



# EXPLORING THE INFLUENCE OF KEY OPINION LEADER ON INTERNET WORD OF MOUTH (IWOM) AND CONSUMER'S PURCHASING BEHAVIOR IN NETWORK LIVE BROADCAST

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# Certificate of Individual Study Approval to Master Student

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Exploring the Influence of Key Opinion Leader on Internet Word of Mouth

(IWOM)And Consumer's Purchasing Behavior in Network Live Broadcast

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Individual Study

Exploring the Influence of Key Opinion Leader on Internet Word of

Title:

Mouth (IWOM) And Consumer's Purchasing Behavior in Network

Live Broadcast

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# **Abstract**

The rapid development of online streaming in social media has made online interactive live shopping constantly attracting people's attention, and key opinion leader explain commodities through personal experience and communicate with consumers in real-time interaction, precisely because the sticky relationship under two-way communication satisfies the psychological needs of college students in shopping. The rapid development of live broadcasting and the influence of key opinion leader on the college student population is increasing. The influence of key opinion leader on college students has attracted extensive attention from researchers and scholars. In this study, we collected data on key opinion leader, IWOM and consumer purchasing behavior from college students of a university in Guizhou Province by questionnaire survey method. The data were analyzed by SPSS. Through the analysis of the questionnaire data, it was found that the current status of key opinion leader, IWOM and consumer purchasing behavior of college students in social media is at a high level. At the same time, this study also concluded that there are significant differences between key opinion leader and IWOM and consumer purchasing behavior of college students in Guizhou Province based on the comparative analysis of different research background variables. In addition, key opinion leader were found to have a positive correlation between IWOM and consumer purchasing behavior, which suggests that opinion leader have a positive



influence on the development of IWOM as well as consumer purchasing behavior.

In summary, this study is of great significance to the cultivation of college students' subjective awareness and media literacy; and it can also promote the establishment of college students' correct concept of consumption, and secondly, enterprises can develop more accurate marketing strategies in the subsequent brand development; at the same time, it also puts forward suggestions on Key opinion leaders' personal professionalism and maintenance of their personal image, and lastly, puts forward suggestions to the state in two aspects, on the one hand, the On the one hand, the state should pay attention to the control of the network broadcasting environment; on the other hand, it should correctly guide the concept of college students' consumers. On the one hand, the state should pay attention to the control of the webcasting environment; on the other hand, it should guide the college students to set up correct consumer concepts.

**Keywords:** Key Opinion Leader; Internet Word of Mouth; Consumer's Purchasing; College Students

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Wanting Shi Chinese International College Dhurakij Pundit University March 5,2024



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# **CHAPTER 1**

### INTRODUCTION

The advent of the Internet age has made the network an interconnected industry for consumers in all walks of life, and online shopping has become a more convenient way of life. During this process, the joining of opinion leaders has created live interactive shopping. In addition, as an important group of online consumers, the online word-of-mouth spread by opinion leaders has received increasing attention, allowing online word-of-mouth to play an important role in consumer purchasing behavior. Therefore, this chapter first describes the background, purpose, and questions of the research, and then describes the content of each subsection as follow.

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Throughout the extensive history of communication arts and media education, the ever-evolving landscape of the digital realm has invariably heralded a sea change in how information is disseminated and consumed (Zhang et al., 2021). The genesis of this transformation can be traced back to the late 20th and early 21st centuries, when the internet began its inexorable rise to eventually permeate nearly every facet of human existence. The advent of social media platforms further catalyzed this convergence, not only democratizing content creation but also irrevocably altering the symbiotic relationship between content creators and consumers (Ding, 2018). This, in turn, has fueled the ascendancy of social media within the entertainment marketplace as well as the broader market economy. In their bid to retain users, social media platforms have relentlessly augmented their functionalities, precipitating the introduction of live-streaming capabilities and, by extension, the burgeoning of the online live-streaming industry. As this industry continues to mature, the influence and popularity of online live-streaming are entering a new era (Liu, 2021).

Amidst these paradigmatic shifts, the phenomenon of online live streaming stands out, a medium that interweaves real-time interaction with conventional content dissemination. Scarcely any other domain has garnered such interest regarding its profound impact on the burgeoning virtual populace (Lin, 2021). The burgeoning of online live streaming culture has witnessed the increasing adoption of live streaming



commerce, a shopping modality wherein opinion leaders congregate followers through live broadcasts, leveraging their influence to promote products (Lin et al., 2018). During live broadcasts, opinion leaders share authentic experiences with product information and functionalities, encouraging their followers to make purchases (Nunes et al., 2018). An interactive element exists between opinion leaders and consumers throughout the purchasing process, effectively fulfilling both their functional and emotional needs (Li, 2017).

Traditional broadcast media provide a one-way flow of content, whereas live streaming media facilitates two-way communication with its interactive environment, enabling consumers to actively engage with and even shape the narrative. This has inadvertently had a major impact on Internet word-of-mouth (IWOM), the modern-day evolution of word-of-mouth, which has been widely documented in academia for its significant influence on consumer purchasing behavior (Goldsmith, 2008). The advent of IWOM has altered the way in which a majority of consumers acquire information (Bhaiswar et al., 2021). Given the increase in the number of online shoppers, coupled with the diversity and complexity of product information online, IWOM has gained traction among consumers as they are faced with many choices during the product purchasing process and thus require more specific information to aid them in their purchase decisions (Schindler & Bickart, 2004). In this context, from a psychological standpoint, we can delineate an intricate network of factors that interact within this digital realm. The real-time nature of live streaming fosters a sense of belonging and intimacy among viewers, creating a digital environment where opinions, experiences, and perspectives are constantly being exchanged (Kang et al., 2021). Within this matrix, IWOM emerges as an organic byproduct, often guiding the narrative for the broader online audience and subsequently influencing their purchasing decisions (Riegner, 2007).

Prior research has emphasized the role of personal anecdotes and peer reviews in shaping consumer behavior. In such an atmosphere, influencers and content creators can leverage the power of live streaming to sway public opinion, thereby exerting a profound impact on consumers' purchasing behaviors. This study aims to delve into and elucidate the relationship between opinion leaders and their influence on online word-of-mouth and consumer purchasing preferences (Gilbert, 2019). As our global society becomes increasingly interconnected through social media and the broader



digital realm, understanding these phenomena is not only an academic pursuit but also a prerequisite for navigating the future of business and communication.

# 1.2 Statement of the Problem

Over the past few decades, the field of communication arts and media education has witnessed the rise of the digital domain, redefining traditional modes of information dissemination and consumption (Zhang et al., 2022). Despite this profound transformation, a phenomenon that remains worthy of in-depth exploration is the influence of opinion leaders on online word-of-mouth and consumer purchasing tendencies. The advent of the live streaming era has brought about an awareness of the internet's capacity for mobilization and the influential power of prominent opinion leaders online. The inherent immediacy of live streaming has engendered a profound sense of intimacy and shared experience among a vast audience, fostering an atmosphere of continuous exchange of personal opinions, beliefs, and convictions (Ding, 2021). For the younger demographic of university students, factors such as age, gender, online shopping duration, and time spent watching live streams may result in variations in the relationship between opinion leaders, online word-of-mouth, and consumer purchasing behavior. Consequently, this cohort tends to rely on the recommendations of opinion leaders when making purchasing decisions (Gao et al., 2022). Prior to endorsing products, opinion leaders interact with consumers through live streaming platforms or community forums to understand their needs. This interactive engagement enhances the opinion leaders' credibility in the eyes of consumers. Therefore, when opinion leaders recommend products they deem to have exceptional word-of-mouth, it stimulates consumer demand and ultimately fuels the desire to purchase among others (Li, 2020).

At the same time, with the rapid development of live streaming, the mode of live streaming with goods has also changed, and the rise of Internet content platforms has driven opinion leader marketing (Dong, 2023). Consumers are not satisfied with one-sided product information. Compared with single pictures and texts, opinion leader marketing can be closer to consumers' purchasing psychology. The interaction between opinion leaders and consumers establishes a relationship, which makes consumers feel trust. In the live broadcast, the professional explanation and suggestions of the opinion leader on the product will not only output a positive



reputation for the product but also drive consumption (Chen, 2022). Because opinion leaders continue to communicate through social media, coupled with the inherent interactivity of live streaming media, online reputation is no longer just a passive residue, but an active and decisive factor in guiding the purchasing decisions of the digital public (Zak & Hasprova, 2020). Preliminary studies have highlighted the profound impact of personal narratives and peer reviews on consumer behavior. However, the extent and contours of the impact of live streaming on this dynamic are still unclear and deserve further exploration by academia.

Guided by the aforementioned, a cascade of interconnected questions surface, compelling deeper investigation into the prevailing status of KOLs in Guiyang, Guizhou Province, and their impact on the purchasing behaviors and eWOM of university students. Primarily, grasping the current landscape of KOLs and their resonance with consumer purchasing behaviors and eWOM assumes paramount importance (Kongtraipop & Sakdapat, 2023). Furthermore, the potential disparities between this phenomenon and its implications across demographic variables, such as gender, age, etc., also demand scholarly scrutiny. Finally, the question of causality among KOLs, eWOM, and consumer purchasing behavior looms large (Meng et al., 2011). Addressing these academic inquiries is not merely an intellectual exercise as the world marches inexorably toward ever more digitalized paradigms of commerce and communication, but a pressing imperative for the development of future research trajectories and actionable strategies in the digital business and media landscape.

# 1.3 Objectives of the Study

This study, focusing primarily on Guiyang City, Guizhou Province, aims to elucidate the dynamic changes in consumer purchasing behavior based on opinion leaders and online word-of-mouth amid the ceaseless development of the internet. Our primary objective is to conduct quantitative analyses to ascertain the current status of such group phenomena among university students. Our survey will meticulously examine this cohort, encompassing statistical disparities across gender, age, online shopping duration, and live-streaming viewing time, as well as their respective interactions with opinion leaders. Furthermore, this article will endeavor to establish the correlation between opinion leaders, online word-of-mouth, and consumer purchasing behavior. In light of this, the study explores a quantitative



investigation of the relevance of opinion leaders to consumer purchasing behavior and online word-of-mouth based on the university student population of Guiyang City, Guizhou Province. The following objectives are established in response to the aforementioned issues:

- To investigate the current status of the university student consumer group in Guiyang City, Guizhou Province, regarding opinion leaders and online word-of-mouth and consumer purchasing behavior
- 2) To examine the differential effects of background variables (gender, grade, online shopping duration, live-streaming viewing time) of the university student consumer group on opinion leaders and online word-of-mouth and consumer purchasing behavior
- 3) To explore the correlations among opinion leaders, online word-of-mouth, and consumer purchasing behavior

### 1.4 Research Questions

In accordance with the aforementioned research objective, this article proposes the following three research questions:

- 1) What is the current landscape of opinion leaders and online word-of-mouth (eWOM) in relation to consumer purchasing behavior?
- 2) Are there any significant variations in the background variables (gender, grade, online shopping duration, livestream viewing duration) of the college student consumer group with regard to the impact of opinion leaders and eWOM on consumer purchasing behavior?
- 3) Is there a correlation between opinion leaders, eWOM, and consumer purchasing behavior?

# 1.5 Significance of the Study

In examining the landscape of digital consumerism, the proliferation of live streaming media has notably augmented consumers' proclivities for making purchases through such channels (Jiang & Zhang, 2018). This environment has elevated the role of opinion leaders as pivotal arbiters of influence within the digital milieu, fostering a dynamic interplay between these leaders, the mechanism of online word-of-mouth, and consumer behaviors (Shen, 2019). The exploration into the triangulated



relationships among opinion leadership, online discourse, and consumer purchasing actions not only deepens our understanding of their interconnectedness but also augments the theoretical frameworks surrounding the impact of opinion leadership on consumer decisions. Importantly, this analysis extends to delineating the effect of opinion leaders on the purchasing decisions of college students, offering insights into their consumption psychology and promoting more informed consumption behaviors among this demographic (Lei, 2019). This research builds on existing literature by incorporating a quantitative examination of the influences wielded by opinion leaders, online word-of-mouth, and consumer behaviors, thereby contributing to the academic discourse on this subject.

Furthermore, from a practical standpoint, this study elucidates the role of opinion leaders in shaping the purchasing behaviors of college students within the context of live streaming, providing critical insights for refining marketing strategies and addressing the nuances of college students' consumption patterns (Jing, 2023). It underscores the significance of online word-of-mouth in driving purchasing decisions among college student consumers, thereby offering valuable perspectives for businesses and institutions in tailoring their branding and promotional endeavors (Chen, 2022; Li, 2023). Through this lens, the research presents actionable guidance for leveraging opinion leadership in marketing models, thereby facilitating more effective brand engagement and collaboration strategies that resonate with the collegiate consumer segment.

