

# Influence of KOL Cooperation on Brand Loyalty in the Short Video Platform: A Study of the Relationship Between KOL Economy and Brand Trust Mechanism"

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**Keywords:** Integrated Marketing, KOL Economy, Consumer Trust, Brand Collaboration.

**Abstract:** With the popularity of social media, Internet celebrity, also known as 'net reds', have become a mainstream marketing strategy. The collaboration between internet celebrities and brands has greatly increased brand exposure and conversion rates. However, as consumer behavior becomes increasingly complex and variable, how brands can effectively collaborate with internet celebrities to enhance consumer brand trust and loyalty remains worthy of further research and discussion. As a leading player in the short video field, this study uses the case analysis method to find typical cases on Douyin platform and analyzes how internet celebrities can influence brand loyalty through interactive and personal brand building. The study finds that targeted internet celebrity relationships play a key role in enhancing brand trust and loyalty; the study emphasizes that the consistency of internet celebrities' image with the brand identity, coupled with sincere interaction and continuous cooperation, is crucial in transforming occasional followers into loyal brand advocates; rational synergy not only enhances brand awareness but also solidifies consumer trust, thereby cultivating long-term brand loyalty.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The internet celebrity economy has become an important component of marketing in today's market. The collaboration between internet celebrities and brands not only increases brand exposure and conversion rates but also sparks extensive discussions on the consumer trust mechanism (Zhu, 2024). As consumer behavior becomes increasingly complex, how brands can effectively collaborate with internet celebrities to enhance consumer brand trust and loyalty has become an important research topic (Wang, 2024). Based on this research background, this study uses the case analysis method to find typical cases on the Douyin platform and conducts an in-depth analysis to examine how internet celebrities can play a role in brand marketing and the reasons for the effectiveness of their role. This method is effective in analyzing how internet celebrities can contribute to brand marketing by starting from real-

life examples, which is beneficial for the conduct of this study. The research objective of this study is to make up for the lack of research on the long-term effects of the cooperation between brands and Internet celebrities, aims to explore the interaction between Internet celebrities and brand cooperation, especially how they increase brand visibility and trust by engaging fans in large numbers.

Douyin platform, as a leading player in the short video field, has attracted a large number of users and enterprises with its unique "5-second rule" and creative interactive forms (Shen, 2024). Under this background, it has become increasingly common for brands to collaborate with influencers to achieve effective market penetration. However, whether this collaboration can establish long-term consumer trust is still an issue that needs to be answered. In the existing literature, there has been initial discussion on the influence of influencer personal image, fan interaction, and brand fit on brand communication and consumer trust, but less attention has been paid to

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the long-term effects of brand-influencer collaboration (Yuan et al., 2024).

Literature shows that the influencer's personal image plays a crucial role in brand promotion, and its authenticity and credibility directly affect consumers' trust in the brand. Take the cooperation between Mr. Li, a well-known Douyin influencer, and Perfect Diary as an example, Li Mister's professionalism and real-life usage experience successfully reduced consumers' suspicion of the product, thereby enhancing brand trust (Jin, 2024). Fan interaction is also an important aspect of building brand trust, through frequent interaction and experience sharing, influencers can bridge the gap between brands and consumers, thereby influencing consumers' purchase decisions (Jin, 2024). From the perspective of long-term collaboration, sustained collaboration between influencers and brands can effectively consolidate consumers' trust in the brand and transform it into brand loyalty. This collaboration not only enhances brand exposure in the short term but also drives consumers' repeated purchase behavior in the long term. By maintaining long-term cooperation with trusted influencers, brands can continuously increase their market influence (Zheng, 2024). Based on the above analysis, some scholars have proposed 'Brand trust and loyalty model driven by Internet celebrities' cooperation', the model emphasizes the key role of image fit, fan interaction and long-term cooperation in building trust and maintaining loyalty. In this model, the fit between online celebrities' personal image and brand is a key factor affecting consumer trust. Through consistent visual presentation, brands can effectively enhance users' trust (Hua et al. 2024).

Fan interaction through frequent communication and real experience recommendations, effectively deepens consumers' trust in the brand. This not only provides brands with new market insights, it also lays a foundation for its accurate marketing strategy (Liu, 2024). Long-term cooperation gradually transforms consumers' trust in brands into loyalty through continuous market interaction and trust consolidation, promoting the brand to occupy a dominant position in the competitive market (Tarabieh et al., 2024).

Through the construction of theoretical framework, this study provides a new perspective and operational path for brands to cooperate with influencers on social media, aims to promote a closer trust relationship between brands and consumers, so as to promote the improvement of brand loyalty. This study not only enriches the theoretical discussion on Internet celebrity economy and consumer behavior mechanism, but also provides valuable guidance for practical operation, which helps brands achieve

sustainable development in an increasingly complex digital market.

