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EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF THE COLLABORATIVE KOL-KOC DUAL-PATH MECHANISM ON BEAUTY CONSUMPTION DECISIONS AMONG GENERATION Z WOMEN ON REDNOTE: USING DUAL AISAS MODEL

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Abstract: In the context of the rapid growth of digital marketing, the "grass-planting" marketing model on social e-commerce platforms has a significant influence on consumer purchasing behavior. Rednote, as a popular social e-commerce platform combining social networking, shopping, and content sharing, has become a major hub for "grass-planting" marketing, especially in the beauty industry, due to its rich content ecosystem and vast young user base. KOLs (Key Opinion Leaders) and KOCs (Key Opinion Consumers) are central to the "grass-planting" mechanism. This study investigates whether and how KOLs and KOCs influence consumer purchasing decisions through the publication of beauty-related "grass-planting" notes, and explores the relationship between these two types of influencers. Focusing on beauty-related "grass-planting" notes on Rednote and Generation Z women as the core consumer group, the study conducts empirical research based on the Double AISAS model. The findings reveal that KOLs drive the traditional AISAS path through professional content creation, enhancing brand exposure and increasing purchase conversion rates. In contrast, KOCs activate the A+ISAS path by sharing authentic experiences, promoting secondary dissemination, and converting private domain traffic. Both mechanisms work synergistically, driving the full conversion process from awareness to purchase. This study enriches consumer decision-making theory and provides theoretical and practical guidance for developing targeted marketing strategies for beauty brands, as well as for optimizing Rednote's platform algorithms and functionalities.
Keywords: Rednote; Beauty "grass-planting" notes; Generation Z women; Dual AISAS model; KOL and KOC; Synergistic effect

1 INTRODUCTION

In the current environment where internet e-commerce and mobile short videos are thriving, online shopping is no longer confined to traditional e-commerce platforms. People are gradually turning to social e-commerce platforms, with Rednote being one of the typical representatives. Its unique "grass-planting" marketing model has played a crucial role. According to data from the Weibo Easy Trading Platform, the consumption scale of Rednote has continuously increased in recent years, with the number of orders in 2023 increasing by 59.7% year-on-year, and the transaction amount growing by 49%. Rednote has become the social e-commerce platform with the highest brand recognition. Generation Z female consumers, as the core group of Rednote, have significant purchasing power that cannot be underestimated.

Previous research has explored the marketing effects of social media from multiple perspectives. Zhang Jian, based on the AITS model, examined the different impacts of interactive, narrative, and "grass-planting" content marketing on consumer decision-making, with "grass-planting" content marketing being the most effective in promoting consumer transactions and sharing. Chen Ming and Yin Jialu revealed the balancing mechanism between commercialization and content value among knowledge influencers[1]. Yan Yuelong discussed the essential differences in the communication logic between KOLs and KOCs[2]. It is worth noting that existing studies mainly focus on the mechanisms of single influencer types and lack a systematic exploration of the relationship between KOLs and KOCs, leaving a theoretical gap.

The purpose of this study is to construct a framework to understand the impact of beauty "grass-planting" notes on Rednote on the purchasing decisions of Generation Z female users and to validate this framework with empirical data. Based on this, the study raises two key questions: first, do KOLs and KOCs' beauty "grass-planting" notes influence consumer purchasing decisions, and if so, how? Second, if the beauty "grass-planting" notes of KOLs and KOCs influence consumers' purchasing decisions, is there a connection between them? What kind of relationship exists? A deeper exploration of these issues not only contributes to enriching consumer decision-making theory but also provides valuable insights for developing targeted marketing strategies for beauty brands, as well as optimizing Rednote platform algorithms and functionalities. This holds significant theoretical and practical significance.

2 LITERATURE AND THEORY

2.1 Basic Concepts

2.1.1 Rednote APP

Rednote is a lifestyle sharing and social e-commerce platform founded in 2013. Initially, it focused on sharing overseas shopping experiences but gradually expanded into various vertical fields such as beauty, fashion, travel, and food. By 2023, the platform had over 300 million registered users, with 74.1% of them being post-90s and post-00s, and Generation Z women as the core group. Users share their product experiences and consumption decisions through text, images, and short videos. Since 2014, Rednote has gradually developed a "grass-planting" feature, which encourages users to generate content (UGC) or rely on Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs) to promote products and stimulate purchase desire, forming a closed-loop of "social + consumption."

Research on Rednote mainly focuses on marketing strategies, user behavior, and platform mechanisms. Chen Ming and Yin Jialu focus on the marketing strategies of knowledge influencers under the "grass-planting" economy, pointing out that knowledge influencers monetize traffic through professional content and emotional connections[1], with their core value lying in balancing knowledge dissemination and commercialization needs. Jian Yu analyzed Rednote's KOL marketing strategies and explored the impact of social media marketing on consumer purchase intentions[3], which is important for understanding the practical effects of Rednote's KOL marketing strategies. Fan Qunlin studied the marketing strategy innovation of Rednote's social e-commerce platform[4], emphasizing the importance of innovating platform functions, building strong connections with users, improving market response speed, and establishing long-term relationships, which provide insights for the development of innovative marketing strategies on Rednote.