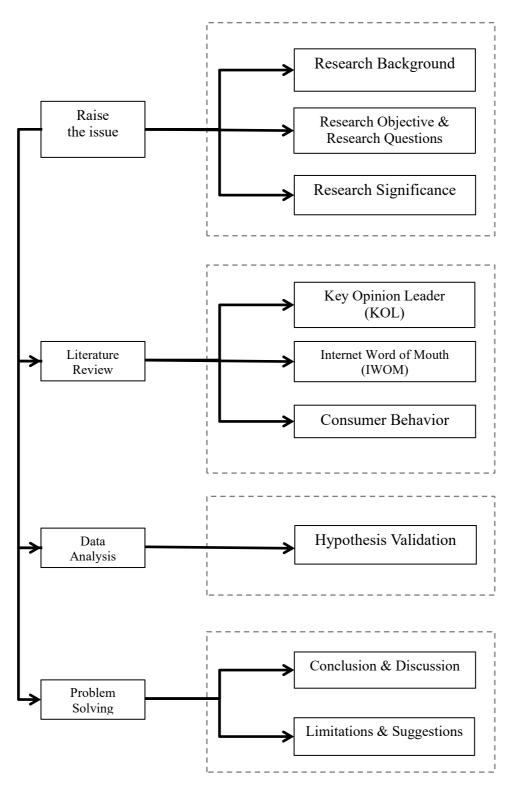
### 1.6 Research Process

This study delves into the impact of social media opinion leaders on the consumer purchasing behavior and online reputation of college students. It commences by setting the research scene, detailing its aims, inquiries, and significance. A comprehensive literature survey follows, examining constructs such as opinion leaders and network reputation, underpinned by theories of media richness and the communication process. Data collection was executed through questionnaires. The analysis segment first identifies the subjects before testing hypotheses via status, differential, and correlation analyses. The concluding section draws from these analyses to offer findings and suggestions. The research's procedural framework is depicted in Figure 1.1.



Figure 1. 1

Reseach Process Flowchart



Note: The data herein is sourced from a compilation independently conducted by the researcher in 2023



# **CHAPTER 2**

### LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter begins with a theoretical selection of the concepts of Opinion Leaders, IWOM and Consumer Purchasing Behavior, as well as the elaboration of related theories and scales. In addition, the relationship between opinion leaders, IWOM and consumer purchasing behavior is analyzed in the literature and the hypotheses of this study are deduced.

# 2.1 Principal Theories in the Study

### 2.1.1 Media Richness Theory (MRT)

The media richness theory, propounded by Richard and Robert (1987), postulates that various media possess divergent capacities for conveying and disseminating information. This differential capacity is denominated as the media's richness. The more affluent the medium, the more copious the information it can bear, thereby diminishing ambiguity and enhancing clarity during the communication process. The greater the knowledge transmitted, the richer the medium becomes (Richard & Robert, 1987). From the perspective of this study, opinion leaders' dissemination of product information via social media augments consumers' comprehension of the goods. The more copious and detailed the information propagated by opinion leaders, the more readily consumers accept their recommendations and endorsements, consequently heightening the propensity for purchase behavior.

### 2.1.2 Key Opinion Leader (KOL) Theory

Lazarsfeld (1944) initially introduced the concept of opinion leaders and initiated research on the subject. He posited that opinion leaders facilitate the dissemination of information and influence others. In the communication process, scholars have collectively referred to those individuals capable of influencing others' decisions and actions as opinion leaders (Katz, 1957). To become an opinion leader, one must possess four primary skills: first, a high capacity for acquiring information; second, adept information integration abilities; third, a relatively high degree of credibility; and finally, a relatively elevated social status (Liu & Suyang, 2017). However, with



the advent of the internet, opinion leaders' primary manifestations in the realm of live-stream shopping encompass two aspects: exerting influence over consumers and disseminating opinions through word-of-mouth (Zhao et al., 2018). Concurrently, opinion leaders possessing professional expertise can provide product information and purchasing decision recommendations to other consumers through word-of-mouth, thereby influencing their attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors (Villanueva & Hanssens, 2008).

### 2.1.3 Communication Process Theory

The theory of communication process posits that the communicator must engage in encoding information to effectively convey the message to the receiver, while the efficacy of the communication process is susceptible to external environmental interference (Middleton, 1960). Consequently, the social system model propounded by Lasswell (1948) postulates that communication activities are primarily constituted by five essential elements: the source, the content, the channel, the receiver, and the effect.

### 2.1.4 Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) Theory

The Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) theory primarily elucidates the physiological and psychological transformations that occur within the human body upon exposure to external stimuli, as well as the consequent series of responses (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). It is fundamentally composed of S representing stimulus, O denoting organism, and R signifying response. Drawing from the psychological SOR model theory, Mehrabian and Russell (1974) posited that approach behavior manifests as a manifestation of positive stimuli, while avoidance behavior constitutes an exhibition of negative stimuli. When an individual exhibits approach behavior, it is primarily aimed at expressing a sense of belonging towards the external environment. Conversely, when an individual displays avoidance behavior, they predominantly convey an intention to evade or depart. Bitner (2000) elucidated through research that individuals react differently to external stimuli, encompassing not only physiological responses but also cognitive, emotional, and other psychological responses, which can influence personal purchasing decisions.



# 2.2 Key Opinion Leader

### 2.2.1 Concept and Definition of KOL

The concept of opinion leaders originates from the field of communication studies. Lazarsfeld (1944) posited that opinion leaders are individuals who collect information through social media and subsequently disseminate it to the masses, acting as a link between the public and various media outlets. Simultaneously, he divided the dissemination of information into two steps: first, from the media to opinion leaders, and second, from opinion leaders to the general public. Rogers and Cartano (1962) asserted that opinion leaders are perceived as capable of providing better, more effective information and more professional advice. Furthermore, opinion leaders are generally regarded as individuals who possess more information, enjoy consumer trust, hold higher social status, and wield significant influence (Katz et al., 2006).

With the rapid development of social networks, live streaming has gained widespread application and development, interconnecting with various industries, enabling consumers to engage with live stream shopping more extensively (Xiao, 2022). However, as a plethora of opinion leaders have entered this industry as live stream hosts, live streaming is increasingly becoming another channel for opinion leaders to disseminate information (Lyu et al., 2022). During live streams, consumers engage in synchronous communication with opinion leaders, exchanging opinions, and obtaining comprehensive, high-quality information about products (Dehouche et al., 2020). This phenomenon has elevated the status of opinion leaders, and an increasing number of consumers prefer to learn about products through opinion leaders' videos or live streams (Ho & Rajadurai, 2020). The continuous integration of social platforms has transformed marketing approaches, with live stream shopping primarily focusing on attracting audience participation in real-time interactive online shopping. In recent years, live streaming has been adopted by online shopping consumers and has gradually become more prevalent, with the convergence of opinion leaders and live streaming ushering in a new phase (Jie et al., 2018). Deng (2022) contends that in live streaming, opinion leaders provide recommendations to audiences through live streaming platforms, while audiences interact with opinion leaders by sending comments and feedback. Opinion leaders, through this bidirectional interaction, provide precise product information to their followers,



converting the audience's attention during the live stream into purchasing power.

Based on the aforementioned research by scholars such as Katz et al. (2006), Dehouche et al. (2020), Ho and Rajadurai (2020), and others, this study defines opinion leaders as individuals who, through live streaming, exert influence on consumer purchasing behavior by virtue of their personal appeal and professional knowledge.

### 2.2.2 Opinion Leader Related Theory and Scale

In the academic realm, the concept of opinion leaders possesses profound implications, which have been meticulously explored by various scholars. Zhang (2020) evinces that opinion leaders wield significant influence and allure, with their personal characteristics constituting the paramount factor influencing consumers. Furthermore, the process and content of information dissemination are principally contingent upon the information disseminated and recommended by opinion leaders. Consequently, this study employs the diffusion theory and the SOR theory as its theoretical underpinnings. The measurement of opinion leaders primarily encompasses personal attractiveness, professionalism, relationship strength, information quality, and accuracy. Therefore, concerning the variable of opinion leaders, this study considers their personal characteristics and knowledge as the primary research dimensions.

The construct of opinion leaders comprises five dimensions and fifteen questions, with each dimension consisting of three questions. The Likert scale is employed to evaluate each dimension, simultaneously utilizing a range from 1 to 5 to represent the interviewees' intentions. By measuring the aforementioned questions, research data is obtained. The Cronbach's Alpha values for the personal attractiveness, professionalism, relationship strength, information quality, and accuracy of opinion leaders are 0.879, 0.875, 0.894, 0.940, and 0.901, respectively, all exceeding 0.8, indicating that the test results for the aforementioned dimensions exhibit high reliability. Furthermore, Ma and Guo (2022) discovered through their research that opinion leaders can elicit positive emotions in consumers, who are more likely to accept their purchasing recommendations, identifying product involvement, professionalism, interactivity, and popularity as key factors influencing consumers. Concurrently, the flow experience theory is introduced to analyze consumers' psychology and emotions.



The domain of opinion leaders primarily encompasses four distinct aspects: product involvement, professionalism, interactivity, and popularity. To quantify these aspects, a rigorously structured survey questionnaire was employed, leveraging the authenticity and reliability of the five-point Likert scale tool. Through stringent statistical verification, each dimension's reliability value exceeded the critical threshold of 0.8. This result not only attests to the reliability of the scale but also confirms the internal consistency of its various dimensions. Simultaneously, Jia and Han (2022), based on the SOR theory, concluded that opinion leaders exert a significant influence on online shopping behavior among university student consumers. When investigating the impact of opinion leaders on purchasing behavior among university students, three key dimensions were delineated: professionalism, popularity, and influence. Concurrently, a highly structured questionnaire survey method was adopted to meticulously collect data, followed by analysis employing a five-point Likert scale. This scale rigorously evaluated the aforementioned dimensions, with the reliability index for each dimension ultimately exceeding 0.7. These values unambiguously substantiate the high reliability of the investigated dimensions. o

### 2.2.3 Opinion Leader Related Empirical Studies

Patzer (1987) posited that when opinion leaders possess more specialized knowledge, their information is more likely to gain the trust of followers. Lee (2011) indicated that opinion leaders are individuals with a certain degree of influence on social media, conveying their opinions to audiences in a representative capacity. Samson (2010) demonstrated through research that more trusted opinion leaders tend to become word-of-mouth propagators, and positive word-of-mouth can enhance consumers' purchase intentions. However, most studies divide this process into two stages: opinion leaders and word-of-mouth, word-of-mouth and consumer behavior, analyzing the relationship between the two variables in each stage separately. Meng et al. (2011) concluded through research that with the continuous development of online word-of-mouth and social media, the identity of opinion leaders is constantly evolving, leading an increasing number of opinion leaders to opt for providing online reviews and product recommendations to consumers. Furthermore, Chaudhry and Irshad (2013) proposed that when making decisions, consumers are more inclined to consider the recommendations of opinion leaders. Through a hybrid framework study,



Li et al. (2013) analyzed the four aspects of opinion leaders' professional knowledge, novelty influence, and activity, concluding that opinion leaders can significantly influence product services and promotion and can affect consumers' purchase decisions through various means.

Xu (2017) points out that opinion leaders can accumulate popularity on social media through their unique video style and then market their products to their fan base, converting consumer trust into purchasing power. Therefore, in this study opinion leaders are spreading knowledge through live broadcasting then influencing consumer purchasing behavior with their own attractiveness, expertise and other factors.

### 2.3 Internet Word of Mouth (IWOM)

### 2.3.1 Concept and Definition of IWOM

Internet word-of-mouth (IWOM) refers to the online dissemination of product-related information and discussions among consumers via social media platforms. As elucidated by Erkan et al. (2016), consumers can garner product information and engage in online discussions through these digital channels, while concurrently sharing their personal experiences and perspectives. The seminal exploration of IWOM can be traced back to Stauss (1997), who pioneered the extension of word-of-mouth research into the digital realm, characterizing IWOM as the exchange of product information among online consumers over the internet.

Liao (2006) posited that IWOM constitutes a form of word-of-mouth propagation facilitated by the internet. Dong et al. (2012) further expounded that IWOM primarily relies on the internet as a medium for information dissemination, wherein consumers engage in bidirectional communication regarding products and reviews. Complementing these perspectives, Lai Shengqiang (2014) defined IWOM as online consumer evaluations of products, encompassing both positive and negative appraisals. Concomitantly, IWOM encapsulates the information exchange among numerous actual and potential consumers concerning an enterprise's products or services, typically manifested through textual, auditory, or visual modalities (Chen & Zhang, 2008). Synthesizing the insights of Erkan et al. (2016), Dong et al. (2012), Lai (2014), and other scholars, this study conceptualizes IWOM as the online propagation and evaluation of goods by opinion leaders, predicated upon the internet as a facilitating platform.