## 2 BACKGROUND

### 2.1 The Rise of Internet Celebrity Economy on Douyin Platform

As one of the most popular short video social platforms, Douyin platform has become a hotbed for the development of Internet celebrity economy. Users share their lives, show talent, exchange, and interact in the form of short videos, which has spawned many Internet celebrities with huge fan bases. With their personal charm and influence, these influencers have attracted the attention of many brands and become a new front for brand marketing.

On Douyin platform, the rise of the influencer economy has benefited from several aspects. Douyin has a large user base, covering a wide age range and diverse interest groups, providing influencers with sufficient fan resources. Douyin's algorithmic recommendation mechanism enables high-quality content to quickly gain attention, helping influencers quickly accumulate fans. The short video format on Douyin is flexible and diverse, making it easy for influencers to showcase their personalities and enhance interaction with fans. Brands can collaborate with influencers to leverage their influence and fan base to boost brand exposure and conversion rates. This cooperation model has become increasingly common on Douyin platform and has become an important means of brand marketing. Internet celebrities promote brand information to fans through original content, live streaming, and interactive marketing, stimulating fans' purchasing desire.

However, the effects of influencer cooperation with brands are not always positive. Some influencers pursue short-term interests, ignoring the quality and reputation of the brand, leading consumers to question the brand. Therefore, studying how influencer promotion content affects consumers' trust in the brand, and whether these collaborations can effectively enhance brand loyalty, has become an issue that needs to be addressed. In this context, the rise of the influencer economy on Douyin platform has attracted widespread attention from academia and industry. The rapid development of the influencer economy has not only changed traditional brand marketing models but also had a profound impact on consumer behavior and brand trust mechanisms.

## 2.2 Brand Loyalty Controversy in Brand-Influencer Collaboration

As the influencer economy on Douyin platform has risen, brand-influencer collaboration has become an important means to boost exposure and conversion rates. However, whether this cooperation can effectively establish consumer trust relationships still remains controversial. On the one hand, influencers can help brands quickly expand their popularity and influence with their strong influence and fan base. On the other hand, the authenticity of influencer promotion content and whether there is any conflict of interest between influencers and brands have become the focus of consumer attention.

The authenticity of the content promoted by influencers is a key factor affecting consumer trust. In pursuit of business interests, some influencers may exaggerate or falsely advertise the effects of products, thus harming the interests of consumers. Interest transmission between influencers and brands may also affect the objectivity of promoted content. If influencers simply take money to promote, instead of really recognizing and trusting the brand, then its promotion effect and credibility will be greatly reduced.

The fit between influencers' personal image and brand image is also an important factor affecting consumer trust. If the influencer's personal image is highly compatible with the brand image, then its promotion will be more convincing. However, if the image of the influencer is far from the brand image, there are even conflicts, then its promotion effect will be affected, and may even damage the brand image.

The long-term cooperation between influencers and brands is also important for building consumer trust. If influencers and brands can maintain long-term and stable cooperative relationships, then consumers will have a deeper sense of trust in the brand. However, if influencers change brands frequently, then consumers may have doubts about the trust of the brand.

To sum up, there is great potential for brands to work with influencers to increase exposure and conversion, but its impact on consumer trust is still controversial. When brands choose to work with influencers, the personal image of Internet celebrities, the authenticity of promoted content, and the possibility of long-term cooperation should be fully considered, to build consumer trust and thus enhance brand loyalty.

## 3 CASE STUDY

### 3.1 Online Celebrity Image and Brand Fit

In Douyin platform, the cooperation between influencers and brands often depends on the degree of alignment between their images. Take the case of Li, a well-known Douyin influencer, and Perfect Diary as an example. Li, as a well-known beauty vlogger, has a professional, fashionable, and sincere image that is highly aligned with Perfect Diary's brand positioning. Li shares makeup techniques, product reviews, and other content on Douyin, showcasing his professionalism. His authentic and sincere image has won the trust of his fans. Perfect Diary, as a young and fashionable beauty brand, has a product positioning that is highly aligned with Li's image. This alignment not only enhances brand exposure but also strengthens consumer recognition of the brand. Therefore, the degree of alignment between an influencer's image and a brand's image is a key factor affecting the effectiveness of cooperation. Brands should fully consider the image characteristics of influencers when choosing partners to ensure that the partnership can generate positive brand effects.

### 3.2 Fan Interaction and Trust Mechanism Establishment

On Douyin platform, the interaction between Internet celebrities and fans is an important link in building brand trust. Mr. Li, a well-known Douyin Internet celebrity, through frequent live interaction, recommends the perfect diary product to fans and shares their own experience of using it. This interaction not only increased fans' trust in Mr Lee, it also gave them a sense of trust in the Perfect Diary product.