2.1.2 "Glass-Planting"

"Grass-planting" is an emerging consumer cultural phenomenon that refers to the act of stimulating others' purchase intentions through genuine product experiences or recommendations shared on social media. Its model includes user-generated sharing, KOL professional reviews, and brand collaborations, with the subsequent act of "pulling out the grass(de-influencing)." In addition to Rednote, platforms such as Douyin, Kuaishou, Weibo, and Bilibili also integrate "grass-planting" functions through short videos and live streaming, forming a multi-platform competitive landscape, especially in the beauty sector.

Li Zhongmei and Huang Min argue that Rednote has built a "grass-planting" marketing model that combines content ecosystem, word-of-mouth[5], brand, innovative UGC, and self-operated e-commerce strategies, highlighting the importance of content marketing for brand development. They provide a strategy framework for effective "grass-planting" marketing on Rednote. Dong Yuanyuan analyzed the differentiated effects of three types of "grass-planting" formats (text, image, video, and live-streaming) on consumer flow experiences based on the SOR model[6]. The study found that live-streaming grass-planting is the most effective, while video "grass-planting" has the most significant mediating effect. Qian Jingjing and Zhao Jingjing verified that "grass-planting" short video marketing, with its usefulness, ease of use[7], life-like characteristics, and interactivity, can promote emotional arousal, positively influencing consumer purchase intentions. This provides a new perspective for research in the short-video marketing field.

2.1.3 KOL and KOC

KOL (Key Opinion Leader) refers to someone with expertise, rich experience, and significant influence in a particular field, and who has a large following. Their core characteristic is the ability to produce content in a vertical field and provide professional brand endorsement. In social and marketing contexts, KOLs have a significant influence on the attitudes and behaviors of their followers. KOC (Key Opinion Consumer), on the other hand, emphasizes participants in consumer behavior who are closer to ordinary consumers. KOCs, as active sharers among regular users, gain influence from real experiences and emotional resonance within their social relationship networks.

Yan Yuelong pointed out the essential differences in the communication logic between KOLs and KOCs. The former relies on professionalism and public domain traffic[2], while the latter empowers private domain traffic with authenticity, emphasizing the high conversion rate achieved by KOCs through emotional bonds, reflecting the "KOL downward, KOC upward" marketing trend. Li Li empirically analyzed the trust-driven differences between KOLs and KOCs in the influencer economy based on consumer trust dimensions[8]. It was found that ability and charm-driven trust dominate KOLs, while good-will and honesty-driven trust drive KOCs, and a five-dimensional scale including institutional trust was developed.

2.2 Research Model and Hypotheses Development

With the evolution and development of media, consumer purchasing behavior patterns have also changed. Advertising companies have used various models related to the consumer decision-making process to analyze consumers' purchasing behaviors and purchase intentions. In 1898, American advertising scholar E.S. Lewis proposed the AIDMA model, which suggests that consumers go through five stages from exposure to information to the final purchase: Attention, Interest, Desire, Memory, and Action. Later, to meet the demands of the digital age, the Japanese advertising company Dentsu upgraded the AIDMA model and proposed another consumer behavior model, AISAS, in 2008. This model better explains consumer behavior activities on the internet and includes five stages: Attention, Interest, Search, Action, and Share.

Today, people are more inclined to word-of-mouth communication than traditional advertising. According to relevant data, compared to notes from celebrities or KOLs, "grass-planting" notes posted or shared by KOCs, ordinary users, or friends are more effective in driving purchase behavior, as they include consumer emotions and more easily trigger consumers' desire to purchase or share. The traditional AISAS model focuses on the linear decision-making path of consumers in the digital age, but the interactivity and networked features of social media have made consumer

decision-making behaviors non-linear, especially as sharing behavior may trigger a new round of dissemination effects. In response, Dentsu and digital marketing company Atara LLC collaborated in 2015 to propose a new AISAS model, called the "Dual AISAS Model", to enhance digital communication and maximize sales [9]. The Dual AISAS model builds upon the traditional path and introduces a new "desire to share" (A+AISAS) process. It emphasizes the activation effect of users' sharing behavior on social networks: shared content spreads through social relationship chains, attracting others' Attention, Interest, and secondary dissemination (Spread), forming a cycle of diffusion. The core innovation of the Dual AISAS model lies in its dual-path integration mechanism. The first path (traditional AISAS) focuses on the individual decision-making process from attention to purchase, with core variables being the driving factors of purchase desire, such as content attractiveness and information credibility. The second path (A+ISAS) emphasizes the activation effect of users' sharing behavior on social networks, with core variables being the triggering mechanisms for sharing desire, such as social identity and emotional resonance. The Dual AISAS model is highly applicable to the study of social platforms like Rednote, which are centered around user-generated content (UGC). Beauty-related content, with its strong visual and interactive characteristics, can achieve viral dissemination through the dual paths. Generation Z women, as the core audience for Rednote's beauty content, exhibit characteristics such as segmentation, emotional engagement, and social dependency, which align well with the dual-path logic of the Dual AISAS model.

