Proceedings of ICFTBA 2025 Symposium: Data-Driven Decision Making in Business and Economics
DOI: 10.54254/2754-1169/2025.BL38147

The Influence of "Content Seeding" on Social Media on Consumers' Purchasing Decisions

Ziyue Yin[1,*,†], Zhenyu Qu[2,†], Zihao An[3,†]

[1]North Cross School, Shanghai, China
[2]North Cross School, Shanghai, China
[3]Haichuan Middle School of Jinan Hitech Zone, Jinan, China
**Corresponding Author. Email: yzyzyzy12345@outlook.com*
†These authors contributed equally to this work and should be considered as co-first authors

Abstract. As social media has become the core platform for consumers to obtain information and interact, "content seeding" (through targeted distribution of high-quality content by KOLs, ordinary users, or brand officials) as a precise communication strategy, its mechanism of influencing consumers' purchasing decisions has gradually become a focus of attention in both academia and industry. This study takes social media users as the research subjects and combines questionnaire surveys to systematically explore the paths of different forms of content seeding (such as KOL evaluations, user UGC sharing), content credibility, and dissemination frequency on consumers' purchasing decision-making at various stages (demand cognition, information search, scheme evaluation, purchase behavior, and post-purchase feedback).

Keywords: Content Seeding, Social Media, Consumers' Purchasing Decisions, KOL Marketing, User-Generated Content

1. Introduction

In recent years, with the continuous improvement in living standards and the development of the social media industry, the influence of "content seeding" on consumer purchasing decisions has been steadily increasing. Not long ago, if we wanted to buy a product, we had to visit physical shops to view and purchase it. Now, however, we only need to input the desired item into certain apps to browse thousands of products and make purchases anytime, anywhere. Online shopping has become the primary consumption method for people.

Regarding the current state of social media "content seeding" influencing consumer decisions, numerous issues persist within this marketing approach. These include whether personalized recommendations on e-commerce platforms truly satisfy users and concerns over misleading content, which jeopardize both consumer rights and the sustainability of the social media marketing ecosystem. The former leverages technologies such as big data and machine learning to conduct in-depth analysis of user browsing histories, purchasing behaviors, and saved preferences, thereby enabling the precise targeting of potentially appealing products [1].

© 2026 The Authors. This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License 4.0 (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

DOI: 10.54254/2754-1169/2025.BL38147

Therefore, a systematic analysis of the key issues within current social media marketing strategies is required, alongside proposing effective solutions addressing their root causes. This paper will investigate how social media "content seeding" influences our shopping choices[2].

2. The definition and main forms of "content seeding" in online media

"Online product recommendation" (also known as "content seeding" in online media) refers to a social communication and consumption guidance phenomenon where consumers, influenced by the product or service information shared by others on social platforms, develop interest and positive feelings towards the product or service, and eventually form a purchase intention. Its main forms are concentrated in short videos and live streaming: Live streaming is essentially a new type of e-commerce model. The host recommends and sells products through video live streaming, based on online live broadcasts and online transactions, which can achieve simultaneous growth in brand awareness and product sales. The core lies in completing the sales conversion through consumer interaction, product promotion, and experience display during the live streaming process[3]. On the other hand, short videos are more suitable for users' fragmented time, improving the efficiency of information dissemination - consumers can learn about the appearance, functions, usage methods of the product, as well as the usage experiences and evaluations of other consumers through short videos, thereby comprehensively grasping the product information[4].

3. The core stage of consumers' purchasing decisions and the intervention point of the "content seeding" approach

The core stages of a consumer's purchasing decision consist of five steps: demand identification, information collection, scheme evaluation, purchase decision-making, and post-purchase behavior. The act of "content seeding" can intervene in multiple key stages: In the demand identification stage, vivid product demonstrations in short videos and live broadcasts can stimulate consumers' unmet needs; in the information collection stage, detailed product introductions, experience sharing, and people explanations in the content seeding content provide consumers with multi-dimensional external information, reducing information asymmetry; in the scheme evaluation stage, the real usage effects and comparative evaluations in the content seeding content help consumers intuitively assess the quality of the product; in the purchase decision-making stage, the limited-time discounts and real-time interactions in the live broadcast, as well as the action guidance in the short videos, further drive consumers to make a purchase [5].

