

The Influencer Marketing in Digital Media Platform: Based on Jiaqi Li on Douyin and Chiara Ferragni on Instagram

Kairan Shi

Faculty of Arts & Humanities, King's College London, London, WC2R 2LS, U.K.

Keywords: Influence Marketing, Consumer, Purchase.

Abstract: With the development of social media, people frequently share their lives on these platforms, and influencer marketing has gradually emerged. Different social media platforms vary in how they present content. This study will examine influencer marketing on various digital media platforms by comparing Li Jiaqi's marketing on Douyin with Chiara Ferragni's marketing on Instagram. A literature review will be used to highlight existing research and its gaps. This study will also employ a case study approach to provide a more detailed explanation. The research finds that influencer marketing on both Douyin and Instagram offers unique advantages for brands. Leveraging the characteristics of each social media platform, Douyin facilitates short-term, high-efficiency conversions by capitalizing on users' tendency for impulsive purchases. On Instagram, brands establish a fashionable and high-end image in consumers' minds, as users typically take more time to consider their purchases. The study will also provide recommendations for brands on how to prevent user fatigue.

1 INTRODUCTION

In recent years, social media become more popular, people tend to use social media to have conversations with friends, entertainments, and purchase products, such as WeChat, Instagram, and TikTok. Digital media platforms have revolutionized traditional ways of receiving information, becoming the mainstream method for people to access information. Because people of different age groups have varying habits, it leads to two different marketing channels: Outdoor advertising such as billboards, and mobile advertising (Haenlein et al., 2020). Mobile advertising is usually on social media platforms. For example, when people open any app, a few seconds of advertisement often pop up, and when people watch YouTube videos, a 15-second advertisement often appears. In social media, short videos and photo sharing is the essential element. People always use social media to post photos and videos to share their daily lives. Therefore, it will bring some followers on social media, also called fans. With an increasing number of fans, this account will become more popular on social media. It will become an influencer account. The term "Internet celebrity", which appeared in the public eye in 2015, refers to a person who becomes popular in real or online life after an event or behavior is followed by netizens, which is also called Influencer.

Influencer marketing is also defined as a third party that significantly shapes the customer's purchasing decision but is never responsible for it (Brown and Hayes, 2008). Abidin said influencer is the epitome of internet celerity (Abidin, 2018). Influencers use photos, videos, or other formats to attract fans, then it will build intangible assets. By applying the amount of their attention, people can create wealth, which is called influencer marketing. The concept of "influencer marketing" is defined as operating in a deceptive, covert, subtle, and disguised manner in the market, purposefully influencing the audience without the users' awareness of these activities (Mathew, 2019).

Nowadays, this field has some research about influencer marketing on Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube, which includes perceived interactivity and persuasiveness. However, it does not have a comparison of the interaction and results in Douyin and Instagram. Because different social media platforms have different interaction modes and effects. For example, TikTok interacts in the form of short videos, while Instagram mainly interacts in the form of photos. This difference in these two platforms will produce different influences on user engagement, brand loyalty, and purchasing decisions. With the rapid development of social media in recent years, new phenomena like influencers have emerged

alongside it. Consequently, research on digital media is still not very thorough. As social media has become an inseparable part of people's lives, studying digital media is essential.

