumer decision-making process(Awad & Ragowsky, 2008; Erkan & Evans, 2016). Indeed, previous studies have also demonstrated the impact of information credibility on information adoption(McKnight & Kacmar, 2006) and consumer purchase intention (Nabi & Hendriks, 2003; Prendergast et al., 2010). There is a positive correlation between information credibility and consumer purchase intention, especially when the information is found to be useful and adaptable (Hui, 2017; JA et al., 2018; Park et al., 2007; Prendergast et al., 2010). For example, Cheung et al (2008), in their study of the role of word-of-mouth opinions in online customer communities, confirmed that information quality will have a significant positive effect on customers' perceived usefulness of information through the central path, which covers the characteristics of reliability, accuracy, relevance, completeness, and richness of information; meanwhile, the source of community word-of-mouth, including the credibility of the sender and the characteristics of the degree of specialization, will play a role in the perception of customer's word-of-mouth opinions through the edge path, and the more reliable the source of information is, the stronger the community customer's perceived usefulness is, and the more likely that their opinions will be accepted and adopted. Therefore, this research predicts that information credibility is positively related to information usefulness.

H2: There is a positive relationship between information credibility and information usefulness.

Information usefulness and information adoption
Information usefulness refers to people's belief that using new information will improve their performance (Bailey & Pearson, 1983; Cheung et al., 2008). Information usefulness is considered a major predictor of information adoption (Davis, 1989; Sussman & Siegal, 2003). This is because people engage with information when they find it useful. Especially in social media, people are exposed to a large amount of word-of-mouth information on the Internet Chu & Kim (2011); therefore, when they perceive information to be useful, they may have a greater willingness to adopt it. Information adoption manifests itself as a process of behavioral intention through which individuals intentionally adopt information (Cheung et al., 2008; Wang, 2016). Social media increases the sharing of information, opinions, and experiences among consumers, and when information meets the needs of social media users, social media becomes a good source of information for people to seek and adopt information. Therefore, this study anticipates a positive relationship between information adoption and information usefulness.

H3: There is a positive relationship between information usefulness and information adoption.

Information adoption and purchase intention
Cheung and Thadani (2012) found that information adoption is one of the determinants of consumer purchase intention. A subsequent study by Sánchez Torres et al. (2018) further found that information adoption on social media tends to influence an individual's purchase intention. Information adoption behavior is one of the main activities that users seek to perform in virtual communities. For example, users browse opinions and reviews posted by others before making a purchase decision Pitta & Fowler (2005), and people develop opinions on whether these opinions help them make better purchase decisions. Thus, if others find a review in an online community useful, they will be more likely to adopt it. In this study, by linking IAM and TRA, we predict that consumers who adopt information adoption behaviors are more likely to make a purchase. Therefore, this study anticipates a positive relationship between information adoption and purchase intention.

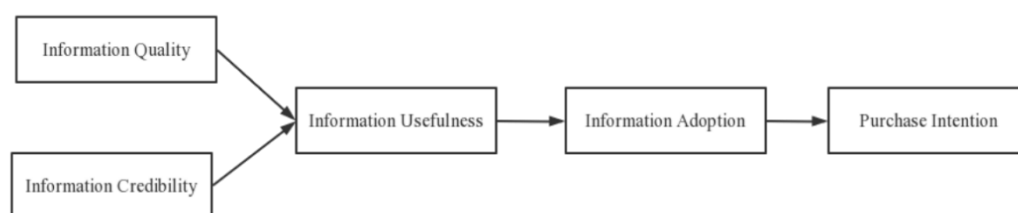H4: There is a positive relationship between information adoption and purchase intention.

Figure1: Research Framework

Methodology
In this study, a questionnaire was administered online to the respondents and a purposive sampling technique was used to select the respondents. The respondents in this study are Chinese students studying in Malaysia and are also social media users. The online questionnaire was mainly developed by the professional questionnaire data platform "Questionnaire Star" and forwarded to friends, professional forums, and university alumni groups using mobile social tools. The questionnaire survey lasted more than two months from June 2023 to mid-August 2023, and 247 questionnaire samples were initially obtained. To make the data of the survey more real and improve the scientific of the results, this study deleted some substandard data samples, including the questionnaires with inconsistencies, missing data, and obvious filling patterns, and finally screened out 209valid questionnaire samples for empirical analysis, with a validity rate of 85%. To make the design of the questionnaire more reliable and reasonable, this study refers to the connotation of the variables suitable for this questionnaire survey and the mature scales that have been cited more often. In addition, to improve the reliability of the questionnaire, this study also conducted a small-scale pilot study to analyze the validity and reliability of the questionnaire before the formal research. Based on the feedback and suggestions from the respondents, minor adjustments were made to the structure of the questionnaire and the measurement items of the variables, and further modifications were made to the selected scales by

considering the characteristics of information sharing in social media and the special group of Chinese students in Malaysia, which finally resulted in the questionnaire of this study.