In the Web 2.0 era, scholars suggest that brands cooperate with KOLs, as they are more likely to help brands capture the public's attention. The attention stage highlights that influence starts from the outside in, so the extent of influence depends on the number of KOLs or celebrities the users follow. The vertical flow in Figure 1 shows that users' attention is captured by the notes posted by KOLs and celebrities. The rate of user attention and trust determines the intensity of user interest. The higher the attention and trust towards influencers, the greater the interest generated [10]. When a user posts a beauty-related "grass-planting" note, they receive feedback in the form of "likes", "comments", "shares", and "follows". The more followers, the more intense the feedback, which can stimulate more attention from others. Rednote, as a digital social media platform, quickly boosts initial exposure through KOL content with professional endorsement. Fans, based on trust in the KOL's expertise,tend to develop a strong interest in the beauty products recommended by them, even making direct purchases. Based on the above research, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: KOL's beauty "grass-planting" notes have a positive impact on user attention.
H2: KOL's beauty "grass-planting" notes have a positive impact on user interest.
H3: KOL's beauty "grass-planting" notes have a positive impact on user search intent.
H4: KOL's beauty "grass-planting" notes have a positive impact on user purchase or action intent.
H5: KOL's beauty "grass-planting" notes have a positive impact on user sharing intent.

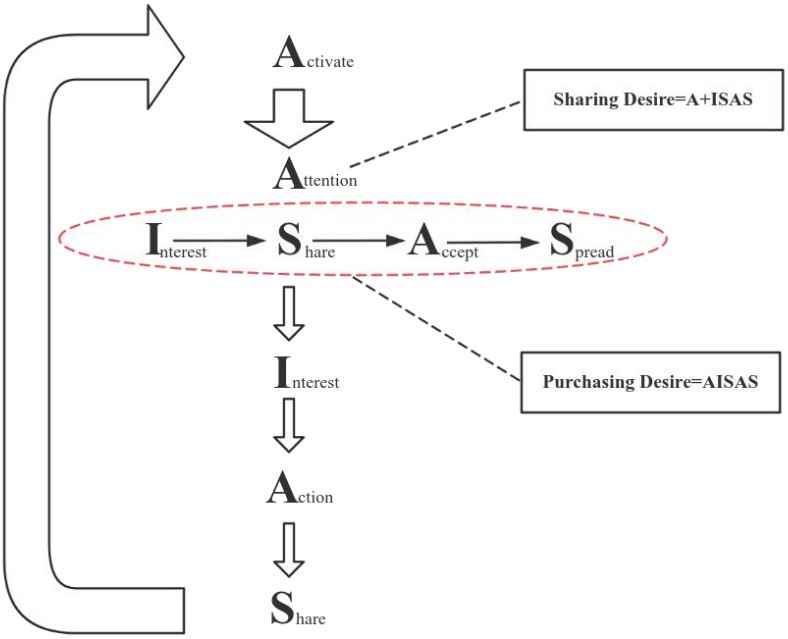

Figure 1 The Dual AISAS Model

In the A+ISAS path, sharing behavior is not only the end point of the purchase decision but also the starting point for a new round of dissemination. Figure 1 shows the inward influence's beginning. Cheah et al. found that when information is spread by close friends[11], it is more widely accepted than when spread by celebrities, and the former is more effective than the latter. KOCs, as active sharers among ordinary users, gain influence from real experiences and emotional resonance within their social relationship chains. KOCs are characterized by authenticity and trust, and they can achieve high conversion from exposure (public domain traffic) to conversion (private domain traffic) [2].

According to the multi-step flow theory, once information is transmitted to followers by opinion leaders (e.g., KOLs), followers further diffuse the content through private networks (e.g., friends, followers) and extended networks (e.g., cross-platform links). This diffusion process relies on "emotional resonance" and "social identity" in social interactions. Shintara and Yun used the "Dual AISAS model" to explore consumer behavior on SNSs[12], finding that consumers tend to trust information conveyed by other consumers, and they are more inclined to share and recommend products through SNSs than before. This activity can attract others' attention and influence other users' purchasing behaviors. Based on the above research, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H6: KOC's sharing has a positive impact on user activity.
H7: KOC's sharing has a positive impact on user attention.
H8: KOC's sharing has a positive impact on user interest.
H9: KOC's sharing has a positive impact on user sharing intent.
H10: KOC's sharing has a positive impact on user information acceptance.
H11: KOC's sharing has a positive impact on user dissemination intent.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Questionnaire Collection

The questionnaire for this study was conducted using a random sampling method. The survey was designed and distributed via Wenjuanxing and collected on online platforms such as WeChat and Rednote. Screening questions were included to exclude invalid responses. A total of 459 questionnaires were distributed, and 444 valid responses were collected. SPSSAU was used as the primary analysis tool for testing the hypotheses proposed in this study.