The characteristics of online content seeding include: Firstly, it is highly interactive - live broadcasts can provide real-time answers to questions, and short videos support comment exchanges, enabling prompt responses to consumers' inquiries; Secondly, it is rich in information - integrating pictures, text and dynamic videos to convey product details, meeting consumers' information needs[3].

4. The authenticity of the content of the content seeding project

The authenticity of the content of online product recommendations is the core attribute in the online media recommendation scenarios. It refers to the degree of alignment between the recommended information (such as product usage experience, functional effects, real shooting displays, etc.) and the actual situation of the product. Its core feature lies in that the content originates from real experiences and can objectively reflect the advantages and potential shortcomings of the product,

DOI: 10.54254/2754-1169/2025.BL38147

rather than overly packaged or fictional commercial promotion content. This authenticity is reflected not only in the shopping experiences shared by ordinary users and the real shooting materials, but also in the objective recommendations based on actual use by KOLs or hosts, and is a key foundation for reducing information asymmetry and building consumer trust[4].

Liu Chen clearly pointed out in "The Impact of 'Recommendation' Content Marketing on Users' Purchase Intentions - Taking Xiaohongshu as an Example" that on social platforms such as Xiaohongshu, the real content posted by users, including shopping experiences, real photos, and videos of products, can help consumers gain a clear understanding of the actual situation of the products. The research further emphasized that such genuine recommendation content can effectively reduce the information gap and decision-making risks in consumers' purchasing decisions, enhance their perception of product credibility, and thereby provide support for improving purchase satisfaction and purchase intentions. This fully demonstrates the core role of the authenticity of recommendation content in connecting product information with consumers' decisions.

5. Interactivity of seeding content

Seeding interactivity means two-way communication between seeding communicators (like KOLs, hosts, or regular users) and consumers in online media seeding. It shows in live streams—hosts answer audience questions in real time—and short videos, where users interact via likes, comments, or shares[3].

A study titled Understanding the Psychology of Douyin Short-Video Seeding Users notes that Douyin's interactivity boosts its seeding effect. User participation (likes, comments, challenges) deepens product impressions. For example, a new phone brand on Douyin held a "photo challenge," inviting users to share photos taken with the phone. This not only increased engagement but also spread product influence via user-generated content [4].

Another report from Shanghai Jiao Tong University's China Institute for Development adds that Xiaohongshu's algorithm, which favors regular users, fosters cross-temporal community interaction. Such exchanges spread useful info, letting new consumption ideas reach more people.

6. Hypothesis and literature support

If consumers often use specific social media (like Xiaohongshu or Douyin) to look at "seeding" posts, the more they use the platform, the faster they might buy the "seeded" products; using it less could mean slower purchases.

So, studies on how social media ties to shopping habits show more platform use makes buying decisions faster. People who use Xiaohongshu or Douyin a lot get regular "seeding" content from algorithms—this saves them time checking if a product is good. They also get used to the platform, so they trust the content more and go through product info quicker. On the flip side, folks who use these apps less don't see as much "seeding" stuff. They have to spend more time looking up product details by themselves, which makes buying take longer. This matches what's found about apps people use a lot—they make it faster for people to decide to buy[1].

7. Test results and discussions

This questionnaire survey aims to understand the impact of "Content Seeding" on social media on consumers' purchasing decisions. The survey period was from September 7, 2025 to September 14,

DOI: 10.54254/2754-1169/2025.BL38147

2025. Samples were collected through an online questionnaire platform. A total of 218 questionnaires were returned, all of which were valid. The questionnaires included consumers of different age groups, genders, occupations, and social media usage habits.

Among the 218 questionnaires, 46.33% were male, 49.54% were female, and 4.13% did not wish to disclose their personal information. The proportion of those under 18 years old was 14.68%, those aged 18-25 were 4.59%, those aged 26-35 were 8.26%, those aged 36-45 were 27.98%, and those 45 years old and above accounted for 44.5%. The sample group was mainly concentrated among those over 45 years old.

Through this questionnaire, we can observe that different people have different preferences for using social media. WeChat and Douyin are the most commonly used platforms.

