

The Application of Celebrity Effect in Brand Marketing Under the New Media Model: STAYREAL as an Example

Kejing Xu

SHU-UTS SILC Business School, Shanghai University, Shanghai, 201800, China

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Abstract: In the field of contemporary brand marketing, the development of new media has changed brand marketing strategies and consumer interaction profoundly. This study investigates the application of the celebrity effect in the brand marketing of STAYREAL, a trendy brand co-founded by musician Ashin, specifically through platforms like Xiaohongshu, Weibo, and Instagram. The study used questionnaires, combined with online and offline consumer surveys, to assess how celebrity endorsements increase brand awareness and influence purchase intentions among young consumers. The results of the study show that through Ashin's influence, STAYREAL's marketing effectiveness is significantly improved and consumers show higher brand loyalty and engagement. The study concludes that combining celebrity endorsements with an innovative social media strategy increases brand awareness and creates a deeper emotional connection with consumers.

1 INTRODUCTION

In today's business environment, brand marketing methods and strategies are undergoing significant transformations, including increased personalization of marketing messages, enhanced interactivity between brands and consumers, and a greater reliance on data-driven insights. The new media model refers to web-related technologies that enable interaction between users and brands through platforms such as social media and blogs (Yujie, Al Imran Yasin, Alsagoff & Hoon, 2022). This model has become a key force in change. With the rapid rise of new media models, interactions between brands and consumers have become more frequent and more direct. New media has not only changed traditional marketing strategies but has also redefined consumer buying behavior and brand perception. Influenced by social media, consumers are no longer passive receivers of information, but have become important participants in brand communication, which has fundamentally changed consumption patterns (Zhou, 2021). The new model of instant communication between brands and consumers via social media, mobile apps and digital platforms has significantly increased brand visibility and awareness.

Celebrity endorsement is an important marketing strategy that has become increasingly common in

brand communication in recent years. Celebrities not only attract the attention of consumers effectively. They also enhance the sense of trust in the brand. According to relevant research, the celebrity effect influences consumers' cognitive and emotional perceptions, which in turn affects their purchasing intentions and behavior (Piven & Breazeale, 2017). This effect is even more pronounced in social media communication. Through cooperation with brands, celebrities not only promote brand exposure, but also further enhance brand image through social interaction with users.

STAYREAL is a trendy brand founded by the famous musician Ashin. By making full use of celebrity effects and the characteristics of new media, it has effectively attracted the attention of a large number of young consumers. The influence of ASHIN and his band Mayday has made STAYREAL a remarkable success in social media marketing. Through the communication power of social media, STAYREAL has not only increased brand awareness, but also created a unique brand image and enhanced consumer brand loyalty.

This thesis aims to explore the specific application of celebrity effect in the marketing of the STAYREAL brand on platforms such as Xiaohongshu, Weibo, and Instagram, and to analyze how it can enhance brand awareness through the influence of Ashin and the band Mayday. Through the

analysis of questionnaires on consumer attitudes, brand awareness and purchase intentions, this article will assess the actual effectiveness of the celebrity effect in STAYREAL's marketing and how consumers respond to the brand.

The following chapters will first define the relevant concepts of the new media model, then explore the theoretical basis of the celebrity effect, and subsequently analyze the marketing strategy of the STAYREAL brand and its application on new media platforms. Finally, consumer feedback is presented and analyzed using questionnaire methods, and corresponding conclusions and recommendations are proposed. Through this series of studies, this article hopes to provide theoretical support and practical guidance for brands to more effectively use the celebrity effect in the new media environment.

2 THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF NEW MEDIA AND THE CELEBRITY EFFECT IN BRAND MARKETING

2.1 Characteristics of New Media

New media has transformed communication through key features such as interactivity, immediacy, and personalization. Interactivity enables real-time interaction between brands and consumers, promoting deeper relationships and immediate feedback (Yujie et al., 2022). Immediacy ensures the rapid spread of information, allowing brands to quickly respond to market trends and maintain a continuous dialogue with consumers (Zhou, 2023). In addition, personalized use of data analysis to target marketing messages to individual preferences can increase the effectiveness and engagement of marketing activities (Yujie et al., 2022). These characteristics require brands to adjust their strategies to maximize the potential of new media.

2.2 Impact of New Media on Brand Marketing Strategies

The rise of new media has transformed brand marketing from one-way advertising to two-way communication, cultivating consumer trust and loyalty through increased engagement and user-generated content, thereby enhancing brand authenticity (Zhou, 2023). In addition, brands can use

data-driven insights and the immediacy of new media to understand consumer behavior and interact in real time, so as to create relevant and targeted content (Bhatt & Jain, 2023).