3.2 Sample Description

Descriptive statistical analysis was conducted on the data from the questionnaire to reflect the overall representativeness of the sampled population. Table 1 lists the demographic characteristics of the sample.

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics of the Sample(N=459)

question	options	Frequency (N=459)	Percentage (%)
Your gender:	female	450	98.04
	male	9	1.96
Have you ever browsed beauty "glass-planting" notes on Rednote: (n=450)	yes	444	98.67
	no	6	1.33
Your age group is: (N=444)	1995-1999	81	18.24
	2000-2004	261	58.78
	2005-2009	102	22.97
Your occupation is: (N=444)	students	285	64.19
	employee	114	25.68
	freelancer	33	7.43
	others	12	2.70
Your disposable monthly beauty spending: (N=444)	Less than 500 yuan	210	47.30
	500-1000 yuan	162	36.49
	1001-2000 yuan	54	12.16
	More than 2,000 yuan	18	4.05
How often do you use Rednote:(N=444)	Multiple times per day	231	52.03
	once a day	75	16.89
	3-5 times per week	84	18.92

question	options	Frequency (N=459)	Percentage (%)
The average length of time you spend browsing Rednote's beauty content per day is: (N=444)	occasional use	54	12.16
	Less than 15 minutes	135	30.41
	15-30 minutes	162	36.49
	30 minutes - 1 hour	108	24.32
	More than 1 hour	39	8.78
Which of the following is a higher percentage of the beauty influencers you follow:(N=444)	KOL (Professional beauty influencers with >50,000 followers. (e.g., Li Jiaqi, etc.)	141	31.76
	KOC/Ordinary user (Ordinary users with < 50,000 followers. e.g., college student non-pro influencers, etc.)	168	37.84
	both are equal	135	30.41

According to the statistical results, more than half of the respondents were born between 2000 and 2004, accounting for 58.78%, and the majority of respondents were students, representing 64.19%. In terms of monthly average spending on beauty products, most respondents reported spending less than 500 yuan (47.3%) or between 500–1000 yuan (36.49%), indicating that most Generation Z female consumers are relatively cautious in their beauty consumption. In terms of Rednote usage frequency, the highest proportion (52.03%) of users reported using the platform multiple times a day. Regarding the average daily time spent browsing Rednote, the highest proportion (36.49%) of users spent 15–30 minutes, followed by 30.41% who spent less than 15 minutes. This suggests that most users spend relatively little time on Rednote, possibly due to the frequent content updates, causing users to habitually browse quickly. Among the types of beauty influencers followed, KOCs or ordinary users made up the highest proportion at 37.84%, indicating that beauty content shared by ordinary users is gaining increasing popularity.

3.3 Variable Measurement

The variables involved in this study include Attention (Att), Interest (Int), Search (Stch), Action (Act), Share (Sha), Activate (Actv), Attention (Attnt), Interest (Inter), Share (Shre), Accept (Accpt), and Spread (Sprd). This study referenced established scales from previous scholars and designed the items based on literature review and online research. The final scale design is shown in Table 2:

Table 2 Variable Measurement Scale

Variables	Items	Statement	Scale source
Attention (Att)	Att1	The beauty "grass-planting" notes posted by KOLs catch my attention.	Wei&Lu [13] Cheah, J.-H., Ting, H., Huei Cham, T., & Ali Memon, M. [11].
	Att2	The beauty "grass-planting" notes posted by KOLs fully capture my attention.	
	Att3	The beauty "grass-planting" notes posted by KOLs catch my eye.	

Interest (Int)	Int1	After reading the beauty "grass-planting" notes posted by KOLs, I am very interested in the notes.	Wei&Lu [13] Cheah, J.-H., Ting, H., Huei Cham, T., & Ali Memon, M. [11].
	Int2	After reading the beauty "grass-planting" notes posted by KOLs, I am interested in the related beauty products.	
	Int3	The beauty "grass-planting" notes posted by KOLs leave a good impression on me regarding the related beauty products.	
Search (Stch)	Stch1	After reading the beauty "grass-planting" notes posted by KOLs, I will search for information about the beauty products.	Wei&Lu [13] Cheah, J.-H., Ting, H., Huei Cham, T., & Ali Memon, M. [11]. Meng Fei
	Stch2	After reading the beauty "grass-planting" notes posted by KOLs, I will search for online reviews of the beauty products.	
	Stch3	After reading the beauty "grass-planting" notes posted by KOLs, I will compare the prices of the beauty brand products.	
Action (Act)	Act1	After reading the beauty "grass-planting" notes posted by KOLs, I believe that the beauty brand's products are worth trying.	Wei&Lu [13] Cheah, J.-H., Ting, H., Huei Cham, T., & Ali Memon, M. [11]. Meng Fei
	Act2	After reading the beauty "grass-planting" notes posted by KOLs, I will develop a desire to purchase the beauty products.	
	Act3	If I already have a purchase need, I will prioritize purchasing the brand/product recommended by the KOL.	
Share (Sha)	Sha1	After reading the beauty "grass-planting" notes posted by KOLs, I will forward the notes to my friends.	Wei&Lu [13] Cheah, J.-H., Ting, H., Huei Cham, T., & Ali Memon, M. [11].
	Sha2	After reading the beauty "grass-planting" notes posted by KOLs, I will share information about the related beauty products with my friends.	
	Sha3	After purchasing and using the beauty products, I will share my experience and comment on the products.	
Activate (Actv)	Actv1	The beauty notes shared by KOCs have sparked my interest.	Awasthi, A. K., & Choraria, S. [14]. Sara Javed, Md. Salamum Rashidin & Yun Xiao [15]
	Actv2	I will follow and check the notes shared or reposted by KOCs in beauty communities.	
	Actv3	I will click to view the details of beauty products due to KOC's real feedback (such as reviews from ordinary users).	
Attention (Attnt)	Attnt1	The beauty "grass-planting" notes shared by KOCs caught my attention.	Awasthi, A. K., & Choraria, S. [14]. Sara Javed, Md. Salamum Rashidin & Yun Xiao [15]