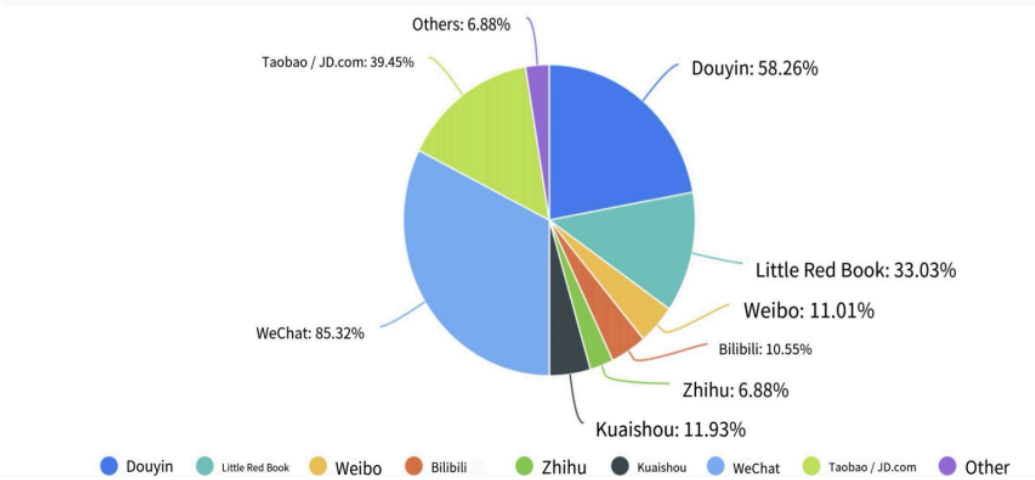


Figure 1. Consumers' preferences for social media

Among the 218 respondents, over 60.09% stated that they had learned about new products through "Content Seeding" content on social media, with a total of 131 people.

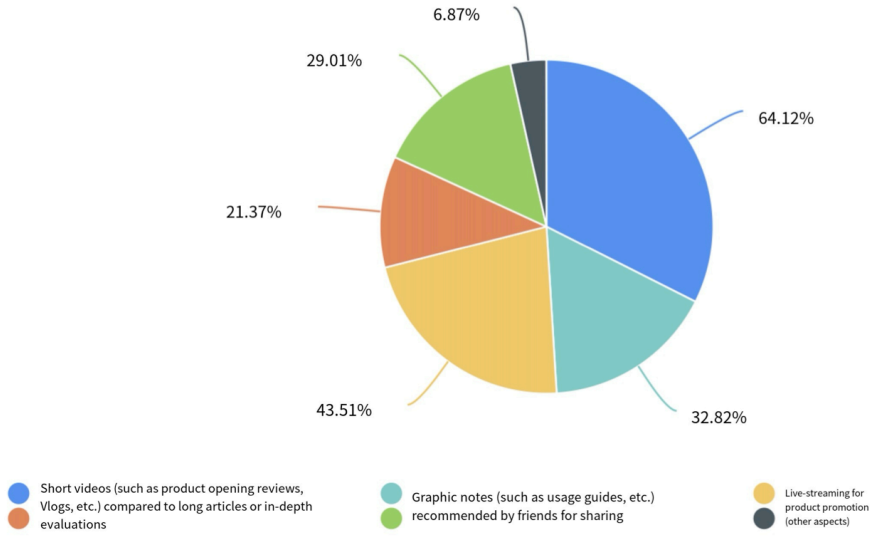


Figure 2. Content seeding method

The top three content formats that most easily trigger "Content Seeding" behavior are: short videos (such as product opening reviews, Vlogs, etc.) accounting for 64.12%, live-streaming e-

DOI: 10.54254/2754-1169/2025.BL38147

commerce accounting for 43.51%, and graphic notes (such as usage guides, etc.) accounting for 32.82%. At the same time, 42.75% of the respondents believe that "Content Seeding" content is generally important in the consumer purchase decision-making process, and 19.08% believe that "Content Seeding" content is very important in the consumer purchase decision-making process.

Female users show a higher level of recommendation sensitivity in categories such as beauty and skincare, clothing and shoes, and household and daily necessities. Male users, on the other hand, are more likely to be deeply influenced by content that provides technical analysis and evaluation in categories such as clothing and shoes, digital appliances, food and beverages.

Regression analysis indicates that the emotional resonance triggered by the content even partially explains the purchase intention more than the product functions themselves. Most people are moved by the authenticity, rich details, analysis of the pros and cons of the product, and positive reviews in the "recommendation" content, thereby generating emotional resonance and making users more willing to purchase the product.