On Instagram, people can post their photos and stories on the platform, users can share with their followers or a selected group of friends. The users can view, comment on, and like posts shared by friends (Mathew, 2019). Douyin is China's version of TikTok. Douyin allows users to create and share videos. The case study will mention Li Jiaqi and Chiara Ferragni. Li Jiaqi is a famous internet celebrity on Douyin in China. He often became famous for using short video posts and live streams to personally apply lipstick, providing audiences with genuine brand feedback. Chiara Ferragni is internet celebrity on Instagram in Italy. She frequently posts photos of herself with high-end luxury brands and has established her own clothing and beauty brand on Instagram. This research will use these two case studies to analyze influencer marketing in Douyin and Instagram.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Social media is becoming more popular and has formed a new marketing mode – influencer marketing. Influencer marketing campaigns have three primary objectives: first, to increase brand awareness; second, to boost user engagement; and third, to generate potential leads and drive sales (Esseveld, 2024). Current literature researched the brand how to choose influencers, marketing effects, and challenges on TikTok and Instagram. A brand needs to know how to select an influencer. According to Vancotten's research, Parasocial Interaction (PSI), perceptual interaction, and openness are key characteristics for choosing influencers (Vancottem, 2024). PSI is a psychological phenomenon that is the intimate relationship between the audience and media personality (Vancottem, 2024). Users may develop an emotional dependence and sense of belonging toward influencers, perceiving them as personal friends. As a result, they are more likely to follow the influencer's advice and recommendations. However, this interaction remains one-sided. However, this approach enhances users' sense of connection, fostering greater brand loyalty, and making consumers more willing to share information with the brand (Lee and Watkins, 2016). Perceived interaction refers to the subjective sense of interaction that users feel when engaging with influencers or content. It goes beyond actual interactive actions (like likes,

comments, and shares) and instead centers on the user's psychological perception and interaction experience. Users may feel a sense of resonance with the creator, and features like comment replies and likes on user comments create a feeling of immediacy, enhancing users' sense of involvement. Perceived interactivity is a derivative of parasocial interaction, and Labrecque points out that it is also a key component influencing both the success of influencers and influencer marketing (Labrecque, 2014). Perceived interactivity leads to greater engagement. This means that the content is less likely to be ignored by consumers, and participants are more likely to become paying customers, increasing brand loyalty and potential reach (Tan and Lim, 2020). Openness refers to the degree of open-mindedness in the thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors of individuals, organizations, or systems. It generally implies a willingness to embrace new ideas and experiences, welcome diverse perspectives and feedback, and adapt to and accept a variety of changes. The accessibility and ease of use of highly sophisticated photo editing tools have led to a new trend: images posted on Instagram are often heavily edited (Hosie, 2024). Therefore, the authenticity of product presentations on Instagram has become an important issue. For instance, when an influencer shares a personal story and users respond with differing viewpoints, this openness not only boosts user engagement but also helps build trust and a loyal, long-term follower community.

However, some researchers pointed out that the number of followers, brand fit, and content authenticity are also important for brands to select influencers (Haenlein et al., 2020). The final target is to increase brand awareness by influencers. Vancottem used quantitative research to point out PSI, perceptual interaction, and openness not only related to influencer selections but also enhancing the engagement of users (Vancottem, 2024). Haenlein et.al uses a successful case study – Gucci, to explain that influencer marketing activity can improve the brand visibility and engagement of users. However, in recent years, the credibility of many influencers has declined, so many brands are switching to new influencers for collaboration. As an example mentioned by Haenlein et.al research, inappropriate influencer marketing is the collaboration between the U.S. pharmaceutical company and Kim Kardashian to promote the anti-nausea drug Diclegis (Haenlein et al., 2020). When Kardashian posted about it on Instagram, it was quickly flagged by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). FDA ordered Kardashian to take down the post and include a

complete list of the drug's side effects in any future posts (Haenlein et al., 2020). This highlights the importance of compliance and ethical standards in all influencer marketing efforts. According to the Vancottom research, how to keep the authenticity and credibility of influencers, and how to manage the different platforms of influencer marketing more efficiently is a common issue for every brand.

According to these two types of research, the factors for selecting influencers are also related to marketing effectiveness, with both selection factors and marketing impact aimed at enhancing brand awareness and increasing consumer engagement. The credibility and authenticity of influencers are challenges that brands face, and the content promoted by influencers must meet compliance and ethical standards. Although Vancottom's research discusses managing influencer marketing effectiveness across multiple platforms, both studies overlook a comparison of marketing outcomes on Instagram and Douyin.