	Attnt2	The beauty "grass-planting" notes shared by KOCs aroused my interest.	
	Attnt3	The beauty "grass-planting" notes shared by KOCs caught my eye.	
Variables	Items	Statement	Scale source
Interest (Inter)	Inter1	I like the beauty "grass-planting" notes shared by KOCs.	Awasthi, A. K., & Choraria, S. [14]. Sara Javed, Md. Salamum Rashidin & Yun Xiao [15]
	Inter2	The beauty "grass-planting" notes shared by KOCs leave a good impression on me.	
	Inter3	KOC's recommendations make me more confident in the cost-effectiveness of beauty products.	
Share (Shre)	Shre1	I am willing to forward the beauty "grass-planting" notes shared by KOCs because their content is more credible.	Awasthi, A. K., & Choraria, S. [14]. Sara Javed, Md. Salamum Rashidin & Yun Xiao [15] The definition of this study
	Shre2	I will interact in the comments section of KOC's beauty "grass-planting" notes (e.g., asking about their experience).	
	Shre3	After reading the beauty "grass-planting" notes shared by KOCs, I am more willing to share my own experience with beauty products.	
Accept (Accpt)	Accpt1	The beauty "grass-planting" notes shared by KOCs affect my acceptance of product information.	Awasthi, A. K., & Choraria, S. [14]. Sara Javed, Md. Salamum Rashidin & Yun Xiao [15] The definition of this study
	Accpt2	I will refer to the comments in KOC's beauty "grass-planting" notes to decide whether to purchase the product.	
	Accpt3	I tend to purchase the beauty products recommended by KOCs (compared to those recommended by influencers or celebrities).	
Spread (Sprd)	Sprd1	Through KOC's notes, I learn about more niche beauty brands and recommend them to others.	Awasthi, A. K., & Choraria, S. [14]. Sara Javed, Md. Salamum Rashidin & Yun Xiao [15] The definition of this study
	Sprd2	I will forward and share KOC's beauty "grass-planting" notes to my social circle, along with my comments.	
	Sprd3	The KOC notes I share are often re-shared or liked by other users.	

3.4 Reliability and Validity Analysis

3.4.1 Relisbility analysis

Reliability analysis was performed on the statistical results of the survey using the Cronbach's α coefficient, a commonly used method in questionnaire surveys. The Cronbach's α coefficient measures the reliability of a scale by calculating the average correlation coefficient (r). A Cronbach's α coefficient greater than 0.8 indicates high reliability; a coefficient between 0.7 and 0.8 indicates good reliability; a coefficient between 0.6 and 0.7 indicates acceptable reliability; and a coefficient below 0.6 indicates poor reliability.

Table 3 Reliability Analysis of Questionnaire Scales

Variable	Number of items	Cronbach's Alpah
Overall Scale	33	0.831
Attention (Att)	3	0.835
Interest (Int)	3	0.730
Search (Srch)	3	0.721
Action(Act)	3	0.760
Share (Sha)	3	0.835
Activate (Actv)	3	0.757
Attention (Attnt)	3	0.869
Interest (Inter)	3	0.789
Share (Shre)	3	0.673
Accept (Accpt)	3	0.788
Spread (Sprd)	3	0.808

As shown in Table 3, the overall Cronbach's α coefficient for the scale is 0.831, with the lowest Cronbach's α coefficient for any variable being greater than 0.6, indicating good reliability. The results show that the scale design is reasonable and exhibits good internal stability and consistency, making it suitable for further analysis.

3.4.2 Validity analysis

The validity of the scale was tested using the KMO and Bartlett's test. When the KMO value exceeds 0.8, it indicates that the scale is highly suitable for data extraction. A KMO value between 0.7 and 0.8 indicates that the scale is reasonably suitable for data extraction. A KMO value between 0.6 and 0.7 indicates that data extraction can proceed. A KMO value below 0.6 suggests that information extraction is difficult. The KMO value for this study is 0.825, which is above 0.8, and the p value is 0.000, less than 0.01, indicating that factor analysis can be conducted. See Table 4.

