

# **Analysis of influencer advertising on social media posts and its influence on audience engagement**

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# Why studying influencer advertising in China context?

- *Online influencers and their prevalence in China*

- ✓ Thomala's study (2021) found that most Chinese people, around eighty percent, follow at least one online influencer.
  - ✓ COVID-19 may have strengthened the trend toward social media usage and influencer marketing (Taylor 2020).
  - ✓ Companies increasingly value influencers (Schouten, Janssen, and Verspaget 2020).
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# Why studying influencer advertising in China context?

- *Research gap*

- ✓ Much of the previous research has addressed consumer reactions about influencer advertising using interviews, surveys, and experiments, while research on media content is scant (Sundermann and Raabe 2019; Ye et al. 2021).
  - ✓ Although influencer studies have been done in China, such studies on the United States are currently outnumbering research on China by a factor of 8:1. Therefore, further research deserves to be conducted on the largest consumer market in the world (Vrontis et al. 2021).
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- RQ1: What are the most popular social media posts among the top online influencers in China?
- RQ2: What are the characteristics of influencer advertising-related posts?
- RQ3: What factors influence audience engagement with online influencers on social media?

## Research Method

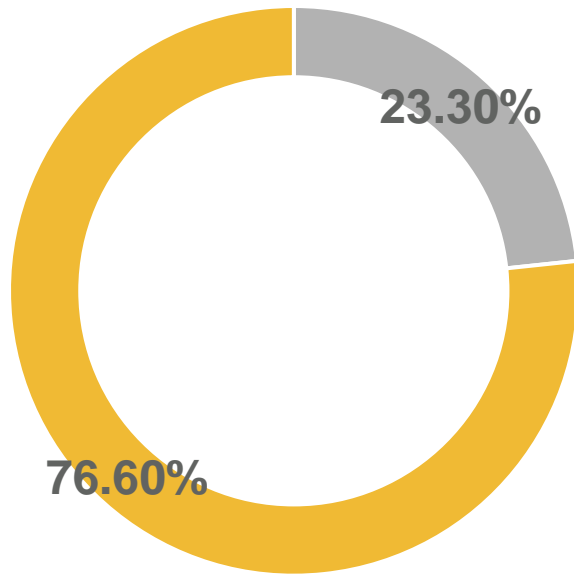
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- **Sample frame:** The ranking list of the most popular online influencers in China co-published by eNet Research Center and the magazine China Internet Week. The top 10 online influencer accounts were selected based on the number of fans on Sina Weibo as of April 2021.
- A web crawling application based on Python was used to collect the Weibo posts as of May 2021.

## Research Method

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- **Systematic sampling method:** Each fifth post was sampled for coding.
- **Sample size:** 1,779 Weibo posts



- influencer advertising related to brand/product information
- posts without brand information

## Research Method

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### **Foreign Brands**

0= Post includes no foreign brand  
1 = Post includes foreign brand

### **Number of Foreign Brands**

### **Chinese Brands**

0= Post includes no Chinese brand  
1 = Post includes Chinese brand

### **Number of Chinese Brands**

### **Brands**

0= Post includes no brand  
1 = Post includes either a Chinese brand or a foreign brand

### **Product Category (for posts with brands only)**

- Fashion & beauty
- Food & restaurant
- Services
- Others

### **PSA:**

0= Post includes no PSA  
1 = Post includes PSA

### **Promotion activities providing incentives that drive immediate action (e.g., lucky draw)**

0= Post includes no promotion  
1 = Post includes promotion

### **Events**

0= Post includes no event  
1 = Post includes event

### **length of post**

Use Excel formula to compile: =len()

### **Engagement**

- Likes
- Shares
- Comments

### **Photos/Visuals**

0= Post includes no photos/visuals  
1= Post includes photos/visuals

### **Videos**

0= Post includes no videos  
1= Post includes a video

# Research Method

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The inter-coder reliability scores for all variables ranged from **0.77** to **0.92**, showing good reliability performance.

# Results

- *Who are the selected online influencers?*

No.	Online influencer	Number of fans	Sex	Profile	Content of posts is mostly about
1	Jia Ma	41,621,527	Male	Weibo blogger	Personal feelings, humor
2	Papi Jiang	33,119,050	Female	Weibo video blogger	Funny videos, pets, feelings as a woman
3	Austin Li	29,108,250	Male	Weibo blogger	Promotion of cosmetics and snacks
4	Ziqi Li	27,569,380	Female	Founder of Li Ziqi brand	Food
5	13 Dai	20,267,602	Female	Weibo blogger	Funny, talk show
6	Uncle Tong Dao	18,554,301	Male	Weibo blogger	Constellation/ astrology
7	UK Baojie	18,361,698	Female	Weibo blogger	Daily life and culture of other countries
8	My ex is a jerk	17,088,324	Female	Weibo blogger	Humor, feelings, and pets
9	Teen Quanyou Liu	16,855,587	Male	Weibo blogger	Humor, feelings
10	Mr. Deca's mailbox	16,235,695	Male	Weibo blogger	Encouragement and positive thinking