2.3 Theoretical Foundation of Celebrity Effect

The celebrity effect significantly influences consumer behavior through cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions. Celebrities enhance the credibility of a brand by associating positive attributes with the brand, and promote consumer trust and approval of the brand (Liu, 2022). In terms of emotions, trusted celebrities generate a strong emotional connection with the brand and promote consumer loyalty (Qi, 2024). This interaction often translates into a higher purchase willingness, as consumers feel connected to the likeable celebrity (Meng & Xia Hou, 2020). Social media multiplies this effect. Direct interaction fosters parasocial relationships, and fans feel a personal connection, which increases the effect of endorsement (Chen, Xu & Cai, 2021).

3 ANALYSIS OF STAYREAL'S NEW MEDIA MARKETING STRATEGIES

STAYREAL is a trendy clothing brand co-founded in 2007 by Ashin, the lead singer of the rock band Mayday in Taiwan, and the famous illustrator Chen Boliang (Wang & Lin, 2021). The brand name is a play on the word 'stereo' and reflects the fusion of rock culture with elements of innocence, humor and realism. STAYREAL initially focused on T-shirts, but has now expanded its product line to include a range of clothing styles and accessories, dolls and more, in collaboration with international brands and popular cartoon characters.

The brand positions itself in the youth market and uses Ashin's celebrity status and Mayday's cultural influence to attract young consumers. This positioning is reflected in STAYREAL's core values, which emphasize authenticity, creativity, and a connection to music culture.

3.1 Social Media Marketing

STAYREAL effectively harnessed the celebrity effect through various new media platforms such as Weibo, Xiaohongshu and Instagram. By leveraging

the influence of Ashin and the popularity of Mayday, the brand developed a marketing strategy that resonated deeply with the target audience. STAYREAL maintains active accounts on platforms like Weibo, Instagram, and Xiaohongshu, fostering community by interacting with fans. The brand often interacts with the official accounts of Mayday and Ashin, which greatly enhances the connection between consumers and the brand. This strategy not only encourages fan participation but also strengthens the overall engagement between the audience and STAYREAL.

3.2 Influencer Marketing

The appearances by Ashin and members of Mayday in the promotional materials have greatly increased the brand popularity of STAYREAL. Concert videos have a wide spread on social media platforms (Gao et al., 2023). During the concert, the band members often wore STAYREAL clothing, and the spread of the concert video effectively increased the brand's exposure. This linking enhances brand visibility and establishes a direct connection between the celebrity and the product.

3.3 User-Generated Content

STAYREAL employs user-generated content (UGC) to cultivate fans' brand loyalty. By encouraging customers to share their experiences of using STAYREAL products and matching on social media platforms, the brand has cultivated a group of advocates. In addition, Ashin's personal involvement, such as replying to posts and sharing fan content, deepens the emotional connection. This interaction makes fans feel noticed and valued, thereby increasing the brand's affinity and loyalty among consumers.

3.4 Event Marketing

STAYREAL also uses innovative marketing strategies, such as pop-up stores and limited-time events, to build enthusiasm for new product launches. The STAYREAL PARK pop-up store is a prime example of this strategy. It was opened in line with the time and location of the Mayday concert, and it offered exclusive merchandise and interactive experiences to attract consumers. In addition, STAYREAL actively monitors fan feedback on social media platforms to adjust the quantity and style

of products to ensure that consumer needs are better met. STAYREAL and STAYREAL PARK consistently update their social media accounts with news and promotions, effectively engaging consumers through a dual-channel approach.

4 ANALYSIS OF THE MARKETING EFFECTIVENESS OF STAYREAL UTILIZING CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENT IN NEW MEDIA

This section presents an analysis of the results from the questionnaire survey, focusing on consumer perceptions of the STAYREAL brand. A particular focus will be placed on the impact of the celebrity endorsement by both Ashin and the band Mayday. The analysis will explore key areas such as consumer brand awareness, attitudes towards the brand and purchase intentions. The analysis will also examine the relationship between the survey results and the marketing strategies discussed in the previous section. It will explore the practical implications of celebrity influence in the context of new media marketing, highlighting how these endorsements can shape consumer behavior and brand engagement.

This study adopted the form of online questionnaire distributed through the Questionnaire Star applet and offline questionnaire distributed in STAYREAL's physical shop in Shanghai to conduct a questionnaire survey to STAYREAL's consumers. A total of 237 online and offline questionnaires were distributed and invalid questionnaires were screened based on respondents' response time and polygraph questions. A total of 167 valid questionnaires were collected online and 48 offline, with an effective rate of 90.7%.