### 2.3.2 Theories and Scales Related to Internet Word of Mouth

Based on a meticulous examination of the literature, this response endeavors to elucidate the intricate dynamics governing the influence of online word-of-mouth (WOM) on consumer purchasing behavior. The study undertaken by Zheng (2020) elucidates that the predominant theoretical underpinnings of the impact of online WOM on consumer purchasing tendencies emanate from the marketing discipline, concurrently incorporating psychological or interdisciplinary constructs. Consequently, the research instrument employed in this investigation is grounded in an extensive review of domestic and international scholarly literature, and is formulated through the lens of communication theory. The WOM scale is deconstructed into four dimensions: source, quantity, quality, and efficacy. Utilizing a five-point Likert scale for empirical assessment, the reliability analyses yield the following Cronbach's Alpha coefficients: source credibility (0.837), quantity (0.844), quality (0.871), and efficacy (0.882). These values, exceeding the threshold of 0.8, attest to the high reliability of the respective variables.

Furthermore, in the realm of online WOM research, Zhao (2017) constructed a theoretical model predicated on the Technology Acceptance Model, asserting that online WOM facilitates consumers' expression of product usage experiences via the internet, thereby aiding enterprises in product promotion and enabling consumers to access comprehensive information to inform their purchasing decisions. The analytical framework within this domain encompasses four pivotal dimensions: quantity, directionality, entertainment value, and overall quality of online WOM. The reliability coefficients for each dimension surpass the critical value of 0.7, further substantiating the internal consistency of the scale. Building upon this foundation, Yang et al. (2023) undertook a comprehensive investigation into the influence of online WOM on consumer behavior, employing a framework rooted in perceived value theory. This empirical survey meticulously measured online WOM across six distinct dimensions: reliance strength, relationship strength, professionalism, utility, visualization, and propagation. The consolidated reliability coefficient derived from the collected data stood at an impressive 0.958, a statistic that attests to the robustness of the questionnaire and the high reliability of the data acquisition process.



### 2.3.3 Empirical Studies Related to Internet Word of Mouth (IWOM)

In the study of online word-of-mouth propagation, numerous scholars from both domestic and international spheres have conducted research exploring various aspects of this phenomenon. Within this context, Sidong (2010) identified factors such as online word-of-mouth propagators, online information, target audiences, and relationship strength as crucial drivers of online word-of-mouth during the research process. Simultaneously, it was emphasized that enterprises should develop an understanding of online word-of-mouth. Complementing this perspective, Yang et al. (2011) posited that online word-of-mouth exerts a significant influence on consumers to a certain extent, while the effectiveness of online word-of-mouth propagation largely depends on the frequency, quantity, and richness of information sources. Furthermore, Huang et al. (2013) discovered through their investigation that consumers' perceived value plays a supportive role in both the quality of online word-of-mouth and consumer purchase intentions. Concurrently, Lai (2014) elucidated the roles of positive and negative evaluations within online word-of-mouth, asserting that positive evaluations exert a more profound impact on individuals. Xu (2007) demonstrated that consumer trust hinges upon two critical factors: the online platform and consumer perception. Platform factors encompass the strength of the relationship between consumers and the platform, as well as the degree of consumer dependence on the platform, while consumer perception factors encompass consumer risk perception and willingness to trust.

# 2.4 Consumer Purchasing Behavior (CPB)

### 2.4.1 Concept and Definition of CPB

With critical acumen and logical rigor, Kotler (1997) has definedconsumer buying behavior as a sequential series of activities undertaken by consumers to satisfy their needs, encompassing the search, comparison, selection, consumption, utilization, evaluation, and subsequent disposition of products. In a concomitant vein, Liao (2022) has posited consumer buying behavior as the motivational impetus underpinning consumer purchases or consumption. Primarily, comprehension is deemed a requisite antecedent, with consumer buying behavior necessitating both internal and external stimuli. Secondarily, through the meticulous collation of data facilitated by communication media and personal experiences, consumers acquire product



information. Subsequently, an analytical and preliminary screening process ensues regarding the acquired data. Ultimately, this culminates in the manifestation of buying behavior. Consumers exhibit both the desire to purchase and the actualization of purchasing behavior. Additionally, they engage in post-purchase evaluations, encompassing satisfaction levels and proclivity for repeat purchases. In a cohesive synthesis of the aforementioned scholarly expositions by Kotler (1997), Liao (2022), and others, this disquisition defines consumer buying behavior as the decision-making process underlying product purchases intended to fulfill personal needs and requirements.

### 2.4.2 Theories and Scales Related to Consumer Purchasing Behavior

Li (2021) posits that, under the continuous influence of live streaming on consumers, internet celebrities play a pivotal role in online live streaming. Through an examination of domestic and international literature, coupled with a study on domestic opinion leaders, they ultimately formulated a consumer purchase behavior scale based on three dimensions: trust, perceived functional value, and perceived emotional value. Comprising 11 questions, 5 pertained to trust, 3 to functional value, and 3 to emotional value. Participants utilized a five-point Likert scale to indicate their degree of agreement with each item. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the three dimensions of trust, perceived functional value, and perceived emotional value all exceeded the threshold of 0.8, indicating good reliability. Li (2021) notes that e-commerce live streaming, a vertical domain of online live streaming, has experienced a relatively short period of emergence, yet the proportion of sales it accounts for has been steadily increasing, with a rapid growth rate. Grounded in the psychological concept of flow theory, they constructed a consumer purchase behavior scale. Through investigating the impact of the flow experience on consumer purchase patterns, they divided this experience into two primary aspects: concentration and enjoyment. Employing an empirical methodology, they utilized a five-level Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" to gauge participants' responses. Statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS 25.0, primarily focused on evaluating internal consistency and reliability. The results demonstrated that the Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the two dimensions of concentration and enjoyment maintained high levels, exceeding 0.9. The strong consistency of these data



underscored the robustness and reliability of the measurement, as the alpha coefficients surpassed the critical value of 0.9.

### 2.4.3 Empirical Studies Related to Consumer Buying Behavior

With regard to the study of consumer purchasing behavior, scholars Howard and Sheth (1969), in an effort to provide a basis for research on consumer purchasing behavior, analyzed theories of purchasing behavior and investigated factors influencing purchasing behavior. These factors were primarily categorized into three main classes: purchasing motives, product selection, and factors influencing purchasing decisions. Kotler (2000), on the other hand, divided the factors influencing consumer purchasing behavior into psychological factors and material factors. Subjective factors and objective factors, with psychological factors acting as subjective factors, would influence consumers. The continuous development of online live streaming has also shifted scholars' attention to consumers' online shopping behavior. Deng (2016) found that in online live streaming, the content of the live stream is the aspect that users are most concerned with, which is also the main reason for attracting consumer interest. Meng et al. (2015), based on the influence of opinion leader factors on consumers, pointed out that opinion leaders are an important source of online word-of-mouth, and opinion leaders with higher social influence have a greater impact on consumer purchasing behavior. Li (2017) then studied live streaming platforms, arguing that the timeliness of live streaming can cause consumers to experience a sense of urgency to purchase.

# 2.5 Correlations among KOL, IWOM and CPB

### 2.5.1 KOL, IWOM and CPB Current Status

The rapid development of social media has transformed consumers' consumption venues. Yang et al. (2021) argue that compared to traditional shopping methods, consumers tend to prefer the interactive effect of dynamic real-time video shopping. Among them, college students are more inclined towards online shopping than other groups, constituting the main force of online shopping. College students have almost achieved full coverage in terms of mobile phone ownership. For live streaming, college students are the primary audience. The internet celebrity economy is a major product of internet development, and online consumption has become the primary



mode of consumption for college students. Although they have an average monthly income of 1200-2000 yuan, college students tend to spend a significant portion of their money following opinion leaders in consumption (Lei, 2019). Wang (2019) demonstrated through research that the purchasing behavior of college students is susceptible to the influence of opinion leaders, with this group paying attention to opinion leaders who can help them keep up with trending fashions. Regarding word-of-mouth propagation by opinion leaders, Li (2018) pointed out that this young group of college students places relatively more emphasis on users' actual word-of-mouth propagation. Opinion leaders evaluate products from their own perspective and interact with fans, making their post-consumption recommendations more readily accepted by the college student group.

Furthermore, the virtual and remote nature of online shopping makes it difficult for consumers to make purchasing decisions by comparing products and services, rendering information particularly important for consumers. College students are more willing to listen to the opinions of other consumers who have already used the product when making purchasing decisions (Cao et al., 2018). Simultaneously, Tobon and García (2021) discovered through a survey of the college student group that they trust products recommended by opinion leaders more, so products recommended by opinion leaders after experiencing them have a more significant influence on consumer purchasing behavior. Additionally, positive online word-of-mouth disseminated by opinion leaders has a greater impact on consumer purchasing decisions. In light of this, the following hypothesis is proposed for this study:

H1: The college student consumer group's perception of opinion leaders and online word-of-mouth regarding consumer purchasing behavior is at a relatively high level.

### 2.5.2 Background Variables among KOL, IWOM and CPB

In recent years, due to the significant increase in attention towards opinion leaders in online livestreaming, college student consumer groups have become more intensely focused on opinion leaders. In a survey study of college student groups, it was found that the proportion of female student consumers is higher than male students, and female students have higher consumer demands than male students, making them more susceptible to the influence of opinion leaders (Xiang & Du, 2022). The degree of influence exerted by opinion leaders on people is continuously



deepening. College student groups have active mindsets, and when receiving external information, they are more inclined to listen to the opinions of opinion leaders with professional expertise and higher social status (Ma & Peng, 2023). However, regarding online word-of-mouth, Lu (2023) states that the internet has become an important channel for people to obtain information, and interactive communication is more likely to prompt consumers to make purchases. Among college student groups of different age groups, consumer behavior has also changed, with third-year students being more inclined towards online shopping than fourth-year students, and also placing more emphasis on the actual word-of-mouth and value of products. With the development of the internet, online word-of-mouth has become an important channel for consumer information exchange. Females tend to engage in more emotional communication online than males and will consult online word-of-mouth through social media (Wang, 2021). Jiang (2022) pointed out that consumers of different genders exhibit differences in online shopping behavior, with a higher proportion of female students. As female consumers' consumption awareness changes, the female group will pay more attention to external pursuits, and therefore prefer online shopping more. In light of this, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

H2: The background variables (gender, grade level, online shopping time, livestreaming viewing time) of college student consumer groups have significant differences in the relationship between opinion leaders, online word-of-mouth, and consumer purchase behavior

### 2.5.3 Correlational Studies among KOL, IWOM and CPB

With the increasing coverage of online live streaming and the rise in online purchasing in the internet economy, the value of online word-of-mouth has gained significant attention. Song (2015) posits that consumers accept and trust the information conveyed by opinion leaders primarily because their personal opinions and experiences have earned the trust of other consumers. Thus, the credibility of opinion leaders' statements directly impacts their public trust. Opinion leaders disseminate product information through the internet, thereby achieving information output through word-of-mouth communication and influencing consumer purchasing behavior (Chai et al., 2023). Galster (2012) suggests that opinion leaders with high product involvement can enhance consumers' purchase intentions through positive



word-of-mouth communication. Zhang et al. (2018) constructed a model and found that opinion leaders reduce the information gap between themselves and consumers through their influence during the dissemination process, thereby improving the effectiveness of online word-of-mouth and guiding consumers to form purchasing behaviors.

Moreover, with the advent of online shopping, online word-of-mouth has become increasingly crucial for consumers' product information acquisition and purchase decision-making. Consequently, scholars have conducted research on online word-of-mouth. Duhan et al. (1997) classified the main determinants of information providers and consumers in online word-of-mouth, primarily relying on the degree of familiarity and the strength of relationships to investigate consumer purchasing behavior. High familiarity represents strong relationships, while low familiarity represents weak relationships. Furthermore, Bloch et al. (1986) demonstrated that consumers tend to evaluate the credibility of online word-of-mouth information based on their subjective perceptions. Therefore, the more knowledge consumers have about a product and the stronger their ability to acquire information, the more confident they are in making purchase decisions and the more inclined they are to believe in more professional online word-of-mouth information evaluations. Gilly et al. (1998) argue that in online live streaming, the higher the professional level of the communicator, the greater the impact of online word-of-mouth on the purchasing decisions of the audience. Bansal and Roth (2000) point out that the more reliable the source of information, the more trusted it is by consumers, and the easier it is for them to make decisions. The rapid development of online live streaming platforms has elevated the central position of opinion leaders in the minds of consumers, and their influence plays a crucial role in the consumer purchase decision-making process. Opinion leaders can enhance the credibility of information, disseminate high-quality information, lower consumers' psychological defenses, and persuade consumers to make purchasing decisions (Zhang, 2018). Based on this, the present study proposes the following hypothesis:

H3: Opinion leaders have a positive correlation with online word-of-mouth and consumer purchasing behavior.



