

Research on the Influence of Video Marketing of Social Media Influencers on Consumers Purchase Intention of Beauty Products—Taking YouTube as Example

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Abstract: *This research is a secondary study, which explores the relationship between the credibility of social media influencers and consumer trust, and uses a mixed research method to collect secondary data. Generally speaking, consumers believe that video marketing by social media influencers is positive because it can provide objective, true and multidimensional information. At the same time, consumers' trust in social media influencers is closely related to the source of their credibility, and social media influencers with high credibility are more likely to gain consumer trust. In addition, video marketing by social media influencers does have an impact on consumers' purchase intentions. These conclusions supplement the relevant theories of social media influencer video marketing, and to a certain extent make up for the gaps in the research on the influence of social media influencer video marketing on consumer purchasing decisions. Based on the above research results, this research provides suggestions in four aspects for social media influencers and managers. Finally, this research reflected on the limitations of this study and puts forward the research direction of future research.*

Keywords: *social media, video marketing, customer behavior*

1. Introduction

With the continuous improvement of Internet technology, social media platforms have become popular entertainment and leisure platforms for young people, and a number of influential social media influencers have emerged. At the same time, these social media influencers began to use their influence for influencer marketing, and gradually became an important force in brand marketing strategies [1]. Brands hope to use the influence of social media influencers to gain more Sales opportunities [2]. HypeAuditor counts the marketing expenditures of global YouTube influencers in 2019 and 2020 [3]. The data shows that global influencer marketing expenditures on YouTube in 2019 were US\$5.5 billion. Based on the enhancement of the previous year, influencers are expected to be by the end of 2020. Marketing expenses will be \$6.6 billion. This data reflects the growing investment in influencer marketing on YouTube. As a platform that combines online video streaming and social functions, YouTube has more than 2 billion users worldwide, accounting for nearly one third of the total number of Internet users, with a total daily viewing time of up to 1 billion hours [4]. Deloitte Insights found that under the influence of COVID-19, 80% of consumers in the US have subscribed to at least one video streaming service, which further reflects the high permeability of video services among consumers [5]. Therefore, brands hope to combine influencer marketing with the advantages of YouTube platform to further expand the brand's market share. In this context, this research intends to explore whether and how video marketing by social media influencers on YouTube will influence consumers' purchase intention.

Social media influencers are ordinary users who have more followers and play the role of opinion leaders on social media. Trustworthy, expertise, attractiveness, interactivity, and authenticity are important factors that constitute the credibility of social media influencers, and they also have an impact on consumer behavior. YouTube influencer videos are videos published by social media influencers with marketing purposes in the context of social media influencers and brand cooperation. Consumer online trust is related to the professional knowledge, honesty, and reputation of the trusted object, and will have an impact on consumers' purchase intentions. Through combing, it is found that although there are many relevant researches on social media influencers, there is a lack of discussion about the combination of social media influencers and video marketing. And the impact of social media

influencers' video marketing on consumer purchase decisions There are still gaps in research. Therefore, this dissertation will take the beauty industry as an example to explore the impact of YouTube influencers video marketing on consumers' purchase intentions, make up the research gap.

2. Methodology

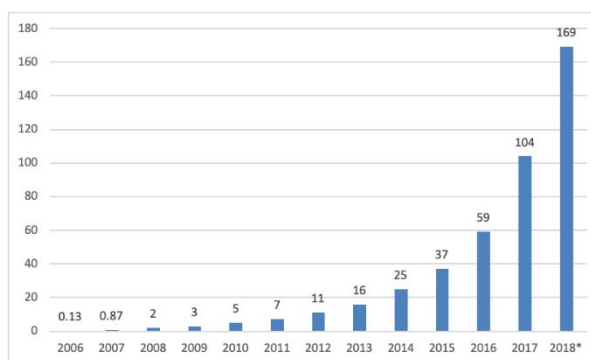
In view of the fact that social media influencers and video marketing have become more popular in recent years, in order to make the research more authentic and pertinent, this research has set time requirements for data sources. Only secondary data from the past 6 years will be considered for collection, and data before 2014 are excluded because newer data are more time-sensitive and representative than old data. The keywords used in this research to collect secondary data are: "social media influencers", "sources of social media influencers' credibility", "video marketing", "consumer trust", and "consumer purchase intentions".