Table 4 KMO and Bartlett's Test

KMO value		0.825
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approximate Chi-square (math.)	1376.065
	df	55
	p value	0.000

4 RESEARCH RESULTS

4.1 Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis is a statistical method used to examine the relationship between two or more variables, which can help understand the associative properties between them. In this study, Pearson Correlation Coefficient method was used to test the relationships between 11 variables. The results of the correlation test are shown in Table 5.

Table 5 Pearson Correlation Coefficients

	Mean	Standard Deviation	Attention (Att)	Interest (Int)	Search (Stch)	Action (Act)	Share (Sha)	Activate (Actv)	Attention (Attnt)	Interest (Inter)	Share (Shre)	Accept (Accpt)	Spread (Sprd)
Attention (Att)	3.905	0.770	1										
Interest (Int)	4.101	0.633	0.453**	1									
Search (Srch)	4.095	0.633	0.445**	0.413**	1								
Action (Act)	3.910	0.797	0.359**	0.426**	0.499**	1							
Share (Sha)	3.818	0.889	0.285**	0.383**	0.308**	0.280**	1						
Activate (Actv)	4.027	0.779	0.493**	0.318**	0.208*	0.269**	0.376**	1					
Attention (Attnt)	3.951	0.853	0.334**	0.237**	0.355**	0.392**	0.179**	0.386**	1				
Interest (Inter)	4.072	0.746	0.355**	0.263**	0.268**	0.258**	0.220**	0.401**	0.326**	1			
Share (Shre)	4.054	0.652	0.268**	0.315**	0.177**	0.111*	0.302**	0.242**	0.261**	0.240**	1		
Accept (Accpt)	4.110	0.763	0.124**	0.372**	0.190**	0.229**	0.327**	0.270**	0.322**	0.319**	0.356**	1	
Spread (Sprd)	3.849	0.893	0.305**	0.337**	0.290**	0.244**	0.425**	0.285**	0.255**	0.465**	0.401**	0.339**	1

* $p<0.05$ ** $p<0.01$

From Table 5, it can be seen that Attention (Att) has significant positive correlations with Interest (Int), Search (Stch), Action (Act), Share (Sha), Activation (Actv), Attention (Attnt), Interest (Inter), Share (Shre), Acceptance (Accpt), and Spread (Sprd), with correlation coefficients all greater than 0. This indicates positive correlations between the variables.

4.2 Hypothesis Testing

Path analysis was used in this study to test the research model. The study first checked for collinearity issues among the variables. In the Pearson Correlation Coefficients, when the absolute value of the correlation between any two variables exceeds 0.8, it suggests the potential existence of collinearity problems. If the correlation coefficient between two variables is 1, it indicates absolute collinearity. According to Table 5, there are no pairs of variables with an absolute correlation coefficient greater than 0.8 in this study. Additionally, the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) scores indicate that if a variable's VIF exceeds 5, it suggests collinearity. From Table 6, it can be seen that no variables have a VIF greater than 10, meaning there are no collinearity issues among the variables in this study.

Table 6 Colinear Diagnosis

Variable	VIF value	Tolerance
Attention (Att)	1.798	0.556
Interest (Int)	1.675	0.597
Variable	VIF value	Tolerance

Search (Srch)	1.628	0.614
Action (Act)	1.577	0.634
Share (Sha)	1.497	0.668
Activate (Actv)	1.661	0.602
Attention (Attnt)	1.484	0.674
Interest (Inter)	1.520	0.658
Share (Shre)	1.367	0.731
Accept (Accpt)	1.463	0.684
Spread (Sprd)	1.630	0.614

The study used SPSS to conduct path analysis and model construction. The initial model had a low fit, so model modification was made using the MI (Modification Indices) based on the relationships between the variables, and new paths were added. The model fit was improved. The recommended model fit indices are: RMSEA less than 0.10, RMR less than 0.05, CFI greater than 0.9, NFI greater than 0.9, IFI greater than 0.9, GFI greater than 0.9, and AGFI greater than 0.9. The fit results of the model in this study are as follows: RMSEA = 0.084, RMR = 0.044, CFI = 0.928, NFI = 0.909, IFI = 0.930, GFI = 0.945, AGFI = 0.907. The results of the measurement model indicate good model fit, and the model shown in Figure 2 has strong explanatory power.