# **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHODOLOGY**

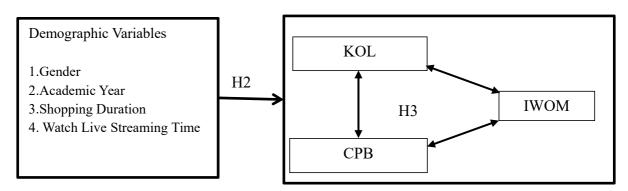
This study mainly adopts the method of questionnaire survey, and carries out statistics and analysis through quantitative methods, and its purpose is mainly to explore the relationship between opinion leaders and IWOM and consumer purchasing behavior of college students in Guizhou Province. This chapter is divided into eight subsections to explain, including the research framework, the research object, the definition of each variable operation type and research tools, etc. The contents of each subsection are described as follows.

### 3.1 Research Framework

Based on the research questions, research objectives, and research hypotheses, this study proposes the hypotheses shown in Figure 3.1 below for the three variables of this study: opinion leaders, internet word of mouth and consumer purchasing behavior

Fugure3. 1

Research Framework



*Note:* The data herein is sourced from a compilation independently conducted by the researcher in 2023

# 3.2 Research Participants

The research object of this study is based on undergraduate students of a university in Guiyang City, Guizhou Province. Due to their characteristics in age, undergraduates are more likely to accept new things, tend to fashionable and



personalized consumption, and are more willing to adopt new online shopping methods such as webcasting. Therefore, students are the main driving force of online shopping (Xu, 2020). In addition, with the continuous rejuvenation of the webcast shopping group, the college student group is gradually becoming a new generation of consumers (Jia & Han, 2022), which also makes the college student consumer group become an important consumer group of online shopping, and the college student group not only has a greater demand for shopping, but also is happy to share the word-of-mouth information about the products on the social platform (Wang, 2023). Therefore, the selection of college students in the university is very representative of the live broadcast culture and consumer buying behavior for this study.

# 3.3 Questionnaire Survey Method

Questionnaire surveys are an empirical research method that primarily collects data through questionnaires. They are not only a necessary and integral component of social research but are also gradually expanding into other fields and aspects, becoming an important tool for understanding social phenomena and social life (Deng & Feng, 2000). The questionnaire survey method is the most widely used research method; it samples a portion of respondents, employs questionnaires as the survey tool, collects data and information, and then conducts statistical analysis on the data and information to describe, explain, and predict social phenomena (Zhu et al., 2023). The questionnaire survey method is typically used for large-scale data collection. The content of this study involves three scales: opinion leaders, online word-of-mouth, and consumer purchasing behavior. The research is conducted by distributing and collecting online questionnaires from university students.

# 3.4 Operational Definitions and Research Tools

### 3.4.1 Demographic Variables

This study is based on the literature to select four background variables such as gender, grade, online shopping time, watching live time, in the main is to understand in the live online shopping, in terms of gender, male and female consumers accounted for the proportion, at the same time, in terms of grade for the investigation, is to understand the freshman to senior college students to participate in the proportion of online shopping. As well as the study on the time of online shopping and watching



live streaming time is to examine how the proportion of how long college students use on online shopping time as well as live streaming (Li Zhen, 2021; Yang Xi, 2022). In addition, this study examined the basic information from the four questions of gender, grade, online shopping time, and watching live streaming time, mainly to understand the background variables of the test individuals.

- a. Gender: male, female
- b. grade level: freshman, sophomore, junior, senior
- c. Time spent online: less than 1 year, 1-2 years, 3-4 years, 5+ years
- d. Time spent watching live streaming: less than 1 year, 1-2 years, 3-4 years, 5+ years

### 3.4.2 Key Opinion Leader (KOL)

### A. Operational Defintion

Opinion leaders exert influence on their audience through live streaming by leveraging their reputation, charisma, and expertise (Lyu et al., 2022). This study investigates the impact of opinion leaders on consumer purchasing behavior via live streaming, focusing on the influence of their personal appeal and professional advice. When disseminating information through online live streaming, opinion leaders must possess unique personal charisma to attract consumers and have a more extensive knowledge base to provide comprehensive and reasonable advice. Consequently, the higher the practicality and reliability of the information released by opinion leaders, the greater their attractiveness to followers, which is contingent upon their personal charm and professionalism (Rogers, 2003). In this study, the survey items for opinion leaders encompass both their characteristics and the attributes of the information they convey. Operationally, the mean score of opinion leaders is used to represent the degree of influence on their followers, with higher scores indicating a greater impact.



Table3. 1

Key Opinion Leader Scale

Dimension	Scale Item
Indiv. charisma	1. I choose a live broadcast platform because the live broadcast
	anchor has charisma
	2. The higher the influence of the live host, the more trustworthy
	the products he/she recommends for sale
	3. The greater the fame of the live host, I think he / she
	recommended the more guaranteed the product
	4. I always pay attention to the activities of live hosts
Prof. Knowledge	5. The live host has expertise in the field
	6. The live host has a lot of experience in the field
	7. The more the live host knows about the product, the more I trust
	the quality of the product he/she is selling
Practicality of information	8. The information shared by the live host helps me understand the product in more detail
	9. The information shared by the live host helps me increase my shopping knowledge
	10. The information shared by the live host can fulfill my shopping needs.
	11. The products recommended by the live anchor were what I needed at the time.
	12. The products recommended by the live host are up-to-date with the times
	13. The product information recommended by the live host is up-to-date.

Note: Zhang, Key (2020). Research on the influence of opinion leaders on consumers' purchase intention. CKNI, <a href="https://kns.cnki.net/KCMS/detail/detail.aspx?dbcode=CMFD&dbname=CMFD2023&filename=1021017593.nh">https://kns.cnki.net/KCMS/detail/detail.aspx?dbcode=CMFD&dbname=CMFD2023&filename=1021017593.nh</a>

### B. Research Instrument of KOL

This study employs the scales developed by Zhang Jian (2020) to investigate the relationships between opinion leaders' personal traits, information characteristics, consumer attitudes, and consumer purchase intentions. The original questionnaire primarily tested the influence of opinion leaders on consumer purchase intentions, focusing on categories such as opinion leaders' personal traits (charisma, professional level, and strong interpersonal relationships) and information characteristics (information quality and timeliness). In this study, the personal traits and information characteristics of social media opinion leaders are selected as the main research The dimensions. original scale is modified, and items from dimensions—charisma, professional level, and information timeliness—are chosen to survey the respondents, as shown in Table 3.1.

In terms of reliability and validity assessment, in Zhang Jian's (2020) research, a



five-point Likert scale was used, with higher scores indicating a higher degree of influence from opinion leaders. The reliability and validity of the instrument were rigorously evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha and KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin) measurement methods. The overall reliability value of the scale was 0.8, demonstrating strong reliability. Moreover, the Cronbach's alpha coefficients for each dimension exceeded the standard threshold of 0.8, indicating good internal consistency of the scale. Additionally, the KMO values for each dimension were 0.743, 0.704, and 0.734, respectively. Although slightly lower than the benchmark of 0.8, these values still suggest that the sampling adequacy reached an acceptable level, further confirming the construct validity of the scale.

### 3.4.3 Internet Word of Mouth

### A. Operational Defintion

Internet Word of Mouth (IWOM) refers to consumers letting others see in their own sharing and posting of their consumption experiences on the Internet (Xu Ying, 2016). The IWOM explored in this study is mainly in in exploring IWOM quantity, IWOM quality, and IWOM efficacy. With the increase of IWOM quantity, the credibility and correlation of IWOM quality information will have an increasing impact on its consumer decision-making, while IWOM quantity and quality will give consumers a more comprehensive understanding of the product, and IWOM potency is more favorable to consumer decision-making (Park, 2007). In this study, IWOM is defined as word-of-mouth communication and evaluation of goods by opinion leaders based on the Internet. In this study, the questionnaire survey for IWOM then includes quantity, quality and validity. Operationally, the average of IWOM quantity, IWOM quality, and IWOM effectiveness is used to represent the likelihood of a consumer's purchasing decision, with higher scores representing higher likelihood.



Table3. 2

Internet Word of Mouth Scale

Dimension	Item
Number of IWOM	1. If a lot of users have rated the product, I am inclined to
	choose that product
	2. The more IWOM reviews there are, the more likely I am to choose the product
	3. I would be inclined to choose the product if the IWOM reviews are both positive and negative.
Quality of IWOM	4. If the IWOM reviews are true and reliable, I would be inclined to choose the product.
	5. If the IWOM reviews are rational and fair, I will tend to choose the product.
	6. If the product reviews are clear and easy to understand, I will tend to choose the product
IWOM effect	7. If the product's IWOM reviews are generally positive, I'd be inclined to choose the brand
	8. If the product is recommended by many buyers, I would tend to choose the product.
	9. The product's positive IWOM reviews fulfill my need for product information.

Note: Zheng, Z. (2020). A study on the influence of IWOM on consumer purchasing behavior. CNKI, <a href="https://kns.cnki.net/KCMS/detail/detail.aspx?dbcode=CMFD&dbname=CMFD2020&filename=1020627386.nh">https://kns.cnki.net/KCMS/detail/detail.aspx?dbcode=CMFD&dbname=CMFD2020&filename=1020627386.nh</a>

### B. Research Instrument of IWOM

IWOM this variable, this study adopts Zheng (2020)'s IWOM influence on consumer buying behavior scale, according to the research object of the school college students to make appropriate modifications for the scale suitable for this study. The three components of IWOM quantity, IWOM quality and IWOM potency were finally determined, as shown in Table 3.2 above. In this study, the survey scale consists of 10 topics, which are operated through a five-point Likert scale, with the scale ranging from 1 to 5, with increasing values, indicating that the influence of IWOM on consumers' purchasing behavior gradually increases. After the collection of data, and after a reliability assessment, Zheng (2020) concluded that the Kronbach coefficients of the IWOM quantity, quality, and validity dimensions significantly exceeded the critical line of 0.8, thus demonstrating that the IWOM indicators show a high degree of reliability. In addition, the KMO measure of 0.875 exceeded the benchmark value of 0.8, which further confirmed the robustness of the construct validity of the questionnaire.



# 3.4.4 Consumer Purchasing Behavior

### A. Operational Definition

Consumer purchasing behavior is a form of consumer psychology, but also allows consumers to psychological changes in the stage of events, is the consumer under the influence of demand satisfaction to generate motivation, and ultimately lead to the formation of consumer behavior process (Tang, 2010). The consumer purchasing behavior referred to in this study is that college students, when generating purchasing demand, need to make a step forward in purchasing decisions for the acquisition of commodity information, will be disseminated through opinion leaders to assist their own purchase of commodities.