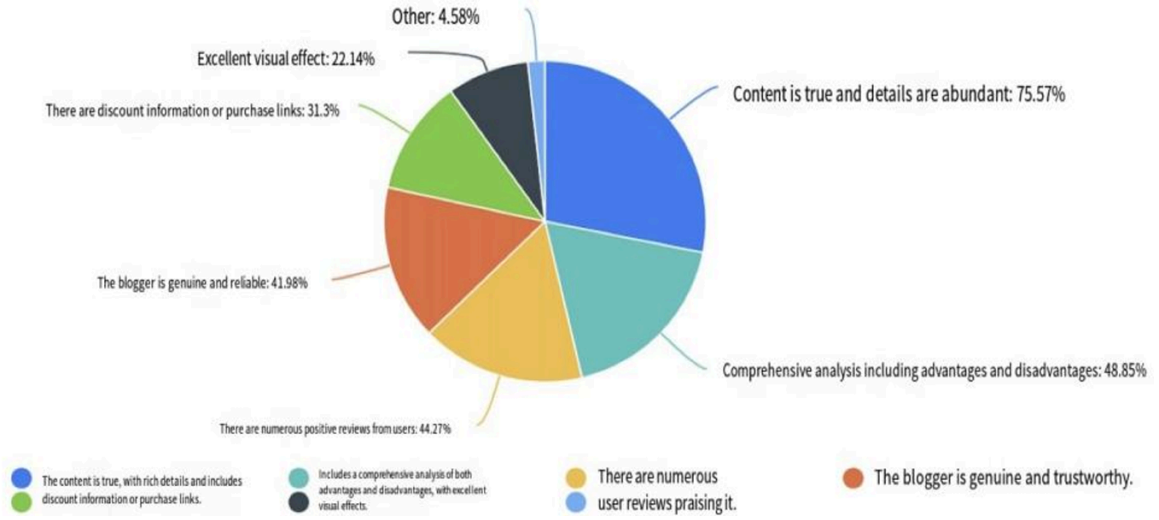


Figure 3. The reasons that attract people

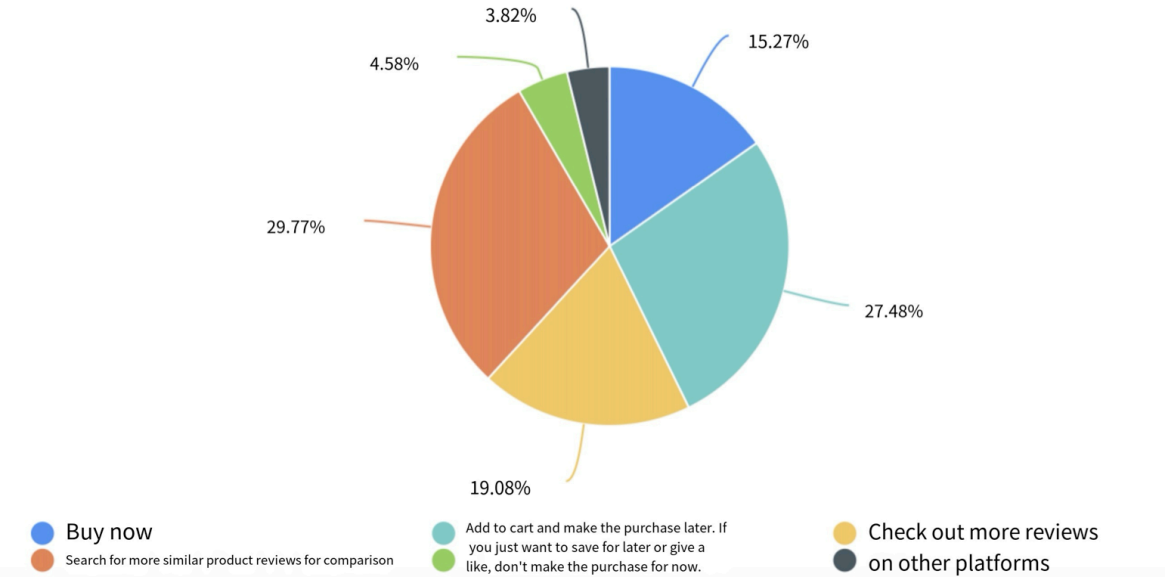


Figure 4. The behaviors of people after being seeding by content

DOI: 10.54254/2754-1169/2025.BL38147

"Content Seeding" mainly influences consumers through the process of awareness -> interest -> search -> action -> sharing. Data shows that 29.77% of users will engage in active searches (such as checking details and reviews on e-commerce platforms) after being "promoted". Users who make immediate purchases are in the minority. Users are more inclined to make rational judgments after making decisions and then decide to purchase or not.