Mr. Li took questions from fans during the live stream, shared makeup tips, and showed how perfect dairy products work. This real-use experience gives fans an intuitive understanding of the product and reduces doubts about the product. Mr Lee's affinity and sincerity also enhanced his fans' sense of trust in him. Mr. Li also interacts with fans during the live stream, such as launching raffles, gifts, and other activities, these actions can make fans feel involved and valued. This interaction not only increases fan engagement but also makes them feel good about the Perfect Diary brand. Through these interactions, Mr. Li has built a relationship of trust with his fans, at the same time, this trust is also transferred to the perfect

diary brand. Fans' trust in Mr Li translates into trust in the perfect diary product, which increases brand loyalty.

Fan interaction plays a key role in building brand trust. Through sincere interaction and sharing of real use experience, influencers give fans a sense of trust in the brand. Through cooperation with Internet celebrities, using fan interaction to build trust and thus increase brand loyalty.

### **3.3 The Impact of Long-Term Cooperation on Brand Loyalty**

On the Douyin platform, long-term cooperation between brands and influencers is not only a means to increase exposure and conversion rate, but also a key strategy to build consumer trust and loyalty. The cooperation case between Douyin famous Internet celebrity Mr. Li and Perfect Diary, fully demonstrates the important role of long-term cooperation in brand loyalty construction.

Long-term cooperation helps to deepen consumers' brand awareness. Through continuous cooperation, Mr. Li's image and brand positioning of Perfect Diary has been continuously strengthened, and that gives consumers a stable and deep impression of the brand. This long-term brand image output helps eliminate consumer doubts about the product and enhances trust. The interaction between Internet celebrities and fans in long-term cooperation has gradually formed a community atmosphere, it strengthens the connection between consumers and enhances their sense of belonging to the brand. Under the influence of this community atmosphere, consumers are more willing to accept brand information and emotional dependence on the brand is generated, thus forming loyalty. Moreover, long-term cooperation enables brands to obtain market feedback promptly, and continuously optimize products and services. Through the interaction with fans, Mr. Li has collected a lot of feedback on the use of perfect dairy products, and this information helps brands improve their products to better meet consumer needs. The needs of consumers are valued and satisfied, further enhancing their loyalty to the brand.

Long-term cooperation can also reduce the cost of choice for consumers. With long-term promotion by influencers, consumers develop trust in the brand, reducing the confusion of choosing among numerous brands and improving purchasing efficiency. This convenience makes consumers more inclined to repeat purchases, thereby promoting the enhancement of brand loyalty. Long-term cooperation is also

beneficial to brands in countering the risks of competition. Under the sustained influence of the influencer effect, brands can establish certain market barriers and reduce the impact of competitors. Li's long-term cooperation with Perfect Diary has made it difficult for other brands to break the fixed impression they have formed in consumers' minds in a short time. Long-term cooperation can also bring about word-of-mouth effects. Satisfied consumers will share their shopping experiences on social media platforms, and this positive word-of-mouth propaganda helps attract new consumers and consolidate the loyalty of old consumers.

The importance of long-term cooperation in brand loyalty building is self-evident. Brands should pay attention to their long-term cooperation with influencers and continuously enhance consumers' trust and loyalty through sustained image output, fan interaction, market feedback, and word-of-mouth propaganda. Such strategies will provide strong support for brands in fierce market competition.

## **4 INTERACTIVE ANALYSIS OF INFLUENCER PROMOTION AND BRAND TRUST MECHANISM**

### **4.1 The Impact of Influencer Image on Consumer Trust**

In the Douyin platform, the influencer's image plays a crucial role in building consumer trust. Influencers act as bridges between brands and consumers, and their personal image, professionalism, and credibility often directly affect consumers' perception and trust in the brand.

Professionalism of Internet celebrity is a key factor in winning consumer trust. For example, Li, a well-known influencer on Douyin, has established a professional and reliable image among his fans by his expertise in cosmetics products and skilled use of techniques. This professionalism is not only reflected in the explanation of product functions but also lies in the ability to understand and solve consumer needs. When purchasing products, consumers are often influenced by the professional image of Internet celebrities, thus enhancing their trust in the brand.

The authenticity of influencers is also an important factor in building trust. On social media, influencers get closer to their fans by sharing their personal lives and showing their true side. This realistic display helps reduce consumers' doubts



about the product and improves their trust in the brand. For example, Mr. Li not only shows the effect of products in the live broadcast but also shares his experience of using them. This authenticity makes consumers feel friendly and trusted.

Moreover, the consistency between the personal image and brand positioning of Internet celebrities is also important for the construction of trust. Mr. Li's collaboration with Perfect Diary, is precisely because of the high degree of fit in the image of the two. Mr. Li's youthful and fashionable image complements the brand positioning of Perfect Diary, making it easier for consumers to accept and trust this cooperative promotion.