**Table3. 3**Consumer Purchasing Behavior Scale

Dimension	Item
Purchasing Behavior	1. The items on the live stream all grab my attention
	2. I will often use the live broadcast to buy goods
	3. When I have a need to buy, I will buy goods through the live broadcast.
	4. I recommend the products I have purchased in the live broadcast to others.
	5. I am very likely to buy products recommended by live streaming hosts.
	6. My favorite live streaming anchor will motivate me to make purchases when bringing goods to me
	7. The influence of the live anchor is relatively large, and I am willing to buy the products recommended by him.
	8. Live with goods anchor in the process of bringing goods on the product recommendation will prompt me to buy behavior
	<ol><li>Live with goods anchor will make me again to buy products</li></ol>

- Note 1: Yang, X. (2022). Research on the impact of Netflix live streaming with goods on consumers' purchasing behavior. CNKI, <a href="https://kns.cnki.net/KCMS/detail/detail.aspx?dbcode=CMFD&dbname=CMFD2023&filename=1022030798.nh">https://kns.cnki.net/KCMS/detail/detail.aspx?dbcode=CMFD&dbname=CMFD2023&filename=1022030798.nh</a>
- Note 2: Li Zhen (2021). Research on the influence of Netflix traits on consumers' pur chasing behavior. CNKI, <a href="https://kns.cnki.net/KCMS/detail/detail.aspx?dbcode=CMF">https://kns.cnki.net/KCMS/detail/detail.aspx?dbcode=CMF</a>
  <a href="D&dbname=CMFD2022&filename=1021130166.nh">D&dbname=CMFD2022&filename=1021130166.nh</a>
- Note 3: Li, Xiaodong (2021). A study on the influence of e-commerce live streaming f eatures on consumer purchasing behavior. CNKI. <a href="https://kns.cnki.net/KCMS/detail/detail.aspx?dbcode=CMFD&dbname=CMFD2022&filename=1022015215.nh">https://kns.cnki.net/KCMS/detail/detail.aspx?dbcode=CMFD&dbname=CMFD2022&filename=1022015215.nh</a>
- Note 4: Shi Ship Voyage (2022). Research on the Influencing Factors of Consumer Purchasing Behavior of Live Streaming Bandwagon under the Perspective of Information Ecology. CNKI. <a href="https://link.cnki.net/doi/10.2697/d.cnki.gccsc.2022.000647doi:10.26979/d.cnki.gccsc.2022.000647">https://link.cnki.net/doi/10.2697/d.cnki.gccsc.2022.000647</a>



#### B. Research Instrument of Consumer Purchasing Behavior

Consumer purchasing behavior scale is based on Likert's five-degree scale, citing four authors' scales such as Yang (2019); Li (2019); Li (2021); Shi (2022), and the partial scale of consumer purchasing behavior was used to select the question items that are suitable for this study. Yang (2019) for the investigation of the data of consumer buying behavior concluded that the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of consumer buying behavior is 0.896, close to 0.9 indicating good reliability, and the KMO value is 0.798, higher than 0.7 can be seen that the validity is good. Li (2019) consumer buying behavior has a reliability value of 0.885 and a KMO value of 0.832 indicating that the scale reliability and validity are both good. Li (2021) for the reliability analysis of consumer purchasing behavior, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient and KMO value are higher than 0.9, indicating that the scale has good consistency and construct validity. Shi (2022) in the study of consumer purchasing behavior, in which the reliability coefficient value and KOM value are 0.876 and 0.943, respectively, both values are higher indicating higher reliability and better construct validity.

# 3.5 Sampling Techniques

This study primarily focuses on students from a top-ranking undergraduate institution in Guizhou Province, China, with a student population exceeding 5,000. Considering the higher level of attention and relatively more time that college students devote to new online phenomena, they have become a significant consumer group in online live streaming in recent years (Xu, 2020). Therefore, this study employs a convenience sampling method, collecting data through an online questionnaire survey. As students from different grades may have different ways of thinking, the questionnaire is distributed to undergraduate students at a specific university in Guizhou Province, and all samples are requested to provide truthful responses.

Speaking of sample size determination, according to scholars Bautista and Anderson (2021), the sample size for a questionnaire survey should generally be a percentage of the school's population, typically between 10% and 15%, and ideally not exceeding 1,000 individuals. In a population of 5,000, 10% would represent 500 people, which is sufficient to obtain reliable results. The aforementioned university in



Guizhou Province has approximately 5,000 full-time undergraduate students. Therefore, after the formal questionnaire distribution, 500 valid samples need to be obtained. Meanwhile, in terms of pilot study, in this study, the pilot questionnaire consists of 35 questions. According to Tinsley and Tinsley's (1987) recommendation, the ratio of items to participants should be 1:5, and the pilot sample size should be five times the maximum number of items. The opinion leader section has the most questions, with 13 items. Calculating based on a factor of 5, 65 questionnaires are required. To ensure a sufficient number of valid questionnaires above 65, the pilot study aims to collect 80 questionnaires for preliminary analysis.

### 3.6 Pilot Study Analysis

The main purpose of this summary is to analyze the results and data of the pre-test questionnaire, which was designed to test the reliability and validity of the questionnaire, and the pre-test questionnaire for this study was distributed and returned between August and September 2023, and a total of 82 valid pre-test questionnaires were returned.

#### 3.6.1 Reliabilty Analysis

Reliability analysis is used to measure the degree of internal reliability and consistency of the sample data, through the collection of data, the results show that all the reliability values of each variable are maintained above 0.8, among which, the reliability coefficient of opinion leaders is 0.879, the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of Internet Word of Mouth (IWOM) is 0.842, and the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of consumer purchasing behavior is 0.909, thereby This indicates that all variables have good stability and precision, while the internal consistency of the questionnaire is also at a high level, and the questionnaire is set up reasonably. The reliability analysis of the pretest questionnaire is shown in Table 3.4.



**Table3. 4**Reliability Analysis Results of Pilot Study

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Item Number
Key Opinion Leader	0.879	13
Internet Word of Mouth	0.842	10
Consumer Purchasing Behavior	0.909	12

Note: The data herein is sourced from a compilation independently conducted by the researcher in 2023

#### 3.6.2 Validity Analysis

Validity analysis is mainly used to test the accuracy of the measurement index to ensure the validity of the questionnaire, this study uses the KMO and Bartlett spherical test (Bartlett), the questionnaire pre-test test in the KMO value of 0.850 is greater than 0.07, indicating that the questionnaire has a high degree of validity, indicating that the stronger the correlation between the variables, the value of the Bartlett spherical test in this study, on the other hand, 1842.828, the significance of < 0.05 is significant, which means that indicates that the questionnaire has good validity as shown in table 3.5.

**Table3. 5**Validity Analysis Results of Pilot Study

Variable	KMO	Bartlett's test of sphericity	Sig.	Item
Key Opinion Leader	0.849	451.762	< 0.001	13
Internet Word of Mouth	0.833	322.317	< 0.001	10
Consumer Purchasing Behavior	0.897	514.958	< 0.001	12

Note: The data herein is sourced from a compilation independently conducted by the researcher in 2023

In this study's Opinion Leader Scale, the total score correlation of the test questions derived from the survey data ranged from 0.521- 0.632, indicating that the individual questions showed a high degree of correlation as well as tightness between the scales internally and that the Alpha coefficients after deletion all reached 0.880 and all remained above 0.946, indicating that the Opinion Leader Scale has a high degree of internal consistency. A summary of the item analysis of the opinion leader pretest questionnaire is shown in Table 3.6 below.



**Table3. 6**Pilot Study Results of Key Opinion Leader Scale

Item	Correlation of modified terms	Alpha after deletion
Indiv. Charisma 1	0.632	0.946
Indiv. Charisma 2	0.605	0.946
Indiv. Charisma 3	0.521	0.947
Indiv. Charisma 4	0.525	0.947
Prof. Knowledge 1	0.577	0.947
Prof. Knowledge 2	0.596	0.947
Prof. Knowledge 3	0.562	0.947
Practicality of Info. 1	0.579	0.947
Practicality of Info. 2	0.593	0.948
Practicality of Info. 3	0.677	0.946
Practicality of Info. 4	0.516	0.947
Practicality of Info. 5	0.600	0.947
Practicality of Info. 6	0.537	0.947

Note: The data herein is sourced from a compilation independently conducted by the researcher in 2023

The data from the IWOM scale questionnaire yielded that the scale was able to have a good discriminatory effect on the subjects, and in terms of thematic consistency, each of the values for the overall correlation exceeded the critical value of 0.5, thus ensuring the robustness of the internal correlation in the dataset. In addition, the internal consistency test also yielded findings of rigor; the Alpha value after deletion exceeded the benchmark value of 0.880 and also showed significant stability with a value of more than 0.949, which are metrics that emphasize the methodological soundness and reliability, while reinforcing its accuracy in the domain. The IWOM pretest analysis is shown in Table 3.7.

**Table3. 7**Pilot Study Results of Internet Word of Mouth Scale

Item	Correlation of modified terms	Alpha after deletion
Number of WOM 1	0.559	0.947
Number of WOM 2	0.615	0.946
Number of WOM 3	0.590	0.948
Number of WOM 4	0.582	0.947
Number of WOM 5	0.573	0.947
Number of WOM 6	0.591	0.947
Number of WOM 7	0.549	0.947



Table 3.7

Pilot Study Results of Internet Word of Mouth Scale

Item	Correlation of	Alpha
	modified terms	after deletion
Number of WOM 8	0.603	0.949
Number of WOM 9	0.581	0.948
Number of WOM 10	0.573	0.947

Note: The data herein is sourced from a compilation independently conducted by the researcher in 2023

In the empirical analysis of consumer purchasing behavior, the scale test yielded substantial correlations between the dimensions of the scale. Overall, the inter-dimensional correlations exceeded 0.5, with the highest value reaching 0.742. The high inter-dimensional correlations highlight the robustness of the internal consistency of the dataset. In addition, the Alpha coefficient further confirms the reliability of the construct, while the Alpha coefficient exceeds the critical value of 0.946, as shown in Table 3.8. The above findings indicate that there is statistically significant consistency in consumer purchasing behavior.

**Table3. 8**Pilot Study Results of Consumer Purchasing Behavior Scale

Item	Correlation of	Alpha
	modified terms	after deletion
Purchasing Behavior 1	0.652	0.946
Purchasing Behavior 2	0.524	0.947
Purchasing Behavior 3	0.606	0.947
Purchasing Behavior 4	0.645	0.946
Purchasing Behavior 5	0.632	0.946
Purchasing Behavior 6	0.690	0.946
Purchasing Behavior 7	0.742	0.945
Purchasing Behavior 8	0.726	0.946
Purchasing Behavior 9	0.565	0.947
Purchasing Behavior 10	0.582	0.947
Purchasing Behavior 11	0.664	0.946
Purchasing Behavior 12	0.666	0.946

Note: The data herein is sourced from a compilation independently conducted by the researcher in 2023

# 3.7 Reliability and Validity of Official Questionnaire

In this study, the reliability and validity of the formal questionnaire was tested to examine its validity in questionnaire distribution, in which the data of the



questionnaire were analyzed using SPSS 25.0 and internal consistency and structural validity of the questionnaire were tested using Cronbach's alpha and KOM.

In reliability analysis, when the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient ranges between 0.7-0.8, it indicates good reliability, and when it exceeds 0.9, it signifies a highly reliable measure. As shown in Table 3.9, the Cronbach's Alpha coefficients for the three dimensions of opinion leaders, online word-of-mouth, and consumer purchasing behavior are all higher than 0.7. Moreover, the reliability values for all variables surpass 0.9, demonstrating that each dimension of the questionnaire effectively reflects the characteristics of the corresponding scale. The relatively high Alpha coefficients for each dimension indicate a high level of consistency among the scale's measurement results. Furthermore, this study employs the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure and Bartlett's test of sphericity to assess validity. In this study, if the KMO value for each dimension falls below 0.5, it suggests that the questionnaire lacks validity; a KMO value below 0.8 indicates moderate validity, while a value above 0.9 suggests high validity. The KMO value for opinion leaders in this study is 0.939, with a significance level of .000 (p < 0.05), indicating that the opinion leader scale exhibits good structural validity. The KMO value for online word-of-mouth is 0.916, with an approximate chi-square value of 8802.877 and a significance level of .000 (p < 0.05), confirming the strong construct validity of the online word-of-mouth scale. Additionally, the significance level for consumer purchasing behavior is .000 (p < 0.05), with a KMO value of 0.96 and an approximate chi-square value of 21275.790, indicating high validity for the consumer purchasing behavior scale. In summary, the three variables of opinion leaders, online word-of-mouth, and consumer purchasing behavior demonstrate high structural validity, as shown in Table 3.9.

**Table3. 9**Reliability and Validity of Official Questionnaire

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	KOM	Approximate chi-square	DF.	Sig.	Item
Key Opinion Leader	0.943	0.939	21275.790	78	.000	13
Internet Word of Mouth	0.925	0.916	5802.877	45	.000	10
Consumer Purchasing Behavior	0.964	0.963	6950.638	66	.000	12

*Note: The data herein is sourced from a compilation independently conducted by the researcher in 2023* 



### 3.8 Methods of Data Analysis

In this study, the computer software SPSS25.0 was used as a statistical analysis tool, and the specific analysis method is described below.

#### 3.8.1 Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive statistics involve organizing data to delineate the structure of sample data within a study (Wu, 2000). In the present research, descriptive statistics were employed to elucidate the means and standard deviations of the variables under investigation, as well as to ascertain the distribution of variable values. The primary objective of this study is to analyze the current state of the relationship between opinion leaders, online word-of-mouth, and consumer purchasing behavior among the university student consumer demographic, as posited in hypothesis H1.