The widespread spread of the "Content Seeding" phenomenon has brought both benefits and drawbacks to consumers. 62.6% of the respondents stated that they had felt disappointed because the "Content Seeding" content did not match the actual content. Additionally, 33.59% of the respondents said that they had experienced impulsive consumption due to the frequent "Content Seeding" advertisements.

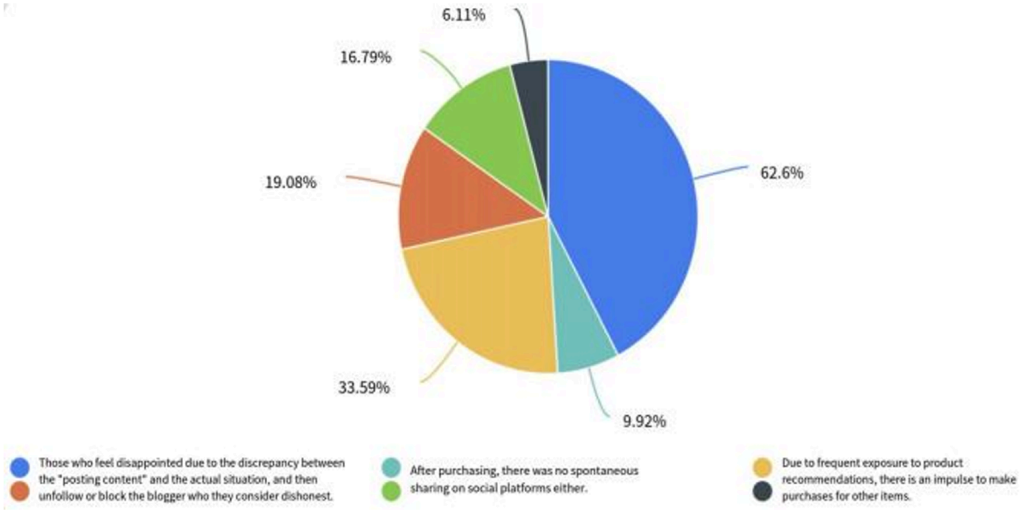


Figure 5. The reason why people are not influenced by the content

In this questionnaire, 39.91% of the respondents had never been "inspired" to purchase a service or product through social media platforms, totaling 87 people. Among them, 31.03% had no purchase intention, 24.14% trusted traditional advertisements and recommendations from friends more, and the remaining people believed that the social media recommendations were not genuine and they did not have the habit of shopping through social media.