The questionnaire was divided into two parts in total: the first part was the content was the demographic characteristics of the study population; the second part was the abstract variables of this study. All latent variables were measured based on previously validated measures. The items of information quality were derived from Park et al (2007); Erkan and Evans (2018); the items of information credibility were derived from Prendergast et al (2010); Erkan and Evans (2016); and information usefulness was derived from Bailey and Pearson (1983); Cheung et al (2008); Erkan and Evans (2018); Gökerik et al (2018); information adoption from Wu and Shaffer (1987); Cheung et al (2009); and willingness to buy from (Coyle and Thorson, 2001; Erkan and Evans, 2016). All constructs were carried out by a five-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

Data Analysis
Sample statistical characterization
The characteristics of the 209 respondents of this study are distributed as follows. Among the respondents, 89 of them are female, accounting for 42.6%, and 120 of them are male, accounting for 57.4%; the age range of the respondents accounts for the largest proportion of 26-35 years old, accounting for 32.1%, but the proportion of 36-40 years old also reaches 31.1%, followed by 18-25 years old, accounting for 23.4%, and the smallest one is over 40 years old, accounting for 13.4%; the respondents' In terms of educational background, the largest range is undergraduates, with 177 respondents, accounting for 84.7%, followed by master's degree holders with 25 respondents, accounting for 12%, and the smallest is Phd with 7 respondents, accounting for 3.3%; the largest range of monthly disposable income of the respondents is between Rmb3000-5000, with 88 respondents, accounting for 42.1%, followed by Rmb3000, with 68 respondents, accounting for 3.4%, and the smallest is above 40 years old, accounting for 13.4%. The remaining ranges of Rmb 5000-8000 and Rmb 8000 and above are 36 and 22 respectively, accounting for 17.2% and 10.5%; 91 of the respondents use social media for 0.5-1 hour a day, accounting for 43.5% of the respondents' daily usage, followed by 60 respondents who use social media for less than 0.5 hours, the number of people who use social media for 1-2 hours and 2-4 hours or more is the same, both are 25 people, accounting for 12%, and only 8 people use social media for more than 4 hours, accounting for 3.8%. (Table 1)

Table 1
Sample Characteristics (n=209)

Measure	Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Mean	Std. Deviation
Gender	Male	89	42.6	1.57	0.496
	Female	120	57.4		
Age	18-25	49	23.4	2.34	0.984
	26-35	67	32.1		
	36-40	65	31.1		
	>40	28	13.4		
Education Level	Bachelor	177	84.7	1.19	0.469
	Master	25	12		
	Phd	7	3.3		
Monthly Disposable Income	<3000Rmb			2.08	0.945
	3000-5000Rmb	68	30.1		
	5000-8000Rmb	88	42.1		
	>8000Rmb	36	17.2		
		22	10.5		
Social Media Usage (per day)	<0.5h	60	28.7	2.19	1.096
	0.5-1h	91	43.5		
	1-2h	25	12		
	2-4h	25	12		
	>4h	8	3.8		

Reliability and Validity

Validity analysis refers to the evaluation of the validity of a measurement tool or assessment method, including whether the content measured by the measurement tool or assessment method is consistent with what needs to be measured, and whether the measurement tool or assessment method can accurately and reliably portray the characteristics of the subject(Wang & Yang, 2023). The KMO value of the questionnaire is 0.985, which is greater than 0.8, and the P value is less than 0.05, indicating that the validity of the questionnaire is good, which indicates that the data of each scale can be subjected to subsequent factor analysis. The validity is divided into content validity, structural validity, convergent validity, and discriminant validity (Liu & Zhao, 2011). In this paper, the validity is measured by model fitness, CR (Combined Reliability), AVE (Average Variance Extracted) of validated factor analysis, and AVE square root value compared with the correlation coefficient, respectively. The test was done by statistical analysis software SPSS 26.0, and Amos 26.0.