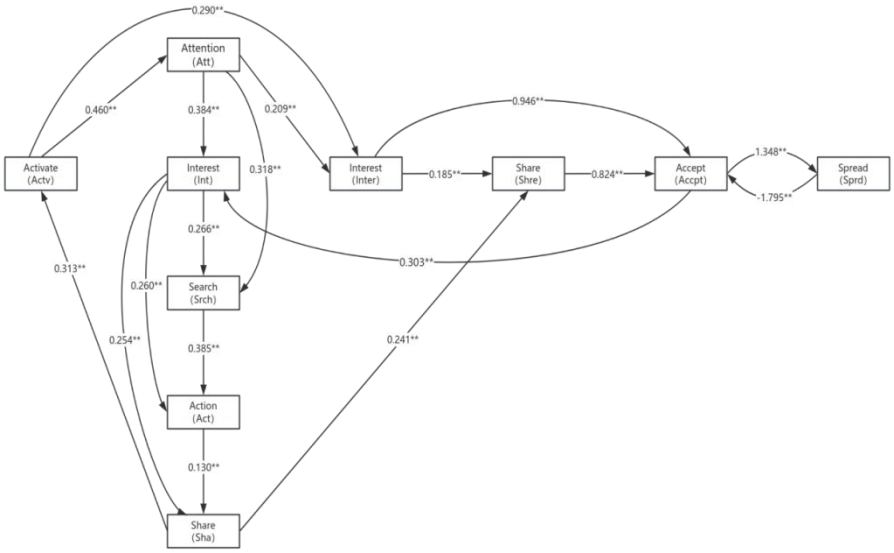

Figure 2 Diagram of the Dual AISAS Model

Table 7 shows the path coefficients after MI correction: Attention is significantly positively correlated with Interest (Int) and Search, Interest (Int) is significantly positively correlated with Search, Action, and Share (Sha), Search is significantly positively correlated with Action, Action is significantly positively correlated with Share (Sha), Share (Sha) is significantly positively correlated with Activate and Share (Shre), Activate is significantly positively correlated with Attention and Interest (Inter), Attention is significantly positively correlated with Interest (Inter), Interest (Inter) is significantly positively correlated with Share (Shre) and Accept, Share (Shre) is significantly positively correlated with Accept, Accept is significantly positively correlated with Spread and Interest (Int), and Spread is significantly negatively correlated with Accept. The results indicate that on Rednote, a platform centered around user sharing, the attention of Generation Z female consumers is attracted by the beauty "grass-planting" notes posted by KOLs, which have a significant impact on consumer interest (Int), promoting further search, purchase, and sharing of relevant beauty products and information on Rednote or other SNS platforms. Hypotheses H1, H2, H3, H4, and H5 are therefore supported. Additionally, consumer sharing on Rednote further activates their private network (e.g., friends, followers),

where KOC's beauty "grass-planting" notes play a major role, increasing followers' and friends' attention and interest in related beauty products and information, leading to purchase or further sharing. Consumers perceive KOC's beauty notes as more authentic and easier to accept and spread. Hypotheses H6, H7, H8, H9, H10, and H11 are therefore supported. Thus, the dual synergistic "grass-planting" mechanism of KOLs and KOCs plays an important role in enhancing the beauty consumption willingness of Generation Z women.

Table 7 Path Analysis Results

Hypotheses	Paths			p	Standardized path coefficient	Relationship
H1, H2	Attention (Att)	→	Interest (Int)	0.000	0.384	Supported
	Attention (Att)	→	Search (Stch)	0.000	0.318	
H3	Interest (Int)	→	Search (Stch)	0.000	0.266	Supported
	Interest (Int)	→	Action (Act)	0.000	0.260	
	Interest (Int)	→	Share (Sha)	0.000	0.254	
H4	Search (Stch)	→	Action (Act)	0.003	0.385	Supported
H5	Action (Act)	→	Share (Sha)	0.000	0.130	Supported
H6	Share (Sha)	→	Activate (Actv)	0.000	0.313	Supported
	Share (Sha)	→	Sharing (Shre)	0.000	0.241	
H7	Activate (Actv)	→	Attention (Att)	0.000	0.460	Supported
	Activate (Actv)	→	Interest (Inter)	0.000	0.290	
H8	Attention (Att)	→	Interest (Inter)	0.000	0.209	Supported
H9	Interest (Inter)	→	Share (Shre)	0.000	0.185	Supported
	Interest (Inter)	→	Accept (Accpt)	0.000	0.946	
H10	Share (Shre)	→	Accept (Accpt)	0.000	0.824	Supported
H11	Accept (Accpt)	→	Spread (Sprd)	0.000	1.348	Supported
	Accept (Accpt)	→	Interest (Int)	0.000	0.303	
	Spread (Sprd)	→	Accept (Accpt)	0.000	-1.795	

5 DISCUSSION

5.1 Research Findings

This study, based on the Dual AISAS model, systematically analyzes the synergistic effect and mechanisms of KOL and KOC beauty "grass-planting" notes on the purchase intentions of Generation Z female users on Rednote. The specific findings are as follows.

5.1.1 Differentiated mechanisms of KOL and KOC

KOL beauty "grass-planting" notes significantly drive the traditional AISAS path through professional content output. Their core value lies in enhancing users' initial attention and purchase conversion rates through the authority of the vertical field. With a large fan base and a professional image in a specific field, KOLs can rapidly increase brand exposure. KOL beauty "grass-planting" notes typically feature high visual quality and information density. Through

carefully designed titles, covers, and scene-based narratives, they attract the attention of Generation Z female users, quickly spark user interest with professional reviews and tutorial content, and naturally incorporate product selling points, significantly increasing user search and purchase conversion rates. KOL beauty "grass-planting" notes can rapidly build brand awareness in a short period and are often associated with clear commercial attributes, leading users to perceive KOLs as brand advocates representing the brand's stance.