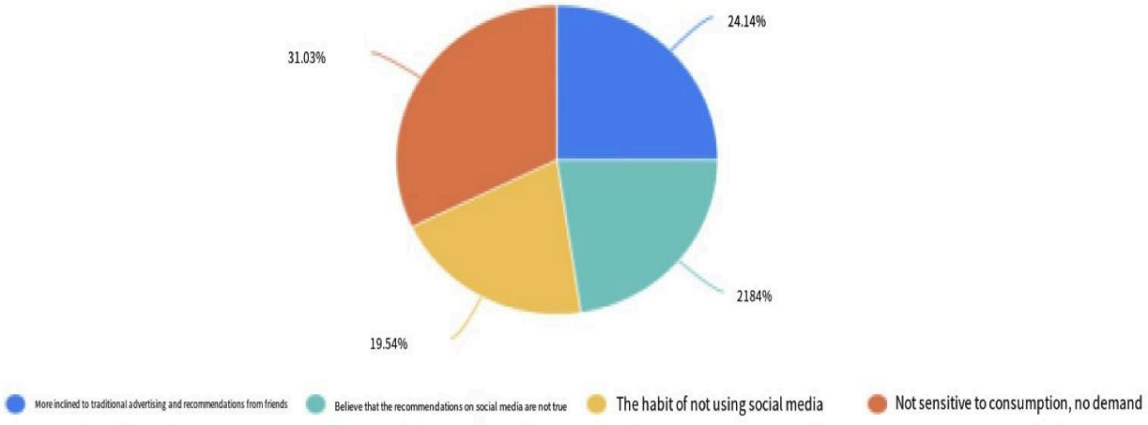


Figure 6. The reason why people are not influenced by the content

DOI: 10.54254/2754-1169/2025.BL38147

The final results show that the "Content Seeding" content on social media has a significant impact on consumers' purchasing decisions, especially in the aspects of product perception and purchase conversion. Sharing of real experiences and highly interactive content is more likely to build trust, but there are also potential risks of impulsive consumption and regretful purchase.

8. Conclusion

This study examines the influence and efficacy of social media "content seeding" on consumer decision-making. Not only does it validate the core hypotheses proposed, but it also reveals the behavioral logic and potential issues underlying the "content seeding" phenomenon.

(1) Social media "content seeding" has become a significant channel for consumers to discover and purchase goods, with its influence empirically confirmed. Survey data indicates that over 60% of respondents have discovered new products through such content, with more than 60% deeming it "important" or "very important" in their purchasing decisions. This confirms the pivotal role of content seeding in the consumer decision-making process, particularly vivid formats like short videos and live streams, which prove most effective at triggering interest [1].

(2) Research hypotheses strongly supported: Social media usage frequency and perceived authenticity of content are key variables moderating purchasing behaviour. Data analysis indicates that users spending longer daily hours on social media exhibit faster purchasing decisions and more pronounced impulse buying tendencies. Concurrently, the study reveals gender and category-specific influences: women demonstrate heightened sensitivity to beauty and fashion content, while men are more readily drawn to high-tech products like digital gadgets[5].

(3) The "content seeding" model on social media exhibits a double-edged sword effect. The study also revealed potential risks: over 60% of consumers have experienced disappointment when "seeded" content failed to match the actual product, while more than 30% of respondents admitted to impulsive purchasing. This serves as a warning that excessive commercialization of content not only harms consumer rights but also erodes the credibility of social media platforms [2].

In summary, this study's theoretical value lies in elucidating the psychological mechanisms through which "content seeding" influences decision-making. Its practical significance provides platforms and brands with directions for optimizing content strategies: pursuing authentic, in-depth, and interactive "seeding" content—rather than merely chasing exposure—is key to building long-term trust and fostering healthy consumption.

9. Research limitations and future prospects

The age distribution of this study's sample favors participants aged 45 and above. Future research could conduct comparative studies targeting younger demographics and incorporate more complex moderating variables to construct a more universally applicable influence model. Furthermore, effectively integrating personalized recommendation algorithms with credible "influencer driven content" represents a crucial future direction for enhancing the marketing efficacy of e-commerce platforms.

Acknowledgment

Ziyue Yin, Zhenyu Qu and Zihao An contributed equally to this work and should be considered co-first authors.

DOI: 10.54254/2754-1169/2025.BL38147

References

[1] Guo, Y., & Tian, J. (2025). Research on the impact of personalized recommendation systems on consumers' purchase decision efficiency. *Modern Marketing*, (27), 154-156. DOI: 10.19921/j.cnki.1009-2994.2025-27-0154-052.

[2] Jiang, W. (2024). *Research on the impact of social media communication strategies on consumers' purchase decisions* [D]. Beijing Foreign Studies University. DOI: 10.26962/d.cnki.gbjwu.2024.000224.

[3] Zhang, N. (2025). *Research on the impact of user-generated content in e-commerce live streaming on consumers' purchase intention* [D]. Harbin University of Commerce. DOI: 10.27787/d.cnki.ghrbs.2025.000613.

[4] Zhao, W., & Qin, Z. (2023). The impact of seed video content characteristics on consumers' purchase intention. *Commercial Economics Research*, (21), 85-88. DOI: CNKI: SUN: SYJJ.0.2023-21-020.

[5] Wang, N., & Gao, Y. (2025). Analysis of cross-border e-commerce consumers' behavior based on consumers' decisions. *China Economy*, (15), 152-154. DOI: CNKI: SUN: KJHU.0.2025-15-035.