Reliability analysis is a method used to assess the credibility and stability of a measurement tool or questionnaire(Melchers & Beck, 2018). In this paper, Cronbach's α was used to analyze the intrinsic reliability of the questionnaire data, and the test was completed

by the statistical analysis software SPSS 26.0; the standardized factor loadings, CR, and AVE indexes of each measurement item were calculated by using Amos 26.0 software to measure the convergent validity. The results are shown in Table 2. Table 2 shows that: the Cronbach's α value of each latent variable is greater than 0.8, which indicates that the questionnaire has good reliability(Gim Chung et al., 2004); the CR value is greater than 0.7, and the AVE value is greater than 0.5, which indicates that the scale has good internal consistency and convergent validity.

Table 2
Results of Reliability and Validity Analysis

The path			Factor loading	P	CR	AVE	Cronbach's α
IQ1	<---	Information Quality	0.854				
IQ2	<---	Information Quality	0.786	***			
IQ3	<---	Information Quality	0.809	***	0.912	0.674	0.909
IQ4	<---	Information Quality	0.863	***			
IQ5	<---	Information Quality	0.788	***			
IC1	<---	Information Credibility	0.727				
IC2	<---	Information Credibility	0.720	***	0.86	0.606	0.856
IC3	<---	Information Credibility	0.845	***			
IC4	<---	Information Credibility	0.815	***			
IU1	<---	Information Usefulness	0.855				
IU2	<---	Information Usefulness	0.696	***	0.874	0.636	0.872
IU3	<---	Information Usefulness	0.821	***			
IU4	<---	Information Usefulness	0.81	***			
IA1	<---	Information Adoption	0.797				
IA2	<---	Information Adoption	0.839	***	0.858	0.668	0.857
IA3	<---	Information Adoption	0.816	***			
PI1	<---	Purchase Intention	0.800		0.874	0.636	0.870

PI2	<---	Purchase Intention	0.728	***
PI3	<---	Purchase Intention	0.706	***
PI4	<---	Purchase Intention	0.936	***

In this study, Amos 26.0 software was used to construct the structural equation model and test the fit. The main fit indexes and fitted values are shown in Table 3, from which all fitted values are in accordance with the recommended values, indicating that the scale has good structural validity.

Table 3
Model Fit Indices

Items			Absolute fit		Parsimonious fit	Value added fit		Residual
Fit index	X2/df	RMSEA	AGFI	GFI	PGFI	CFI	TLI	RMR
Recommended value	< 3	< 0.08	> 0.8	> 0.9	> 0.5	> 0.9	> 0.9	< 0.08
Actual value	1.389	0.043	0.876	0.906	0.690	0.975	0.971	0.073

This study used Amos 26.0 software to compare the AVE square root values and correlation coefficients, and the results are shown in Table 4, where the diagonal values are the AVE square root values, and the AVE square root values are greater than the correlation coefficients of the latent variables, which indicates that the scale has good discriminant validity.

Table 4
Divergent Validity Results

	Purchase Intention	Information Adoption	Information Usefulness	Information Credibility	Information Quality
Purchase Intention	0.821				
Information Adoption	0.467	0.778			
Information Usefulness	0.53	0.623	0.797		
Information Credibility	0.356	0.507	0.666	0.817	
Information Quality	0.37	0.493	0.608	0.533	0.797