#### 3.8.2 Reliability Analysis

Reliability analysis constitutes a prevalent methodology employed to ascertain the internal consistency of sample data. In this study, SPSS 25.0 was utilized to calculate Cronbach's alpha coefficient to assess the reliability of each variable. The magnitude of this coefficient is directly proportional to the reliability of the questionnaire. Specifically, a coefficient exceeding 0.8 signifies exceptionally high reliability of the scale, while a coefficient ranging from 0.6 to 0.8 indicates relatively good reliability. Conversely, a coefficient below 0.6 suggests comparatively low reliability (Zakariya, 2022).

#### 3.8.3 Validity Analysis

Validity analysis is employed to ascertain whether a scale effectively reflects the content it purports to measure. In this study, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure and Bartlett's test of sphericity were utilized to assess validity. As a general principle, the closer the KMO value approaches 1.0, the stronger the correlations among variables, and the higher the validity of the questionnaire. If the KMO value falls below 0.5, the questionnaire is deemed invalid. Bartlett's test is used to examine whether the correlations between variables in the correlation matrix are equivalent to an identity matrix, with a significance value less than 0.05 indicating the presence of correlations among variables (Tu, 2020).



#### **3.8.4 ANOVA**

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) is primarily employed to examine the disparities and relationships among certain variables between two or more samples (Wu, 2000). In this study, ANOVA is utilized to test hypothesis H2: The background variables (gender, grade, online shopping duration, and time spent watching live broadcasts) of the college student consumer group exhibit significant differences in the relationship between opinion leaders, online word-of-mouth, and consumer purchasing behavior.

#### 3.8.5 Pearson Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation analysis employs correlation coefficients to assess the strength of association between variables, with larger absolute values indicating stronger correlations. According to the correlation coefficient evaluation criteria proposed by Tu (2020), an absolute value of 1 signifies perfect correlation, values between 0.7 and 0.99 denote high correlation, and values below 0.1 suggest no correlation. In this study, the Pearson correlation analysis method is utilized to elucidate the findings pertaining to hypothesis H3, which posits that opinion leaders exhibit a positive correlation with online word-of-mouth and consumer purchasing behavior.



### **CHAPTER 4**

#### RESULTS

In this chapter, the results of the study will be analyzed, firstly, by analyzing the demographic variables of the basic data of the study population. Secondly, the data will be analyzed with descriptive statistics to test the research hypothesis H1, then, the degree of difference between the variables will be tested by ANOVA and the correlation analysis will be used to test the variance between the variables and the correlation between the variables to test the research hypotheses H2 and H3, and finally, the results of the test will be summarized as follows.

## 4.1 Basic Information on Research Subjects

The study conducted a questionnaire survey among students at a university in Guizhou Province from October to December 2023, collecting a total of 592 valid questionnaires with an effective response rate of 96.57%. By analyzing the demographic variables of the 592 questionnaires, the characteristics of the research subjects can be ascertained, further determining the sample representativeness of the valid questionnaires collected in this study. Since the time spent using social media among the background variables is of relatively less significance to this study compared to the other four background variables, it was omitted after data investigation and literature review. The following discussion will only focus on the four background variables of gender, grade, online shopping time, and time spent watching live broadcasts.

Firstly, in terms of gender, there were 231 males, accounting for 39.0% of the total, and 361 females, constituting 61.0%. The survey reveals that female students outnumbered male students in the study. Secondly, regarding grade level, 125 participants were in their first year, accounting for 21.1%, 174 were in their second year (29.4%), 163 were in their third year (27.5%), and 130 were in their fourth year (22.0%). The number of students in each grade level did not differ significantly, although the second and third-year students slightly outnumbered those in the other two grades.

Furthermore, concerning online shopping time, the survey indicates that the highest proportion of respondents, 317 individuals (53.5%), had been shopping online



for more than five years. This was followed by 152 individuals (25.7%) who had been shopping online for 3-4 years. The lowest proportions were for those who had been shopping online for less than one year (41 individuals, 6.9%) and 1-2 years (82 individuals, 13.9%). Finally, when analyzing data related to time spent watching live broadcasts, it was found that the primary viewing duration was 3-4 years, with 186 viewers accounting for 31.3% of the total sample. The proportion of viewers who had been watching live broadcasts for less than a year was 22.3%, i.e., 132 viewers. Additionally, 24.7% (146 individuals) had been watching live broadcasts for 1-2 years, while a relatively smaller portion, 129 viewers (21.8%), had been watching live broadcasts for more than five years. The concentration of viewing duration within the 3-4 year range indicates a clear trend in the interactive mode of online live broadcast content. In summary, the sample structure of this study is generally consistent with the actual structure of the survey subjects, and the survey sample is fairly representative without significant structural bias. The specific data is presented in Table 4.1 below.

**Table4. 1**Basic Information of Research Participants

Variables	Category	N	Percentage
Gender	Male	231	39.0
	Female	361	61.0
Academic Level	Freshman	125	21.1
	Sophomore	174	29.4
	Ĵunior	163	27.5
	Senior	130	22.0
Shopping Time	Less than 1 year	41	6.9
	1-2 years	82	13.9
	3-4 years	152	25.7
	More than 5 years	317	53.5
Watch Live Streaming Time	Less than 1 year	132	22.3
· ·	1-2 years	146	24.7
	3-4 years	185	31.3
	More than 5 years	129	21.8

Note: The data herein is sourced from a compilation independently conducted by the researcher in 2023

# 4.2 Descriptive Analysis

The first Hypothesis (H1) of this study posits that the current state of opinion leaders, online word-of-mouth, and consumer purchasing behavior among the college student consumer group is at a relatively high level. Descriptive statistical analysis



was conducted on the questionnaire data of the three variables: opinion leaders, online word-of-mouth, and consumer purchasing behavior, all of which utilized a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 and 5 representing the minimum and maximum values, respectively, and 3 as the midpoint. Upon examining the data, it was discovered that the surveyed college students exhibited an opinion leader score of 3.947 (M=3.947, SD=.814, N=592) in live streaming, which, on the 5-point Likert scale, is considered to be at a higher level when greater than 3.50. Thus, in this study, the opinion leader score of college students, being higher than 3.50, is classified as a higher level.

Moreover, the empirical data from this survey demonstrates that the average word-of-mouth intention score of the college student group participating in online live streaming is 4.113 (M=4.113, SD=.737, N=592). This value surpasses the benchmark of 4.0, thereby positioning the college student group in the upper echelon of online word-of-mouth. Concurrently, the study also delineated the purchasing behavior of the college student group, with an average score exceeding 3.50 (M=4.019, SD=.910, N=592). This result unequivocally positions the purchasing behavior of the aforementioned population in the upper stratum, thereby indicating a marked propensity for consumer purchasing in this domain. Simultaneously, these data collectively manifest the various consumption dynamics commonly present among college students in online shopping, underscoring their strong inclination towards word-of-mouth promotion and purchasing activities. Consequently, hypothesis H1 has been preliminarily verified, as specifically illustrated in Table 4.2.

**Table4. 2**Descriptive Statistical Analysis of Variables

Variables	Mean	SD	Sample
Key Opinion Leader	3.947	.814	592
Internet Word of Mouth	4.113	.737	592
Consumer Purchasing Behavor	4.019	.910	592

Note: The data herein is sourced from a compilation independently conducted by the researcher in 2023

# 4.3 Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

This section tests the research hypothesis H2: There are significant differences in the influence of opinion leaders and online word-of-mouth on consumer purchasing



behavior based on the background variables (gender, grade, online shopping time, and live streaming viewing time) of the college student consumer group. To test hypothesis 2, analysis of variance (ANOVA) is employed to verify whether there are significant differences between the four background variables (gender, grade, online shopping time, and live streaming viewing time) and the impact of opinion leaders and online word-of-mouth on consumer purchasing behavior. In this study's survey of college students, gender differences were found across various variables, as shown in Table 4.3.

According to the questionnaire data results, there are obvious differences among college students in terms of gender regarding opinion leaders, online word-of-mouth, and consumer purchasing behavior. The significance level of gender is 0.006 (p < 0.05), and the F-value is 1.453, indicating that the college students in this study exhibit relatively clear differences across all variables. In terms of grade level, the results show that there are differences between grade and opinion leaders, online word-of-mouth, and consumer purchasing behavior. The F-value for grade is 2.502, with a significance level of 0.000 (p < 0.05), demonstrating that there are significant differences between college students' grade levels and the three variables. Furthermore, in the analysis, the F-value for online shopping time is 1.498, and the P-value is 0.003 (P < 0.05). This statistical result indicates that when the background variable of online shopping time is compared with the variables investigated in this study, it shows relatively obvious differences. The F-value for live streaming viewing time is 1.859, with a significance level of 0.000 (p < 0.05) when comparing the live streaming viewing time dimension of college students with each studied variable. This result highlights the presence of relatively clear significant differences between live streaming viewing time and other variables.

Since the P-values of the background variables are all less than 0.05, it indicates that the four background variables have significant differences in the influence of opinion leaders and online word-of-mouth on consumer purchasing behavior. Therefore, the research hypothesis H2 is supported, and the specific data are shown in Table 4.3 in the following page.



Table4. 3

ANOVA Result for Demographic Variables

Variables	·	Square	Freedom	Mean	F	Sig.
		Sum	Degree	Square		
Gender	Intergroup	32.160	100	0.322	1.453	.006
	Within	108.703	491	0.221		
	Groups					
	Total	140.863	591			
Academic Year	Between	222.095	100	2.221	2.502	.000
	Groups					
	Within	435.898	491	0.888		
	Groups					
	Total	657.993	591			
Shopping Time	Between	122.352	100	1.224	1.498	.003
11 6	Groups					
	Within	401.106	491	0.817		
	group					
	Total	523.458	591			
Watch Live Streaming Time	Between	183.879	100	1.839	1.859	.000
Ç	Groups					
	Within	486.742	491	0.989		
	group					
	Total	669.620	591			

<sup>\*</sup>The mean difference is significant at the .05 level

# 4.4 Pearson Correlation Analysis

Regarding the research hypothesis three (H3), which posits that opinion leaders have a positive correlation with online word-of-mouth and consumer purchasing behavior, Pearson correlation coefficients were employed to conduct questionnaire data analysis on the variables. Simultaneously, the relationships between opinion leaders, online word-of-mouth, and consumer purchasing behavior were examined. In this paper, the correlation analysis of the variables, as shown in Table 4.4, reveals that the three variables—opinion leaders, online word-of-mouth, and consumer purchasing behavior—exhibit positive correlations. Data testing indicates that the correlation coefficient between opinion leaders and online word-of-mouth is 0.905, with a two-tailed significance of 0.000 (p < 0.01), suggesting a high degree of correlation between these two variables. This implies that, under certain circumstances, opinion leaders tend to be more inclined towards the dissemination of positive online word-of-mouth.

Moreover, in the domain of empirical analysis, the relationships between variables are meticulously investigated using rigorous methods. The analysis reveals that the correlation coefficient between opinion leaders and consumer purchasing



behavior is 0.922, with a P-value less than 0.01 (two-tailed test), indicating a significant correlation between the two. This substantial correlation coefficient illustrates the profound impact of opinion leaders on consumer purchasing behavior. Furthermore, the research also discovers that the correlation coefficient between online word-of-mouth and consumer purchasing behavior is 0.873, with a P-value less than 0.01. This signifies a close correlation between the two, elucidating the influence exerted by the dissemination of online word-of-mouth in enhancing and shaping consumer purchasing behavior. Through statistical testing, these findings unveil the dynamic changes in consumer purchasing behavior. In summary, all the variables exhibit significant positive correlations; thus, the research hypothesis three (H3) is verified, with the data for each variable presented in Table 4.4.

**Table4. 4**Correlation analysis of variables

		Key Opinion Leader	Internet Word of Mouth	Consumer Purchasing Behavior
Key Opinion Leader				
Internet Word of Mouth	Pearson Correlation Sig. (two-tailed) Cases (N)	.905** .000 592		
Consumer Purchasing Behavior	Pearson Correlation	.922**	.873**	
	Sig. (two-tailed)	.000	.000	
	Cases (N)	592	592	

<sup>\*</sup>Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

# 4.5 Hypothesis Validation

Integrating the analyses from the preceding subsections, this study posits the following hypotheses:

H1: The current state of opinion leaders, online word-of-mouth, and consumer purchasing behavior among the college student consumer demographic is at an above-average level.

H2: The background variables (gender, grade level, online shopping duration, live streaming viewing duration) of the college student consumer demographic exhibit



significant differences in the relationship between opinion leaders, online word-of-mouth, and consumer purchasing behavior.

H3: Opinion leaders have a positive correlation with online word-of-mouth and consumer purchasing behavior.