On the other hand, this research collected in-depth interviews conducted by three researcher's Anongdeth & Imam Barre [6] and Lockie [7] as the secondary qualitative data source. Anongdeth & Imam Barre [6] studied the credibility of influencers on Instagram. This research also chose semi-structured interviews to collect data. A total of 25 volunteers participated, but only 17 participants completed all the interviews. This interview is able to understand the views of young consumers about influencers on Instagram. Lockie [7] interviewed 13 participants using in-depth interviews, focusing on the issue of consumers' trust in influencer video content. This interview reflects consumer attitudes towards video marketing by social media influencers. All in all, this research will conduct in-depth research based on the collected secondary data.

3. Results and discussion

3.1 Video marketing in the beauty industry

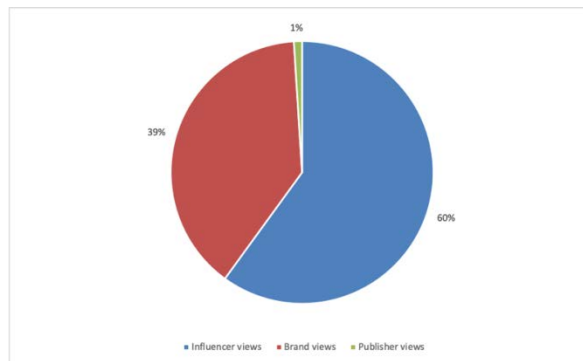
Pixability [8] counted the beauty-related video content on YouTube in recent years, as shown in Figure 1. It can be seen from the figure that in 2015, the number of video views of beauty content was 37 billion times. By 2018, it had exceeded 169 billion times, an increase of 65 billion times over 2017. This shows that the number of plays of beauty content videos is increasing year by year. This not only shows that there are more and more beauty industry videos on the YouTube platform, but also reflects that these videos are becoming more and more popular with consumers.



Source: Pixability (2018).

Figure 1: Annual beauty-related content views on YouTube from 2009 to 2018 (in billions)

Pixability [9] also made statistics on the distribution of views of beauty videos on YouTube, as shown in Figure 2. Figure shows that in the viewing statistics of beauty content videos, 60% of beauty video views are generated by influencers and 39% are generated by brands. In other words, more than half of the beauty videos watched by consumers are generated by influencers on YouTube. It can be seen that in the beauty industry, consumers prefer to watch video content produced by social media influencers than brand-produced videos, which to a certain extent reflects that influencers' video marketing is more easily accepted by consumers.



Source: Pixability (2018).

Figure 2: Distribution of beauty content view on YouTube as of August 2018

3.2 Consumers' attitudes towards social media influencers' video marketing

The influence of social media influencers gives it marketing value. If brands want to establish a strong relationship between consumers and brands through influencers, they must pay attention to consumers' attitude.

In the research of Lockie [7], interviewees expressed their views on video marketing from the perspective of consumers. One participant said that compared with text or image marketing, video marketing not only increases the authenticity of video content, but also allows viewers to feel more interactive, which is a good marketing method:

"I agree with the trusting vlogs more than blogs because I still think coming back to the whole Trip Advisor thing, I think with a blog people can still be a little bit hiding behind, you know, certain things or not. They can rip things to shreds. Whereas with a vlog you have more interaction because you can see the physical person, you can see their facial expressions and so on when they review something, whereas with a blog you can't tell what that person was thinking or doing at the moment they were writing."

It can be seen that consumers affirm the marketing effect of video marketing, believing that video marketing can bring more real information and multi-faceted interaction, which can help consumers obtain more information about the product.

3.2.1 Trustworthy

Trustworthy is an important factor in the source of credibility of social media influencers. In the interview by Anongdeth & Imam Barre [6], a participant suggested that if the content posted by social media influencers is unrealistic, it will affect their credibility:

"Photos that are overly edited and heavily filtered, say a lot about the influencer and in my opinion seems to be less credible."

This view emphasizes whether social media influencers can provide reliable, trustworthy information that will affect their credibility. For influencers in the beauty industry, ensuring the reliability of the source of product information can provide consumers with valuable information and gain the trust of consumers. Therefore, beauty influencers must not only select reliable channel sources, but also review and screen information sources to enhance their credibility.