Structural Equation Path Coefficients and Hypothesis Testing Results
In this paper, the structural equation model is constructed using Amos 26.0 software to test the four research hypotheses proposed in the previous paper, and the structural equation model and detailed path coefficients are shown in Figure 2. The relationship between latent variables, standardized path coefficients, T-value, P-value, and test results are shown in Table 5, from which the standardized path coefficients are greater than 0, T-value is greater than 1.96, and P-value is significant, which indicates that all the hypotheses are valid, and the relationship between each group of latent variables is positively influenced.
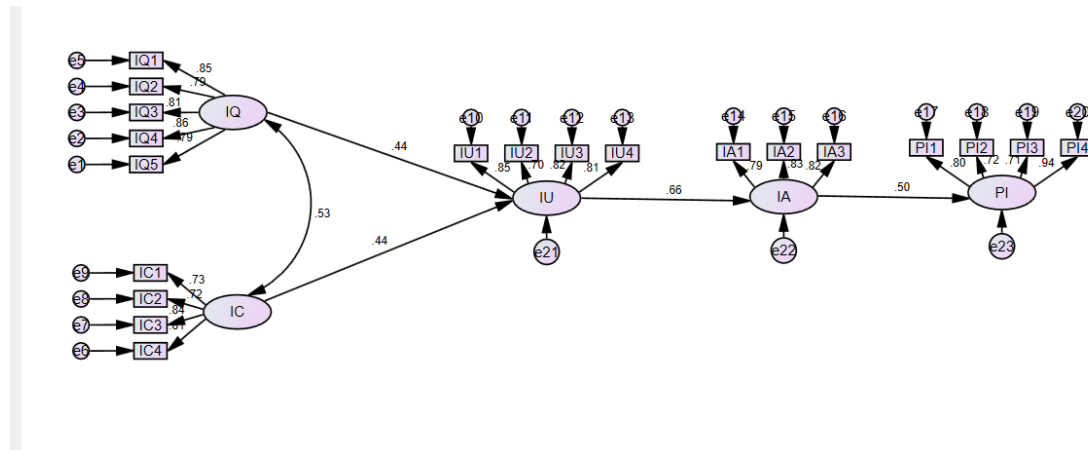

Figure 2: The Structural Model

Table 5
Hypothesis testing results

SEM path			Path value	T value	P	Result
IU	<---	IQ	0.443	5.998	***	H1 Supported
IU	<---	IC	0.440	5.885	***	H2 Supported
IA	<---	IU	0.664	8.466	***	H3 Supported
PI	<---	IA	0.504	6.319	***	H4 Supported

Conclusions
This study constructs the influence of information on consumers' purchase intention in social media sharing behavior based on TRA theory and information acceptance model and selects a special group of Chinese students in Malaysia as the research object. From the perspective of consumers, the study investigates the factors and mechanisms of social media's influence on consumers' purchase intention, empirically analyzes how information quality, information credibility, information usefulness, and information adoption in social media sharing behaviors play a role in purchase intention and draws the following conclusions. First, both information quality and information credibility in social media sharing behavior positively affect consumers' perceived information usefulness. That is when consumers perceive that

the higher the quality of information shared in social media and the more credible the source of information is, the stronger their perceived information usefulness is. Second, consumers' perceived information usefulness positively affects information adoption. That is, the higher the perceived usefulness of information, the higher the likelihood of adoption. The more useful the information is to the consumer, the more likely the review will be adopted during the purchase process. Third, consumers' adoption of information has a positive effect on purchase intention. That is, when consumers adopt the information more deeply, consumers' purchase intentions will be stronger.

The findings of this study have certain theoretical contributions and practical value. Theoretically, this paper is based on the information acceptance model, and theory of reasoned action, and takes the important topic of the effect of information sharing by social media users on consumers' willingness to buy as the research content and takes the special group of Chinese students in Malaysia as the research object. The influencing factors and action paths of consumers' purchase intention are examined in terms of information quality and information reliability, which extends the relevant research theories and enriches the research on social media users and consumer behavior. In practice, the findings of this study provide strategic guidance for enterprises to fully grasp the key factors, explore the psychology of consumers, and utilize social media sharing behaviors to increase consumers' purchase intention, thereby enhancing marketing effectiveness and business value.

Limitations and Future Research
First, in this study, the selected research subjects are Chinese international students in Malaysia, with a more concentrated distribution in terms of geography, age, and education, and their social media experience and consumption attitudes have a certain degree of homogeneity, with a relatively homogeneous group type, which may lead to a lack of representativeness of the sample. Therefore, it is necessary to include diversified social media user groups in future studies. Second, this study does not categorize and differentiate social media but investigates all social media. In fact, different types of social media have different functions and positioning and bring personalized experiences to users, therefore, the study of the impact of sharing behavior on consumers of specific types of social media can be selected for future research to improve the relevance and applicability of the conclusions, and to further validate the theoretical research framework and logic proposed in this paper. Finally, there are many factors that influence consumer purchase intention, including consumer satisfaction, perceived risk, and perceived trust. The variable selected for this study is information adaptation. In addition, there are many factors that significantly affect the usefulness of information, and only information quality and information reliability were selected in this study. Therefore, in future research, more variables can be added to provide a more in-depth and comprehensive exploration of consumer willingness.

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