3 METHODOLOGY

This research will use the two case studies to analyze influencer marketing on different social media. This research chose Li Jiaqi as the Douyin case study. Li Jiaqi rose to fame by sharing beauty brands, especially lipsticks, through short videos and live streams on Douyin. In China, he gradually became prominent on young people's social media. Many young people started purchasing products through his Douyin livestreams, generating massive sales. Following Li Jiaqi's rise to fame and significant profits, more beauty influencers have emerged, imitating Li Jiaqi's approach to product trials for beauty brands. Chiara Ferragni was chosen as the Instagram case study because she is one of the most influential fashion bloggers on Instagram, with over 20 million followers. Her influence extends beyond Europe, attracting a large following worldwide. Her success illustrates Instagram's immense power in boosting visibility and brand awareness for fashion and beauty brands in the global market.

4 RESULT

In the case study, Li Jiaqi uses three methods to attract people. Firstly, Li Jiaqi stimulates people's engagement. Li Jiaqi showcases lipstick effects by

personally applying makeup through videos and livestreams. In one livestream, he applies multiple shades from different lipstick brands on his arm, allowing the audience to clearly see the differences between each shade. Secondly, Li Jiaqi uses popular music to enhance the exposure rate. Finally, Li Jiaqi uses special activities to attract people. Especially, Flash Sale and Limited-Time Deals. People are often attracted by these phrases and make quick purchases. Chiara attracts attention by posting stunning images. On this platform, users typically take more time to consider their purchase decisions. Chiara Ferragni uses Stories to share behind-the-scenes content, live events, and product tutorials, boosting fan engagement. Chiara Ferragni increases brand awareness by adding hashtags to her posts. This strategy helps broaden the reach of her content, attracting potential followers beyond her existing fan base and enhancing the visibility of the brands she collaborates with.

5 DISCUSSION

5.1 Li Jiaqi's Marketing Approach

Li Jiaqi's livestreams and Douyin's posts stimulate user engagement. Through short videos and live streaming, he showcases the authenticity of products by personally applying makeup, allowing users to see the different lipstick shades and their true effects after application. This gives people an intuitive sense of the product, enhancing their understanding of how it looks in real life. This rapidly heightens the level of consumer interest in the product. However, although Li Jiaqi personally applies makeup to showcase the visual effects of lipsticks, filters, special effects, and lighting are often added during video shoots and livestreams. This can alter the visual presentation of the lipstick, leading to questions about the authenticity of the videos and livestreams. Therefore, Li Jiaqi can showcase the most authentic effects of the lipstick by turning off filters and special effects, and by switching lighting on and off.

Li Jiaqi uses popular music to increase the exposure rate. His videos often feature popular trending music. With Douyin's recommendation algorithm, videos are categorized and recommended based on user likes, comments, shares, completion rate, and replay count. Background music is also a factor in this categorization. When a promotional video includes popular music, it gets recommended to users who enjoy that music genre. These users may come across the video for the music rather than the

product, but they'll still notice the brand. This enhances the brand's exposure rate and amplifies its reach. However, adding popular music can attract unrelated users, drawing in viewers who are interested in the music rather than the product itself. These users may have lower engagement and purchase intent, which can reduce the effectiveness of brand promotion and even increase effective traffic. Furthermore, if the music doesn't align with the brand image, a mismatch between the style of music and the brand's tone or product positioning could impact brand perception. For instance, overly lively or trendy music might not suit a high-end or mature brand, potentially causing brand positioning to become unclear or conveying the wrong message. Therefore, Li Jiaqi needs to select music that suits the product, prioritizing styles that align with the brand image and product positioning. This ensures that the music enhances the brand's core message rather than blurring its positioning.