3.2.2 Expertise

In addition to the fact that reliable content can improve credibility, in the Lockie [7] survey, a participant said that the expertise of influencers is a manifestation of their credibility:

"But definitely showing when you are writing that you are an expert in that field or have a lot of knowledge, you should be pointing out things or finding good things or faults at a level that other people may not. So, one of the things if I am reading a review and someone mentions something or an aspect or how it works and then I go wow, I would never have thought of that is a really positive sign for me."

This view shows that influencers with professional knowledge can provide consumers with more guidance and opinions, and consumers will also pay attention to and trust these influencers, because

they can stand on a professional perspective to provide consumers with more comprehensive information.

However, in an interview with Anongdeth & Imam Barre [6], some participants emphasized that social media influencers should pay attention to the degree of matching between their published content and their professional knowledge. If they do not match, the reputation of the influencer will be hit. One respondent contends:

“Influencers need to be themselves on their Instagram profile in order for me to perceive them as credible. If they try to be someone else or act in a way that’s fake, they lose credibility in my eyes.”

In other words, social media influencers can better gain consumer trust by publishing content that matches their expertise. Therefore, even if social media influencers cooperate with a brand, they must pay attention to whether the brand matches the influencer's expertise and values. Cooperation that fails to match will affect the reputation of consumers and the brand.

3.2.3 Attraction

Attraction is also an important indicator of social media influencers' trust. In the Lockie [7] survey, a respondent said that unattractive content is difficult to gain the trust of consumers:

“I would probably not even bother watching a video if it’s only got like three views, unless it’s like something really particular or really peculiar, you know, that it’s not very popular or it’s not even like can I say mainstream, then I might decide to watch it but I wouldn’t trust them, no.”

This view further illustrates that for social media influencers, if their published content is unattractive, it is difficult to arouse the resonance and trust of consumers. Especially for influencers in the beauty industry, if their video content does not show what consumers want to know, it is easy to be ignored. All in all, for influencers, it is necessary to increase their own attractiveness, but also to pay attention to the quality and attractiveness of the content to increase consumer trust.

3.2.4 Interactivity

In addition, in the Lockie [7] survey, some participants suggested that the degree of interaction between social media influencers and followers is also an indicator of whether influencers are credible:

“Couple of people that I have talked to online, they share that kind of interaction with vlogs and blogs and it’s like you can have a different kind of conversation with them ... and it’s like you can relate to them on that additional level. It’s really just like a television show that you can talk about.”

“If I feel like I kind of have a connection with them, like they are relatable, they are easy to listen to or read I definitely feel like it’s easier to trust them.”

These views emphasize that social media influencers' interactions with followers can help build connections between them, because it makes followers feel more authentic, and this relationship can help build trust.

3.2.5 Authenticity

Authenticity includes both the authenticity of content posted by social media influencers and the authenticity of behavior. Regarding the authenticity requirements of the published content, a participant in the interview of Anongdeth & Imam Barre [6] stated:

“Influencers need to be themselves on their Instagram profile in order for me to perceive them as credible. If they try to be someone else or act in a way that’s fake, they lose credibility in my eyes.”

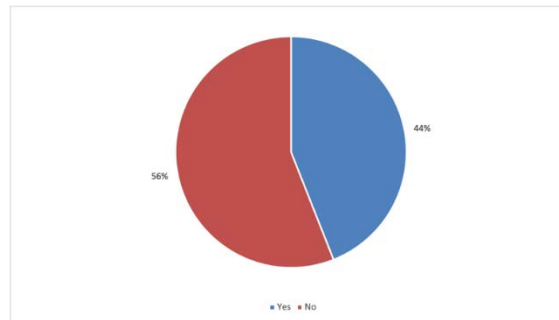
This view emphasizes that real content published by social media influencers will make consumers believe that it is credible and can enhance consumer trust, but it will be counterproductive if false information is published. For influencers in the beauty industry, ensuring the authenticity of photos or videos can better display the effects of products and gain the trust of consumers. Unreal photos will mislead consumers and lose trust.

From the above analysis, it can be seen that the trustworthy and influence of social media influencers are inseparable from reliability, expertise, attractiveness, interactivity and authenticity characteristics. Therefore, if social media influencers want to be influential among consumers, they must not only use professional knowledge and the reliability of content to increase credibility, but also interact with followers and close the relationship with consumers. In addition, social media influencers can also enhance their credibility by providing authentic content, but they should be cautious when

considering whether to disclose sponsorship information. They should choose whether to explain the partnership according to different situations, and strive to win the trust of consumers through honest performance.