4.1 Consumer Perception of STAYREAL

4.1.1 Brand Recognition

Figure 1 indicates that a significant majority of respondents (37%) discovered the STAYREAL brand primarily through Xiaohongshu, followed by Weibo (18%) and recommendations from friends (12%).

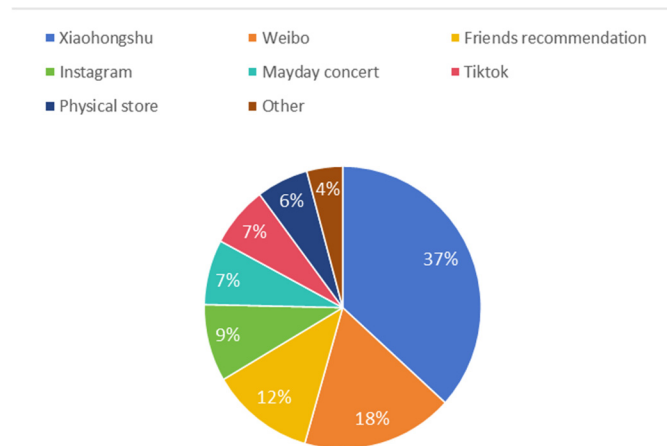


Figure 1. Distribution of channels through which consumers discover the STAYREAL brand.

Alt Text for the figure: A pie chart illustrating the percentage distribution of various channels, with Xiaohongshu at 37%, Weibo at 18%, and recommendations from friends at 12%.

This data suggests that social media platforms play a crucial role in brand recognition and consumer engagement. This finding shows that people (especially younger people) rely heavily on new media platforms to learn about brands, with 75.81% of respondents under the age of 34. The survey results show that STAYREAL's brand recognition is mainly due to its success on digital platforms, with Xiaohongshu and Weibo playing a leading role. The engagement strategies adopted by STAYREAL on these platforms resonate strongly with its target audience, suggesting a successful adaptation to digital marketing trends.

Figure 2 shows that 87.44% of respondents perceived the impact of Ashin and Mayday on the STAYREAL brand image as 'very significant', with a further 11.16% rating the impact as 'significant'. This combined total of 98.6% underlines the significant role that celebrity endorsements play in shaping consumer perceptions of brand credibility and appeal. This is consistent with the theory that celebrity endorsement can enhance brand credibility and attractiveness, making consumers more likely to trust and relate to the brand (Liu, 2022).

4.2 Purchase Intentions

4.1.2 Brand Attitude

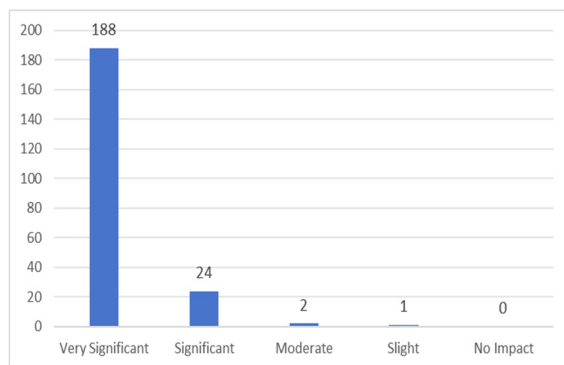


Figure 2. Perceived impact of Ashin and Mayday on STAYREAL's brand image.

Alt Text for the figure: A bar chart indicating that 87.44% of respondents perceive the influence of Ashin and Mayday on STAYREAL's brand image as 'very significant', with an additional 11.16% rating it as 'significant'.

4.2.1 Influence of Celebrity Endorsement

STAYREAL's collaboration with Ashin and Mayday has attracted significant attention on platforms such as Xiaohongshu and Weibo, enhancing the brand's marketing effectiveness.

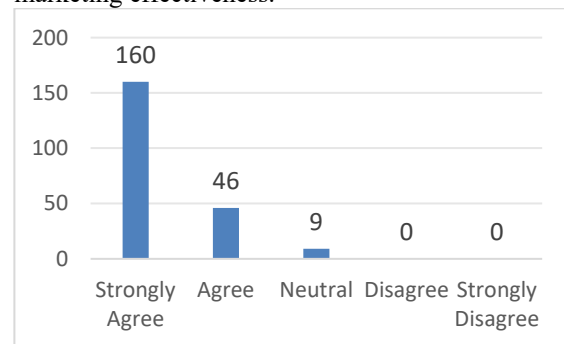


Figure 3. Respondents' purchase intentions after interacting with celebrity-linked content.