Consequently, the three hypotheses put forth in this research are supported, with the specific results presented in Table 4.5 below.

Table 4. 5

Results of Hypothesis Validation

Hypothesis	Results
RQ: What is the current status of opinion leaders and IWOM in relation to consumer buying behavior?	
H1: The current status of the college student consumer group regarding opinion leaders and IWOM and consumer buying behavior is at a high level RQ: Is there a difference in the background variables (gender, grade, time spent	Accept
on online shopping, time spent on watching live broadcasts) of the college student consumer group between opinion leaders and IWOM and consumer purchase behavior?	
H2: There is a significant difference in the background variables (gender, grade, time of online shopping, time of watching live broadcasts) of the college student consumer group between opinion leaders and IWOM and consumer purchasing behavior	Accept
RQ: Is there a correlation between opinion leaders and IWOM and consumer purchase behavior?	
H3: Opinion leaders have a positive finding of correlation between IWOM and consumer buying behavior	Accept

Note: The data herein is sourced from a compilation independently conducted by the researcher in 2023



## **CHAPTER 5**

#### CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

This chapter is to summarize and answer the 3 research hypotheses in the above section where the data analysis of the research results was carried out, and based on the conclusions to propose the research recommendations of this study, and then finally to carry out the research shortcomings of this paper and the outlook of the future research.

#### 5.1 Conclusion

#### 5.1.1 High Spectrum of KOL and IWOM in Relation to CPB

Regarding the subjects of this study, in the previous analysis of the data on opinion leaders, online word-of-mouth, and consumer shopping behavior among college students in Guizhou Province, we can observe that all dimensions are at a relatively high level. In other words, college students are more willing to follow opinion leaders when shopping, value the word-of-mouth spread by opinion leaders, and make purchases after listening to their suggestions.

Concerning the current state of opinion leaders, based on the research subjects of this study, college students in Guizhou Province perceive the influence of opinion leaders to be at a relatively high level, indicating that opinion leaders have an impact on college student consumers when they shop, and this impact is continuously deepening. This conclusion is similar to the research findings of Ma and Peng (2023). Their results show that opinion leaders are constantly influencing consumers, and college students pay more attention to product information and recommendations provided by more professional and trusted opinion leaders. Additionally, college students tend to break out of fixed thinking patterns when collecting product information. Simultaneously, the research conclusions of Liu and Wang (2021) demonstrate that more professional opinion leaders offer suggestions that better align with the individual characteristics of different types of consumers. Their answers to consumer questions are more readily accepted and trusted by consumers. Furthermore, in the study of opinion leaders, Cheng et al. (2021) concluded that the reputation and professionalism of opinion leaders can increase consumers' purchase intention and better assist consumers in obtaining product information and rational advice.



In the preceding discourse, the results pertaining to the influence of online word-of-mouth (WOM) indicate that the college student demographic in this study exhibits a relatively high level of engagement with online WOM, suggesting that college students refer to online WOM prior to making online purchases. This conclusion aligns with the findings of Indahsari et al. (2023), who explored the impact of online WOM on consumers' product choices. The rapid development of the information age enables consumers to exchange necessary product information via the internet anytime and anywhere, with online WOM emerging as a novel communication method that provides information to consumers and aids them in making purchasing decisions. Concurrently, Daowd et al. (2021), in their study on social media WOM, concluded that online WOM has become an influential factor in people's decision-making processes, continuously attracting an increasing number of consumers to share their experiences on social media, thereby deepening the impact of online WOM on consumer purchasing behavior. Moreover, the conclusions drawn by Yones and Muthaiyah (2023) in their research on online WOM demonstrate a widespread increase in consumers' online product purchases, with their study further indicating that consumer purchasing decisions are influenced by online WOM, making online WOM and user information sharing the most potent factors influencing consumers..

The purchasing behavior of college students, as a consumer group, remains at a relatively high level. For college students, opinion leaders' influence is a crucial factor in their purchasing decisions. According to Zhang's (2022) research findings, live streaming has brought about a shift in consumers' consumption patterns, primarily skewing towards younger demographics, with college students being the main group. As college students pursue more personalized consumption, they are more receptive to the opinions of opinion leaders who can provide individualized recommendations, alongside the new consumption experiences brought about by live streaming shopping. This makes college students' purchasing behavior more susceptible to the influence of opinion leaders.

Kurdi et al.'s (2022) conclusions on consumer purchasing behavior indicate that opinion leaders in online live streaming have become an effective marketing tool for influencing consumers. Opinion leaders engage with their followers and other online users through live streaming, making consumers more reliant on them and ultimately



impacting their purchasing decisions. Vaidya and Karnawat's (2023) research also demonstrates that opinion leaders are a significant source of information that influences consumers. As the number of opinion leaders' followers continues to grow, their advice is readily accepted by their followers due to their influence.

In addition, for this research literature citation, there may be some differences in the results of the research due to the different fields of the research and the regions investigated by the researcher. The results of the status quo test on opinion leaders and IWOM and consumer purchasing behavior are different for subjects in different fields and regions. In this regard, the findings of this study support the research that the current status of opinion leaders and IWOM and consumer purchasing behavior of college students in Guizhou Province are at a high level in the three dimensions of opinion leaders and IWOM and consumer purchasing behavior.

#### 5.1.2 Significant Differences among KOL, IWOM and CPB

In this study, different background variables exhibited significant differences in opinion leaders, online word-of-mouth, and consumer purchasing behavior. From a gender perspective, a higher number of female students, compared to male students, preferred shopping through live streaming. Moreover, female students were more likely to agree with the recommendations of opinion leaders, thus allowing opinion leaders to exert a greater influence on their shopping behavior. Zuo and Pan (2021) supported this conclusion in their research, stating that female students, relative to male students, had a higher demand for products, and the recommendations or suggestions made by opinion leaders were more likely to satisfy their needs for various products. Xiang and Du (2022) reached a similar conclusion in their study, noting that since female consumers' consumption needs are slightly higher than those of males, the proportion of females among consumers is also higher than that of males. Furthermore, Rialti et al. (2020) concluded that, compared to male consumers, female consumers are more inclined to shop through online live streaming, and their purchasing behavior is based on word-of-mouth; if they trust an opinion leader, the word-of-mouth will translate into purchasing behavior.

Simultaneously, from a grade perspective, the primary consumer groups in university live streaming shopping were sophomores and juniors. Compared to freshmen, sophomores experienced some changes in their shopping methods,



pursuing more personalized consumption after being exposed to the internet. In contrast to seniors, juniors had relatively more leisure time, which they could spend on live streaming shopping and watching live streams (Lu, 2022). Jiang (2022) concluded that junior students, compared to students from the other two grades, shopped more frequently through live streaming and spent more time watching live streams, thus placing greater trust in opinion leaders and allowing them to influence their purchasing behavior. Based on a survey of university students, Lu (2023) demonstrated that among students of different ages, the proportion of juniors engaging in online shopping was higher than that of seniors, and they placed more emphasis on the actual word-of-mouth and value of products.

Furthermore, in terms of online shopping time and live streaming viewing time, with the rise of social media platforms, consumers have recognized the convenience brought by online live streaming. Compared to traditional e-commerce platforms, live streaming e-commerce is more concrete, and university students, as the primary group of online shoppers, have more time to spend on online shopping and live streaming (Zhan, 2023). Regarding online shopping time, Gao et al. (2023) concluded that the rise of online shopping has shifted consumers' offline shopping time to online platforms, leading to an increasing number of consumers, primarily university students, using online shopping. University students are more proficient in online shopping and spend more time using this method. Concerning live streaming viewing time, Zhang et al. (2021) concluded that, as an emerging shopping method, university student consumers still invest a considerable amount of time in watching live streams, making live streaming shopping an important shopping method for them.

#### 5.1.3 KOL Positively Correlated to Both IWOM and CPB

Through data analysis, this study discovers that there exists a positive correlation between opinion leaders and online word-of-mouth (WOM) as well as consumer purchasing behavior among university students in Guizhou Province. The continuous development of online live streaming culture has led to an influx of opinion leaders into the live streaming industry. These opinion leaders interact with their audience through live streaming and disseminate product-related WOM. By utilizing live streaming, opinion leaders can more easily stimulate consumer participation and increase purchase intention (Zheng et al., 2023). The results of this study bear



similarities to the findings of other scholars on this issue. Tobon and García (2021) concluded that university students tend to seek recommendations and advice from opinion leaders when shopping, as the products recommended by opinion leaders during live streaming carry lower risks compared to consumers directly experiencing the products themselves. Moreover, the positive online WOM disseminated by opinion leaders exerts a higher degree of influence on university students' purchase decision-making. Similarly, Jeyhan and Pangaribuan (2023) found that opinion leaders can influence consumers' purchase intentions, with charismatic and prestigious opinion leaders positively impacting consumer purchasing behavior.

Furthermore, this study discovers a positive correlation between opinion leaders and online WOM. The comments or suggestions posted by opinion leaders on social media platforms influence their audience. When making purchases, university students are more inclined to seek advice from opinion leaders they trust, and the positive online WOM disseminated by opinion leaders is more readily accepted by consumers (Bu et al., 2022). Online WOM can better assist university students in understanding products and subsequently making purchases because opinion leaders have greater influence and faster dissemination speed. The information disseminated by opinion leaders can be received and transmitted by the public more quickly, thereby expanding the spread of online WOM effects. This makes the information disseminated by opinion leaders relatively more credible and persuasive (Jia & Bie, 2021). As discussed above, opinion leaders have a positive impact on online WOM because they can enhance the persuasiveness and credibility of online WOM, making it more likely to be adopted by consumers.

Simultaneously, there exists a positive correlation between online word-of-mouth and consumer purchasing behavior. Due to the virtual nature of the internet, consumers are unable to physically interact with products during the purchasing process; consequently, online word-of-mouth has become a crucial reference source for consumers engaging in online shopping. As products cannot be personally tested during online purchases, online word-of-mouth assists consumers in filtering products, thereby exerting a positive influence on consumer purchasing behavior (Zhan & Li, 2020). The development of social media has enabled consumers to more actively express their views and opinions. As the mindset of university student groups across various grades evolves, this has also led university student consumers to place greater



emphasis on online word-of-mouth, which possesses higher credibility for university students and is more effective in promoting their purchasing behavior (Yang et al., 2023). In this regard, online word-of-mouth has a positive impact on consumer purchasing behavior, as it serves as an essential means for consumers to acquire information and aids them in filtering products (Sun & Ly, 2023).

Finally, this study has revealed that opinion leaders exhibit a positive correlation with consumer purchasing behavior. Opinion leaders provide recommendations to consumers in need during live broadcasts, and they influence consumers through their unique style and more professional perspective. Through such continuous communication, opinion leaders enable consumers to gain a deeper understanding of products, thereby stimulating purchasing behavior (Zak & Hasprova, 2020). Moreover, during live broadcasts, opinion leaders can offer more interesting, useful, and valuable advice to consumers. The products recommended by opinion leaders also increase consumer confidence in those products, directly promoting positive purchasing decisions among consumers (Audrezet & Moulard, 2020).

In summary, opinion leaders have a positive impact on consumer purchasing behavior. Through live broadcasts, opinion leaders can provide consumers with more professional shopping advice and assist them in making purchasing decisions.

#### 5.2 Recommendations

#### 5.2.1 Potential Future Research Perspective

This study tries to make suggestions for future research directions. In this study, the background variable of social media use was adjusted due to the consideration of various factors, because the time of social media use duplicated with other background variables in this study, so it was not possible to analyze this background variable in a unified way, so it is suggested that future researchers can increase the investigation of different aspects of the background variable (Moretta et al., 2022), to introduce the study of the impact of different background variables on consumer purchasing behavior into other perspectives or areas of research, and to be able to have the results of different research directions.

#### 5.2.2 Practicality Perspective

Through the above narrative, this subsection focuses on four aspects: students,



opinion leaders, enterprises and the state to make suggestions. In the rapid development of the Internet, the convenience, timeliness, and interactivity that online live broadcasting brings to consumers make online live broadcasting shopping using users continue to climb, while opinion leaders in the live broadcasting of unique ways and styles of college students consumers products external attraction, while live broadcasting in the real product demonstration can be to college students to buy to promote the role of (Yang &Wang, 2022).