Li Jiaqi attracts attention through special events. On Douyin, most users exhibit impulsive buying behavior due to the platform's strong immediacy, especially during limited-time brand events. Marketing tactics like "flash discounts" or "livestream flash sales" prompt users to make quick purchase decisions. This approach achieves a high conversion rate when promoting lower-priced items such as beauty products and snacks. Douyin's livestream function further amplifies this effect, as users engage with influencers' recommendations and interact through live comments, leading to large-scale sales. For instance, during the 618-shopping event in 2021, Li Jiaqi's livestream achieved 2.565 billion RMB in sales, with 106 million viewers tuning in. This boosts brand sales. As viewers interact with Li Jiaqi, their sense of perceived interactivity also increases, making them feel as though they have a friendship-like relationship with him. As a result, they are more likely to trust his recommendations and are willing to make purchases based on his suggestions. Such events may lead to impulsive purchases and post-purchase regret. Limited-time flash sales often prompt users to make quick buying decisions, which can result in impulsive spending. After the event, users may feel regret, and this could even create a negative impression of the product and brand, potentially affecting long-term user satisfaction and loyalty. Additionally, users may become fatigued by the frequent use of such event formats. If flash sales and limited-time offers occur too often, users might gradually perceive these events as less special or scarce. This can diminish the effectiveness of the promotions over time, making it harder to

continuously attract user participation. Therefore, Li Jiaqi should increase the after-sales support and user feedback. Optimizing the post-event customer service process and promptly addressing user feedback can ensure a complete user experience. For customers who purchase through flash sales, providing special after-sales services or dedicated support channels can help them feel valued and cared for by the brand. In addition, Li Jiaqi should optimize the frequency and pacing of promotions. By avoiding excessive flash sales and scheduling events at a reasonable frequency, he can maintain a sense of novelty and exclusivity. Concentrating limited-time discounts around major holidays or special brand events—such as new product launches or anniversaries—can create a stronger sense of occasion and anticipation.

5.2 Chiara Ferragni's Marketing Approach

On Instagram, most of the photos Chiara Ferragni posts feature high-end luxury brands. Users on this platform tend to take longer to consider making a purchase. Due to the high price of these products, they often compare products and reviews in detail before buying. This behavior is particularly effective for establishing a brand image that is high-end, fashionable, and luxurious in consumers' minds. However, this marketing model can often have some negative effects. Firstly, it reinforces consumer anxiety and a sense of comparison. The display of luxury brands may make some users feel pressured to consume, especially when they feel unable to afford similar luxury items, leading to anxiety and inferiority. This comparison mindset can also drive some users to overspend to achieve a "high-end" image similar to others, potentially impacting their mental health and shaping unhealthy consumer attitudes. Secondly, it can widen the gap between the brand and average users. Luxury brands are often expensive, making them inaccessible to many regular consumers. Such content may create a sense of distance between the brand and users, leading to feelings of detachment. This can hinder long-term interaction between the brand and users and may even result in user attrition. Therefore, brands should emphasize product practicality and sustainability. By showcasing everyday use scenarios or highlighting the product's durability and eco-friendly materials, brands can help users better understand the product's real value. This approach positions the product not only as a luxury item but also as a rational investment and a lifestyle choice. Additionally, brands can enhance emotional connections in their content.

When posting, they should focus on conveying emotions and showing how the product aligns with personal style. For example, by highlighting everyday moments, family life, or travel scenes featuring the product, brands can demonstrate how they integrate into real life, fostering emotional resonance with users.

Chiara Ferragni uses Stories to share behind-the-scenes moments, real-time events, and product usage tips, which increases fan engagement. Stories allow users to post videos that do not remain permanently on their main profile and are automatically deleted after 24 hours. This feature gives fans a sense of authenticity, making them feel closer to the brand or influencer's life. However, since the content disappears after 24 hours, its lifespan is limited; if users miss it, they may find it difficult to revisit, potentially leading to incomplete information dissemination. The hashtag feature on Instagram enables content to reach a wider audience, attracting potential users beyond the brand's existing followers, which increases brand exposure. Additionally, hashtags make it easier for users to find related posts, helping them gain a deeper understanding of the brand. However, using too many hashtags may attract irrelevant users, adding ineffective traffic and reducing the overall effectiveness of the content. Therefore, it's essential to include only fundamental hashtags in the caption and avoid adding too many unrelated ones.