Alt Text for the figure: A bar graph showing that 95.82% of respondents are more likely to purchase STAYREAL products after exposure to content featuring Ashin or Mayday.

Figure 3 shows that 95.82% of respondents said that they were more likely to buy STAYREAL products after being exposed to Ashin or Mayday-related content on social media. This suggests that the celebrity effect significantly heightens consumers' likelihood of purchasing products, reinforcing the idea that effective celebrity endorsements can lead to higher sales conversions (Meng & Xia Hou, 2020).

4.2.2 New Media Marketing Performance

Analysis of STAYREAL's marketing performance on new media platforms demonstrates the significant role that celebrity endorsements play in driving engagement and strengthening brand presence.

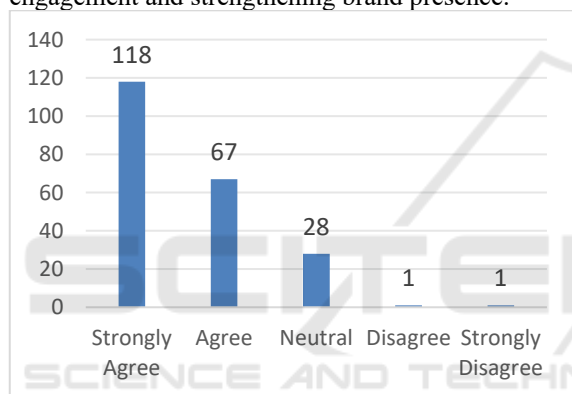


Figure 4. Respondents' purchase intentions when engaging with STAYREAL's new media campaigns compared to traditional methods.

Alt Text for the figure: A comparative bar chart indicating that 95.82% of respondents express a higher likelihood of purchasing STAYREAL products after seeing content linked to Ashin or Mayday on social media.

According to Figure 4, 95.82% of respondents said that after seeing content related to Ashin or Mayday on platforms such as Xiaohongshu and Weibo, they are more likely to consider buying STAYREAL products.

In addition, STAYREAL's new media campaign has also achieved good participation indicators. In October and November 2024, the official STAYREAL Xiaohongshu account averaged 2,500 likes per post. Posts that featured Ashin or were directly endorsed by him achieved an average of 6,500 likes, a remarkable increase of 160%. This shows that Ashin's celebrity status has a unique

influence in terms of expanding the reach and influence of brand content.

During Mayday's Shanghai concert series, STAYREAL launched the SKY MOJO EXPO campaign in collaboration with Shanghai Oriental Pearl Tower. The related Weibo topic received 3.242 million views and 13,000 interactions, further demonstrating the widespread interest generated by celebrity-backed campaigns. The success of this event highlights the synergy between STAYREAL's branding and Mayday's cultural influence.

SKY MOJO EXPO and concert-related promotional activities directly translated into sales. STAYREAL's flagship product, MOJO CARROT, sold more than 20,000 units through its Taobao flagship store during the Shanghai concert, accounting for an estimated 20% of total sales. Offline sales at the STAYREAL PARK pop-up store are expected to account for 80% of sales, reinforcing the importance of combining online and offline channels in event-driven marketing.

5 CONCLUSION

This study explores the application of the celebrity effect in brand marketing, using STAYREAL as a case study within the new media model. Analysis shows that integrating new media platforms such as Weibo and Xiaohongshu is crucial to improving brand awareness and engagement with young consumers. In addition, there is a significant correlation between celebrity-related content and increased consumer engagement and purchase intent, supporting the hypothesis that celebrity endorsements can lead to significant sales conversions.

Based on the research results, STAYREAL can improve its marketing strategy to further strengthen its marketing efforts. First, the brand should continue to leverage Ashin's celebrity status and Mayday's cultural influence to create more interactive and engaging content on social media platforms, thereby strengthening the emotional connection with consumers. In addition, STAYREAL should consider expanding its user-generated content activities by encouraging fans to share personal stories and brand experiences. This will foster a sense of community and belonging among the audience. Finally, time-limited collaborations or exclusive flash experiences around concerts or cultural events can be launched for more targeted marketing to better convert attention into sales.

Overall, this study provides a fundamental analysis of the celebrity effect in brand marketing and

will help to explore innovative marketing strategies in the rapidly evolving digital environment.

There are also some limitations to this study. The scope of the research was limited to a specific population, focusing on young consumers who are familiar with STAYREAL and its associated celebrities. Future research could survey a wider range of people to gain a comprehensive understanding of the influence of brands across different consumer groups.

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