# Results

- *Characteristics of influencer advertising-related posts*

No.	Online influencer	No. of sampled posts	PSA %	Promotion %	Event %	With picture %	With video %	Mention of foreign brand %	Mention of Chinese brand %	Mention of any brand %	Fashion/ beauty %	Food/ restaurant %	Service/ entertainment %	Others %
1	Jia Ma	200	1.0	2.5	1.0	48.5	11.0	3.5	13.5	16.5	0.5	2.0	14.0	3.0
2	Papi Jiang	124	3.2	4.0	5.6	29.8	26.6	7.3	16.1	22.6	1.6	4.0	17.7	3.2
3	Austin Li	200	4.0	42.0	21.0	45.0	23.0	18.5	28.5	42.0	24.0	5.0	24.5	7.5
4	Ziqi Li	53	0.0	9.4	3.8	45.3	32.1	1.9	20.8	20.8	0.0	43.4	66.0	0.0
5	13 Dai	200	1.0	5.0	6.0	68.0	38.0	10.5	15.0	23.5	1.0	5.0	16.0	4.0
6	Uncle Tong Dao	201	0.0	2.5	0.0	36.3	19.4	0.5	17.4	17.9	0.0	0.0	16.9	1.0
7	UK Baojie	200	0.5	4.0	4.0	58.5	21.0	20.5	23.5	41.0	2.5	2.5	34.5	8.0
8	My ex is a jerk	200	0.0	0.5	0.5	65.5	11.0	2.0	5.0	6.5	0.5	1.5	6.0	0.5
9	Teen Quanyou Liu	200	1.5	9.5	13.0	55.0	7.5	8.5	32.0	35.5	2.0	7.0	27.0	8.5
10	Mr. Deca's mailbox	201	1.5	1.0	1.0	10.9	9.0	1.0	5.0	5.0	0.5	0.0	2.5	2.5
	Total	1779	1.3	8.1	5.7	47.0	18.5	7.9	17.5	23.3	3.6	4.2	19.1	4.2
	Chi-sq (significance)		22.4**	365.6***	146.3***	207.9***	108.8***	122.8***	98.1***	168.7***	273.6***	234.1***	181.5***	38.9***

\*\*\*p<0.001; \*\*p<0.01

# Results

- *Factors predicting audience engagement on social media*

	Standardized Coefficients Beta		
	Likes	Comments	Shares
Length of post	0.07*	0.03	0.04
With picture	-0.06*	0.00	0.01
With video	0.02	0.02	-0.00
PSA	0.04	0.02	0.02
Promotion	0.10***	0.22***	0.14***
Event	0.08**	0.14***	0.14***
With foreign brand	-0.24***	-0.20***	-0.21***
With Chinese brand	-0.45***	-0.35***	-0.38***
Fashion/beauty brand	0.18***	0.21***	0.20***
Food/restaurant brand	0.10***	0.01	0.03
Services/entertainment brand	0.41***	0.29***	0.32***
Other brand	0.08**	0.07**	0.08**
Adjusted R sq	0.11	0.15	0.12
F-stat (significance)	18.9***	26.5***	19.9***

\*p<0.05;\*\*p<0.01;\*\*\*p<0.001

Combining traditional content analysis with data analysis of messages on online social media platforms obtained via web data crawling, our study is **one of the first empirical studies to analyze influencer advertising and consumer reactions on social media.** It provides a prototype for the future content analysis of social media platforms.

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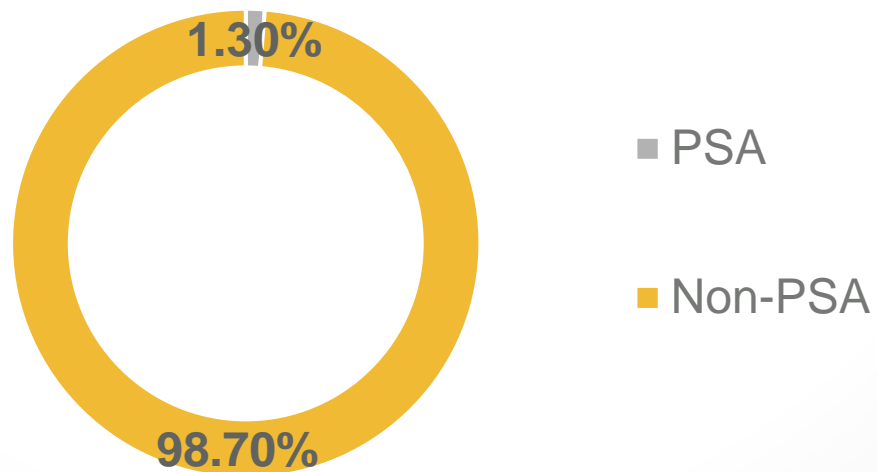
## **Significance of the Study**

# Practical Implications

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- Online influencers' frequency to do product endorsement:  
**Not frequent** → 23.3 percent of their Weibo content is influencer advertising related to brand/product information. This might be explained by the intention of online influencers to manage their authenticity and brands' preferences for product endorsement.
- The use of photos in social media posts was not a significant predictor of the number of comments and shares.  
→ Implication: Content/text are treated as the essential elements used in the post when doing influencer advertising, rather than the photos.

- The longer the post and the fewer the photos that go with the post, the more likes will be generated. → Longer texts attract more readers due to they contain a great variety of content and are easier to search for.
- Online influencers seldom share PSA-related social media posts. → Probably because of their perceived low credibility and vulnerable reputation in the audience's mind.



## Practical Implications

**Thank You!**

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