For college students, the cultivation of subjective awareness and the strengthening of media literacy are important methods for students when shopping on live webcasts. Webcasting has an impact on college students' consumers, and the emergence of bad consumer ways such as early consumption and impulsive consumption has affected college students' consumerism (Xu et al., 2019). Then the cultivation of college students' subjective consciousness can, be able to have their own subjective judgment on the bad shopping methods when they produce purchasing behaviors, manage their bad shopping habits, and set up the correct consumption view (Ni, 2023). At the same time, college students should strengthen the education of media literacy, and should take the best and discard the worst of the product information and word-of-mouth disseminated by opinion leaders, and should have their own subjective judgment of different types of IWOM information (Shen, 2021). Through the cultivation of subjective awareness and the enhancement of media literacy, college students can make their own judgments in live online shopping and improve their ability to screen online information.

For key opinion leaders, enhancing personal professional competence is one of the crucial abilities for opinion leaders in live streaming. Despite the rapid development of the new media industry and the proliferation of opinion leaders in live commerce, influential opinion leaders often possess distinct personalities and exhibit exceptional live streaming proficiency. Moreover, they can resonate with their audience. Therefore, opinion leaders can only better captivate consumers and elevate their commercial value by improving their professional capabilities (Wu, 2023).

In addition to augmenting their professional knowledge, opinion leaders need to establish their image and reputation from multiple dimensions. A more professional image in live streaming is more likely to gain the trust of the audience, and managing one's external image is a critical step in live streaming. Simultaneously, as influential



disseminators of knowledge and culture, opinion leaders bear the social responsibility of recommending high-quality products and conveying correct values to their audience, which is also a necessary choice to maintain their image (Chen & Yin, 2023; Deng, 2022).

For enterprises, conducting accurate brand marketing is a vital pathway for enterprises to successfully enter the market. When promoting products, enterprises need to understand their target audience and collaborate with opinion leaders who align with their brand (Barta et al., 2023). Among the compatible opinion leaders, selecting the most influential ones for collaboration is crucial, as they possess a larger follower base and higher trust levels. Recommendations from well-known opinion leaders will contribute to product dissemination and increased sales (Li & Chen, 2022).

Moreover, elevating the brand's service quality and reputation constitutes a crucial safeguard for enterprises conducting marketing endeavors. From the consumers' perspective, the enterprise's excellent and meticulous service provision is regarded with utmost importance; a commendable service attitude can enhance consumers' favorability towards the enterprise, further bolstering its reputation, and simultaneously stimulating consumers' purchasing desire (Zhang & Wang, 2019). Only through the delivery of superior service and the adoption of marketing strategies more aligned with their own brand can enterprises garner consumers' trust and brand loyalty.

For the nation, it should foster a more orderly social media environment by refining the management regulations and rules governing social media platforms, while concurrently strengthening internet monitoring to curb the occurrence of platform irregularities and maintain a favorable, well-regulated social media environment (Wang & Yang, 2019). Simultaneously, the nation should guide the college student consumer demographic towards rational consumption, preventing the occurrence of desire-driven and premature consumption. Emphasis should be placed on guiding college students towards the correct values, enhancing their cultivation of consumption cultural literacy, and reinforcing the promotion and guidance of college students' online consumption (Huang, 2021; Wu, 2023).



#### 5.3 Limitations

#### 5.3.1 Research Sample Perspective

This study explores the influence of opinion leaders on consumer purchasing behavior through the consumer group of college students, but only for this type of consumer group. Other ethnic consumer groups have not been compared and analyzed. Therefore, the results of this study have certain limitations. Future research can consider further expanding the research on other ethnic groups, thereby expanding the scope of the research and exploring the differences between different ethnic groups. This will allow the research results to be more comprehensive.

#### 5.3.2 Region Selection Perspective

This study explores the influence of opinion leaders on consumer purchasing behavior through the consumer group of college students, but only for this type of consumer group. Other ethnic consumer groups have not been compared and analyzed. Therefore, the results of this study have certain limitations. Future research can consider further expanding the research on other ethnic groups, thereby expanding the scope of the research and exploring the differences between different ethnic groups. This will allow the research results to be more comprehensive.

#### 5.3.3 Research Method Perspective

Furthermore, this study employs a questionnaire survey to collect data from the research subjects, which falls under the category of quantitative research methods; this research method is limited in terms of data acquisition methods and the scope of applicability of the research results. Future research could combine qualitative research methods by conducting in-depth interviews to increase the data sources, thereby allowing us to delve deeper into the research subjects while increasing the credibility of the research data.

#### 5.3.4 Participant Demographic Variables Perspective

In this study, the option of less than one year for the background variables of online shopping time and live streaming viewing time is too short, and the research results may be affected by the short usage time of background variables, which is not rigorous enough in the selection of valid samples. In the future, the literature can be



used to verify and test the background variables, and more scientific research methods can be used to select the background variables and strengthen the consistency and closeness between the background variables and various options.

On a final note, through the above suggestions for future research, we can further understand the opinion leaders, online reputation, and consumer purchasing behavior in Guizhou Province through expanding the research group and scope, and combining multiple research methods.



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# Appendix

# Chinese Version—Pilot Study Questionnaire

您好!感谢您百忙之中参与此次调查。我们正在对大学生进行关于意见领袖的影响研究调查,因此,我们谨请您填写以下问卷。该问卷填写时间只需要 10-20 分钟,问卷仅用于学术研究,您所填写的问卷将完全保密,请您不要有任何的顾虑! 如果您对问卷有任何疑问,可通过电子邮箱的联系到我们 2583471920@qq.com

## 第一部分:个人基本資料

1,	您的性别: □男 □女
2,	您目前就读的年级是: □大一 □大二 □大三 □大四
3、	社交媒体的使用时间: □不到1年 □1-2年 □2-3年 □3年以上
4、	网购时间: □不到1年 □1-2年 □2-3年 □3年以上
5、	观看直播时间: □不到1年 □1-2年 □2-3年□3年以上

以下問卷部分请根据自己的情况在相应的选项上打勾,每个量	号码	答案	代表	き为り	山下
[1-完全不同意; 2-不同意; 3-一般; 4-同意; 5-完全		哥()		•, •,	,
	E 1-1 v	$\overline{\Sigma}$			
A. 意见领袖量表:					
問卷項目	1	2	3	4	5
直播主持人的魅力和影响力					
1. 我认为直播主播有一种特殊的魅力					
2. 直播主播的影响力越高,他/她推荐销售的产品就越值得					
信赖					
3. 直播主播在社区中的名气越大, 我认为他/她推荐的产品					
就越有保证					
4. 我总是关注直播主播的活动					
专业知识和经验:					
5. 直播主播拥有该领域的专业知识					
6. 直播主播在该领域有丰富的经验					
7. 直播主播对产品的了解越多,我就越信任他/她销售的产					
品质量					
信息质量和实用性:					
8. 直播主播分享的信息有助于我更详细地了解产品					
9. 直播主播分享的信息有助于我增加购物知识					
10. 直播主播分享的信息可以满足我的购物需求					
11. 直播主播推荐的产品是我当时真正需要的					
12. 直播主播推荐的产品与时俱进					
13. 直播主播推荐的商品信息是最新的					



B.网络口碑量表					
問卷項目	1	2	3	4	5
评论的数量和多样性					
14. 如果有很多用户对产品进行了评价,我就会倾向于选择					
该产品					
15. 网络口碑评价越多,我就越有可能选择该产品					
16. 如果网络口碑评价既有正面评价也有负面评价,我会倾					
向于选择该产品					
评论质量与诚信					
17. 如果网络口碑评论真实可靠,我会倾向于选择该产品					
18. 如果网络口碑评论理性、公正,我会倾向于选择该产品					
19. 如果产品评论清晰易懂,我会倾向于选择该产品					
120 如果网络口碑评价具体全面, 对产品和服务的质量描述					
详细,我会倾向于选择该产品 总体评论情感					
总体评论情感					
21. 如果该产品的网络口碑评价普遍正面,我会倾向于选择该品牌					
22. 如果该产品得到许多买家的推荐,我会倾向于选择该产					
23. 该产品的正面网络口碑评价能满足我对产品信息的需					
求					
C.消費者购买行为量表			1	1	ı
問卷項目	1	2	3	4	5
24. 我曾经在直播中购买过商品					
25. 我会经常使用直播购买商品					
26. 在有购买需求时,我会通过直播进行商品购买					
27. 我曾经将在直播购买过的商品推荐给其他人 28. 我购买直播带货主播推荐产品的可能性非常高					
28. 我购买直播带货主播推荐产品的可能性非常高					
29. 我所喜爱的直播带货主播在带货时会促使我产生购头					
[ 行为					
30. 直播带货主播的影响力比较大,他推荐的产品我愿意购					
买					
31. 直播带货主播在带货过程中对产品的推荐会促使我产生购买行为					
32. 直播带货主播会使我进行再次选购产品					
33. 直播带货主播在直播中对我的消费观念产生了影响					
34. 直播带货主播对我购买欲望有正面影响					
35. 直播带货主播对我的购买决策提供非常大的帮助					



# Chinese Version—Official Research Questionnaire

您好!感谢您百忙之中参与此次调查。我们正在对意见领袖对于大学生的影响研究调查,因此,我们谨请您填写以下问卷。该问卷填写时间只需要 5-10 分钟,问卷仅用于学术研究,我们会对您所填写的问卷将完全保密,请您不要有任何的顾虑!感谢您的宝贵时间,如果您对问卷有任何疑问可通过电子邮箱的联系到我们 2583471920@qq.com

## 第一部分:个人基本資料

1、	您的性别:	口男	$\Box $	ζ
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- 2、您目前就读的年级是: □大一 □大二 □大三 □大四
- 3、网购时间: □少于1年 □1-2年 □3-4年 □5年以上
- 4、观看直播时间: □少于1年 □1-2年 □3-4年 □5年以上

### 第二部分:正式問卷

以下問卷部分请根据自己的情况在相应的选项上打勾,每个号码答案代表为如下 1-完全不同意; 2-不同意; 3-一般; 4-同意; 5-完全同意 A. 意见领袖量表: 問卷項目 1 2 3 4 5 个人魅力: 我选择某个直播平台是直播主播有魅力 2. 直播主播的影响力越高,他/她推荐销售的产品就越值得信赖 直播主播在社区中的名气越大,我认为他/她推荐的产品就越 有保证 4. 我总是关注直播主播的活动 专业知识: 5. 直播主播拥有该领域的专业知识 直播主播在该领域有丰富的经验 直播主播对产品的了解越多,我就越信任他/她销售的产品质 信息实用性: 直播主播分享的信息有助于我更详细地了解产品 9. 直播主播分享的信息有助于我增加购物知识 10. 直播主播分享的信息可以满足我的购物需求 11. 直播主播推荐的产品是我当时真正需要的 12. 直播主播推荐的产品与时俱进 13. 直播主播推荐的商品信息是最新的 B.网络口碑量表



問卷項目	1	2	3	4	5
网络口碑数量:					
14. 如果有很多用户对产品进行了评价,我就会倾向于选择该产	Z				
品					
15. 网络口碑评价越多,我就越有可能选择该产品					
16. 如果网络口碑评价既有正面评价也有负面评价,我会倾向于	<u> </u>				
选择该产品					
网络口碑质量:					
17. 如果网络口碑评论真实可靠,我会倾向于选择该产品					
18. 如果网络口碑评论理性、公正,我会倾向于选择该产品					
19. 如果产品评论清晰易懂,我会倾向于选择该产品		$\perp$			
20. 如果网络口碑评价具体全面,对产品和服务的质量描述证	牟				
细,我会倾向于选择该产品					
网络口碑效价:		1			
21. 如果该产品的网络口碑评价普遍正面,我会倾向于选择该品	니 1				
牌					
22. 如果该产品得到许多买家的推荐,我会倾向于选择该产品					
23. 该产品的正面网络口碑评价能满足我对产品信息的需求					
C.消費者购买行为量表					
問卷項目	1	2	3	4	5
消费者购买行为					
24. 直播中的商品都会引起我的注意力					
25. 我会经常使用直播购买商品	$\perp$	$\perp$			
26. 在有购买需求时,我会通过直播进行商品购买					
27. 我将在直播购买过的商品推荐给其他人		$\perp$			
28. 我购买直播带货主播推荐产品的可能性非常高		$\perp$			
29. 我所喜爱的直播带货主播在带货时会促使我产生购买行为		$\perp$			
30. 直播带货主播的影响力比较大,他推荐的产品我愿意购买	$\perp$	$\perp$			
31. 直播带货主播在带货过程中对产品的推荐会促使我产生则	勾				
买行为		$\perp$			
32. 直播带货主播会使我进行再次选购产品	$\perp$	$\perp$			
33. 直播带货主播在直播中对我的消费观念产生了影响					
34. 直播带货主播对我购买欲望有正面影响					
54. 直播市员主播科技例关联至有正面影响					



# Biogrpahic of Author

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