The positive image and social influence of Internet celebrities are also a way to enhance consumer trust. An Internet celebrity with a sense of social responsibility can establish a good social image through public welfare activities and other forms, thus improving consumers' trust in the recommended brand. The interaction between influencers and fans also plays an important role in the construction of trust. By responding to fans' concerns and answering questions in a timely manner, Internet celebrities can effectively eliminate consumers' concerns and enhance their sense of trust. This two-way communication mechanism helps to establish a stable trust relationship. The word-of-mouth and reputation of Internet celebrities in the industry are also important factors affecting consumer trust. An Internet celebrity with a good reputation can bring a higher degree of trust and recognition to the brand.

The influence of Internet celebrity image on consumer trust is multifaceted, involving professionalism, authenticity, image consistency, social influence, and interactivity. Brands should fully consider these factors when selecting cooperation influencers, so as to effectively build trust and enhance brand loyalty.

#### **4.2 Fan Interaction and Construction of Brand Trust**

Fan interaction plays a crucial role in the promotion of Internet celebrities, which directly affects consumers' trust in a brand. Through fan interaction, influencers can narrow the distance between them and consumers, and enhance consumers' trust in the brand. Taking Mr. Li, a well-known Internet celebrity on Douyin, and Perfect Diary as an example, Mr. Li shared his real experience of using perfect dairy products through frequent interaction with his fans. Fan interaction can also help brands understand consumer needs and feedback so that they can better

meet consumer needs and improve consumer satisfaction with the brand. Therefore, fan interaction is one of the important ways to build brand trust.

#### **4.3 Trust Effect of Long-Term Cooperation Between Internet Celebrities and Brands**

On Douyin platform, the long-term cooperation between Internet celebrities and brands can not only continuously enhance the brand's exposure and influence, but more importantly, it can gradually build consumers' trust in the brand, which translates into brand loyalty. The case of cooperation between Mr. Li, a well-known Douyin Internet celebrity, and Perfect Diary fully demonstrates the important role of long-term cooperation in trust construction.

Long-term cooperation helps to deepen consumers' understanding of the relationship between influencers' personal image and brand image. As a top Internet celebrity in the field of beauty, Mr. Li's professional and sincere image complements the brand positioning of Perfect Diary. Long-term cooperation makes this image consistency deeply rooted in the hearts of consumers, thus improving consumers' favorability and trust in the brand.

Frequent fan interaction in long-term cooperation can effectively strengthen the emotional bond between consumers and brands. Mr. Li keeps close contact with fans through live streaming, interactive comments, and other means, which not only enhances the sense of participation of fans but also enables consumers to have a deeper understanding of the products of Perfect Diary. This continuous interaction enables consumers to feel the care and integrity of the brand, thus establishing a stable trust relationship.

Moreover, long-term cooperation enables brands to continuously convey brand values and strengthen brand stories through Internet celebrities. In the cooperation between Mr. Li and Perfect Diary, through a series of promotional activities, the brand concept of Perfect Diary has been effectively conveyed, and the resonance of this concept has deepened consumers' sense of identity with the brand, thus promoting the formation of brand loyalty.

Long-term cooperation also helps brands to obtain market feedback in time and adjust product strategies. Through Mr. Li's live feedback and fan interaction, the perfect diary can quickly understand consumer needs, so it can adjust the product line in time to meet market demand. This quick response ability undoubtedly enhances consumers' trust in the brand.

Long-term cooperation can also effectively resist the impact of competitors. In the beauty market,

brand competition is fierce, and Mr. Li's long-term cooperation with Perfect Diary has formed a stable brand recognition, so that consumers in the face of many choices, are more likely to choose brands they trust.

The long-term cooperation between influencers and brands plays a key role in building trust and enhancing brand loyalty. Through various factors such as image consistency, frequent fan interaction, transmission of brand values, rapid market response, resistance to competition, and word-of-mouth communication, Long-term cooperation has gradually built up consumers' trust in the brand, which has laid a solid foundation for brand development.

## 5 CONCLUSION

The research result of this study is the consistency between the personal image and brand identity of Internet celebrities under Internet marketing, coupled with sincere interaction and continuous cooperation, which is critical to turning casual followers into loyal brand advocates. Therefore, it can be further concluded that this synergistic effect between Internet celebrities and brands not only improves brand awareness, and it solidifies consumer trust, thus cultivating long-term brand loyalty conclusions. This study provides many valuable references for future research in this direction, it mainly affects the future impact of different types of influencer cooperation on brand loyalty, and research on the direction of brand trust change under cultural differences, meanwhile, future research should focus more on exploring the dynamic relationship between Internet celebrity economy and brand loyalty, in particular, the challenges and opportunities in the context of rapid changes in digital marketing are deeply explored.

## AUTHORS CONTRIBUTION

All the authors contributed equally and their names were listed in alphabetical order.

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