In comparing the content strategies on Douyin and Instagram, Douyin primarily uses short videos to showcase product content, while Instagram displays products through high-quality images or Stories. Additionally, Douyin has an immediacy factor, and users tend to make impulsive purchases, making marketing tactics like "livestream flash sales" effective in attracting impulsive buyers. On Instagram, however, due to the higher price of products, users generally take more time to compare options, resulting in a longer decision-making process.

6 CONCLUSION

Both Douyin and Instagram offer distinct advantages for brands promoting their products on these social media platforms. Douyin leverages immediacy, viral spread, and trending music to push product videos, capturing user interest and quickly converting them into purchases. However, brands need to select music that aligns with their product's image to maximize appeal, especially for new product launches and

limited-time promotions aimed at impulsive buyers. While this may sometimes lead to post-purchase regret, strengthening after-sales support can help ensure a complete user experience and mitigate potential negative impacts. Additionally, optimizing promotion frequency can prevent user fatigue from repetitive events.

Instagram, on the other hand, emphasizes the aesthetic appeal of images, making it an ideal platform for high-end, luxury brands to showcase their products. This platform is better suited for brands focused on long-term image building and loyalty. Emphasizing the practicality and sustainability of products helps to avoid positioning them solely as luxury items, thus reducing potential consumer pressure, anxiety, or inferiority. Brands can also foster emotional connections by highlighting personal style and how the product fits seamlessly into everyday life. Adding appropriate tags further enhances brand visibility.

Ultimately, the choice for brands between gaining rapid exposure and high sales or building a high-end brand image depends on their market positioning. This study focuses only on Douyin and Instagram's role in influencer marketing, without analyzing the impacts of other platforms like YouTube or Weibo. Therefore, it may not fully represent the broader effects of influencer marketing across social media.

REFERENCES

- M. Haenlein, E. Anadol, T. Farnsworth, H. Hugo, J. Hunichen, D. Welte, Navigating the new era of influencer marketing: How to be successful on Instagram, Tiktok, & Co. *Calif. Manag. Rev.* 63, 5–25 (2020) <https://doi.org/10.1177/0008125620958166>
- D. Brown, N. Hayes, Who should evaluate the influencers in your market? *Influencer Mark.* 78–80 (2008) <https://doi.org/10.1016/b978-0-7506-8600-6.50012-4>
- C. Abidin, What is an internet celebrity anyway? *Internet Celebrity: Understanding Fame Online* (Emerald Publishing Limited, Leeds, 2018).
- D.S. Mathew, Micro-celebrity influencer marketing: The impact of Instagram influencers on consumer culture of young millennial women (Academic Press, New York, 2019).
- N. Esseveld, Why Goals Matter to Influencer Marketing Success. *Twi Blo* (2024).
- A. Vancottem, A study of influencer marketing on Instagram, TikTok and YouTube: The effects of parasocial interactions, openness, perceived interactivity, persuasion knowledge and correspondence bias. *Mémoire UCL* (2024)

- J.E. Lee, B. Watkins, YouTube vloggers' influence on consumer luxury brand perceptions and intentions. *J. Bus. Res.* 69, 5753–5760 (2016)
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2016.04.171>
- L.I. Labrecque, Fostering Consumer–Brand Relationships in Social Media Environments: The Role of Parasocial Interaction. *J. Interact. Mark.* 28, 134–148 (2014)
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.intmar.2013.12.003>
- W. Tan, T. Lim, A critical review on engagement rate and pattern on social media sites. *Proc. Int. Conf. Digit. Transform. Appl.* 58–61 (2020)
<https://doi.org/10.56453/icdxa.2020.1002>
- R. Hosie, A photographer asked teenagers to edit their photos until they thought they looked ‘social media ready,’ and the results are shocking. *Bus. Insider*. Available at: <https://www.businessinsider.com/selfie-harm-photo-series-rankin-asks-teens-to-edit-photos-until-social-media-ready-2019-2> (Accessed: 02 November 2024)