3.2.6 Consumers' purchase intentions

Statista [10] investigated whether social media influencers will influence the buying behavior of American consumers, as shown in Figure 3. 56% of respondents said they would not be influenced by social media influencers, and 44% of respondents would buy products because of social media influencers. From this data, it can be seen that nearly half of consumers' purchase intentions will be affected by social media influencers.



Source: Statista Survey (2019).

Figure 3: Have you ever purchased a product because of a social media influencer

4. Conclusion

Taking the beauty industry as an example, this research focuses on the influence of influencers on YouTube on consumers' purchase intention, including the influence on consumer trust, following conclusions are drawn after research and analysis. Consumers can identify social media influencers, usually based on the number of followers and whether they are influential. In general, consumers' influence on social media the video marketing of the audience holds a positive attitude, believing that it will allow them to better understand the product, but is skeptical of false marketing. Social media influencers can use the different sources of credibility. In terms of gaining consumer trust, such as authenticity, expertise and interaction. Video marketing by social media influencers will have an impact on consumers' purchase intentions.

5. Theoretical contribution

This research has three theoretical contributions. First, with regard to consumer trust, the results of the research found that consumer trust is closely related to the source of the credibility of social media influencers. The research results support that when the expertise of social media influencers matches the product or brand, they can gain consumer trust. In addition, if the attractiveness of social media influencers can arouse consumers' attention and trust, this includes not only the attractiveness of social media influencers themselves, but also the attractiveness of the content they generate. Furthermore, authenticity and interactivity seem to be more trustworthy for consumers. Social media influencers must not only publish authentic content to gain consumer trust, but their behavior must also show authenticity.

Second, this research complements the relevant theories of influencer video marketing and provides new research directions for future research. The research results show consumers' attitudes and opinions on influencer video marketing. From the consumer's perspective, credible social media influencer video marketing can help them make purchase decisions, the authenticity of marketing will affect consumer behavior and attitudes.

Third, this research bridges the research gap in the impact of social media influencers' video marketing on consumer purchasing decisions. The results show that video marketing by social media influencers does have an impact on consumers' purchasing decisions. Consumers' buying behavior will be influenced by social media influencers, and they will refer to the recommendations of social media influencers before making a purchase decision.

6. Implications

For social media influencers, they need to enhance the authenticity and credibility of the information posted, and provide consumers with real and effective information. For consumers, faced with the uncertainty of the online consumption environment, they hope to obtain real and effective information from social media influencers, which can be used as a reference for purchasing decisions. In other words, social media influencers should enhance the authenticity and effectiveness of video content and strive to improve consumer retention and conversion rates by providing consumers with valuable real information. Moreover, social media influencers need to interact with their followers to strengthen the close relationship with consumers. Social media influencers can enhance interaction by commenting, liking, sharing, and building a fan group. These interactions can not only make followers feel valued, but can also strengthen their close relationship and help increase consumers' trust in social media influencers.

For marketers, when they choose social media influencers to cooperate, they should pay attention to the degree of matching of influencers with brand image and positioning. When the positioning of social media influencers does not match the brand, it will have a negative impact on the brand and social media influencers. Therefore, marketers must not only select influential social media influencers, but also pay attention to the fit between the influencers and the brand image and positioning, so as to increase consumer trust and purchase willingness.

7. Limitations

Affected by COVID-19, this research cannot conduct empirical research and collect questionnaires, but conducts a secondary research, which makes it difficult to explore the causal relationship between variables. At the same time, due to the limitation of research methods, it is impossible to discuss the research issues in more depth, which leads to the lack of scientific and rationality in this research. Therefore, in future research, primary research should be conducted to collect data once, collect data in the form of questionnaires, further explore the causal relationship between variables, and dig deeper into how social media influencers' video marketing affects consumer trust and purchase willingness.

8. Future research

Although this research found that consumers' purchase intentions will be affected by social media influencers' video marketing, it is still unclear whether the causal relationship between this and whether other driving factors can influence consumers' purchase behavior. Thus, it is recommended that researchers in future studies further dig deeper into the factors that drive consumers to purchase behavior, that is, which mechanism can affect the relationship between consumers and social media influencers, and further affect consumer behavior.

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