KOC beauty "grass-planting" notes, on the other hand, activate the A+ISAS path through authentic experiences, using emotional resonance and trust within social relationship chains to drive secondary dissemination and conversion of private domain traffic. Although KOCs have fewer followers, the quality of the content they share is high, focusing on real experiences and stronger emotional resonance with more relatable characteristics. This weakens the commercial attributes, making users more likely to view the content from a consumer's perspective, thus creating "peer identification" and triggering the trust foundation for purchase decisions. For example, KOCs, through unfiltered lipstick swatches, everyday usage scenarios, or cost-effectiveness comparisons, can precisely address the pain points of their target users, stimulating active searches and sharing behaviors. While KOCs' beauty "grass-planting" notes are less influential than KOLs', their lower collaboration costs bring the advantage of matrix-based dissemination. When a large number of KOC/ordinary user beauty "grass-planting" notes are published on Rednote, the penetration ability of their information can rival that of KOLs. If the content quality is well-controlled, it can achieve cost-effective viral spread. KOCs' beauty "grass-planting" notes can also activate secondary dissemination (Interest → Spread) through the viral effects of social networks (e.g., WeChat Moments sharing, comment section interactions), generating long-tail traffic in the A+ISAS path.

5.1.2 Synergistic effect of KOL+KOC dual path

KOL beauty "grass-planting" notes have an advantage in the initial dissemination stage, making them suitable for quickly building brand recognition and achieving short-term exposure and conversion. KOC beauty "grass-planting" notes perform better in the sharing stage, as users are more likely to trigger social dissemination due to authentic experiences, leading to long-term trust and viral growth. The synergistic effect of the KOL + KOC dual path is mainly reflected in the fact that KOLs dominate the traditional path (AISAS) in the "awareness—decision" stage, while KOCs drive the diffusion path (A+ISAS) in the "sharing—activation" stage. Together, they form a closed-loop ecosystem of "professional guidance + real feedback", efficiently promoting the entire conversion process from awareness to purchase. This validates the effectiveness of the dual-path model.

5.2 Research Contributions

This study contributes to both the theoretical and practical understanding of consumer decision-making. From a theoretical perspective, this study builds on existing literature using the AISAS model to study consumer behavior and introduces the new "Dual AISAS Model", providing an in-depth exploration of how KOLs and KOCs impact the consumer decision-making process. By integrating the Double AISAS model with the non-linear and multi-interactive characteristics of social media, this study introduces the concept of "dual-path synergy", incorporating the non-linear interaction characteristics of social media into the consumer decision-making model, filling the gap left by traditional theories in addressing dynamic dissemination mechanisms. Additionally, based on the research of Yan Yuelong and Li Li [2,8], this study further clarifies the role boundaries of KOLs and KOCs: KOLs focus on public domain awareness building, while KOCs empower private domain conversion, providing a theoretical basis for tiered marketing strategies.

From a practical perspective, this study focuses on Rednote's beauty "grass-planting" notes and analyzes the effects of KOLs and KOCs on Generation Z female consumers' Attention (Att), Interest (Int), Search, Action, Share (Sha), Activate, Attention (Attnt), Interest (Inter), Share (Shre), Accept, and Spread. This enriches our understanding of each stage of the consumer decision-making process and provides new directions for future research. This study also offers practical insights for platform optimization and beauty brand marketing strategy enhancement. Rednote can strengthen the dual-path closed loop by weighting long-tail content through algorithms and implementing "one-click purchase" functions, while beauty brands can increase user retention by using a "KOL + KOC combined strategy".

5.3 Limitations

Like other empirical studies, this research has certain limitations. First, the study population is limited to Generation Z female consumers in mainland China, which may not represent other age groups, genders, or audiences from other countries and regions. Second, the research is confined to the Rednote platform and does not compare with other social e-commerce platforms, such as Tiktok and Kuaishou. Additionally, the study is limited to the beauty industry and may not be fully applicable to other industries or products. Finally, this study only uses cross-sectional data, rather than a longitudinal study, making it difficult to establish definitive causal relationships.

5.4 Future Research Directions

Given the limitations of this study, the following suggestions are made for future research. Future studies could investigate a broader range of audience types and other countries or regions, and test the model on other social e-commerce platforms to better understand the situation of digital influencers and consumer decision-making. Future research should also test the Dual AISAS model in other industries, such as food, tourism, and health, to enhance the robustness of the model. Additionally, follow-up surveys based on this study could further explore the causal

relationships between variables in the existing theoretical model and investigate the factors that influence the variables of the Dual AISAS model.

COMPETING INTERESTS

The authors have no relevant financial or non-financial interests to disclose.

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